

Crawley

High School
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Dear Sir

I have sent you a copy —
of course I can lend you the original
if you wish to see it — If a letter
your father was good enough to send
to me in 1879. I feel that it

is just possible that the expressed
opinion of the Modern Aristotle
on his brother of Alexander's time
may interest you — and happily others.

The question I had put to Dr. Darwin
was: "Can you tell me whether there

is any ground for thinking that

est the ipissima verba ✓

THE SENSITIVENESS OF PLANTS KNOWN TO THE ANCIENTS?—I should be very glad if any reader of "N. & Q.," who may have given attention to the subject, could tell me whether there are any passages in the classics which will help me to understand how much or how little the ancient Greeks and Romans knew of the sensitiveness of plants. There is one passage in the beginning of Aristotle's (?) *περὶ φυτῶν*, where the writer, whoever he may have been, speaks of Anaxagoras and Empedokles "maintaining stoutly that plants have perception, feel pain and pleasure, and holding that they are moved by desire." This *locus* has set me wondering whether the old Greeks made any experiments on plants, and, if so, what are the *loci* where such experiments are referred to. I do not think Lewes says anything about it, though he does warn his readers against reading into the Greek the accumulated knowledge of the "heirs of all the ages."

Does Herodotus, in speaking of the nummulitic limestone of the Pyramids, or in any other part of his history, call the fossils therein "beans"? I am aware that Strabo (see Quekett's *Lectures on Histology*, I think) compares some fossils to lentils.

J. A. C.

P.S. I was trying to put together
a paper to be called some such
title as (1) The Modern Aristotle

or (2) Darwin in Alexandria times.

J. A. C.

that any of the ancients (more especially
the Staggyrite) had ever made experiments
to test the sensitiveness of plants?

I venture to forward the question as
I sent it to N.H.R. - I got no answer
to this - at least not for several
months afterwards till I gave up
looking for any such answer.

I found it rather hard to put into
articulate English just what I wanted
to know - have a certain lameness in
the English of this query, which I will
ask you to be good enough to return to
Yours respectfully

John A. Crawley

To F. Darwin Esq^r

June 6. 1852.