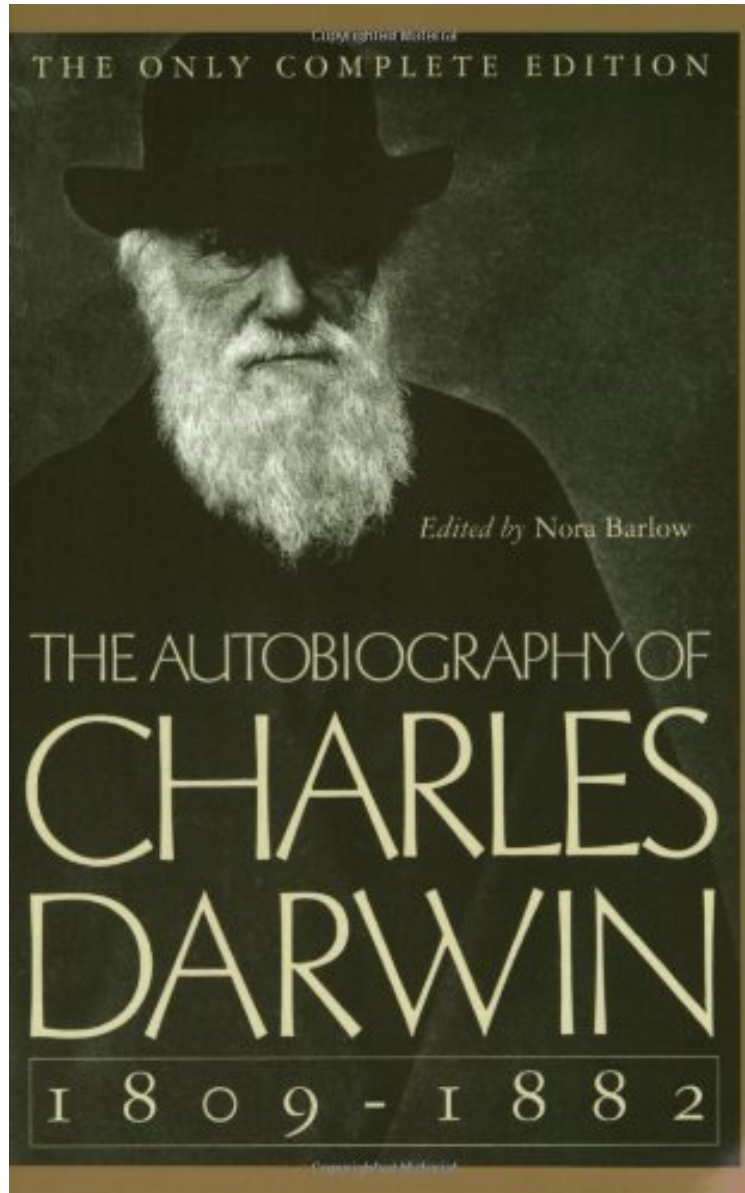


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The Autobiography of Charles Darwin: 1809-1882

Charles Darwin

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Charles Darwin : The Autobiography of Charles Darwin: 1809-1882 before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Autobiography of Charles Darwin: 1809-1882:

18 of 18 people found the following review helpful. Warning! This is the Censored Version!!!By David MilliernDarwin's family had Charles' biography censored, and Nora Barlow's edition is the only complete version

available. If it doesn't say "edited by Nora Barlow," be aware that it is not the unexpurgated edition, the one intended by Charles. That is my reason for giving this edition 3 stars. Otherwise, Barlow's edition gets 5 stars. There is much that is controversial and interesting that isn't in this edition, so I highly recommend that you drop a few bucks on that edition. This is a sufficient ersatz, if need be, but you are missing out.

