

SCIENTIFIC NEWS.

— SOME GOSSIP ABOUT DARWIN.—In a recent visit to England, the writer strolled into the village of Down in Kent, and talked with some of the villagers in regard to Mr. Darwin, whose beautiful home is just outside the little town.

Some of this talk, although in itself idle and valueless, may have an interest to readers, as showing how a great man looks to his smaller neighbors.

The landlord of the "George Inn" said that "all the people wished to have Mr. Darwin buried in Down, but the government would not let them. It would have helped the place so much. It would have brought hosts of people down to see his grave. Especially it would have helped the hotel business which is pretty dull in winter time.

"Mr. Darwin was a very fine-looking man. He had a high forehead and wore a long beard. Still, if you had met him on the street, perhaps, you would not have taken much notice of him unless you knew that he was a clever man."

"Sir John Lubbock (Darwin's friend and near neighbor) is a very clever man, too, but not so clever nor so remarkable-looking as Mr. Darwin. He is very fond of hants (ants) and plants and things."

At Keston, three miles from Down, the landlady of the Greyhound had never heard of Mr. Darwin until after his death. There was then considerable talk about his being buried in Westminster, but nothing was said of him before.

Several persons had considerable to say of Mr. Darwin's extensive and judicious charity to the poor. To Mr. Parslow, for

many years his personal servant, Mr. Darwin gave a life pension of £50, and the rent of the handsome "Home Cottage" in Down. During the time of a water famine in that region, he used to ride about on horseback to see who needed water, and had it brought to them at his own expense from the stream at St. Mary's Cray.

"He was," said Mr. Parslow, "a very social, nice sort of a gentleman, very joking and jolly indeed; a good husband and a good father and a most excellent master. Even his footmen used to stay with him as long as five years. They would rather stay with him than take a higher salary somewhere else. The cook came there while young and stayed there till his death, nearly thirty years later.

"Mrs. Darwin is a pleasant lady, a year older than her husband. Their boys are all jolly, nice young fellows. All have turned out so well, not one of them rackets, you know. Seven children out of the ten are now living.

"George Darwin is now a professor in Oxford. He was a barrister at first; had his wig and gown and all, but had to give it up on account of bad health. He would have made a hornament to the profession.

"Francis Darwin is a doctor, and used to work with his father in the greenhouse. He is soon to marry a lady who lectures on Botany in Oxford.

"For the first twenty years after Mr. Darwin's return from South America, his health was very bad—much more than later. He had a stomach disease which resulted from sea-sickness while on the voyage around the world. Mr. Parslow learned the water-cure treatment and treated Mr. Darwin in that system, for a long time, giving much relief.

"Mr. Darwin used to do his own writing but had copyists to get his work ready for the printer. He was always an early man. He used to get up at half past six. He used to bathe and then go out for a walk all around the place. Then Parslow used to get breakfast for him before the rest of the family came down. He used to eat rapidly, then went to his study and wrote till after the rest had breakfast. Then Mrs. Darwin came in and he used to lie half an hour on the sofa while she or some one else read to him. Then he wrote till noon, then went out for an hour to walk. He used to walk all around the place. Later in life, he had a cab, and used to ride on horseback. Then after lunch at one, he used to write awhile. Afterwards he and Mrs. Darwin used to go to the bedroom, where he lay on a sofa and often smoked a cigarette while she read to him. After this he used to walk till dinner-time at five. Before the family grew up, they used to dine early, at half-past one, and had a meat-tea at half-past six.

"Sometimes there were eighteen or twenty young Darwins of different families in the house. Four-in-hand coaches of young

Darwins used sometimes to come down from London. Mr. Darwin liked children. They didn't disturb him in the least. There were sometimes twenty or thirty pairs of little shoes to be cleaned of a morning, but there were always plenty of servants to do this.

“The gardener used to bring plants into his room often of a morning, and he used to tie bits of cotton on them, and try to make them do things. He used to try all sorts of seeds. He would sow them in pots in his study.

“There were a quantity of people in Westminster Abbey when he was buried. Mr. Parslow and the cook were among the chief mourners and sat in the Jerusalem chamber. The whole church was as full of people as they could stand. There was great disappointment in Down that he was not buried there. He loved the place, and we think that he would rather have rested there had he been consulted.”—*David S. Jordan, Bloomington, Indiana.*