

### THE WRITING OF THE BOOK

In 1858 a young friend of Darwin named Alfred Russell Wallace was engaged in scientific study in the East Indies. As he pondered over the varieties of plants and animals that he saw there, he recalled having read Malthus' Essay on Population and hit upon exactly the same theory that had already entered Darwin's mind from the same source. He immediately wrote an article presenting his idea rather fully, and sent it to Darwin who was greatly surprised to find that Wallace had advanced exactly the same theory that he himself had thought of twenty years earlier. He feared that Wallace might publish it first and thus be considered as its originator. Yet he did not wish to do anything that would be unfair to Wallace. When he discussed the matter with his friends, and showed them the great similarity between Wallace's article and his own previous statement, they suggested that he allow them to read both statements at a meeting of a scientific society.

Darwin accepted the suggestion. At the meeting of the Linnean Society on July 1, 1858, separate statements of the views of both Darwin and Wallace were read, along with a prefatory letter explaining the circumstances. The thirty scientists present seem to have felt no particular interest in the presentation. A few months later, when the president of the Linnean Society reviewed the events of the <sup>year</sup> 1858, he declared that he could find no memorable scientific progress to record.

Darwin soon began to fear that either Wallace or someone else would publish the theory ahead of him. His friends urged him immediately to put it in print himself. He therefore spent several months writing a book, which he called: On the Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection, or the Preservation of Favoured Races in the Struggle for Life.