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful.
Short but sweet
By Karl Janssen
The Autobiography of Charles Darwin was originally published in 1887. Darwin began writing it in 1876, though the final chapter was not completed until 1881. He explains that he began writing this sketch of his life to satisfy a German editor who requested details on his intellectual development, but his son Francis Darwin, who edited the published version, states that the work was intended as a memento from the great scientist to his children. There are brief parenthetical notes by Francis throughout the text, but they are few and far between and don't interfere with his father's narrative voice. The reader can easily imagine himself in a lamplit room of some 19th-century London academic club, filled with wingback armchairs and pipe smoke, as Darwin regales a select few listeners with his tales of yore. This is a very brief work, consisting of only about 64 pages. For that reason, serious scholars of Darwin's life and works will likely be disappointed by the lack of detail, but for the general reader with a fascination for the man, the brevity of the piece works to its advantage. Darwin's concise encapsulation of his life provides surprising insight into his mind and personality. Judging by the short length of the work and its table of contents, I was worried that it would be merely a curriculum vitae of his research accomplishments, but there are plenty of personal anecdotes here that make for a lively read, particularly in the passages where he's discussing his childhood and youth. This autobiography will be most enjoyable and accessible to those who already have some knowledge of Darwin's works. It helps to have read *The Voyage of the Beagle* first, because Darwin pretty quickly glosses over that period having already written an entire book about it, but he does allude to some of his discoveries from that journey, such as his theory of the formation of coral reefs. The latter portions of the book are less personal and more career-focused, discussing the work that went into his various scientific publications, yet still for Darwin enthusiasts it's quite entertaining to hear accounts of his research methodology related straight from the horse's mouth. The only dull moments in the book are when he's describing some of his scientific colleagues. He's so hesitant to characterize anyone in a negative light that the relentlessly polite praise becomes repetitive. The overwhelming feeling that permeates this text is one of a boundless enthusiasm in scientific discovery and a wonder for the natural world. The period in which Darwin practiced his naturalistic profession was like a scientific Wild West. So much was left to be discovered, that anyone with talent willing to work hard could stake his claim in whatever disciplines he chose, and the opportunity for eureka moments was virtually limitless. This was definitely not the age of specialization, and Darwin's breadth of knowledge in all matters of natural science is truly staggering. Another quality of the man that comes shining through is his remarkable modesty. When speaking of other scientists, he's not afraid to say, "I was right; he was wrong," but when it comes to his general career success he speaks as if the theory of evolution was something that just fell into his lucky lap. Of course, that's not the case. Darwin was a singular genius, and his success was the result of a tenacious work ethic. This autobiography is a fitting memorial to this brilliant man and his myriad achievements. Every Darwin admirer should read it.

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful.
Smaller and worse print-type face and not even pagination
By Roger V. Moseley
although the "Look inside" feature of the book as presented showed chapter headings and a TOC there was none in the reset item I received. Smaller and worse print-type face and not even pagination! A rather cheap effort, but I trust all the relevant words are there. Sometimes the "feel" of the book gives it substance...I guess I got what I paid for...cheap. I did not get what I had ordered, which was based on the look inside. Deceptive indeed.

The only complete edition. Charles Darwin's Autobiography was first published in 1887, five years after his death. It was a bowdlerized edition: Darwin's family, attempting to protect his posthumous reputation, had deleted all the passages they considered too personal or controversial. The present complete edition did not appear until 1959, one hundred years after the publication of *The Origin of Species*. Upon its appearance, Loren Eiseley wrote: "No man can pretend to know Darwin who does not know his autobiography. Here, for the first time since his death, it is presented complete and unexpurgated, as it exists in the family archives. It will prove invaluable to biographers and cast new light on the personality of one of the world's greatest scientists. Nora Barlow, Darwin's granddaughter, has proved herself a superb editor. Her own annotations make fascinating reading." The daring and restless mind, the integrity and simplicity of Darwin's character are revealed in this direct and personal account of his life: his family, his education, his explorations of the natural world, his religion and philosophy. The editor has provided page and line references to the more important restored passages, and previously unpublished notes and letters on family matters and on the controversy between Samuel Butler appear in an appendix.

About the Author
Naturalist Charles Darwin (1809-1882) is the father of evolution. His groundbreaking *The Origin of Species* argued that all species of life have descended over time from common ancestors, and proposed the scientific theory that this branching pattern of evolution resulted from a process that he called natural selection. As much as

anyone in the modern era, Darwin has changed the course of human thought.