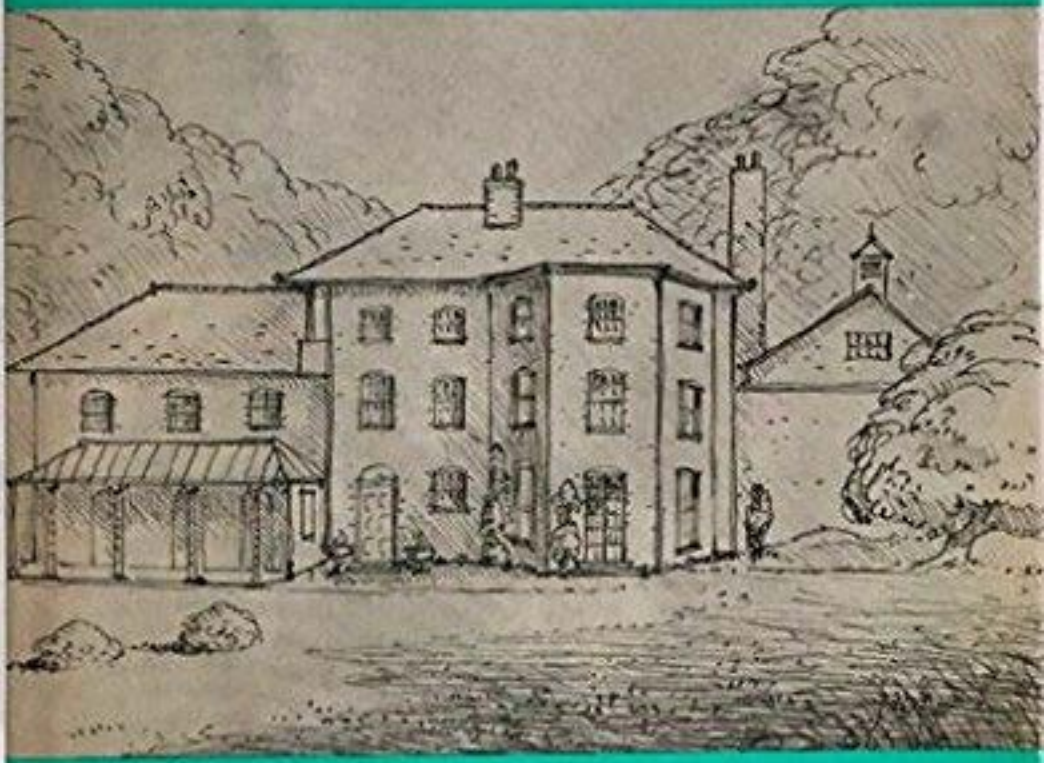
DOWN

THE HOME OF THE DARWINS



SIR HEDLEY ATKINS KBE

DOWN

THE HOME OF THE DARWINS

The Story of a House
and the People who lived there

SIR HEDLEY ATKINS KBE

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TO MY WIFE

Who has worked so hard to make the house and garden
once more a family home

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FOREWORD

Charles Darwin has always had a fascination for the biographer and many volumes have been written on his life and works. There are probably several reasons for this appeal. One obvious reason is that the principle of Evolution as presented in the *Origin of Species* has had such a widespread influence throughout the biological sciences. Another reason is that he was a prolific writer of books and letters and lived in an age when letters tended to be kept for posterity. Most of his letters are preserved today and provide a wealth of material for the historian. The facts of Darwin's life also have a natural appeal in that they tend to fit in with the archetype of the ideal scientific life. Starting with a wild voyage of discovery, Darwin's later years were devoted to continuous writing and study, interrupted by the battle against ill-health, and ended with the flowering of worldly fame and success. Whatever the reasons may be for Darwin's appeal to the biographer, a great many books have been written on his life and achievements.

In this context there are several aspects of the present work that make it an interesting addition to the Darwin bibliography. Some of the material used in this book comes from the archives of Down House and is being published for the first time. The original documents have of course been available to scholars in the past, but this is not the same thing as being presented in a published book. The bulk of Charles Darwin's letters are now in the possession of the Cambridge University library, including most of those that are of scientific interest. The letters in the Down House archives are mainly those that are concerned with the social life of the family at Down House. The use of some of this material for the first time adds to our knowledge of Darwin and his family.

The theme of the book is the history of the estate rather than just being a biography of one of its owners and an interesting part of the book is the later history after the departure of the Darwin family. Parts of this story have been recorded elsewhere but the complete story has not been published before as a single narrative. Over this period the history of the estate has had its twists and turns before reaching its present form as the Darwin Museum under the auspices of the Royal College of Surgeons of England.

The Darwin Museum at Down House represents a memorial to the life of one of the world's leading scientists and one hopes that it will continue to fulfil this role for many years to come.

George Darwin

1.9.74

PREFACE

The number of books written about Charles Darwin is prodigious and every year new volumes appear dealing with his scientific work, his philosophy or the resounding impact that his writings had on scientific thought in the latter part of the nineteenth century and which they still exert today. These books are written mostly by experts in his particular field of inquiry and help to illuminate the character and personality of Darwin through a study of his work. This book is different; it makes an attempt to reveal the personalities of Darwin and his wife Emma through a study of the house in which he lived for forty years and where he died. This essay constitutes the main body of the book.

It was felt that a brief description of the background of Down House might not be regarded as irrelevant and so Chapter I is devoted to the story of the land upon which the house was built, the village to which it brought fame and the early history of the building before the Darwins came to live there.

In recounting the history of the house a number of other characters emerge unconnected with the Darwin family, many of them striking personalities in their own right, most of whom stride on to the stage in the last four chapters.

The reader may be perplexed by the spelling of Downe Village, as it now appears in the Post Office Directory. Up until the middle of the nineteenth century the village was spelt 'Down' (without an 'e') as the house is still but at that time officialdom fearing, so it is said, that it might be confused with Co. Down in Ireland dictated that it should be spelt "Downe". Darwin resolutely refused to alter the spelling of his home and, whilst we may applaud his sturdy independence of spirit, this leads to endless confusion today in ordering goods from shops and also presents a problem when writing this book. I have attempted to solve this problem by adhering to the old spelling in those parts of the book which deal with the periods when this spelling was in vogue and adopting the present spelling in the last four chapters.

Another question was how to refer to the principal character: Mr. Darwin, Charles Darwin or just Charles. No claim for consistency can be made in this respect and all three ways of referring to him are used. If the setting is formal he is generally referred to as Mr. Darwin or Darwin, but in the intimacy of the family circle I have been emboldened to refer to him as Charles, which is much more friendly.

Much of the source material comes from books and letters published more than seventy years ago which, for most people, are difficult to obtain, and much from original manuscripts which are kept in The Down House Museum and which have not hitherto been published. For permission to use all such material I am grateful to the Royal College of Surgeons of England who have maintained this house and its estate as a memorial to Charles Darwin since 1953. The College has also allocated from the Down House Fund

a grant which has made the publication of this book possible, for which I should wish to record my profound gratitude.

Many people have given unstinting help in the preparation of this book: Lord Zuckerman (anthropology), Dr. P. T. Warren (geology) and Dr. J. N. L. Myers (mediaeval history) have kindly read the first chapter and corrected the more egregious errors. If any remain this is due to my imperfect understanding of these complicated matters and the blame is in no sense to be laid at their door.

Mr. Keith Dalton has written a splendid account of his great-grandfather, Col. Johnson, and has generously allowed me to use this material in relating the story of an interesting owner of Down House who migrated to Canada. Mr. R. S. Handley has given me the most welcome and helpful advice.

Mrs. Gillian Bragg is responsible for the maps, charts and drawings over which she took immense trouble. My particular thanks are due to Miss Marjorie Gardener who not only read the original typescript and made many valuable suggestions and corrections, but also corrected the proofs and helped to compile the index, all with indefatigable energy and care. Once more I must take responsibility for any remaining errors.

I should like to record my gratitude for the generosity of the authors or their executors and the publishers of the following works from which I have been allowed to quote, sometimes *in extenso*.

Olive Willis and Downe House by Anne Ridler, John Murray; *The Life and Letters of Charles Darwin*, ed. Francis Darwin, John Murray; *Emma Darwin, A Century of Family Letters* by H. E. Litchfield, John Murray; *Sir George Buckston Browne* by Jessie Dobson and Sir Cecil Wakeley, Churchill Livingstone; *Sir Arthur Keith*, Autobiography, C. A. Watts; *Period Piece* by Gwen Raverat, Faber and Faber; *The World That Fred Made* by Bernard Darwin, Chatto and Windus; *Darwin's Victorian Malady* by J. S. Winslow and other MSS., The American Philosophical Society; *Darwin's Autobiography*, ed. Nora Barlow, Collins; *Darwin's Voyage of the Beagle*, Everyman ed., J. M. Dent and Sons; *Darwin Revalued* by Arthur Keith, C. A. Watts; *A History of Darwin's Parish* by O. J. R. and Eleanor K. Howarth, Russell and Co.; *The Old Road* by Hilaire Belloc, Constable; *A Short History of the English People* by J. R. Green, J. M. Dent and Sons; *The Reception of Darwin's Origin of Species by Russian Scientists* by J. A. Rogers in *Isis*, The History of Science Society; and the Editor of the *New Statesman*.

Finally I should like to thank The Curwen Press for their invariable co-operation and valuable advice.

Down House
July 1974

Royalties from the sale of this book will be devoted to the upkeep of The Down House Museum and Estate as a memorial to Charles Darwin

CHAPTER I

THE LAND, THE VILLAGE AND THE HOUSE

Choose one of the first few days of June, the evening is the best time when the sun is setting behind the lime trees; the house-martins are dipping and swerving in their ravenous scoops for insects which hang almost motionless in the still air and the sweet smell of nicotiana drifts across the lawn. Go out by the french windows of the drawing-room, through the verandah and across the lawn to rest on the garden seat under the yews. At the far end of the orchard the tracery of a Scots pine is etched against the evening sky; beyond the garden in the Home Meadow a herd of young bullocks crop lazily at the rich grass; a cuckoo is declaring the close of day and the countryside settles for repose.

Beyond the meadow, and partly hidden by a row of beech and hawthorn, the chalk-hills of the North Downs roll away towards the south, solid, enduring and seemingly as ageless as if they had been there for ever! For ever? This is far from being the case. Let us, as we muse under the yew trees, go back to the beginning. Well, not quite to the beginning, not 4500 million years when the world was first created, but let us undertake a more modest imaginative exercise; let us go back a mere hundred and forty million years.

Around us the flat, luxuriant countryside would be covered by conifers, ferns and cycads, and browsing amongst them, together with other reptiles, is the giant Iguanodon squatting on its thick tail and two hind legs which formed a tripod from which it reached up to seize food from the branches of the fir trees with its short fore-limbs. Instead of house-martins we might see the last of the huge, toothed feathered bird, the archaeopteryx, gliding from the treetops and flapping away over the marshy ground towards a great delta with many distributaries flowing where the Weald of Kent now is. This delta was part of a still larger freshwater system draining into a sea which covered the Low Countries of Northern Europe.

In another twenty-five million years the scene has changed; a vast sea covers the land where we have been letting our imagination roam, a sea which spread over Northern Europe and into Russia as far as the Ural mountains.

More than forty million years were to pass before this sea was driven out by an uprising of the land and in the meanwhile, in successive stages, marine deposits were laid down of sand and clay and finally chalk. Thrusting up of the crust of the earth more than fifty million years later, during the Miocene, caused a great elongated mound to arise, the remains of which now run across the counties of Sussex and Kent to form the North and South Downs. In time the summit of the chalk-covered range was gradually eroded exposing successive layers of sand and clay until the old freshwater Wealden deposits, over which the archaeopteryx flew so long ago, were exposed to the light of day.

At some stage, before this erosion had split off the North from the South Downs,

subsidiary valleys running northwards from the North Downs were carved out. Darwin thought that these valleys were the remnants of the bays of some primaeval sea, but it is now almost certain that they were scoured out by torrents flowing down from the snow-covered heights to the south during one of several cold periods. Eventually the summit of the North Downs and its northward running spurs was capped by clay with flint due to the dissolution of the surface chalk and admixture by slow chemical reaction with other materials. The high land between the subsidiary valleys later became covered with brushwood, hawthorn and beech, known locally as "shaws", and it is on one of these spurs that the village of Down came to be built.

But the air is getting chill, the bats have replaced the house-martins; the owl's hooting, the cuckoo's song and, with the lights going on in the house, it is time to return indoors and to pursue a little further the story of this part of the country in the more factual and less fancy-provoking atmosphere of the library. If we assume that every second of the journey from the garden to the library represents the passage of a million years, we would arrive there at the beginning of what is known as the Pleistocene era about one and a half million years ago and very glad we would be to get indoors. The Pleistocene corresponds roughly to the four great ice ages, the last of which ended 10,000 years ago. The British Isles land mass was joined to the Continent and, although the sheet ice stopped short at what is now the Thames Valley, the garden had we lingered there would have been bitterly cold. The appearance of the landscape would have changed to tundra, over which a few species of animals ventured such as elk, wolf, fox and beaver. Man-like creatures, even early representatives of *Homo Sapiens*, had evolved and the more daring would have approached the very edge of the ice.

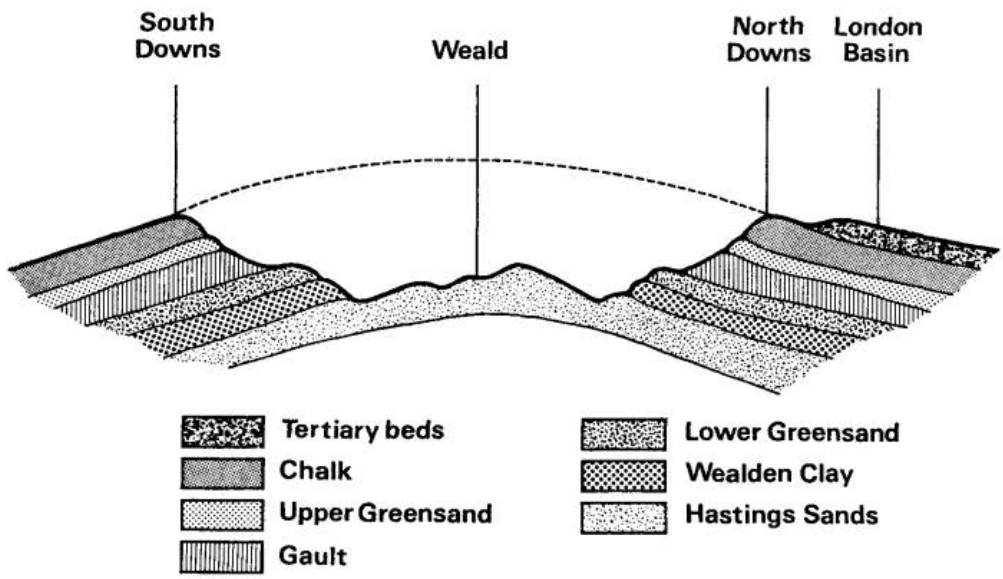


Figure 1: Section through the North and South Downs

We do not know when man first came to what is now the county of Kent; perhaps during the first warm interglacial period; certainly in the second of the warm periods known as the Hoxnian there was a migration over these lands, as a cranium has been recovered at Swanscombe within twenty miles of Down which belonged to a 'human' female living over 300,000 years ago in the middle of the Hoxnian period. The countryside then would be dotted with pine, oak and yews, viburnum, hazel and euphorbia; and sharing the living space with Swanscombe man were the straight-tusked elephant, rhinoceros, deer, cave bear, giant beaver, lemming and the rare, massive cave lion. Following the Hoxnian warm period there were two more ice ages separated by another warm period during which the ice advanced and receded, then advanced again to recede finally between 10,000 and 8000 B.C. How far human migration occurred during the third warm period lasting until 55,000 B.C. we do not know. Neanderthal man, with many of the same animals which migrated north during the Hoxnian, now accompanied by bison, hippopotamus and wild cat must have wandered over the countryside amongst the pine, oak, alder, sycamore and hornbeam, because remains of his flint implements can be found to record his presence.

Towards the end of the fourth and last ice age, as the ice melted and the sea-level rose, the British Isles became separated from the Continent.

