

SECOND ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE

Lewisham and Blackheath

SCIENTIFIC ASSOCIATION.

19

SATURDAY, JULY 10th

EXCURSION TO DOWN.—The members and their friends availed themselves of the very kind invitation of CHARLES DARWIN, Esq., LL.D., F.R.S., &c., &c., to spend the afternoon at his house at Down. Among the visitors on the occasion, were Herr Hesse-Wartegg and J. Jenner Weir, Esq., F.L.S. The party was received in the drawing-room by Mr. and Mrs. Darwin, Miss Darwin, and Dr. Francis Darwin. Here Mr. Darwin exhibited and described some of his most prized curiosities, prominent among which were the large Photographic Albums presented to him by his enthusiastic admirers in Germany and Holland. In the study, was shown the arrangement by which the great naturalist was making himself acquainted with the habits of the earth-worm. Wine and other refreshments were provided in the verandah. When Mr. Darwin at length felt fatigued and faint and was compelled to retire, he said, in bidding his visitors adieu, that he had felt very proud and happy in seeing them at his house that day.

At the "White Hart" Hotel, Orpington, dinner was provided for 43 ladies and gentlemen. Mr. Darwin's health was enthusiastically drunk, and the toast was responded to by Mr. J. Jenner Weir. Mr. Weir said that Mr. Darwin had introduced into the world a new system of philosophy. We had all long ago rejected the watch-making theory of Paley, and felt that, in some way or other, the animal and vegetable world had been evolved by a natural process. We knew that each species was derived by evolution from the ovum, but it was reserved for Mr. Darwin to show the great part which was played by "Natural Selection," or the "Survival of the Fittest." We found in the species around us constant variations from the normal type—if some were better fitted, or in other words responded more satisfactorily to their environment, they became favoured in the struggle for existence, and sometimes even displaced the normal type. Nature, Mr. Weir remarked, was always making what perhaps might be termed tentative experiments; and confining his observations to this action of nature in colour, and taking *white* for an example, he instanced white rabbits, which had often been produced

on an estate near Eastbourne, and which, though much trouble was taken to preserve them, invariably died out, because, being so conspicuous in colour, they were easily observed by both mammalian and feathered foes, and fell victims to dogs, foxes, cats, and falcons. Again, white pigs, not having their olfactory organs so keen as those of the normal colour, ate poisonous herbs and died; so that in a state of nature there was no chance of such an aberration surviving. On the other hand, as a protective colour, was instanced the case of the northern hare (*lepus variabilis*), which became white during winter in Norway, Sweden, and Russia, grey in Scotland, and in Ireland did not change colour at all.

Although one of the most painstaking of naturalists, and most genial of men, Mr. Darwin was, remarked Mr. Weir, perhaps the most vehemently abused person in existence, and it had been more than once said of him that he had done more mischief than any living man. Mr. Weir felt, however, that he was addressing an Association which thought very differently on the subject, and he was sure that Mr. Darwin would feel much gratified at the cordial manner in which the toast had that day been received.

A long and interesting account of this visit to Mr. Darwin, from the pen of the eminent traveller, Herr Hesse-Wartegg, appeared in the *Frankfurter Zeitung*, of Friday, 30th July, 1880.

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 5th.

A Lecture was delivered by FRANCIS BOND, Esq., M.A., F.G.S., on "Glaciers and Glaciation."

Glaciers are most easily described as *ice-rivers*. They abound in mountainous parts of the world; being very numerous in Switzerland, on the Himalayas, and in New Zealand, while on the Andes they are rarer. In colder climates they are of immense size; in Greenland there is one which is at least 69 miles in breadth. The antarctic regions are covered by a veritable ice sheet, which is from 50 to 180 feet above the level of the sea.

The resemblance of a glacier to a river helps to realise some of its characteristics: like a river, it moves downwards and wears away

Trentonham and Blackheath

SCIENTIFIC ASSOCIATION.

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Trinshaw and Blackbath

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A long and interesting account of this visit to Mr. Darwin, from the pen of the eminent traveller, Herr Besse-Warwigg, appeared in the *Frankfurter Zeitung*, of Friday, 26th July, 1860.

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 24.

A Lecture was delivered by FRANCIS BORN, Esq., B.A., F.G.S., on "Glaciers and Glaciation."

Glaciers are most easily described as *ice-rivers*. They abound in mountainous parts of the world; being very numerous in Switzerland, on the Himalayas, and in New Zealand, while on the Andes they are rarer. In colder climates they are of immense size; in Greenland there is one which is at least 40 miles in breadth. The antarctic regions are crossed by a veritable ice sheet, which is from 50 to 100 feet above the level of the sea.

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