

THE BRITISH MUSEUM.—The want of space for exhibiting the various natural curiosities of the British Museum has long been a matter of complaint and a subject of deep consideration on the part of the trustees. At a meeting of the sub-committee of that body on "natural history," held on the 16th of June, 1858, evidence was taken upon the question of removing the botanical collection to Kew-gardens. Sir W. Hooker stated, in answer to Sir R. Murchison's question from the chair, that it would undoubtedly advance the interests of botanical science to remove the collection to the *herbarium* at Kew, it being desirable that *herbaria* in establishments should be in connexion with living plants. Dr. Hooker corroborated the evidence of his brother, Sir William. Dr. Lindley generally testified to the same effect—that is, in favour of the removal to Kew. It appears that persons go to Kew and reside there in order to study botany, so that no practical inconvenience would arise from the collections being there kept. The three above-named gentlemen having been ordered to withdraw, Professor Owen was called in, and in answer to the question about removal gave the same opinion, stating that the only disadvantage would arise from the loss of certain specimens of recent botany required to illustrate fossil plants. On this point, however, the learned professor explained that he spoke solely as the Superintendent of the "Natural History" Collections in the Museum, and not in reference to the wider question of the relations of a national collection of botany in the Museum to the advancement of that interesting science. Mr. Owen is now in favour of retaining the mineralogical collection in the Museum, in opposition to his former opinion. At a subsequent meeting (21st of June) Mr. G. Bentham, Professor Henfrey, and Dr. H. Falconer were examined by the sub-committee. The first thought that the removal of the whole collection to Kew would not be advantageous to science, but that the removal of the Banksian Herbarium might be so under certain circumstances; he also insisted on the importance of always including a botanical collection in the British Museum. Professor Henfrey generally agreed with Mr. Bentham; Dr. Falconer agreed generally with Mr. Bentham, but was opposed to the severance of the Banksian Herbarium from the collection in Great Russell-street. These gentlemen having retired, letters were read from Sir C. Lyell and Mr. C. Darwin, of Bromley, Kent. The former "had heard, with the greatest concern, the proposal of removing any part of the botanical collection from the British Museum to Kew." He has been hoping for years (he says) to see that collection enlarged, and a part of it opened freely to the public; "London," he adds, "is the place where they ought to be stationed." Mr. Darwin "follows on the same side," and thinks that a national collection of botany (like an art-collection of paintings) ought to be in London. The sub-committee, having duly considered their report, unanimously resolved that, "It is not desirable to recommend the translation of the botanical collection from the British Museum to Kew; one of the great objections being the circumstance that the *herbarium* and library at Kew are mostly private property, and only accessible to the public under certain conditions, while the buildings there are inadequate to accommodate the united collections. On the subject of the general collections of natural history, concerning which sundry memorials from savans and others are published, it was intimated to the Lords of the Treasury by Mr. Panizzi, on the 15th ult., that the trustees of the Museum are ready to deliberate and report upon the proposed increase of accommodation for the Museum collections.