From about 35,000 B.C. a new race of modern man, *Homo Sapiens*, migrated northwards probably from Asia or Africa as the climate became progressively more temperate and mingled with Neanderthal man eventually displacing him from his caves and rock ledges so that this race seems to have been entirely obliterated.

It is not, however, until the end of the Pleistocene when, as far as we are concerned, the ice ages were all over that settlements in the county of Kent were established.

In about 10,000 B.C. a new race, Neolithic, or late Stone Age man, spread into Europe and eventually crossed the English Channel into Britain.

Between 2200 B.C. and 1600 B.C. elaborate erections such as those at Stonehenge and Avebury attested an advancing civilisation. A regular traffic by sea from the Continent to link up with the Cornish tin mines and for purposes of trade was established and consequent upon this was the founding of ancient centres at Canterbury and Winchester.

Inevitably a road or track must have existed for many centuries between these two centres of civilisation, and what better pathway than the North Downs which spanned most of the 128 miles between them? This track runs along the site of the present road from Winchester to Farnham and thereafter, until within sight of Canterbury, it takes to the North Downs. Here its course lies just below the summit of the south face, sometimes dipping down to the upper green-sand, but for most of the hundred miles from Farnham to Canterbury on good solid chalk. Since the death and martyrdom of Thomas à Becket this ancient road has been called the Pilgrims' Way because it was along this same path that the pilgrims from the West Country wound their way to the tomb of St. Thomas the Martyr. But for us at this stage it is the road along which Neolithic man trudged with his heavily-laden oxen to the markets of Winchester and Canterbury. At first their load would be the products of the farm, but from about 2000 B.C. they would carry first pots and pans made of bronze and perhaps, nearly a thousand years later, farm

implements made of iron. Only a few miles to the north of this old road and near the top of the more gently sloping north face of the Downs there are the remains of a fine Iron Age earthwork almost on the site of the present village of Down. We may perhaps be allowed to imagine this community living relatively peacefully for a hundred or more years following their various avocations and surrounded by prosperous farms. Like a modern village which has been bypassed by a motorway, they were a secluded community, yet within easy reach of the thoroughfare over the brow of the hill to the south.

The next 3000 years see the Romans come and go; Jutes, Angles and Saxons swarm over the island, and in the early part of the ninth century A.D. the Danes invaded the country. They were at one time sturdily resisted by Alfred, King of the West Saxons.

Alfred was a soldier, a scholar and a fine administrator, so that his Kingdom became settled and prosperous. The Danes, however, finally prevailed over the Saxons early in the eleventh century under their great King Canute, who in 1016 came to rule over all England, Denmark and Norway. At his death the realm of England passed to his son Harold I. This king has some relevance to the story of Down. His great-aunt Elgida married Ranulph of Mannheim, Count Palatine, in the tenth century and Ranulph was granted land at Down. Local tradition has it that he is the first in a line of Mannings (from Mannheim) who, as will presently be related, were holders of the manor of Down until 1560 and were the most important landowners in this part of the county.

In 1066 another race of Norsemen, who in 911 had occupied Normandy under their appropriately named leader, Rolf the Ganger, and had developed their own language over the centuries, crossed the channel and defeated Harold II at the battle of Senlac near Hastings.

The general scene having been set, we must "cone down", as the modern phrase has it, exclusively on that small village which was to be the home of England's greatest biological scientist.

Within a mile south-west of the old Iron Age or Roman Camp four roads meet, those from Bromley, Orpington, Cudham and Biggin Hill. These roads or lanes probably existed for centuries before the Norman Conquest and at their confluence there was a settlement from prehistoric times, the village of Down. Around this settlement as the centre, according to Norman custom, fields radiated to all points of the compass by which they were known. Thus, at Down we still have Westfield orientated in this direction from the centre of the village. The acreagé of these fields was measured by the *Jugum* or yoke, being that amount of land that could be cultivated by a yoke of oxen.

Dr. and Mrs. Howarth, from whose scholarly work[1] much of the material in this chapter is taken, picture the scene at this time as consisting of a huddle of one-storey timber huts with walls made of branches mixed with clay. At some distance from the centre would be the common land, shared by the villagers for grazing their cattle and, on the periphery of the clearing in the as yet uncut woods, timber for fuel. Here in season the villagers would shake the oak trees for acorns for their pigs, which were cared for by a communal swineherd.

There is no mention of Down in Domesday Book (1068), but in the monastic *Registrum Roffense* at Rochester it is related how Anselm (Archbishop of Canterbury from 1093 to

1109) assigned the title of *Duna* to the Bishop of Rochester and this was confirmed in the *Custumale Roffense* about the year 1300.

In 1291 Prior Henry built a new chapel in the manor of Orpington and this was almost certainly the origin of the present church at Down, which for many centuries was a chapel first of Orpington and then of Hayes, becoming "a church" only in the nineteenth century (Pl. II). This chapel was built for £60 and must have been somewhat austere and gloomy.[2] It consisted of a single flint structure without aisles and the massive walls were pierced by tiny lancet windows, one of which happily survives to the east of the present porch. Subsequently early English builders put in fresh windows in fourteenth-century style and built the tower. There are now six bells in this tower, the three remaining old bells having been cast by William Dawe of London (1385–1418).

In 1287 there is the first reference to the transfer of land from Henry Southwood to John de la Dune (*alias* Atte Doune). It will be observed[3] that at this date the village was liable to be spelt according to fancy and many references give the name a final 'e' as here. Nevertheless, once the spelling had been formalised, it was spelt Down (without an 'e') until the middle of the nineteenth century, and it is this spelling which will be adhered to until the last section of the book, when the modern spelling of 'Downe' will be adopted. Nevertheless, in accordance with the independent spirit of the Darwin family, the house will still be known as Down House as it is today. The land conveyed to John Atte Doune was almost certainly the piece of land upon which the manor house of the village, Down Court, was built. This house was probably moated as the disposition of the present ponds attests. Other houses as they sprang up were named after their first

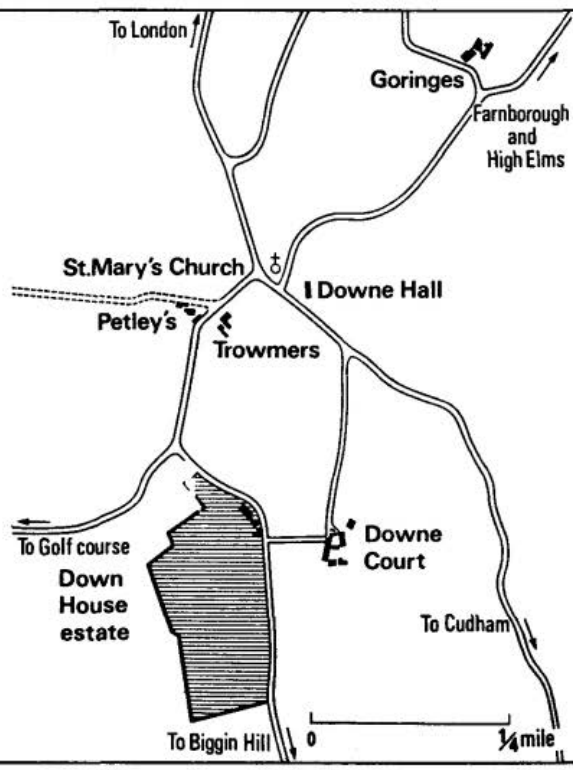


Figure 2:
Plan of the Village of Down

owners—Petley's, Trowmer's and Goddards, and the first two retain their original names today, but Goddards has been converted into Down Hall. A document in the Chapter library at Canterbury dated about 1470 and headed "Downe Rent and Customys" mention Petle and Trogmere (Trowmer) as rent payers, presumably to the manor (Fig. 2).

A picture of life in the Middle Ages at Down is presented to us by the system of frankpledge, whereby a community was responsible for the misdemeanours of its fellows. Frankpledge was maintained by a sheriff and ten tithingmen of responsibility, and the activities of this little court are preserved in the Public Record Office in Orpington. From there we learn that there was a fight between Richard Ferdying (of Farthing Street, a neighbouring village) and John Upstrete, each accusing the other of assault. Also eight women in Down "broke the assize" by brewing ale.[4]

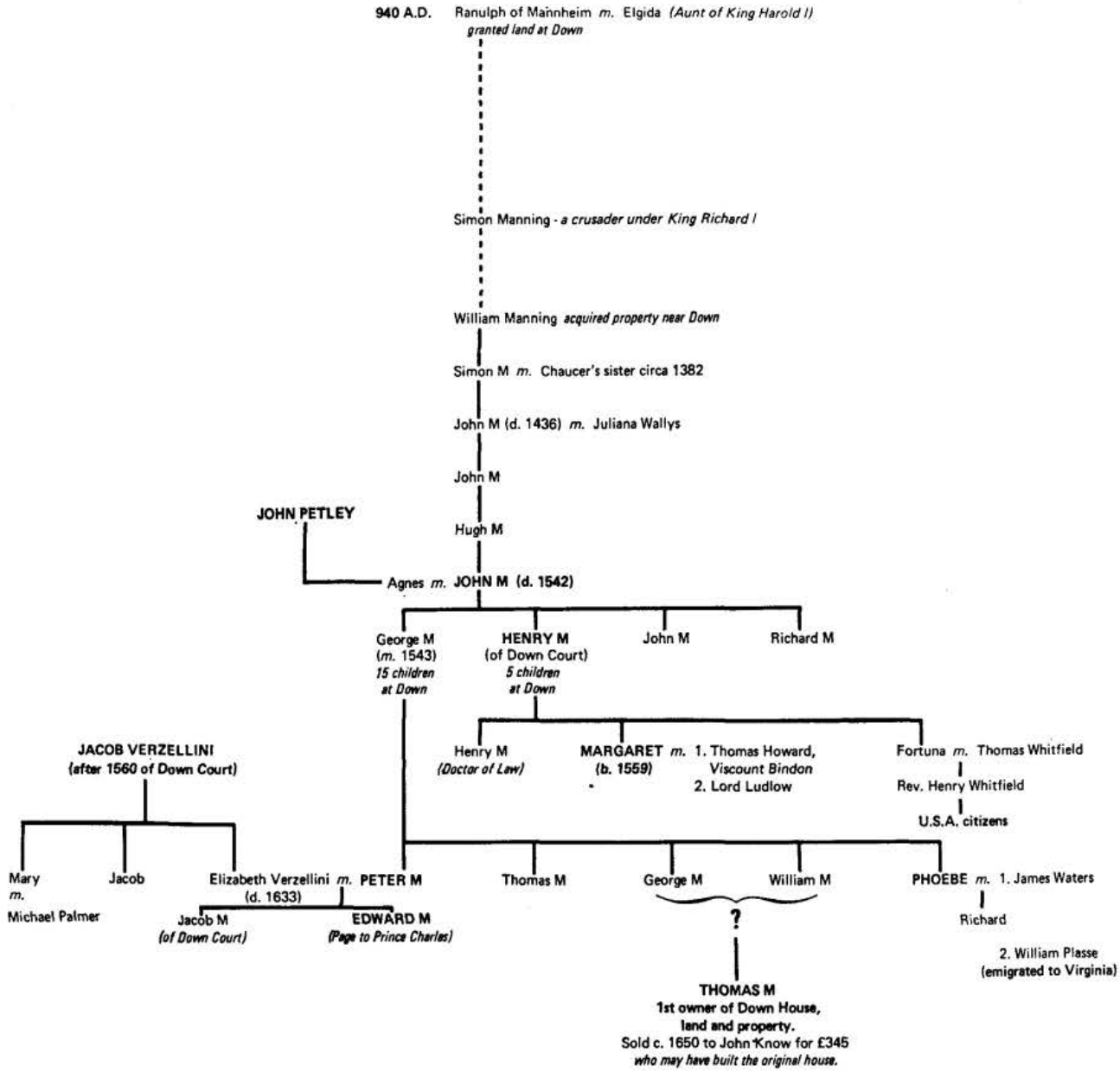
In 1503 Mistress Wyndesoner was arraigned *pro quarteria brasiatrix et tipulatrix*, that is for brewing and selling beer, on four occasions; and Alicia Austen was similarly had up, this time with a fine disregard for gender *pro tria tipulator bere*, the latin for beer having been too much for the clerk. In the same year Geoffrey Pope stole a bill-hook from William Pettley *gesam vocatam a byll.*

In 1508 a grand jury made inquisition on one Stephen Gabell because, *contra formam statuti*, not being in possession of land worth forty shillings, he kept a ferret![5] No doubt the jurors were chiefly concerned with what Stephen did with his ferret.

During the reign of Henry VII frankpledge fell into disuse, although stocks were kept up against the church wall until 1826, so that for the future "goings-on" in the village we turn to the Church Register. All deaths occurring in the parish were entered, together with the cause, if known. Thus, we learn that in 1589 Thomas Doer broke his neck by falling down Mr. Maninge's well, and in 1601 Henry Maninge had the misfortune to be killed by a hatchet. Considering the importance of the Manning family, this must have caused quite a stir in the village; perhaps it was a family affair and was hushed up. Other entries mentioned were "overthrown from a cart", "horse falling on him" and suchlike hazards of the countryside. Suicides were denied a Christian burial and Richard Owsley *qui se laqueo* (by a noose) *suspendebat* was interred without ceremony. There is a gravestone in memory of an Owsley now in the village churchyard, but the stone is so badly worn that the date is impossible to decipher. During the Commonwealth the entries in the register were not kept up, but from 1672 they once more constitute an important record. At that time the infant mortality, the classic measure of general health standards in a community, was seventy-three per thousand. As the infant mortality for Great Britain in 1931 was sixty-six per thousand, this argues a good standard of health in the village.

Fig. 3 gives an extract from the family trees of some of the important inhabitants of Down. To have given the complete genealogy would have been unhelpful and, considering that some of the bearers of the names mentioned had up to fifteen children, impossible in the space available. Furthermore, the practice of placing children in the order of their ages has not necessarily been followed, as this is not always known.

It would be tedious to recite what is known about all the samples selected from the family trees, but we may pick out a few of these characters for special mention.



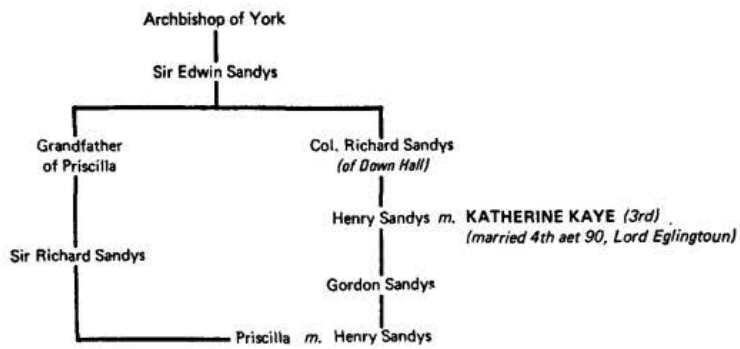


Figure 3: Family Tree of some Down notables

From about 940 A.D., when Ranulph of Mannheim married the Saxon Lady Elgida and was granted land at Down, as has been recorded previously, the Manning family was, until the middle of the seventeenth century, the principal one in the neighbourhood.[6]

Henry Manning, who lived in the manor house Down Court until 1560, was Knight Marshal or Marshal of the Household under Henry VIII, Edward VI, Mary and Elizabeth.

Henry's daughter Margaret was baptized at Down in 1559 before Henry moved away and it is thought that Queen Elizabeth herself may have attended the baptism. Elizabeth frequently went "a-maying" in the neighbourhood of Lewisham. She enjoyed the Kentish countryside and she may well have wished to attend a family occasion of her Marshal of the Household; at least the entry in the Parish Register records that this ceremony took place "after ye Queene's visitation".

In the seventeenth century some members of the Manning family emigrated to America and there is a Manning Association in Cambridge, Massachusetts, which exists primarily to trace connections with the Manning family and to exchange Manning gossip.

