

## CHAPTER II.

### SCIENTIFIC JUSTIFICATION OF THE THEORY OF DESCENT. HISTORY OF CREATION ACCORDING TO LINNÆUS.

The Theory of Descent, or Doctrine of Filiation, as the Monistic Explanation of Organic Natural Phenomena.—Its Comparison with Newton's Theory of Gravitation.—Limits of Scientific Explanation and of Human Knowledge in general.—All Knowledge founded originally on Sensuous Experience, *à posteriori*.—Transition of *à posteriori* Knowledge, by Inheritance, into *à priori* Knowledge.—Contrast between the Supernatural Hypotheses of the Creation according to Linnæus, Cuvier, Agassiz, and the Natural Theories of Development according to Lamarck, Goethe, and Darwin.—Connection of the former with the Monistic (mechanical), of the latter with the Dualistic Conception of the Universe.—Monism and Materialism.—Scientific and Moral Materialism.—The History of Creation according to Moses.—Linnæus as the Founder of the Systematic Description of Nature and Distinction of Species.—Linnæus' Classification and Binary Nomenclature.—Meaning of Linnæus' Idea of Species.—His History of Creation.—Linnæus' View of the Origin of Species.

THE value which every scientific theory possesses is measured by the number and importance of the objects which can be explained by it, as well as by the simplicity and universality of the causes which are employed in it as grounds of explanation. On the one hand, the greater the number and the more important the meaning of the phenomena explained by the theory, and the simpler, on the other hand, and the more general the causes which the theory assigns as explanations, the greater is its scientific