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Charles Darwin

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**The Effects of Cross and Self Fertilisation
in the Vegetable Kingdom**

Darwin's impetus for the experiments which of which the results are recorded in this book was 'a mere accidental observation; and indeed it required the accident to be repeated before my attention was thoroughly aroused to the remarkable fact that seedlings of self-fertilised parentage are inferior, even in the first generation, in height and vigour to seedlings of cross-fertilised parentage'. After eleven years of meticulous experimentation and observation, described in this volume, he was ready to publish in 1876 the detailed study which he regarded as a companion volume to his 1862 *On the Various Contrivances by which British and Foreign Orchids are Fertilised by Insects*. His 'first and most important of the conclusions which may be drawn ... is that cross-fertilisation is generally beneficial, and self-fertilisation injurious': this understanding is of course the basis of all modern plant breeding programmes.

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OF
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IN THE
VEGETABLE KINGDOM.

BY CHARLES DARWIN, M.A., F.R.S.,
ETC.

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35, Table VI., bottom of second column, *for* "495·13" *read* "495·25."121, twelve lines from bottom of page, *for* "fertilised" *read* "self-fertilised."162, Table LVII., bottom of third column, *for* "158·76" *read* "158·75."