Jacob Verzellini was a fugitive Venetian who had set up a glass-making factory in Crutched Friars in the City of London, where he was granted a monopoly for the making of drinking glasses. He was the first to use soda ash made from seaweed instead of the crude potash from wood or fern ash. When Henry Manning left for Greenwich in 1560, Verzellini bought Down Court and subsequently came to own much land at Down, Keston and Hayes. Three pieces of Verzellini glass are known to exist. One, the so-called "Queen Elizabeth's glass", is in a leather case at Windsor Castle; a round tankard with silver and enamel mounts which once belonged to Lord Burghley is now in the British Museum, and a third is of unadvertised whereabouts. A fourth was dropped and broken at an auction sale.

Verzellini left £20 for a marble stone, now to be seen on the floor of Down Church embellished with the brass figures of himself and his wife with their family below.

Two other families remain to be mentioned, the Petleys and the Sandys. Richard Petley first came to Down in the thirteenth century and there is a record of a transaction involving the conveyance of land in 1297 to William de Petteleys. From the fourteenth to the sixteenth centuries the Petley family rivalled the Mannings in the extent of their domain. Much of this came into the hands of the Manning family when John Manning married Agnes Petley in the early part of the sixteenth century. A John "Petle" is notable in that he was one of the eight inhabitants of Down who took part in Jack Cade's rebellion in 1450.

In the sixteenth century Henry Manning sold Down Hall to Sir Frances Carew and it eventually passed to Colonel Richard Sandys, son of Sir Edwin Sandys, and grandson of an archbishop. Richard Sandys of Down Hall was a colonel in the Parliamentary Army during the Civil War and in 1647 became a Governor of the prosperous Bermuda Company. After his death the Hall passed to his son Henry, who married the remarkable Katherine, daughter of Sir William St. Quentin of Yorkshire. This indomitable lady was successively the wife of Sir George Wentworth, Sir John Kaye (as his third wife), Henry Sandys and, at the age of 90 (some historians say 96), the 8th Earl of Eglingtoun, who was

1651	Thomas Manning	(Property sold to John Know the elder, yeoman for £345)
1653	Roger Know (son of John Know; m. 1654)	
	Thomas Know (b. 1658, d. 1728)	
	Roger Know (d. 1736)	
		(Property descended by gavelkind to his cousins)
1748	John Know Bartholomew Leonard Bartholomew (d. 1757) (brothers)	(Property conveyed by Leonard Bartholomew the surviving brother for £800)
1751	Charles Hayes of Hatton Garden	
		(Property descended to wife's family—the Cales)
1759	John Cale (landowner)	
		(Property descended to the heirs of his nearest relative, Thomas Prowse, M.P. for Somerset)
1777	Lady Mordaunt Mary Prowse (sisters)	(Property sold for £780-18-0)
1778	George Butler, esquire (landowner) (and George Richards of New Inn, gentleman)	(Built the present house; son sold property for £1230)
1791	Cholmely Dering (and Joseph Yates, Foster Brown & Hon. Henry Legge)	(Property sold for £1660)
1801	Thomas Askew	
		(Property sold for £2280)
1818	Nathaniel Godbold (a property speculator of Fulham)	(Property sold for £2750)
1819	Col. John Johnson	
		(Property sold for £1425)
1837	Rev. J. Drummond	
		(Property sold for £2020)
1842	Charles Darwin	

Table 1
The Owners of Down House

Thomas Askew and the Rev. J. Drummond are thought to have laid out considerable sums of money on the estate

himself over 70. The wedding took place at St. Bride's, off Fleet Street, but the occasion was so unusual that in 1698 it found a place in the records of Down Parish Register as "an interesting event". She died after two more years of connubial bliss and is buried at Down. The Scottish antiquary Charles Kirkpatrick Sharpe observes that, "Alas there is no portrait of her known—which is a sad pity, considering her remarkable conquests". After Henry's grandson married a distant cousin, Priscilla Sandys, the family retired to their Northbourne estates and Down knew the Sandys no more.

In 1651 Thomas Manning sold the land upon which Down House now stands to John Know, "Yeoman". The price paid for the property was £345 and it has been argued that this sum was too small if a house had been included and that John Know purchased only a tract of land. However, various pieces of evidence suggest otherwise. In the first place the area of the land involved was little more than ten acres in extent and £34 an acre would have been an absurdly high price to pay for land in those days; furthermore, over a hundred years later the land, together with a house, which may well have been improved, fetched only £780.

We know from the deeds that John Know the elder lived in a house on this property which he gave to his son Roger in 1653, probably as a wedding present, as Roger married the following year. Unless John Know built a house on the land in the short interval between 1651 and 1653, which, from the structure of the oldest part of the present house, seems very unlikely, we must presume that he bought a house with the property.

We can only speculate what this house was like. A small part of the present house is of this period, and in one surviving room a window has been bricked up to avoid the window tax, introduced in 1695.

John Know is described as a yeoman and no doubt his son Roger was a farmer. In various excavations for structural purposes during the last twenty years remains of old farm buildings have been turned up.

For the next hundred years the story of the house was probably a peaceful one, the property passing to various members of the Know family (Table I). The Bartholomew brothers inherited Down by gavelkind, whereby the property of a man dying intestate was divided equally amongst his immediate relatives. This sometimes led to quite awkward situations. For instance, one son or daughter might own the living room and two bedrooms of a house, another the remaining rooms including the kitchen, and a third the entrance hall and garden! Fortunately, at about the time of the transfer of Down House to the Bartholomews, the elder brother, John Know Bartholomew, died and Leonard was left as the sole owner. The system of gavelkind survived in Kent long after it had been abolished by law elsewhere. The system prevailed all over England until the Norman Conquest, when William the Conqueror substituted the feudal system of primogeniture. It is told that immediately after the Battle of Hastings some men of Kent surrounded William with leaf-bearing branches of trees and so behind this moving camouflage he escaped with his life. In return for this the King allowed gavelkind to persist in Kent and it survived until the twentieth century in this county, a doubtful reward one might think!

It is not certain how many of the succeeding owners lived in Down House. Charles

Hayes of Hatton Garden sounds a prosperous sort of person, and we know that John Cale was an extensive landowner, so that they might not have relished living in a humble farmhouse. The Mordaunt and Prowse family handed the property on as soon as they inherited it and so it came into the hands of Mr. George Butler in 1778.

George Butler was a wealthy business man and large landowner. It is almost certainly he who built the present house with the exception of the north-west wing which was added by Darwin, and from then on, except for the speculator Nathaniel Godbold who made a quick sale and tolerable profit, the owners resided in the house.

Thomas Askew is thought to have laid out considerable sums of money on the house and the estate so that in the seventeen years of his occupancy the value of the property increased from £1160 to £2280. After Nathaniel Godbold had made his little 'killing' the house and grounds came into the hands of Lt. Col. John Johnson in 1819.

I am indebted to Lt. Col. Johnson's great-grandson, Mr. Keith Dalton, of Toronto, for an account of this interesting owner of the Down House estate.

"Lieut. Col. John Johnson, C.B., the father of William Arthur Johnson, was of English birth (1768), educated in France, and had gone to India at an early age to join the Bombay Engineers. He had served for many years as a military engineer and surveyor at various posts and in most of the campaigns of that period. For part of this time he was aide-de-camp to the first Duke of Wellington, Sir Arthur Wellesley. Col. Johnson was a capable artist of water-colour painting and sketched well. He married Dederika Memlincke, a member of a famous family of artists of that day.

In 1835 Col. Johnson visited Canada to establish ownership of an area of land he had purchased in the Township of Dunn on the north shore of Lake Erie (and) William, then twenty-one years of age, came with him."

Following the departure of Col. Johnson and his family to Canada, Down House became the property of the Rev. J. Drummond, Vicar of Down, and it was he who sold the property to Charles Darwin in 1842.

CHAPTER II
THE HOUSE AND GARDEN

In 1836 Charles Darwin returned from his epoch-making voyage round the world on the *Beagle*. He had set off from Plymouth in December 1831, a young man aged twenty-two, having just come down from Cambridge.

The story of how he came to make this voyage has often been told and need not concern us here in any detail except to recall that it was 'touch and go' whether he went at all. First his father, the redoubtable Dr. Robert Waring Darwin, objected to his son wasting any more of his time on such a profitless adventure, an objection which was only overcome by the tactful intervention of Charles' uncle, Josiah Wedgwood; and then by the doubts in regard to his suitability entertained by the master of the *Beagle*, Captain FitzRoy, who judged a man's character by the shape of his nose and was at first dissatisfied with this feature of Darwin's physiognomy, but later was prepared to take a chance and agreed to allow him to accompany the *Beagle* as official naturalist.

Professor Henslow, the botanist, originally suggested that Darwin was the man for the job and recognised in the somewhat feckless undergraduate, who spent most of his time at Cambridge collecting beetles and shooting, qualities of mind and character which were to mature and reveal themselves eventually in the person of the greatest natural philosopher of the age.

The voyage of the *Beagle* about which much has been written brought out the finest qualities in Darwin. As the *Beagle* ploughed through the chops of the channel towards the Bay of Biscay the hapless young man, unknown to the world with a smattering of knowledge of the coleoptera and an amateur geologist, was prostrated by seasickness, a disability which dogged him for the next five years. Sharing a cabin with Captain FitzRoy, Darwin took with him amongst other books the Bible and the first volume of Lyell's *Principles of Geology*, which had just been published. As the *Beagle* crossed the Atlantic and pursued its chequered course down the east coast of South America on its cartographical mission and especially when braving the fury of Cape Horn, the lad became a man. He became a man inspired by the wonder of natural phenomena; physically he was hardened by the rough life of the pampas and he learnt to devote himself unremittingly to the work which he had set himself to accomplish, however much he may have been handicapped by frequent bouts of seasickness.

Then, after the *Beagle* set sail across the Pacific from the west coast of South America, Darwin visited the Galapagos islands lying on the Equator 600 miles off the coast of Ecuador. There he observed the different species of animals and plants each apparently adapted to the varied conditions on the different islands, and there perhaps was born the idea of Darwin's great contribution to the theory of evolution—the Natural Selection of Favourable Variations—whereby species evolve from the pressures of environmental circumstances.

During the voyage Darwin had collected specimens of plants, insects and fossils, which were sent back to England as the occasion allowed. Prominent among these were the fossil remains of the giant sloth *Megatherium*, which revealed to his eyes what he had read in Lyell's book, namely the great antiquity of the earth and the extinction of species which had once roamed upon it. So, when the *Beagle* at last put in to Plymouth in October 1836, Darwin had established for himself a modest reputation in scientific circles. Almost at once he set about the fulfilment of his second great contribution which was to bear fruit twenty-three years later with the publication of *The Origin of Species*. This was to provide an accumulation of evidence in favour of the theory of evolution such that no reasonable man thereafter could deny the essential probity of the thesis.

At first, after visits to his home in Shrewsbury, to his uncle Josiah Wedgwood at Maer and to Cambridge, he settled in lodgings in Great Marlborough Street in London, where he remained until he got married.

Darwin undertook the adventure of marriage only after great deliberation in which passion apparently played little part and having made a sort of balance sheet "for" and "against" marriage. But if this was a somewhat calculated enterprise it resulted in forty-three years of great marital happiness and a family life of such serenity that he was sustained in his natural tranquillity against the attacks and abuse of the world outside, which at first was unable to digest his advanced scientific views set in opposition as they were to established and hallowed beliefs.

In January 1839 Darwin married uncle Josiah's daughter, his cousin Emma Wedgwood, and they came to live in London in Upper Gower Street in a house which was destroyed by the German bombing in the last war. Here the symptoms of Darwin's illness, which will be described in greater detail later, began to appear in an obtrusive form. He was not exactly lionised by London Society, but at least his considerable reputation meant that he was entertained by numbers of people interested in his adventures and in his work. He met Sir John Herschel the astronomer, the illustrious Humboldt, Sydney Smith, Macaulay, Grote, Carlyle, Babbage, Joseph Hooker, and of course Lyell. He also acted as secretary to the Geological Society, and all these activities as well as the task of writing up his account of the voyage of the *Beagle* proved too much for him. He became increasingly convinced that he and Emma must move away from London to some quiet place where he would be free from social distractions and the bustle of city life.

So it was that he came to live at Down House in the county of Kent. As early as 1840 Charles and Emma were becoming disenchanted with London life and they were thinking of moving to the country. There were, however, clearly some problems. Charles' father was opposed to the idea of buying a house in the country until the young couple had lived there for some years in order to see whether the neighbourhood suited them, but we find Charles, who was staying with his family in Shrewsbury, writing to his wife, who was visiting hers at Maer Hall, on July 3rd 1841: ". . . My father seems to like having me here; and he and the girls are very merry all day long. I have partly talked over the Doctor about my buying a house without living in the neighbourhood half-a-dozen years first."[1]

In the next few months Dr. Darwin clearly capitulated on this issue because Charles

and Emma devoted much time searching first for a suitable small estate in Surrey. The choice of Down, nevertheless, was rather the result of despair—than of actual preference; they were weary of house-hunting and the attractive points about Down seemed to outweigh its somewhat more obvious faults. It had at least one essential quality, quietness. Indeed it would have been difficult to find a more secluded place so near to London.

Charles was delighted with the countryside, so unlike what he had been accustomed to in the Midlands, and still more pleased with its extreme quietness and rusticity. It was not, however, quite so secluded a place as a writer in a German periodical made it out to be when he said that the house could be approached only by a mule-track!

By July 1842 the die had been cast and Charles took Emma down to see the property for the first time, staying the night in the village inn. In a letter to his sister Emily Catherine a day later he writes:

"My dear Cathy,

You must have been surprised at not having heard sooner about the house. Emma and I only returned yesterday afternoon from staying there [at the inn]. I will give you in detail, as my father would like, *my* opinion on it—Emma's slightly differs. Position about a quarter of a mile from a small village of Down in Kent sixteen miles from St. Paul's, eight miles and a half from station with many trains; which station is only 10 [miles] from London. I calculate we were two hours' journey from London Bridge. Westcroft [another house which they had considered] was one-and-threequarter [hours] from Vauxhall Bridge. Village about 40 houses with old walnut tree in middle where stands an old flint church and three ["roads" crossed out] lanes meet. Inhabitants very respectable; infant school; grown-up people great musicians; all touch their hats as in Wales, and sit at their open doors in evening; no ["thoroughfare" crossed out] high road leads through village. The little pot-house where we slept is a grocer's shop and the landlord is the carpenter. So you may guess the style of the village. There is one butcher and baker and post-office. A carrier goes weekly to London and calls anywhere for anything in London and takes anything anywhere. On the road to this village, on *fine day* scenery absolutely beautiful: from close to our house, views very distant and rather beautiful, but being situated on rather high table-land, has somewhat of desolate air. There is [a] most beautiful old farm-house [Downe Court] with great thatched barns and old stumps of oak trees, like those at Shelton, one field off. The charm of the place to me is that almost every field is intersected (as alas is our) by one or more foot-paths. I never saw so many walks in any other county. The country is extraordinary [*sic*] rural and quiet with narrow lanes and high hedges and hardly any ruts. It is really surprising to think London is only 16 miles off. The house stands very badly close to a tiny lane and near another man's field. Our field is 15 acres and flat, looking into flat-bottomed valley on both sides, but no view from drawing room [the present dining-room] which faces due South [S.W.] except over our flat field and bits of rather ugly distant horizon. Close in front [he means on the side away from the road] there are some old (very productive) cherry-trees, walnut trees, yew, spanish chestnut, pear, old larch, scotch fir and silver fir and old mulberry make rather pretty group. They give the ground an old look, but not flourishing much also rather desolate. There are quinces and medlars and plums with

plenty of fruit and morello cherries, but few apples. The purple magnolia flowers against the house. There is a really fine beech in view in our hedge [the "elephant tree"]. The kitchen garden [not the present one, but probably a strip along the Luxted Road] is a detestable strip and the soil looks wretched from quantity of chalk flints, but I really believe it is productive. The hedges grow well all round our field and it is a noted piece of Hay-land. This year the crop was bad but was bought, as it stood for 2£ per acre. That is 30£, the purchaser getting it in. Last year it was sold for 45£, no manure put on in interval. Does not this sound well, ASK MY FATHER? Does the Mulberry and Majestic show it is very cold in winter, which I fear [?]. Tell Susan it is 9 miles from Knole Park, 6 from Westerham, seven from Seven-Oaks, at all which places I hear scenery is beautiful." (After referring once more to the flat-bottomed valleys and observing that the fields left fallow appear white from a dressing of chalk, the letter continues.) "House ugly, looks neither old nor new; walls two feet thick; windows rather small; lower story [*sic*] rather low; capital study 18 × 18. Dining room [now the "Erasmus Room"] can easily be added to is 21 × 15. Three stories [*sic*] plenty of bed-rooms. We could hold the Hensleighs [cousins] and you and Susan and Erasmus [brother Erasmus, not to be confused with Charles' famous grandfather] all together. House in good repair, Mr. Cresy a few years ago laid out for the owner 1500£ and made new roof. Water pipes over house and two bath rooms,* pretty good offices and good stalls . . . with cottage. House in good repair. I *believe* the price is about 2200£ and I have no doubt I shall get it for one year on lease first to try so that I shall do nothing to house at first. (last owner kept 3 cows, one horse and one donkey and sold some hay annually from the field). I have no doubt, if we complete purchase I shall at least save 1000£ over Westcroft or any other house.

