

Lord Derby.

Note by Lord Derby.

23 St. James's Square S.W.

There are many biographies which need not have been written; and the shorter such are, if they must exist at all, the better.

But where a Biography deals with a subject of real interest, brevity is a greater fault than diffuseness. Abstracts are always dry; and detail is essential in delineating personal character.

In the case of such a Man as Mr Darwin, the more the public can be told about him the better they will be pleased.

The danger in the case of his biography is lest it should be overloaded with scientific detail, interesting only or chiefly to specialists. This is difficult to avoid; yet it may be in part avoided by reserving the bulk of the scientific correspondence for separate publication; keeping the memoir - the personal record distinct - This may be done even if they are bound up in the same volume.

Letters from friends giving their recollections and impressions of the person whose life is written, add much to the interest - It is instructive & curious to see how the same character appears in the eyes of a number of competent observers - how differently it is viewed in some respects yet with a fundamental similarity between all the various representations.