

RECORD: Darwin, C. R. 1896. [Letter to George Birkbeck Norman Hill]. Hill, 1896. *Talks about autographs*, pp. 58-9.

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NOTE: See Macauley, Thomas Babington. 1856. [Recollection of Darwin]. In Trevelyan, George Otto ed. 1876. *The life and letters of Lord Macaulay*, vol. 2, pp. 403-4 and *The Correspondence of Charles Darwin*, vol. 27.

[page] 58

[...]

Some years ago, in the course of my reading I came across the following passage in Mrs. Piozzi's "Journey through Italy:" "I have no roses here (at Florence) equal to those at Lichfield, where on one tree I recollect counting eighty-four within your reach; it grew against the house of Dr. Darwin." It raised in my mind so pleasant a picture of the home of the poet who sang of the "Loves of the Plants" that I sent a copy to the great naturalist, Charles Darwin, who was, I knew, writing *Erasmus Darwin's Life*. He replied: -

DOWN, BECKENHAM, KENT,
July 1st [1879]

DEAR SIR, - I am much obliged to you for your kindness in writing to me. My notice of the life of my grandfather will be very short, and I doubt whether I shall go into such detail as to justify my using the little fact communicated by you.

Yours faithfully & obliged,
CH. DARWIN.

When we reflect on the place Darwin holds in the realm of science, a place which no one has held since Newton died, - the two following entries have a certain air of strangeness about them. Macaulay recorded in his diary on July

[page] 59

17*, 1856,

"In the evening, Darwin, a geologist and traveller came to dinner" (at Lord Stanhope's). Little did Macaulay suspect that one greater than Macaulay was there. This is to be said by way of excuse for him, that "The Origin of Species" had not at that time been published. Of that work Carlyle wrote,

"Wonderful to me, as indicating the capricious stupidity of mankind; never could read a page of it, or waste the least thought upon it.

[...]

* In Trevelyan, ed. 1876. *The life and letters of Lord Macaulay*, vol. 2, pp. 403-4, the date is 16 July, 1856.