Emma was at first a good-deal disappointed at the country round the house; the day was gloomy and cold with N.E. wind. She likes the actual field and house better than I; the house is just situated as she likes, not too near nor too far from other houses, but she thinks the country looks desolate. I think all chalk counties do, but I am used to Cambridgeshire which is ten times worse. Emma is rapidly coming round. She was dreadfully bad with toothache and headache in the evening, but coming back she was so delighted with the scenery for the first few miles from Down, that it has worked a great change in her. We go there again the first fine day Emma is able and we then finally settle what to do . . . The great astronomer Sir J. Lubbock owner of 3000 acres here is building a grand house [High Elms] a mile off. I believe he is very reserved [some illegible words follow] so I suspect he will be no catch and will never know us."[2]

The rest of the letter is missing.

As it turned out the friendship between Charles Darwin and Sir John Lubbock and with his son (also John), afterwards Lord Avebury, was one of the most agreeable episodes in all of their lives.

The idea of leasing Down House for a trial period of one year, which would have

*There is some confusion here; Gwen Raverat staying in the house at the turn of the century says that there were no bathrooms. There were probably small rooms where a hip-bath could be placed without making a mess. There were certainly no fixed baths and water, which was warmed up on the kitchen range, was carried to them in cans.

appealed to the cautious Dr. Darwin, must have been dropped. One may imagine that with the summer of 1842 lending a more agreeable and inviting aspect to the countryside, the young couple would be eager to enter into their property. Whatever the reason the purchase was completed with the aid of Dr. Darwin's money and the house became theirs for £2020.

On the 24th of September 1842 Charles Darwin and his wife Emma, together with their son William, aged three, and baby Anne, aged one, took possession of Down House, where they lived together for the next forty years and where Charles produced those monumental and seminal works which changed the face of biological science and made Down House famous all over the world.

In 1842 a coach drive of some twenty miles was the only means of access to Down; and even when the railways crept close to it, it was singularly out of the world, with nothing to suggest the neighbourhood of London, unless it were the thin haze of smoke that sometimes clouded the sky. Nowadays, with the operation of the Clean Air Act this disadvantage no longer obtains. The sky is natural, either clear or cloudy, depending upon the weather; and the fact that London is not far away can be completely forgotten. The noises are twentieth-century country noises. To the lowing of cattle and the 'clip clop' of horses from the nearby riding school may be added the sound of the relatively few passing cars and the inevitable aircraft. The latter, except over weekends when aeroplanes from the small flying club buzz around, are sufficiently high by the time they reach Down from Heathrow or Gatwick that their passage is hardly noticed.

Darwin's son Francis, who lived at Down for much of his life, described the village as standing in an angle between two of the larger high-roads of the county, one leading to Tonbridge and the other to Westerham and Edenbridge. It was cut off from the Weald by a line of steep chalk hills on the south, and an abrupt hill formed a barrier against encroachments from the side of London. The village communicated with the main lines of traffic only by stony, tortuous lanes and this still serves to preserve its retired character. Nor is it hard to believe, he tells us, in the smugglers and their strings of pack-horses making their way up from the lawless old villages of the Weald. The village stands 550 feet above sea-level and possesses a certain charm in the shaws or straggling strips of wood capping the chalky banks. The village in 1842 consisted of three or four hundred inhabitants living in cottages close by the small fourteenth-century flint church. It was a place, we are assured, where newcomers were seldom seen, and the names occurring far back in the old church registers were well known in the village and still are today. The smock-frock was not then quite extinct, though chiefly used as a ceremonial dress by the bearers at funerals; on Sundays some of the men wore purple or green smocks at church.[3]

The house stood a third of a mile from the village and was built, like so many houses of the eighteenth century (*circa* 1778) as near as possible to the road—a narrow lane winding away to the Westerham high-road. "In 1842 it was dull and unattractive enough; a square brick building of three storeys, covered with shabby whitewash and hanging tiles. The garden had none of the shrubberies or walls that now give shelter; it was overlooked from the lane and was open, bleak and desolate."

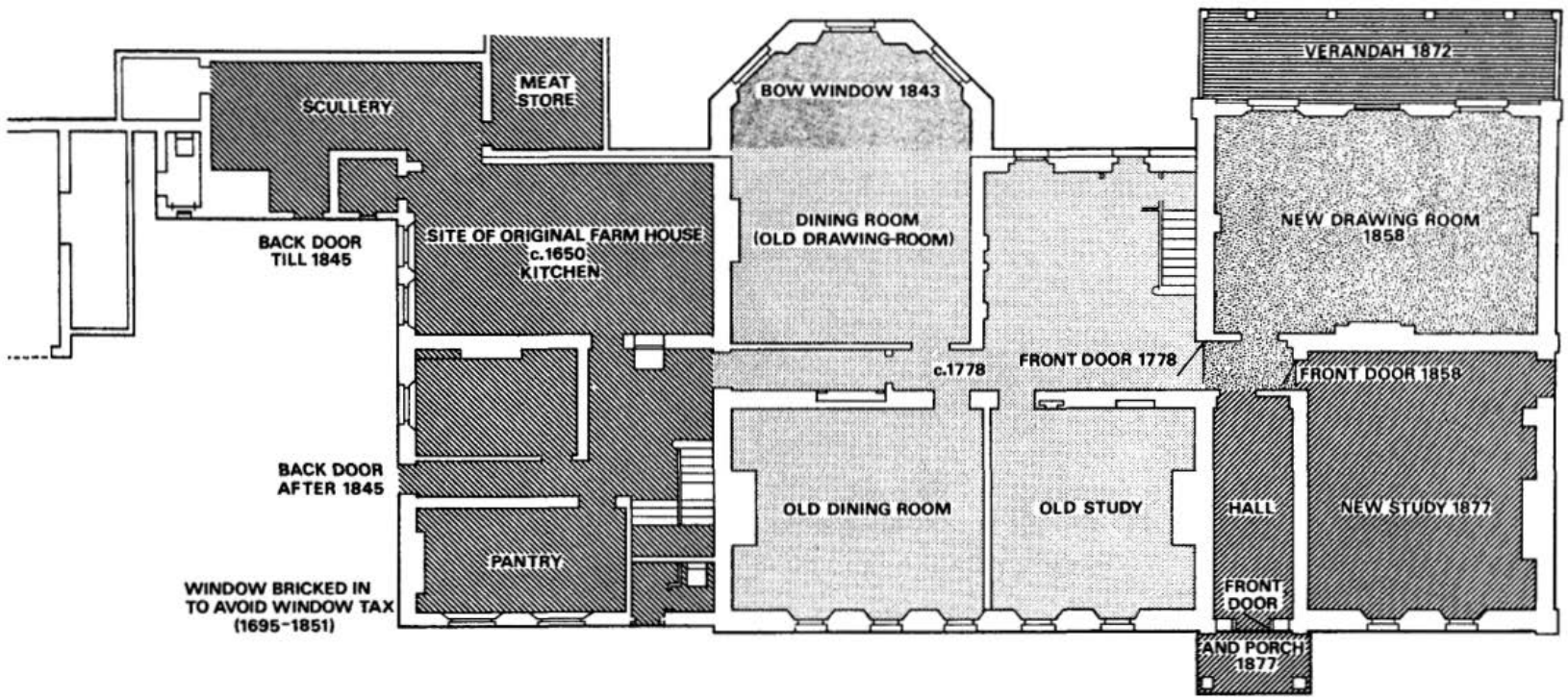


Figure 4: Plan of Down House

In 1843 and 1844 Charles surveyed his new domain in a little essay written at different times during those years which he entitled "The General Aspect". The first entry, dated May 15th 1843, concerns itself with the general shape of the countryside and speculation as to the geology of the flat-bottomed valleys, a matter which has been dealt with in a previous section. He very quickly made his acquaintance with the curious quilt of red clay with flints which caps the summit of the hills and coats the depths of the valleys, the origin of which has already been discussed, and he was fascinated by the shapes of these flints "like huge bones". He describes the different kinds of bushes in the hedgerows entwined by travellers' joy and the tree bryonies which distinguished the countryside from that of the country round his old home in Shropshire.

On June 25th he writes: "The clover . . . fields are now of the most beautiful pink and from the number of Hive Bees frequenting them, the humming noise is quite extraordinary. Their humming is rather deeper than the humming over head which has been continuous and loud during all these last hot days, over almost every field. The labourers here say it is made by 'air-bees' and one man seeing a wild bee in [a] flower, different from the kind, remarked that 'no doubt it is a air bee'. This noise is considered as a sign of settled fair weather."

The September entry once more returns to a consideration of the clay which he found in one place to be fourteen feet deep. The discovery of plants of the gentiana covered with abortive buds prompts an article for the *Gardener's Chronicle*, a publication to which he remained faithful all his life. He also remarks on the curious behaviour of some of the brambles in the garden where the "leeding" shoot is buried in the grass and covered with knobs, each knob developing a new shoot. He records finding an old nest of a golden crested wren fastened to the lower arm of a small fir tree.

In October the ladybirds invaded the house and gathered together in the corners of the rooms. He declared that he had never seen a swift in this part of the country, though nuthatches were common. Finally, in the section of "The General Aspect" of March 25th 1844 he writes: "The first period of vegetation and the banks are clothed with pale blue violets to an extent I have never seen equalled and with Primroses. A few days later some of the copses were beautifully enlivened by *Ranunculus Auricomus*, wood anemones and a white *Stellaria*. Subsequently [is he referring to the previous year or adding this note later?] large areas were brilliantly blue with blue bells [*sic*]. The flowers here are very beautiful and the number of flowers, together with the darkness of the blue of the common little Polygala almost equalled it to an alpine Gentian."

There were large tracts of woodland which were cut about every ten years, some of which were very ancient. Larks abounded and their songs were most agreeable to him; nightingales were common. "Judging from an odd cooing note, something like the purring of a cat, doves are very common in the woods."

Charles has once more become the true countryman and no doubt merits the entry in *Bagshaw's Directory* of 1847 under "Householders in Downe", "Darwin, Charles, farmer"!

One of the first undertakings was to lower the lane (which overlooked the house) by about two feet and to build a flint wall along that part of it which bordered the garden.

Plate I: Down House (Photo by Col. James Creedy)

II: Down Chapel in 1786, now Downe Church (by courtesy of the Rev. Jack Harrison)

The earth thus excavated was used in making banks and mounds round the lawn; these were planted with evergreens, which gave the garden a sheltered character. These banks and mounds are still an interesting feature of the garden, but the energetic gardener who tries to plant shrubs such as azaleas, which now grace one of the banks, to the ruination of many a tine on his garden fork, is soon aware of the material from which the banks were made. The flint wall recently collapsed and has been replaced by one in the same pattern, but two feet higher so as to protect the garden from the bitter northerly winds of which Darwin himself was so conscious.

However, the creation of the banks and mounds and the subsequent modification was undertaken with enthusiasm by the family as a corporate enterprise. Writing to his sister Susan on September 3rd 1845, Darwin relates:

"We are now undertaking some great earthworks; making a new walk in the kitchen garden; and removing the mound under the yews, on which the evergreens we found did badly, and which Erasmus has always insisted, was a great blemish in hiding part of the field and the old Scotch firs. We are making a mound, which will be executed by all the family, viz, in front of the door out of the house [the old front door, see Fig. 4] between two of the lime trees. We find the winds from the N. intolerable, and we retain the view from the grass mound and in walking down to the orchard. It will make the place much snugger, though a great blemish till the evergreens grow on it. Erasmus has been of the utmost service in scheming and in actually working; making creases in the turf, striking circles, driving stakes and such jobs; he has tired me out several times."[4]

Other work was also undertaken. A grand scheme was the making of a schoolroom and two small bedrooms. The servants had complained to him of the nuisance of everything having to pass through the kitchen; and the butler's pantry was thought to be too small to be tidy. Charles felt that it was selfish making the house so luxurious for themselves and not sufficiently comfortable for the servants, so he was determined if possible to effect their wishes. He was clearly anxious what the 'Shrewsbury Conclave' (meaning, I am sure, his father) would think of all this extravagance, and in a letter to his family he declared that he sometimes thinks they are "following Walter Scott's road to ruin at a snail-like pace".

Other changes had, in the meanwhile, been undertaken. The house had been made to look neater by being covered with stucco, but the chief improvement effected (1843) was the building of a large bow extending up the side of the house. This became covered with a tangle of creepers, and pleasantly varied the south-west aspect.

During the next forty years various alterations were made, not only to the house, but to the garden and to the estate and these really were improvements. Indeed, there is no feature which was added by the Darwins which one could do without. The first of these was the famous Sandwalk round which Charles would walk, in later years accompanied by his dog Polly, and which he termed his "thinking path". The name 'Sandwalk' derived from a sandpit at the far end of the wood, the sand from which was used to dress the path.

The job of planting the trees and making the path was carried out in 1846 on a strip of land at the south corner of the field now known appropriately as the Home Meadow.

Howarth says that this wood was made by enlarging a pre-existing shaw, but this is unlikely as the trees are all about 120 years old and Francis Darwin states that the wood was planted in 1846 on a piece of pasture land laid down as grass in 1840. This piece of land was rented from their neighbour, Sir John Lubbock (the elder), with whom by this time, and contrary to his prediction, Charles had become friendly. It was planted with hazel, alder, lime, hornbeam, birch, privet and dogwood and with a long line of hollies all down the exposed side. Most of these trees are still to be found, including a particularly fine oak tree planted at that time which is an object of admiration by connoisseurs.

As we shall see later, the number of hours which he devoted to writing in his study were modest, but much of the real work, the brain work, was undertaken during these perambulations of the Sandwalk. Around this little wood he would stroll a variable number of times, depending upon his mood and the weather, between midday and one o'clock whenever he was at Down, which was most of the days of his life. The number of turns would be assessed beforehand and, rather like a cricket umpire counting the balls bowled in an over, the requisite number of flints would be placed at one corner of the walk, one being kicked away after each turn, and when all had gone he went back to lunch.

"Sometimes when alone," Francis says, "he stood still or walked stealthily to observe birds or beasts. It was on one of these occasions that some young squirrels, mistaking him for a tree, ran up his back and legs, while their mother barked at them in an agony from a nearby tree. He always found birds' nests even up to the last years of his life, and we, as children, considered that he had a special genius in this direction. In his quiet prowls he came across the less common birds, but I fancy he used to conceal it from me as a little boy because he observed the agony of mind which I endured at not having seen the siskin or goldfinch, or whatever it may have been. He used to tell us how, when he was creeping along in the 'Big Woods', he came upon a fox asleep in the daytime, which was so much astonished that it took a good stare at him before it ran off. A Spitz dog [a forerunner of Polly] which accompanied him showed no sign of excitement at the fox, and he used to end the story by wondering how the dog could have been so faint-hearted."[5]

This feature of the estate, besides affording an opportunity for contemplation together with modest exercise for its creator, was an unending source of delight to his children and grandchildren, although it was rather alarming for little children.

