

DARWIN MANUSCRIPTS AND LETTERS

GIFTS TO CAMBRIDGE AND TO DOWN HOUSE

A GENEROUS and timely grant from the Pilgrim Trust has enabled the owners of certain important manuscripts of Charles Darwin to present them, some to the University Library at Cambridge and some to the British Association for preservation at Down House. The gift includes the manuscript of Charles Darwin's autobiography, the manuscript of the diary of the *Beagle*, with the field note-books from which it was compiled, most of the manuscript of the "Origin of Species", the manuscript of "Movement in Plants", "Climbing Plants", and other works; correspondence with Wallace, Samuel Butler, Huxley and other contemporaries; a number of personal papers and of memoranda relating to Down; and a collection of pamphlets, some with his annotations. It was in 1842 that Charles Darwin went to live at Down House. The first sketch, in his handwriting, of his species theory, written in 1842, is included in the gift.

A wise division of these manuscripts has been made. To the Library at Cambridge go the papers which, as will be seen, possess the highest possible value to the history of scientific research—papers which generations of future students may well wish to reinvestigate. To Down House, Darwin's home from 1842 until his death in 1882, now held by the British Association as a national memorial under the gift of Sir Buckston Browne, there return those priceless relics which will be most appropriate for those who visit the place to see—"exhibitible objects", as they were termed by one of those responsible for the division. Down House is closed to the public now, but when it becomes possible to reopen it, the collection of Darwiniana, viewed before the War by some seven thousand visitors annually, will be found to be enhanced by additions of unique personal interest.

A few examples only can be chosen for mention here out of the large mass of material comprised in the gifts. Among the documents destined for Cambridge are, foremost, sketches of "The Origin of Species", dating from 1842 and 1844, and manuscripts of chapters of the work as originally planned, and before the work was abstracted for publication in 1859. There is a fair copy of a draft, annotated by Darwin and Hooker, on "Varieties in Large Genera". There are manuscripts, complete or partial, of, or relating to, the "Expression of the Emotions", "The Movements and Habits of Climbing Plants", the "Cross- and Self-fertilization of Plants", "The Power of Movement in Plants", and other works. There are also manuscripts of a number of short papers communicated to scientific societies and periodicals.

Numerous scientific notes, in books or on loose sheets, are included in the collection. Some are very early, dating from Darwin's short period at the University of Edinburgh as well as from his Cambridge days. Among the material of later date is much that relates not only to the major works but also to other investigations—the names of the parallel roads of Glenroy and of Salisbury Craigs appear; glacial studies, coral reefs, *Peloria*, phyllotaxy, pangenesis, embryology, hybridism, are a few among many subjects. Memoranda for later editions of "The

Origin of Species", "The Descent of Man", "Coral Reefs", "Climbing Plants", "Orchids", "Cross- and Self-fertilization" are included.

In this group of documents there are also the small brass-clasped notebooks kept during the voyage of the *Beagle* and the classified scientific notes made up from these: it is to be noticed that as each page in the notebooks was collated it was crossed through. The very records of observations and incidents made during that arduous voyage, often, it must have been, in circumstances of difficulty and stress, cannot be viewed without reverence; and they will be available to the view of those who visit Down in future, for they go back there, together with the manuscript of the "Diary", which, as is well known, was published verbatim not many years ago under the care of Lady Barlow. The classified scientific notes, however, are rightly included in the Cambridge collection.

Letters are many. These have, of course, been exhaustively worked upon during the compilation of the "Life and Letters of Charles Darwin" and of "More Letters of Charles Darwin"; nevertheless, they again are more appropriate to a library than to exhibition, and the majority go to Cambridge, though those written from the *Beagle* are retained for Down House with the notebooks. It has been noticed that such few letters as in normal times are open to view (in stands) in the Down House collection are assiduously read by many visitors; but correspondence could never be exhibited in bulk.

There are a few scientific notes relating to Down and its neighbourhood, and these now return to their source. There is, for example, a list of plants, grasses, etc., on the lawn at Down, in 1856-58: it might be a labour of love for a botanist to determine which of these, and how many more, appear there now. Among other local observations, there are the notes which were kept by Horace Darwin, from 1878 onward, in continuation of his father's study of the work of earthworms. Rainfall records are associated with the dampness and dryness of the soil, and these with measurements of the movement of the heavy stone (still in its place) which has become known as the wormstone: the term 'wormograph', which heads the notes, was mercifully relinquished.

Apart from the material already mentioned, the bulk of the gift to the British Association is not of a scientific character, but intimate and personal to Darwin, as befits a gift to the present guardians of his home. His own diary of his health, from 1849 to 1854, survives. A number of private account-books have been preserved. It is on record that Darwin rated his own business ability highly (if that phrase be not inapplicable to a man so innately modest); the account-books bear out this estimate. Personal expenditure is meticulously classified under various general headings—his partiality for snuff, by the way, is exhibited under the heading of "Amusements", and that of Mrs. Darwin for the theatre is apparent before they left London to live at Down. No less apparent is their generosity to dependants and others. Much may be inferred from these accounts concerning the regime at Down: the items of expenditure on the estate are not without value for the guidance of those who now are charged with its maintenance; and the entries, in earlier days, concerning livestock and so forth do something to justify the surprising reference which occurs in Bagshaw's Directory of 1847—"Darwin, Charles, farmer".