

RECORD: Anon. 1896. [Obituary] Death of Mrs. Darwin. *Bromley & District Times* (9 October), p. 4.

REVISION HISTORY: Transcribed by Christine Chua and edited by John van Wyhe 4.2020. RN1.

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DEATH OF MRS. DARWIN.

Mrs Charles Darwin, widow of the great and illustrious naturalist, Charles Darwin, passed away on Friday evening last, about 7 o'clock, at the mature age of 88 years, at Downe House, Downe.

Mrs Darwin had been attended by Dr. Scott, of Bromley, for an affection of the heart, Dr. Moore, of London, also being in attendance. The end was not unexpected, and there were present Miss Darwin, Mrs. Litchfield, and Major Leonard Darwin. Immediately her death became known, a deep feeling of sadness spread throughout the district, and manifest signs of real sorrow were displayed on every hand.

The deceased lady first came to reside Downe in 1842 with the late Mr. Charles Darwin, and during this long connection with the village, the family have become endeared to the hearts of the villagers, who were accustomed recent years to occasionally meet the deceased lady being drawn about in her bathchair, and she will long remain in their memory for her goodness and charity, gentle kindness, and sweetness of disposition.

Her death breaks a link in the chain of a long and illustrious life spent in their midst. Mrs. Charles Darwin, whose maiden name was Emma Wedgwood, was Charles Darwin's cousin, and the granddaughter of the well-known potter, Joseph [Josiah] Wedgwood, of the Etruria Works, Staffordshire.

She was married on January 29th, 1839. After her marriage with Mr. Darwin, they lived at 12 Upper Gower Street, where they remained until 1842, when they removed to Down, where Mr. Charles Darwin died 1882.

There were nine children [ten] of the marriage, two [three] died in childhood, and the surviving members include Mr. George Howard Darwin, F.R.S., Plumian Professor of Astronomy at Cambridge; Mr. Francis Darwin, F.R.S., University reader in Botany at Cambridge, Mjr. Leonard Darwin, late member for the Lichfield Division of Stafford. Mr Horace Darwin (engineer), Miss Darwin and Mrs. Litchfield.

Since Mr Darwin's death, Mrs. Darwin has resided during the winter months Cambridge, where three of her sons live. Those who have read the autobiography Charles Darwin and his great work carried on whilst labouring under a load of sickness and ill health for the major

portion his lifetime, will remember how lovingly he refers to his wife's devoted companionship throughout his long suffering.

"In his relationship to my mother, says his son, "his tender and sympathetic nature was shown in its most beautiful aspect. In her presence he found his happiness, and through her his life which might have overshadowed by gloom- became one of constant and quiet gladness."

Among her other labours love was that reading aloud to her husband: for he was very fond of novels and books of general literature, and for some hours a day his wife or other would read them aloud to him.

In the evening, before the reading aloud began, he would often lie on the sofa and listen his wife playing the piano. He was fond, too (like Mr. Gladstone), of backgammon, and played two games with his wife every night.

"For many years." says his son, "a score of the games which each won was kept, and this score look the greatest interest. He became extremely animated over these games, bitterly lamenting his bad luck and exploding with exaggerated mock anger at my mother's good fortune." She also helped him in his work, and corrected the proofs of his book of the "Origin of Species." Mr. Francis Darwin, in his biography of his father's life bears eloquent testimony to his mother's devotion. "No one indeed." he says, except my mother knows the full amount of suffering he endured or the full amount of his wonderful patience. For all the latter years of his life she never left him for a night, and her days were planned that all resting hours might be shared with her She shielded him from every avoidable annoyance and omitted nothing that might save him trouble or prevent him becoming overtired, or that might alleviate the many discomforts of his ill-health. I hesitate to speak thus freely of a thing sacred as the lifelong devotion which prompted all this constant and tender care. But it is, I repeat, a principal feature of his life that for nearly forty years he never knew one day of health of ordinary men, and that thus his life was one long struggle against the weariness and strain of sickness. And this cannot be told without speaking of the one condition which enabled him to bear the strain, and fight out the struggle to the end."

THE FUNERAL

The funeral took place on Wednesday at twelve clock at the Parish Church, which was filled with the many friends of the family. There were also a large number of people who remained in the churchyard. The body was enclosed in a polished oak coffin, with brass fittings and upon the breast plate was inscribed:

"Emma, wife of R. Charles Darwin, Born 2nd May, 1808; died at Downe, 2nd October 1896."

The mourners included:-

Mr. William Erasmus Darwin, Mr. George Howard Darwin, Francis Darwin, Major Leonard Darwin, Mr. Horace Darwin (sons), Mrs. George Darwin, Mrs. Leonard Darwin. Hon. Mrs. H. Darwin, Sir Joseph and Lady Hooker, Lord Sackville Cecil, Lady Farrar, Judge Lushington, Mr. Albert Dicey, Q.C., Mr. and Miss Massingberd, Mr. and Mrs. Godfrey Wedgwood, Mrs. and Miss H. Bonham Carter, Mr. Edward Norman, Mr and Mrs. Sutherland. Rev. C. H. Wright. Mrs. and Miss Vaughan-Williams.

In addition to the carriages conveying the immediate relations and friends of the deceased lady a number of private carriages. The cortege was also followed by the tradesman of Downe. The blinds of the whole of the houses in the villages were drawn, and most of the shops closed during the funeral service.

On arrival at the church the Rev. George Sketchley Ffinden, the Vicar, read the Burial Service, there being no special address nor music. The body was interred in the family vault, wherein also is deposited the body Mr. Darwin's brother. Many beautiful wreaths and crosses were placed upon the coffin, among the senders being the Countess Derby R. Hills and family, from her household, butler, coachman, gardener, and family, Margaret L, Swain [Shaen]. J. Lewis, F Nicholls, F. Capon and L. Capon, and many others.

The funeral arrangements were carried out by Mr. Lewis (of Downe).