His grand-daughter, Gwen Raverat, writes of her impressions as a little girl:

"Of all places at Down, the Sandwalk seemed most to belong to my grandfather. It was a path running round a little wood which he had planted himself; and it always seemed to be a very long way from the house. You went right to the farthest end of the kitchen garden, and then through a wooden door in the high hedge, which quite cut you off from human society. Here a fenced path ran along between two great lonely meadows, till you came to the wood. The path ran straight down the outside of the wood—the Light Side—till it came to a summer-house at the far end; it was very lonely there; to this day you cannot see a building anywhere, only woods and valleys. In the summer-house faint chalk drawings of diagrams could still be made out; they had been drawn by my father [Sir George Darwin] and uncle Frank as children. That made it romantic; but also, once,

when mercifully my father was there, there was a drunken tramp in the summer-house, and that made it dreadful.

The Light Side was ominous and solitary enough, but at the summer-house the path turned back and made a loop down the Dark Side, a mossy path, all among the trees, and that was truly terrifying. There were two or three great old trees beside the path, too, which were all right if some grown-up person were there, but much too impressive if one were alone. The Hollow Ash was mysterious enough; but the enormous beech, which we called the Elephant Tree, was quite awful. It had something like the head of a monstrous beast growing out of the trunk, where a branch had been cut off. I tried to think it merely grotesque and rather funny, in the daytime; but if I were alone near it, or sometimes in bed at night the face grew and grew until it became the mask of a kind of brutish ogre, huge, evil and prehistoric; a face which chased me down long dark passages and never quite caught me; a kind of pre-Disney horror. Altogether the Sandwalk was a dangerous place if you were alone.

One day Charles boasted that he had been all round the Sandwalk quite by himself; so naturally, as an elder sister, I had got to do so too. I took Billy (the baby brother) in the pram for company, and set off bravely enough; but my heart sank into my boots when the kitchen garden door banged behind me and shut me off from the civilized world. However, by whistling and singing and talking brightly to Billy, I got safely down the Light Side, and there was no tramp in the summer-house. But when I turned back down the Dark Side, the strangest rustlings and whisperings began to flit about all over the wood. I held my head up and walked along briskly, but the sighings and stirrings followed me as I went: and someone seemed to be saying something over and over again, something that I could not quite hear. There was a strange creaking noise too, and certainly footsteps following along behind me. I walked faster and faster until I was fairly running; and then absolutely galloping; the pram swayed madly from side to side, but by a miracle did not upset. At last, the hot breath of the pursuer on my very neck, I reached the blessed garden door; and after a short but most dangerous struggle, managed to wrench it open, got through alive, and fairly slammed it after me. I never told anyone of the perils I had passed through. I was not proud of this adventure.

All the same, when there were grown-ups about to make it safe, I loved the Sandwalk; I used to crawl on all fours through the undergrowth for the whole length of the wood, worshipping every leaf and bramble as I went. In the very middle there was the secret clay-pit where we grubbed up the red clay, and rolled it in our handkerchiefs, and tried to make little pots to bake on the bars of the nursery grate; which were not a success. And, under protection, I would even dare to climb right down inside the hollow ash. There is something extraordinarily moving about a hollow tree."[6]

Bernard Darwin (Gwen's cousin) says that the awesome quality of the hollow ash was due to a tramp having slept there and set it on fire so that it was all black inside. He says that the giant beech was called "Bismarck" or sometimes "The Rhinoceros". I can see what he means, but "The Elephant Tree" is really more suitable and the name is now sanctioned by universal usage. Alas! fungi with long names which it is easy to forget such as *Polyporus Squamosus* and *Fomes Ulmarius*, but which are also called somewhat

gruesomely "heart-rot" and "Brown Butt rot", so riddled this 400-year-old beech that, in 1969, it became dangerous and had to be cut down. It was, however, possible to preserve that part of the trunk containing the elephant's head, or if you like "Bismarck", but the glory of it has departed.

So the Sandwalk entered into the life of the Darwin family, but it was not until 1874 in a letter to Sir John Lubbock (the younger), dated February 23rd, that Charles wrote asking whether Sir John would be prepared to exchange "the little wood which I rent" amounting, as described in his customary precise manner, to "1 acre, 2 rods and 10 perches", for part of a field belonging to the Darwins of exactly the same size. The proffered strip, Lubbock was assured, was of considerably better quality of grazing, a point which one imagined hardly needed labouring as the Sandwalk strip was full of trees. After a bit of sparring between these now old friends and some doubt on the part of Sir John Lubbock as to whether the Sandwalk wood was not part of his marriage settlement, "in which case it would be difficult to deal with it till Johnnie is of age",[7] the deal was concluded and the beloved Sandwalk became the property of the Darwins.

Today the Sandwalk is enjoyed by hundreds of visitors each year. In the early spring the ground beside the path on the Dark Side is sprinkled with celandine and later the whole wood is bright with bluebells and wood anemones, some primroses and, in June, occasional wild orchids. If only the children would refrain from picking the bluebells; they must all be nearly dead by the time they reach home, but I suppose the temptation is irresistible. Then, alongside the Sandwalk about four acres have been cut off the Home Meadow for a cricket ground and here on a summer day at the weekend there is the merry sound of bat on ball, punctuated at intervals by a furious "How's 'at".

Charles would have enjoyed that.

In the meanwhile other amenities had been acquired. In a letter to his son William dated May 3rd 1858 from the health centre at Moor Park, to which Darwin repaired from time to time, he writes, "I have been playing a good deal at billiards and have lately got up to my play and made some splendid strokes!"[8] Billiards became an important source of recreation for Darwin and the following year (March 24th 1859) he writes to his cousin, W. D. Fox: "We have set up a billiard table, and I find it does me a deal of good and drives the horrid species out of my head"[9] [*The Origin of Species* was published later that year]. This item of information, together with a letter to Hooker dated December 24th 1858, in which he states "My room (28 × 19) with divided room above, with *all fixtures* (and pointed), not furniture, and plastered outside, cost about £500",[10] is the only evidence we have of the date when an important wing of the house was added. This is the drawing-room and the "Divided room" above it. The old drawing-room (*Charles Darwin Room*) now became the dining-room and the old dining-room was liberated no doubt for the billiard table, which could hardly have been accommodated elsewhere. The shape of the house must now have been somewhat curious with the front door facing north-west in an angle between the original house and the drawing-room (Fig. 4).

In September 1876 Charles is writing to a Mr. Marshall:

"I want some professional assistance in architecture, on a very small scale, if you are inclined to undertake the work. I wish to build this autumn, so as to be ready by early next summer, a billiard room (25ft × 21ft) attached to my house with a bedroom and drawing-room [*sic*] above." And he adds in a postscript, "As the winter is coming on there is no time to lose."[11]

So in 1877 the awkward angle in the plan of the house was filled in. The front door had to be moved to the end of the newly-created hall, where it now stands facing north-east and no doubt the portico was erected at the same time.

In 1872 as their daughter Henrietta writes:

"During the stay of three weeks at Sevenoaks they [Emma and Charles] became acquainted with the merits of a verandah, and this led to a large verandah with a glass roof, opening out of the drawing-room being made at Down. So much of all future life was carried on there, it is associated with such happy hours of talk and leisurely loitering, that it seems to us almost like a friend. The fine row of limes to the west sheltered it from the afternoon sun and we heard the hum of bees and smelt honey-sweet flowers as we sat there. The flower-beds and the dear old dial, by which in the old days my father regulated the clock, were in front and beyond the lawn, the field stretching to the South. Polly too appreciated it and became a familiar sight, lying curled up on one of the red cushions basking in the sun. After my marriage she adopted my father and trotted after him wherever he went, lying on his sofa on her own rug during working hours."[12]

The external form of the house was now complete virtually as we see it today. The kitchen garden, which we have noted was found to be unsatisfactory, was discarded, and a new kitchen garden was made from a strip taken from the Home Meadow. This, however, was not enough for Emma with her love of gardening nor for Charles with his botanical exercises and experiments.

On December 24th 1862 he writes to Joseph Hooker (his lifelong friend and champion, Curator of Kew Gardens): "And now I am going to tell you a most important piece of news!! I have almost resolved to build a small hot-house; my neighbour's first-rate gardener has suggested it, and offered to make me plans, and see that it is well done, and he is a really clever fellow, who wins a lot of prizes, and is very observant. He believes that we should succeed with a little patience; it will be a grand amusement for me to experiment with plants." And on February 5th 1863, "I write now because the new hot-house is ready, and I long to stock it, just like a schoolboy. Could you tell me pretty soon what plants you can give me; and then I shall know what to order? And do advise me how I had better get such plants as you can spare. Would it do to send my box-cart early in the morning, on a day that was not frosty, lining the cart with mats and arriving here before night? I have no idea whether this degree of exposure (and of course the cart would be cold) could injure Stove-plants; there would be about five hours (with wait) on the journey home."[13]

At about that time he writes to Sir John Lubbock, who died two years later:

"My dear Sir,

My little hot-house is finished and you must allow me once again to thank you sincerely for allowing Horwood to superintend the erection. Without his aid I should

never have had the spirit to undertake it; and if I had should probably have made a mess of it.

It will not only be an amusement to me, but will enable me to try many little experiments, which otherwise would have been impossible.

With sincere thanks,

My dear Sir

Yours sincerely obliged

Charles Darwin."[14]

Clearly by 1863 relations between Charles and his neighbour were still on a fairly formal basis, but they had known each other only twenty-one years and in those days familiarity blossomed slowly.

One last embellishment needs to be recorded. In the autumn of 1881, the year before Charles died, "a strip of field was bought to add to the garden beyond the orchard". The object was to have a hard tennis court, but the additional ground added greatly to the pleasantness of the gardens.

Emma was more enthusiastic about this than her children, and was "boiling over with schemes about the tennis court."

Today the old court is still there, the concrete is sorely cracked and the weeds have to be killed as they spring up in the cracks. The surface is curiously uneven, but this is said to add to the interest of the game. Just as it was built to give pleasure to Charles' children and grandchildren, so it is still used by my own children and grandchildren nearly a century later. I dare say the standard has not improved, it may even have deteriorated with the deterioration of the court, but the joy is still there and I am sure that is what Charles and Emma would have wished.

To conclude this chapter I should like to convey some idea of the effect which Down House exerts upon those who live there and love it, who love the rolling, wooded countryside still unspoilt when so much has been despoiled; a house which once again is a family home and where children and household pets can enjoy the sort of life that seems to spell for them, as it does for us, a serenity and security which in these hectic times is hard to find.

This feeling has never been better expressed—could not be better expressed—than by Charles' grand-daughter, Gwen Raverat, who spent so much of her childhood there, and who wrote so lovingly about it in her classic book *Period Piece*.

"But to us everything at Down was perfect. That was an axiom. And by us I mean, not only the children, but all the uncles and aunts who belonged there. Uncle Horace was once heard to say in a surprised voice: 'No I don't really like salvias very much, *though they did grow at Down*.' The implication, to us, would have been obvious. Of course all the flowers that grew at Down were beautiful; and different from other flowers. Everything there was different. And better."

Later on describing a visit to Down:

"The magic began from the moment when John, the coachman, met us at Orpington station with the wagonette, and we drove off through the tunnel under the railway, all shrieking shrilly, to make the echo answer. We drove four miles through the deep narrow

lanes, where the trees met overhead, and there was a damp smell from the high earth banks on either side. The lanes were so narrow that it was often hard to pass a cart without stopping at a wider place. Then came the village and the wagonette rumbled round three sides of the churchyard which surrounds the humble little old flint church, before turning up past the blacksmith's shop and the pond and reaching Down House. And as soon as the door was opened, we smelt again that unmistakable cool, empty country smell of the house, and we rushed all over the big, under-furnished rooms in an ecstasy of joy. They reflected the hard way of life of the early nineteenth century, rather than the crowded, fussy, mid-Victorian period. The furnishing was ugly in a way, but it was dignified and *plain*."

Writing of about 1895 she says:

"There was no bathroom at Down, nor any hot water, except in the kitchen, but there were plenty of housemaids to run about with big brown-painted bath-cans. And just as everything else at Down was perfect, so there too was the most beautiful, secret, romantic lavatory, that was ever known; at the end of a long passage and up several steps. It had the only window which looked out over the orchard and was always full of a dim green light. But the place of all others, where the essence of the whole house was concentrated, was in the cupboard under the stairs, by the garden door. It was full of ancient tennis rackets, smaller than those we use now; and parasols and croquet mallets, and it was there that the exquisite, special smell of the house was strongest."[15]

It still is.

CHAPTER III
LIFE AT DOWN

In discussing the life at Down I shall confine my account to the period from 1842, when Charles and Emma with their two children took possession of the house, to 1896, when Emma died and the house was leased away from the family, an era which will be covered later on. After Charles' death in 1882 Emma spent the winter months in Cambridge and came to live at Down only during the summer. The story, furthermore, must concentrate on Charles and Emma and especially on the period when they were both alive and the family was growing up. Of the later years, of the sons and daughters when they had grown up and moved away, and of the grandchildren, so much has been written that it would be unnecessary to discuss them again here. They will be introduced into the story therefore only in so far as they contribute to the life of the house and particularly to the happiness of Charles and Emma themselves.

In order to understand the characters in this story who will be referred to by their Christian names, Fig. 5 gives a simple family tree.

As Charles must remain the principal character it would be appropriate to describe him and his activities first, because around these the rest of the life of the house revolved.

Francis, writing in 1888, describes him as being about six foot in height with a slight stoop which became more pronounced as he got older. He had a swinging gait and out of doors he carried an iron-shod walking-stick which produced a well-recognised 'click' as he came down the Longwalk or in his strolls around the Sandwalk.[1] Indoors, however, he walked slowly and always took his time mounting stairs, although these at Down, at least between the ground floor and the first floor, which he would most often have had to negotiate, are by no means steep. During such perambulations he might take an oak stick, especially "if he felt giddy", even if it meant going from the study into the hall for a pinch of snuff, to which he was much addicted. He was awkward with his hands and, to his lasting regret, unable to draw, which was a severe handicap in writing up his scientific work. However, by dint of perseverance he dissected under a simple microscope tolerably well, though never expertly, and he learnt to cut sections if the specimen were held in a vice. This accomplishment was a source of immense pride. As a young man he was an excellent shot and, as Francis describes it, a good "thrower". Indeed, quite late in life, he once killed a crossbeak with a stone, an accomplishment which filled him with remorse and to which he never liked to refer; he was so sure he would miss!

