

Cover image

The portrait is of an elderly Charles Darwin, shown with a full white beard. Collier's original painting was completed by July–August 1881 and shows the naturalist in the last year of his life.

Darwin's appearance and costume in this copy portrait conform to the description left by his son Francis: "His beard was full and almost untrimmed, the hair being grey and white, fine rather than coarse, and wavy or frizzled. His moustache was somewhat disfigured by being cut short and square across. He became very bald, having only a fringe of dark hair behind...He wore dark clothes, of a loose and easy fit. Of late years he gave up the tall hat even in London, and wore a soft black one in winter, and a big straw hat in summer. His usual out-of-doors dress was the short cloak" [Francis Darwin (ed), *The life and letters of Charles Darwin including an autobiographical chapter...* in three volumes (London, John Murray, 1888), vol. 1, pp. 111–112]

Three-quarter length portrait. Darwin is shown standing, facing the viewer, dressed in a broad-buttoned black cloak draped over the shoulders. He holds a dark broad brimmed hat left-handed, thumb to the fore.

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