In his later years he became very bald, with only a fringe of hair behind. He had "a ruddy" complexion, blue-grey eyes with overhanging brows and bushy eyebrows; in later years he wore a rather straggly beard. When he was interested he would talk animatedly with frequent gestures and laughed freely. His clothes were somewhat sombre and in later years he gave up his top hat, even for visits to London, and wore the

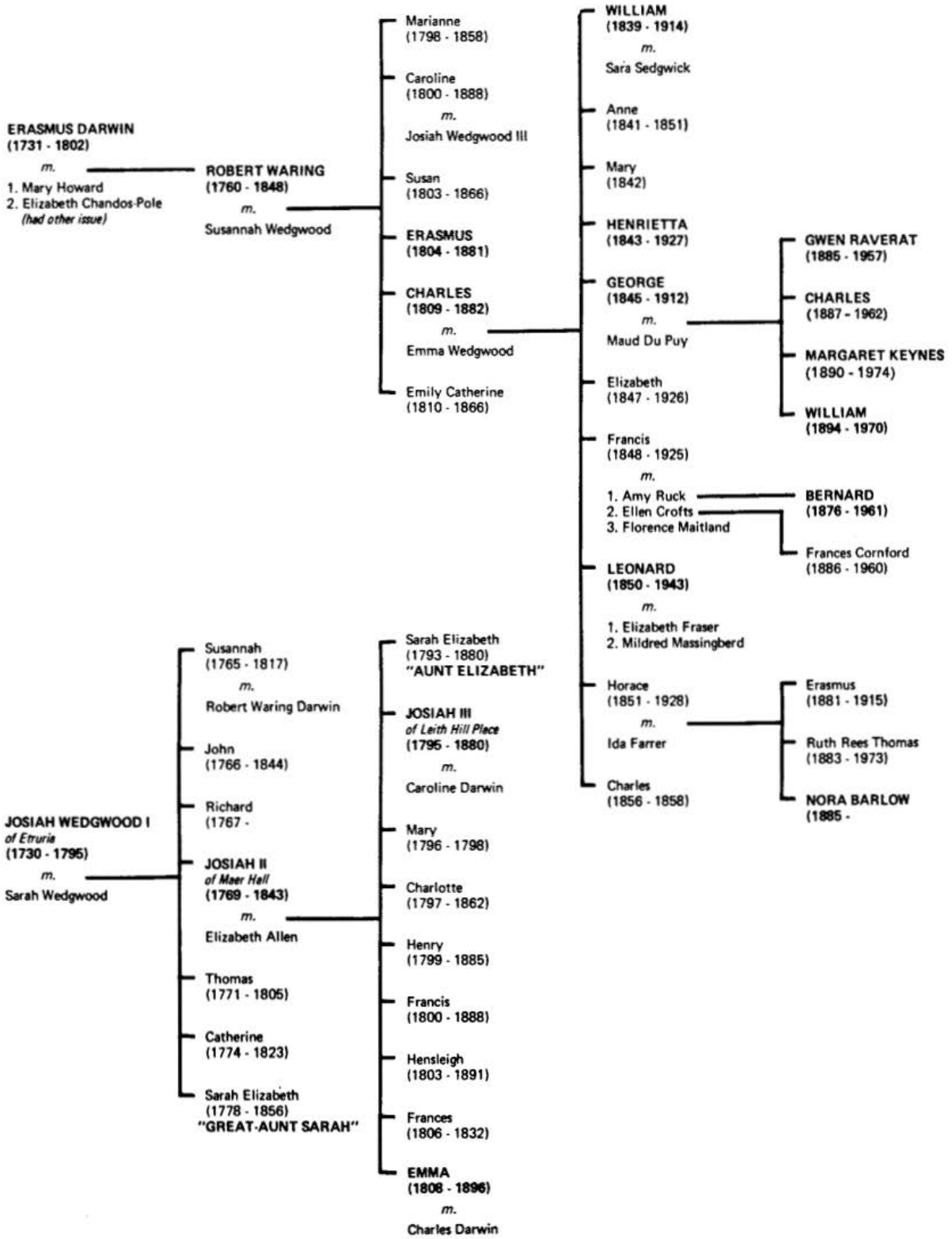


Figure 5: The Darwin Family Tree

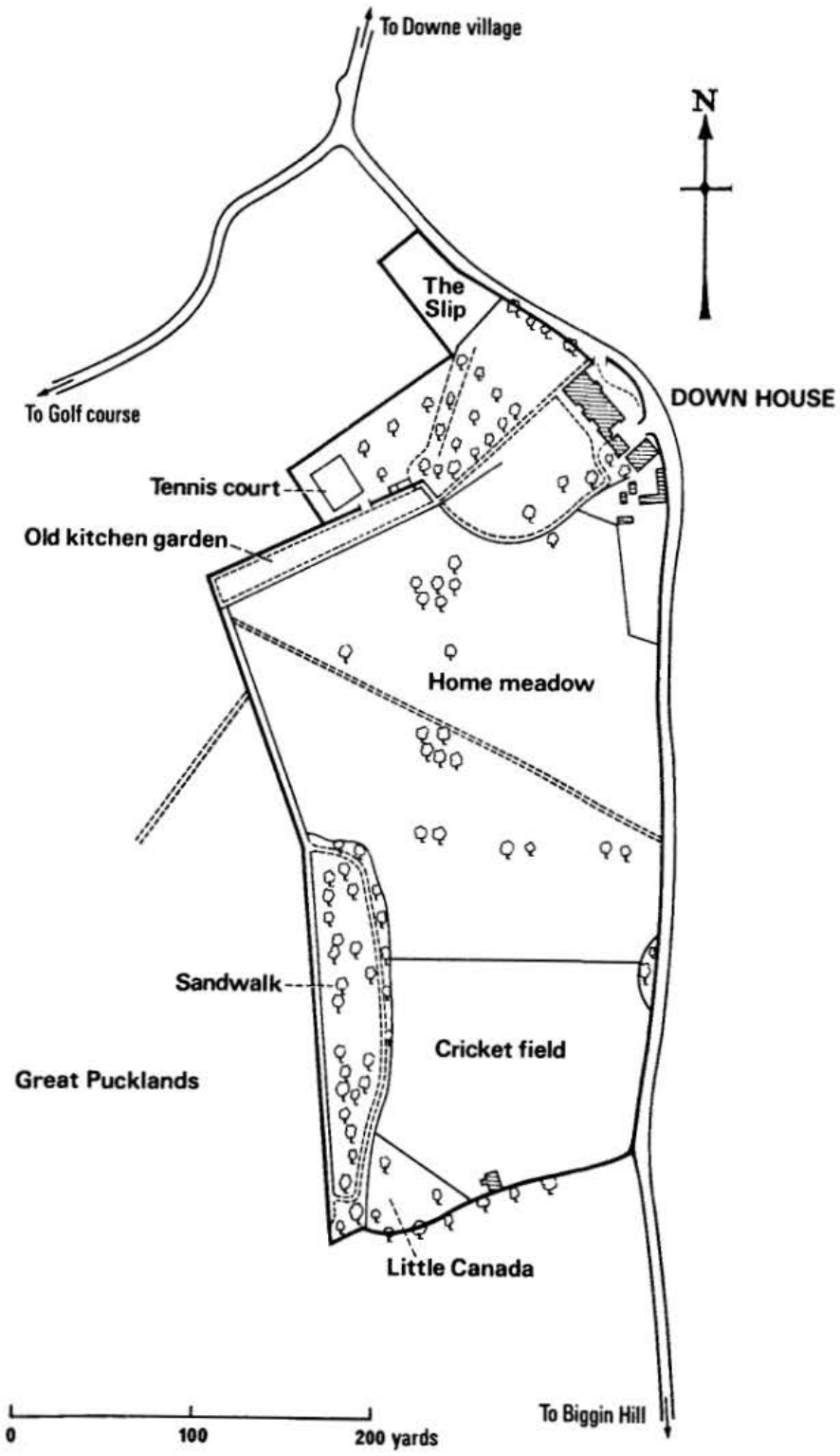


Figure 6: Plan of the Estate

soft black one shown in the photograph (Pl. VII). In summertime this was substituted for a straw hat of not dissimilar shape. Out-of-doors he wore a cloak and indoors a shawl, as he was very susceptible to changes of temperature.

During most of his life at Down he kept to an unvarying routine. He would rise early and take a short turn before breakfast in the garden and even as far as the Sandwalk. In the winter this would be before sunrise and he would often meet foxes trotting home after their night's foraging. The rest of the day was as follows:

7.45 Breakfast alone.

8.00 He would go into the study and work on his writing.

9.30 Was the time for listening to family letters which were read aloud in the drawing-room or perhaps, if there were no letters, he listened to bits of a novel read to him while he relaxed on the sofa.

10.30 to midday he retired once more to the study and this constituted the major effort of the day. At the end of this period he would often observe, with the greatest satisfaction, "I've done a good day's work".

12.00 He walked, wet or fine, generally round the Sandwalk or sometimes further afield. Polly, his terrier, would accompany him if it was fine, but when it was wet she would linger on the verandah in an agony of indecision until, as he disappeared up the Longwalk, she could bear it no longer and scampered after him. Later in the day he would enjoy strolling in the garden with Emma or the children and often, in fine weather, he lay on the grass under one of the lime trees watching tennis on the lawn or chatting with the family. At one time the period before lunch was taken up riding on his cob Tommy, which exercise he found very good for his health, until Tommy, who could not have been more subdued, stumbled on Keston Common and threw him. Perhaps they were both musing! After this he tried Horace's big grey mare Peggy, but after another unspecified accident a year later, he finally gave up riding.

1.00 Lunch. This was a family meal and often followed by sweets, which he loved and kept vowing that he should give up, but as he maintained that vows were never binding unless made aloud, he never did. He drank very little except a glass of light wine, which he enjoyed.

After lunch, no doubt munching the tempting sweets, he would read the newspaper lying on the sofa and this was perhaps the only matter other than scientific papers which he read to himself. This was followed by writing letters, and from the immense volume of his correspondence which has been largely preserved, this might well be categorised as 'work'.

3.00 He rested in his bedroom, lying on a sofa and smoking a cigarette, listening to a novel read to him by Emma or one of his daughters. Often he would fall asleep during the reading and Emma would carry on for fear that the abrupt cessation might wake him up!

4.30 Another short period of work in the study.

5.30 He would come for a short time into the drawing-room before going up to his bedroom for another rest, a cigarette and novel reading.

7.30 A simple tea with an egg or a slice of meat.

8.00 Two games of backgammon with Emma; then he would read some scientific book to himself often in German either in the drawing-room or, if there was too much chatter, in his study. After this he would listen to Emma while she played on the piano or read to him more of the current novel.

The games of backgammon were pursued with a perfervid zeal and taken very seriously. If losing Charles would exclaim to Emma "Bang your bones", in a fit of exasperation. Writing to Professor Asa Gray (January 28th, 1876) he observes, "Now the tally with my wife in backgammon stands thus: she, poor creature, has won only 2490 games, whilst I have won, hurrah, hurrah 2795 games."[2]

10.00 He retired upstairs to his room.

10.30 Bed.

So it went on, day after day, for forty years, punctuated by a few visits to London to meet friends at the Athenaeum or to meetings of the Royal Society. Occasionally there were holidays. Short holidays of five or six days were taken on the insistence of Emma when she thought he was overworked and were spent most frequently with his brother Erasmus at 6 Queen Anne Street or his daughter Henrietta Litchfield at 4 Bryanston Street. Slightly longer holidays were spent with his brother-in-law, Josiah Wedgwood, at Leith Hill; to see his banker son William at Southampton, or at Sir Thomas Farrer's house in Ashdown Forest. Then there were "real holidays" in the Lake District or to the Isle of Wight, where in a few weeks he got to know his children better than in all the years he lived with them at home. From time to time he would visit Dr. Gully's hydropathic establishment at Malvern or a similar organisation run by Dr. Lane at Moor Park. His periods away from Down are set out in Table 2.

He would often recount Polly's ecstatic reception of him on his return from these excursions; how she would dart around the room jumping on and off the furniture and finally leaping on to his lap and licking his face in a transport of joy.

Henrietta writes:

"The early memories that come back to me are full of sunshine and happiness. I think of a sound we always associated with summer days, the rattle of the fly-wheel of the well drawing water for the garden; the lawn burnt brown, the garden a blaze of colour, the six oblong beds in front of the drawing-room windows, with phloxes, lilies, and larkspurs in the middle, and portulacas, verbenas, gazanias and other low growing plants in front, looking brighter than flowers ever do now; the row of lime trees humming with bees, my father lying under them; children trotting about, with probably a kitten and a dog, and my mother dressed in lilac muslin, wondering why the blackcaps did not sing the same tune here as they did at Maer."[3]

In his regard for Emma, his sympathetic nature was shown in its most tender light—"In her presence he found happiness, and through her, his life—which might have been overshadowed by gloom—became one of content and quiet gladness."[4]

Charles "was passionately attached to his own children, although he was not an indiscriminate child-lover. Indeed it is impossible adequately to describe how delightful a relation his was to his family, whether as children or later in life.

It is proof of the terms on which we were, and also of how much he was valued as a play-fellow, that one of his sons when about four years old tried to bribe him with sixpence to come and play in working hours. We all knew the sacredness of working time, but that any one should resist sixpence seemed an impossibility.

Another mark of his unbounded patience was the way in which we were disposed to make raids into the study when we had an absolute need of sticking-plaster, string, pins, scissors, stamps, foot-rule or hammer. These and other such necessities were always to be found in the study, and it was the only place where this was a certainty. I remember the patient look when he said once, 'Don't you think you could not come in again, I have been interrupted very often?' "[5]

Although he took an interest in all the pursuits of his children, and lived their lives with them in a way that very few fathers do, this intimacy did not interfere in the least with their respect or obedience. Whatever he said was absolute truth and law.

With this abounding love for his family, the death of his daughter Annie in 1851 at the age of ten came as a blow from which he never really completely recovered. Writing of her later he recalls:

"Her joyousness and animal spirits radiated from her whole countenance, and rendered every movement elastic and full of life and vigour. It was delightful and cheerful to behold her. Her dear face now rises before me, as she used sometimes to come running downstairs with a stolen pinch of snuff for me, her whole form radiant with the pleasure of giving pleasure. When going round the Sandwalk with me, although I walked fast, yet she often used to go before, pirouetting in the most elegant way, her dear face bright all the time with the sweetest smiles.

In the last short illness, her conduct in simple truth was angelic. She never once complained; never became fretful; was ever considerate of others, and was thankful in the most gentle, pathetic manner for everything done for her. When so exhausted that she could hardly speak, she praised everything that was given her, and said some tea was 'beautifully good'. When I gave her some water, she said, 'I quite thank you', and these I believe were the last precious words ever addressed by her dear lips to me."[6]

So life for Charles Darwin went on through the years. The turbulence in the scientific and ecclesiastical worlds generated by his own work may have affected him deeply, but outwardly he remained calm and pursued the even tenor of his way. In family records and letters there is practically no mention of revolutions and wars in France, of the Indian Mutiny, of the Crimea and only occasional references to the American Civil War prompted no doubt by Charles' intense hatred of slavery. Perhaps as the years went by the number of turns around the Sandwalk grew less and the pace more modest, but still the daily routine was followed until early in 1882, when symptoms of precordial pain after exercise added a further cause for anxiety to that occasioned by his already uncertain health, a subject which will be dealt with in more detail later, as it had such a profound effect on his manner of life and perhaps on the work upon which he was engaged.

I make no apology for giving an account of Charles' last days, taken from a manuscript written by Henrietta.[7] I reproduce it here for three reasons: first it throws more light on Charles' character; second the death of a world-famous figure is a proper subject for

historical record; and last because it is such a good description of a case of coronary thrombosis.

On March 3rd 1882 Henrietta Litchfield arrived at Down to be greeted by her mother, who said that her father had been having a little pain in the chest after walking round the Sandwalk for the previous few days.

On about 6th March he had a very sharp pain while on his usual midday exercise and had great difficulty in struggling home. This was the last time that he ever walked round the Sandwalk.

At first Charles resisted all entreaties that Dr. Clark (afterwards Sir Andrew Clark, physician to Queen Victoria) be called because Dr. Clark always refused to take a fee and this was a great embarrassment to him; and he had no confidence in Dr. Moore. However, Emma wrote a tactful letter to Dr. Clark, who replied by telegram that he would come on 10th March but could only spare a half to three-quarters of an hour, during which time he must have some dinner!

The visit, when it took place, was not a success. Dr. Clark arrived late and was obviously in a great hurry, saying he could spare only half-an-hour, which served to agitate Charles. After what can have been a relatively perfunctory examination he diagnosed (correctly as it happens) *angina pectoris*, by which term coronary thrombosis, which is one of its causes, was known. This diagnosis further depressed Charles and the "hurried visit produced an effect in lowering him from which he never entirely recovered."

After this he became very depressed and said that he would never be able to work again. He took to his bed and had his dinner brought up to him. Nor, for the next few days, could he be persuaded to venture as far as the verandah for fresh air and he continued to have moderately severe bouts of pain.

On about March 15th Dr. Clark sent a prescription and on 17th March there arrived instructions as to diet. This procrastination seems to have upset Henrietta as her observations about Dr. Clark become more and more critical. Emma tried to persuade Charles to see another doctor and at last the somewhat unjustly despised Dr. Moore was called and cheered the patient up immediately by asserting that he thought the diagnosis of *angina pectoris* was wrong and that he was only suffering from weakness. Nevertheless, he wisely left the treatment unchanged.

After this very satisfactory interview Charles recovered considerably, he regained much of his strength, dined downstairs again, played backgammon and even took a few slow turns round the orchard. A few days later when spring seemed to be in the air, when there was warm sunshine and the garden was a blaze of crocuses, he made his way to the lawn and sat on a rug on the ground.

By about March 20th he seemed to be much better and everyone's hopes were raised. On March 23rd Leonard arrived with his wife Elizabeth and found him almost gay in a subdued way.

By April 4th he was able to walk out into the yard and say "goodbye" to Henrietta, who was going away on a visit, but on April 5th he had a very severe bout of pain and was persuaded to call in Dr. Moore again and a Dr. Allfrey, a general practitioner from St. Mary Cray, "in nominal conjunction with Dr. Clark". "He felt," says Henrietta,

"the strongest gratitude to Dr. Clark and would not hear of anything that might mortify him." Perhaps Henrietta all along may have been slightly unfair about Dr. Clark in the manner of ladies whose loved ones are dying and for whom nothing effective is being done. After all, he refused to take a fee, regarding it as a privilege to be called to attend such a famous man, he made the correct diagnosis and prescribed, if a little belatedly, the correct treatments. Elsewhere Francis says, "Sir Andrew Clark himself was ever ready to devote himself to my father who, however, could not endure the thought of sending for him, knowing how severely his great practice taxed his strength." Nevertheless, Dr. Clark should not have been in such a hurry; at least if he was, he should have been more skilful in disguising it, especially in front of a family whose literary propensities would leave his conduct revealed for posterity.

On Saturday, April 15th, Henrietta was back again at Down and that night at dinner he suddenly said, "I am so giddy I must lie down" and he staggered to the sofa. As soon as he reached it he fell on his face in a fainting fit which lasted about one minute. He was given a little brandy and was helped to the study by George. The next day, Sunday, he felt somewhat better and Emma was against sending for Dr. Allfrey because his last examination had made Charles feel so ill. On the Monday he was better and more cheerful, so that early on Tuesday, April 18th, Henrietta felt that it would be all right for her to be away for the day. However, at a quarter before midnight on that day Charles woke Emma and asked her whether she would keep awake as he felt the pain and he also asked her to go down to the study to fetch a capsule of amyl nitrite. Unfortunately, Emma could not at first find the box of capsules, and no wonder with all the boxes of specimens and other paraphernalia which littered the study, and when she got upstairs again Charles had fallen over from a sitting posture in a faint and was deeply unconscious. Brandy was administered and he slowly recovered. Thinking he was about to die and after a few special words for Emma he said, "and be sure to tell all my children to remember how good they have always been to me"; then, "I am not the least afraid to die".

We do not know how he was sent for, but at 2 a.m., April 19th, Dr. Allfrey arrived and "was the greatest possible comfort". He stayed the night with Charles and left at 8 a.m. Soon after he had gone Charles started to vomit and he continued with sickness all the morning. Dr. Moxon of Guy's Hospital was sent for and Henrietta returned in the morning, and she and Francis were with him for the rest of the day. All this time, Emma, who was beside herself with anxiety, had behaved with great control and dignity, but after lunch she was given an opium pill and persuaded to take some rest in Henrietta's room.

Charles continually asked to be sat up and Francis supported him and gave him a little neat whisky which had been prescribed by Dr. Allfrey and which Charles asked for, finding that he was helped by it. At this time his hands were cold and clammy and Francis, the only medically qualified member of the Darwin family, could not feel his pulse.

At one time Charles said, "it is wonderful how I keep dropping off to sleep every minute". Henrietta records that, at about 25 minutes past three he said whilst he was

sitting up, "I feel as if I would faint". She asked Francis to ring for Emma, who came almost instantly. At this time Charles' face looked very grey and sagging. Henrietta gave him some of the whisky, which he was able to swallow, and after three teaspoonfuls he recovered consciousness. Emma kept trying to make him lie down but he said he must sit up.

A little later the front-door bell rang which meant that Dr. Moxon and Dr. Allfrey had arrived, but by the time they reached the bedroom he was unconscious and breathing stertorously. By 4 o'clock he was dead.

On April 26th 1882 he was buried in Westminster Abbey.

So far our story has had as its central figure Charles Darwin and quite rightly, for without him there would have been no object in singling out Down House for special record rather than a thousand other middle-class family homes flourishing throughout the nineteenth century. Now perhaps we should devote some consideration to Emma, his wife.

The more one examines the life of Emma Darwin the more one realises that her heart was brimming over with love and she in turn was loved dearly by her children and grandchildren and adored by her husband. Her love was not sentimental and, intense though it was, it was controlled by a good lacing of commonsense.

We may recall that her first impressions of Down were mixed and her attachment to her new home must have been sorely tried when having given birth to a daughter, Mary Eleanor, on September 23rd ten days after the family had moved in, this daughter died on October 16th. This tragedy, however upsetting, was not the soul searing experience of the loss of little Anne nine years later, whom they had both grown to love, and it must be assumed that she soon recovered her composure.

As a measure of her kindness it is related how she took charge of Mr. Huxley's seven children in 1867 and Mrs. Huxley writes to Henrietta:

"Towards your mother I always had a sort of nestling feeling. More than any woman I ever knew, she *comforted*. Few, if any, would have housed a friend's seven children and two nurses for a fortnight that her friend, myself, should be able to accompany her husband to Liverpool when he was President of the British Association; and in the early days of our acquaintance, soon after we had lost our boy, she begged me to come to her and bring the three children and nurse, and I should have the old nurseries at Down. I first wrote that I was too weak and ill to be out of my house, that I could not get downstairs till 1 o'clock. Her reply was that that was the usual state of the family at Down, and I should just be following suit. What wonder that I had for her always the most grateful affection."[8]

An earlier experience soon after they arrived at Down was not quite so happy. When Emma's brother Hensleigh Wedgwood was ill she agreed to take his three children aged nine, eight and five to relieve Mrs. Wedgwood, and the children, together with William, then aged three, and Annie, aged one, got lost in the "Big Woods". The eldest Wedgwood girl and William got separated from the others, but she managed to drag him for a mile "up to their ankles in mud". They were met by Charles and the butler a short way from home and were able to indicate roughly where the other three children were, in the charge of Bessy the teenage nurserymaid. Eventually they were found at a farmhouse

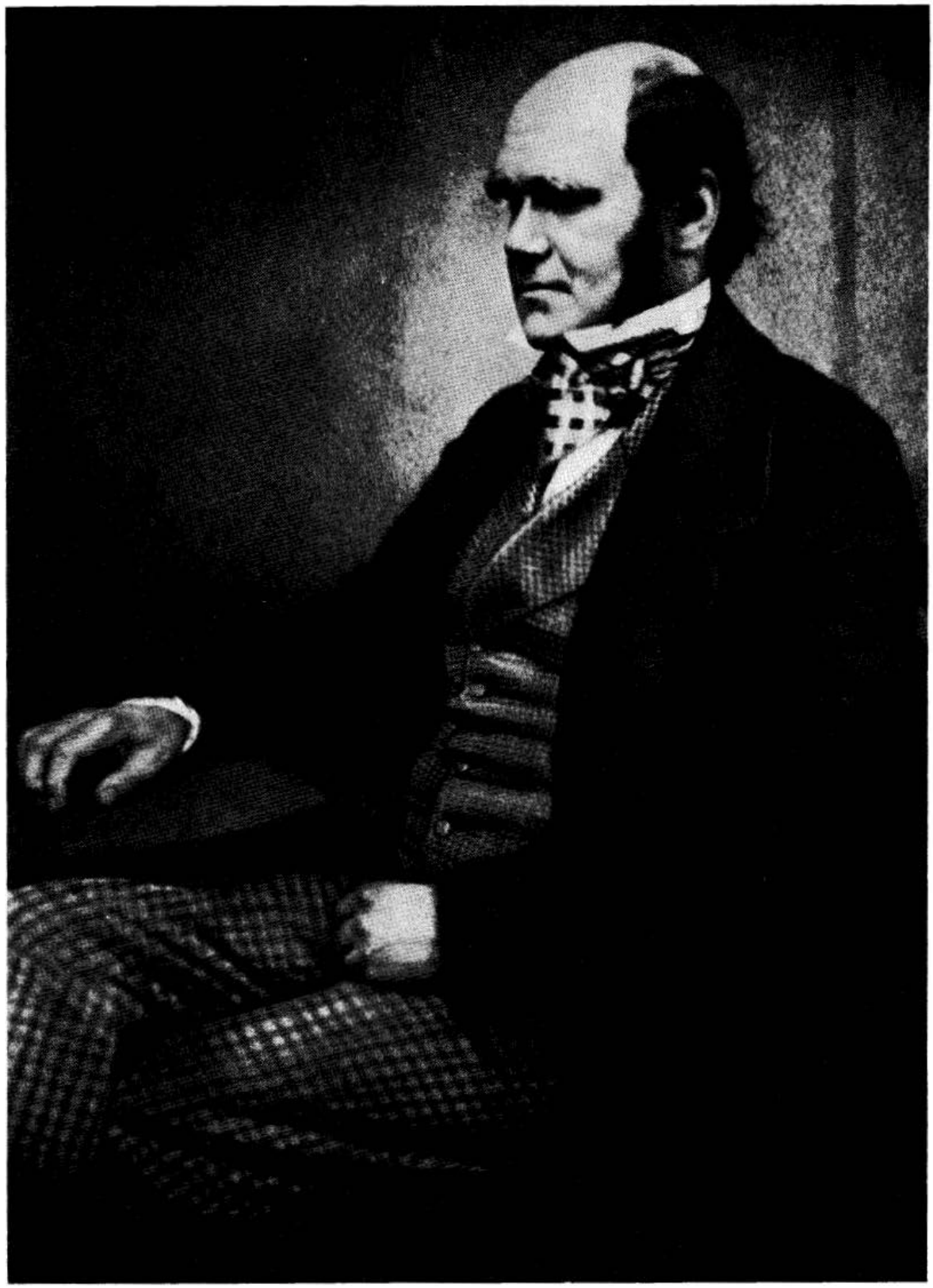


Plate III: Charles

Plate IV:
Squirrels mistake
Mr. Darwin
for a tree

(by courtesy of
Messrs. G. P. Putnam)

and a man was hired to help carry them home. The letter to Mrs. Wedgwood describing the adventure ends with a sentence which reveals something of Emma's attitude to freedom for children. "I had given them leave," she writes, "to go into Cudham Wood which was rash of me, and I have forbidden it in future."[9]

Of her devotion to Charles and his reciprocation there can be no doubt and in a letter to her dated February 1845, while she was staying at Maer, he tells her how he told "Willy" that, "I shall jump for joy when I hear the dinner bell", to which "Willy" replied, "I know you will jump much more when Mamma comes home", "And so shall I, and so shall I", Annie burst in.[10]

Emma would often accompany Charles on his walks, particularly it seems in later life when his pace would have slackened to her more gentle rate of progress. She would often recall how they would cross the field known as Great Pucklands and on to the slope which is now part of the West Kent Golf Course, but must then have been quite wild and deserted. This terrace is sheltered from the north-east by a row of beeches and then had an undergrowth of sloes, traveller's joy, service trees and hawthorn. It was particularly gay with the flowers which love a chalk soil—little yellow rock-rose, milkwort, wild orchids, ladies' finger, harebells, coromilla, scabious and gentian. And so it is today.

There were rabbits in the shaw, and Polly loved this walk. Charles would pace to and fro, and Emma would sit on the dry, chalky bank waiting for him, and be pulled by him up the little steep pitch on the way home.[11]

Emma's life, like that of most Victorian women, revolved round her children, in whom, and later in her grandchildren, she took the greatest delight. As we have remarked, she gave her children a great deal of freedom and was only prompted to constrain them if there were danger, and her interpretation of danger was pretty liberal. Dressing up was always allowed, even if this might entail some disorder, especially when other children were staying at Down.

"The plan was, we [the children] asked my mother for the key of her jewel box—a simple wooden box in which all her jewels rattled about loose, pearls and all, with no cotton-wool to protect them. The key too, worked badly and we had to shake and bang the box violently to get in. Then we locked her bedroom doors to prevent the maids coming in and laughing at us, took out of her wardrobe her long skirts and pinned them round our waists. Out of her lace drawers, we fitted up our bodies with lace fallals, put on the jewels and then peacocked about the room trailing the silks and satins on the floor. A favourite costume was a silver-grey moiré-antique. When we had done, we hung up the gowns, put back the lace and locked up the jewels and returned the key, but she never looked to see whether the two little girls had lost or damaged any of the jewels, and to our credit, be it said, we never did."[12]

Her permissive attitude extended to the boys and William was allowed to learn to ride without stirrups. Although it is now the custom this was an alarming novelty in these days; and George at the age of ten rode off by himself the twenty miles to Hartfield. Henrietta, when a little older than the children who got lost in the Big Woods, was allowed to wander freely in these woods despite the number of tramps which then frequented them and nobody seems to have come to any harm.

On the other hand, unlike Charles, who was in any event more sociably inclined, she did not often play with the children, except when they were very young. Then the furniture in the drawing-room would be pushed aside and Emma, who was an accomplished musician, would play her own composition, "the galloping tune", which always met with a boisterous response. She used also to sing to them nursery songs such as "When Good King Arthur ruled the land" or "There was an old woman as I've heard tell".

When any of them was ill, however, her attentions were devoted. In 1857 when Henrietta was ill for some time, her mother would play backgammon with her every day and read to her. Her favourite Cowper "Winter Walk at Noon" was remembered with special affection.

Although in many ways Emma was, for her day, unconventional, there were some matters in which she observed the rigours of propriety.

She was uncertain for instance as to what should be permitted on Sunday. She persuaded Henrietta to refuse any invitations which might involve the use of the horse and carriage, but this after all was simply due to her regard for the welfare of the servants, who must enjoy their day of rest. She was, moreover, doubtful about embroidery, knitting or playing patience on Sunday, the last of which must have been for her a great deprivation, as she was a considerable addict. In the end, in typical Darwin manner (*vide* Charles' decision to get married), she made a balance sheet. On one side of the balance sheet were listed the advantages of abiding by convention and on the other of doing what you thought was right. Unfortunately the details of this computation are not available and whatever they were I suspect that Emma, as long as it did not upset anybody, went her own sweet way.

Chaperoning was another considerable preoccupation of Victorian ladies and Emma seems to have taken her duties seriously in this respect. For instance, Henrietta was to take her cousin Fanny Hensleigh and her younger sister Bessie, then aged 26, to the Lubbock's Ball. If Henrietta did not feel "brisk enough", Emma decided to go herself for half-an-hour and then "leave them to their fate"![13]

Bessie, a lady of sweet temperament and irreproachable qualities does not appear from her photographs to be a likely target for improper advances, but then the proprieties had to be observed.

Henrietta herself, well chaperoned by Emma, went to a "working man's ball". She "danced with a grocer and a shoemaker who looked and behaved exactly like everybody else and were quite as well dressed. The ladies were nicely dressed but not expensively, and much more decently than their betters are in a ballroom now-a-days"; not quite so décolleté perhaps!

When she was older Emma relived her young married life in her grandchildren. Francis' wife, Amy, had died giving birth to Bernard in 1876, so the father with his baby son came to live at Down. Bernard, there is no doubt, was a joy to his grandparents in their old age.

On one occasion Emma spent much of the day watching him race up and down the Longwalk on his tricycle being timed by his father. Later she herself took over the office of timekeeper when Francis had to go off to London.

Nevertheless, she must have been very strict about some things that seem to us today to be rather fussy. For instance, when Bernard had been staying away in Wales with his dead mother's family, there was much rejoicing on his return; BUT he was "as brown and red as possible, so I don't believe he has worn his hat, which I don't approve of."[14]

However, grandchildren were not invariably an unadulterated joy. In 1883 she took care of Horace's little boy, Erasmus. Although when writing to his father at the end of the visit she declared she would "miss his dear little face", she was hard put to it when "Ras" spent the whole night walking about his room, and she was somewhat thankful that the suggestion that she might take him with her on a visit to her friend Ellen Tollet was not followed up, despite his "dear little face".

In about 1892 there were so many grandchildren visiting Down that a slide was set up. This consisted of "a long shallow wooden tray of polished deal which was hitched by a crosspiece of wood on a step of the stairs and thus reared up as high as was desired. The children came down fast or slow, standing or sitting, according to their desires and the gradient. It could be made almost flat for little children and steep enough to make the big children come down with a grand rush".[15]

Emma was now getting rather old for too raucous behaviour, though boisterous fun, if fairly quiet, was relished and she was not above a little bribery to preserve decorum. "Little Charley" (afterwards Sir Charles Darwin, Master of Christ's College, Cambridge), it appeared, was somewhat high-spirited and chatted incessantly at luncheon in a high-pitched squeak, so that Emma was moved to offer a penny to anyone who talked quietly at the luncheon table. "Shall you give one to Aunt Etty?" "Yes." "Shall you give one to Aunt Bessy?" "Yes." "And to Father and Mother?" "Yes." This had a great effect and she doled out pennies all round. The grown-ups were included only on the first day, but Gwen and Charles earned 10d. each before they went away.[16]

It might appear that the sun was always shining at Down and that nobody ever squabbled or lost their temper. I cannot believe that either of these two states of affairs could have prevailed and I share Gwen Raverat's forebodings when she described her uncles—Charles' and Emma's sons—as being too good to be true. I expect there were occasional rows, but these could not have been countenanced by either of the parents and must soon have subsided from want of opportunity to express them. Certainly there were rainy days, indeed in June 1878 an almost tropical storm broke over Down and water flowed down the Longwalk like a river, overflowing on to the verandah ankle deep. Hailstones battered down on to the glass roof of the verandah in a terrifying manner and if Polly had been out she would, as like as not, have been killed.[17]

In 1847 Emma's Aunt Sarah (Sarah Elizabeth Wedgwood), at the age of sixty-nine, came to live at Petleys in the village of Down so as to be near her niece. She was a tall, gaunt and somewhat severe lady who was treated with invariable courtesy by Emma, but was held in great awe by the children, whose visits to Petleys to see their great-aunt were mercifully rare. Miss Wedgwood affected a profusion of muslin capes and a large Leghorn bonnet with a yellow ribbon. She lived a life of spartan simplicity, existing only for her books and her charities. She had no inclination for social intercourse and never visited in the village. It was far otherwise with her three servants, Mrs. Morrey and her sister

Martha, and Mr. Hemmings. These three gave the children a rapturous welcome and one must suspect that they more often rang the backdoor bell than the front. This somewhat daunting character wore gloves indoors and out; black gloves for putting on coals and shaking hands with children and white gloves for more hygienic operations such as reading books. Although Emma mourned, there might have been a few sighs of well-concealed relief when great-aunt Sarah died in Down House aged seventy-eight.

It was quite otherwise with another Sarah Elizabeth Wedgwood, Emma's elder sister, "Aunt Elizabeth", who came to Trowmers, opposite Petleys, in 1868 aged seventy-five. This was a happy house for the children to visit and although she became blind she retained all her mental and physical energy to the last.

As Henrietta describes it, "She used to be a familiar sight coming into the drawing-room leaning on her stick and with her dog Tony. The first question would always be, 'Where is Emma?' My mother would then put by whatever she was doing in order to go to her. This was sometimes difficult, but she never let any sense of hurry appear and was always ready to give her a warm and equable welcome. She shared all her interests and made constant attempts to protect her from the beggars and impostors who beset her to the end of her life. This devotion and care never failed in the twelve years Aunt Elizabeth lived at [the village of] Down. She died in 1880 aged 87."[18]

With all her family preoccupation, her charities and the care of her often ailing husband, Emma lived a full life. Yet she had time for what in these days might be termed trivialities but which, in reality, are the stuff of living. She played the piano, she was an enthusiastic but erratic performer at whist, her games of backgammon were, as we have seen, phenomenal in their totality, and she made herself responsible for the care of the garden. In addition she was an untiring and interesting letter-writer, a sort of "Dear Octopus" who held the reins of the family firmly but gently together.

For the last ten years of her life, spent during the winter months in Cambridge, patience was her great solace and she used to play at least one game every night as a night-cap before going to bed. In a letter to Henrietta in June 1886 she writes: "Frank and Ellen [Francis' second wife, Ellen Crofts] to dinner and a little whist, after which I succeeded in your patience with only one cheat!"[19]

Perhaps she should have been the chief character in this chapter. Certainly without her Charles would never have accomplished the great work which he did. Peacefully, and writing to her family within a few days of her death, she died with the faithful Henrietta at her side on 2nd October 1896, aged eighty-eight years and four months.

CHAPTER IV
RELIGION AND THE CHURCH

It may properly be asked why, in the story of Down House and the Darwin family, it should be necessary to enter into controversial matters. Unfortunately, Charles himself was the centre of, though no participator in, a public controversy of bewildering proportions and, furthermore, within his own family there were differences of opinion held with such moderation as not to upset, but undoubtedly to colour, the life of the family at Down.

Emma was a practising Christian, using that term to indicate an attention to the formal observances of an organised church; Charles, for most of his life, was not. Undoubtedly this caused some tensions; indeed, the only recorded dissension amongst the children of this remarkably united family was when Francis planned to publish certain of his father's views while Emma was still alive and legal action was contemplated by other members of the family to stop him.

The home of Dr. Robert Waring Darwin, Charles' father, was not remarkable for its involvement in church affairs, but orthodoxy prevailed one would think rather from motives of conformity to current fashion than from any excess of religious zeal. Charles as a boy had the not uncommon faith of children in the intervention of a supernatural power in everyday affairs when summoned by prayer. As a boarder at Shrewsbury School, only a short distance from his home, he would spend his half-holidays with his family and would leave it till the last moment before returning to the school for "call-over". Scampering along the Shrewsbury streets in order to get there in time he prayed as he ran, "firmly believing that the prayer had a very good effect". Whilst still at school he read Law's *Serious Call* and this was said to have had a profound effect on his mind for nearly a year.

After an abortive attempt to read medicine at Edinburgh University he went to Cambridge, where he was recommended by his father to read for the church, the profession of a country clergyman being deemed altogether suitable for one with his taste for shooting and hunting.

In some notes made in the hand of Lady Barlow, Charles' granddaughter, in preparation for the publication of her complete edition of "the Autobiography", she writes that her father told her that in 1827 after giving up medicine as a profession he thought of becoming a parson or it was thought for him. He found it difficult enough even then to drive his reason into accepting the doctrines of the church, although he was for some time afterwards quite orthodox. He studied the Creeds, but had to repeat very often "I believe in the Bible". He was a zealous student of Paley's *Evidences*, which he regarded as the epitome of logical reasoning and he would observe, "Now Paley proves the creeds to be true from the Bible, therefore they must be true".[1]

It will be recalled that Charles took the Bible with him on his voyage in the *Beagle* and throughout that voyage it was recognised by the officers, and even by the perfervidly religious Captain FitzRoy, that he was a religious man in the orthodox sense. Indeed, he himself says, "I never gave up Christianity till I was forty years of age", and then as an *apologia*, "It is not supported by evidence". He realised from his study of the Bible that the Gospels were not a contemporary account of the life of Jesus and that they were inconsistent; and he could not subscribe to the view that unbelievers, in which he included his father, his brother and most of his best friends, would be everlastingly punished.

In 1860 he writes to his friend Professor Asa Gray in America:

"I am inclined to look at everything resulting from designed laws, with the details, whether good or bad, left to the working out of what we may call chance. Not that this notion *at all* satisfies me. I feel most deeply that the whole subject is too profound for the human intellect. A dog might as well speculate on the mind of Newton. Let each man hope and believe what he can."[2]

In 1866 a Mrs. Boole wrote to Charles to ask whether the theories of Natural Selection were inconsistent with a belief in God. This is a very charming and modest letter and Charles replied, with his usual courtesy to an informed stranger and at length. In the course of his reply he wrote:

"I may, however, remark that it has always appeared to me more satisfactory to look at the immense amount of pain and suffering in this world as the inevitable result of the natural sequence of events, i.e. general laws, rather than the direct intervention of God, though I am aware this is not logical with reference to an omniscient [? omnipotent] deity."[3]

Finally we may quote Charles' opinion of his own position on religious matters:

"In my most extreme fluctuation I have never been an atheist in the sense of denying the existence of God. I think that generally (and more and more as I grow older), but not always, an agnostic would be the most correct description of my state of mind."[4]

With the publication of *The Origin of Species* controversy exploded. The authority of the historical account of the creation of the world as related in the first chapter of *Genesis* had been attacked. Today it is difficult to realise the shock and horror which greeted the publication of this great work; a work which stated with infinite care and considerable reserve the evidence for the theory of evolution and the mechanism by which it might be achieved, namely the Natural Selection of Favourable Variations.

Principal amongst those who reacted so vehemently were most members of the Established Church and their champion was the renowned Bishop of Oxford, Samuel Wilberforce.

It is a far cry from Down House to the library of the museum at Oxford University, where at a meeting of the British Association in 1860 the battle was joined. Before an audience of over 700 the Bishop spoke against the theory of evolution in his customary bold oratorical style. As one who was there recalls, he ridiculed Darwin badly and Huxley savagely, but all in such dulcet tones, so persuasive a manner, and in such well-turned periods that those who had been inclined to blame the President for allowing a discussion

that could serve no scientific purpose now forgave him. Carried away by his own eloquence the Bishop concluded his half-hour harangue by needling Thomas Huxley who was sitting on the platform beside him, "And is it", he enquired turning to Huxley, "that it is from your grandfather or your grandmother's side that you are descended from an ape?" To challenge a Huxley on matters pertaining to biological science is a venturesome exercise even today and the Bishop certainly got what he asked for. What was actually said by Huxley, who rose in his wrath to reply, is not accurately known, as no precise record was kept, but the same eye witness related it in a letter to a fellow student shortly after the event as follows:

"I assert, and I repeat, that a man has no reason to be ashamed of having an ape for his grandfather. If there were an ancestor whom I should feel shame in recalling, it would be a *man*, a man of restless and versatile intellect, who, not content with [? an equivocal] success in his own sphere of activity, plunges into scientific questions with which he has no real acquaintance, only to obscure them by an aimless rhetoric, and distract the attention of his hearers from the real point at issue by eloquent digression and skilled appeals to religious prejudice."[5]

Charles Darwin himself was not present; he alleged that the state of his health would not permit it. Nevertheless, in letters to Hooker and Huxley a few days later he exalted in the triumph of "our cause".

Two years later Huxley delivered two lectures in Edinburgh entitled "Man's Place in Nature". *The Witness* of 11th January 1862 records that,

"The audience applauded this anti-scriptural and most debasing theory . . . standing in blasphemous contradiction to biblical narrative and doctrine, instead of expressing their resentment at the foul outrage committed upon them individually, and upon the whole species as made in the likeness of God by deserting the hall in a body, or using some more emphatic form of protest against the corruption of youth by the vilest and beastliest paradox ever invented in ancient or modern times by Pagan or Christians.

(It is surprising that) the meeting did not instantly resolve itself into a 'Gorilla Emancipation Society' or propose to hear a lecture from an apostle of mormonism. Even this would be a less offensive, mischievous and inexcusable exhibition than was made in the recent two lectures by Professor Huxley."

Such then were the clouds of dust sent swirling up from the arena as one side after the other explored the limits of hyperbole in support of its claims. All the while Charles was staying quietly at Down, not perhaps enjoying the rather unedifying spectacle, but relieved, no doubt, that "the state of his health" determined for him the role of *eminence grise* rather than that of a soldier of the line.

Apart from these historic battles in public, Charles' relations with individual clergymen were generally amicable. In the village he helped to form the Friendly Club, he was Treasurer to the Coal Club and acted as a County Magistrate. All these activities brought him into close and harmonious contact with Mr. Brodie Innes, Vicar of Down between 1846 and 1869, and they became fast friends for the whole of Charles' life. His conduct towards the Brodie Innes family was one of unvarying kindness and they, in their turn, regarded him with warm affection.

In parish matters Charles took an active interest, especially those concerning the school and village charities, to which he made liberal contributions. He was a loyal supporter of the Vicar and held that his loyalty should always be given to the clergyman who was best informed and who carried the ultimate responsibility.

Many years later Brodie Innes, writing from Milton Brodie, assured Henrietta that they never attacked each other. Indeed, before he knew Charles, Brodie Innes had adopted and publicly expressed the principle that the study of natural history, geology and science should be pursued without reference to the Bible.

In his turn Charles confided to Brodie Innes the context of a letter he had received from another clergyman saying that he would laugh and admit that he had some excuse for bitterness . . . when this clergyman asserts that he had vainly searched the English language to find terms to express his contempt for him and all Darwinism.

They often differed, but Brodie Innes claimed that Charles was one of those rare mortals from whom one can differ and yet feel no shade of animosity. He recalled that on his last visit to Down, Charles said at his dinner-table, "Brodie Innes and I have been fast friends for many years and we never thoroughly agreed on any subject but once, and then we stared hard at each other and thought one of us must be very ill".[6]

When the Bishop of Oxford produced a blistering review of *The Origin of Species* in *The Quarterly*, Brodie Innes was staying in the same house when Charles' letter arrived advising him to read it, "it makes such capital fun of me and my grandfather". He showed the letter to the Bishop, who said, "I'm very glad he takes it in this way, he is such a capital fellow".

Unfortunately the excellent Brodie Innes left Down in 1869 to be replaced for a short time by the Rev. Henry Powell, of whom little is recorded, and then in 1871 by George S. ffinden, who remained the incumbent for forty years. What he got up to during those forty years it is hard to say. His reputation is so tarnished by rumour one would be excused for suspecting that he indulged in black magic. The truth is that he was probably just a silly old man, but he certainly caused great distress to Emma, particularly over his management of the affairs of the village school. There is the vaguest scent of a scandal but it would be indecent at this time to sniff around. Whatever may have been the trouble, after a few years of his incumbency, Emma, and those other members of the family who went to church, never entered Down Church again. They went to Keston Church, which was quite a business compared with Down, as Keston is two miles away and involved a muddy walk there and back if, as has been recorded, Emma objected on principle to calling out the carriage on Sundays; perhaps she thought church-going was adequate excuse, at least the coachman could attend the service himself.

The evidence for Mr. ffinden's delinquencies comes not only from the Darwin family, between whom and a strict clergyman there might in any event have been some mutual disrespect, but also from Miss Willis, the headmistress of Downe House School, a muscular Christian if ever there was one, and the principal character of the next section of this book, who referred to the Rev. George S. ffinden in my very hearing as "that wicked man". So perhaps there was something in it. In any event the main brunt of the affair fell on

Emma, who was in every sense a practising Christian, so this confrontation has no bearing on the religious convictions, or lack of them, in the Darwin family.

When Charles died in 1882 the family wished to have him buried at Down, ffinden or no ffinden, but the able advocacy of Sir John Lubbock persuaded them that it would be only proper for this great man to be buried in Westminster Abbey. The letter to Dr. Bradley, Dean of Westminster, requesting this privilege was signed by twenty members of Parliament, amongst whom of course was Sir John Lubbock himself and also, interestingly enough, the young Henry Campbell Bannerman, eventually Prime Minister.

And so it was that Charles Darwin was buried close to the tomb of Newton at the junction of the north transept and the aisle. The pall-bearers on that historic occasion of 26th April were: Sir John Lubbock; Mr. Huxley; James Russell Lowell, the American Minister; A. R. Wallace, who so nearly forestalled Darwin in publishing his theory of evolution; Sir Joseph Hooker, curator of Kew Gardens; W. Spottiswoode, President of the Royal Society; the Earl of Derby; and the Duke of Argyll.

Charles, I am sure, would have marvelled at all these distinguished and busy people paying him such homage.

There is a letter from Major Leonard Darwin, his son, to Dr. O. J. R. Howarth, who lived in Down House whilst it was the property of the British Association, and who wrote the history of Down village, saying, "what I want is that it should be known that the church was very broad-minded on this occasion."

Indeed it was.

On the following Sunday, May 1st, there was a memorial service in Westminster Abbey. The sermon was to have been preached by the Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr. Archibald Campbell Tait. A young clergyman, the Rev. L. E. Goodwin, son of the Bishop of Carlisle, was at Lambeth Palace on the day before. The Archbishop appeared to be in a pensive mood and turning to the young man told him to take a letter at once to his father, to place it personally in his hands and to get it receipted. After scurrying around fruitlessly the young clergyman eventually tracked his father down to the Athenaeum Club, where he presented the Archbishop's letter. When he had read it the Bishop of Carlisle paced up and down and then wrote a reply, telling Mr. Goodwin to inform his mother that he, the Bishop, would not be home until late. At once he went into the writing room at the Athenaeum and set about the task of composing the sermon, each sheet of which bears the crest of the club.

Why the Archbishop, at the last moment, handed over the task of preaching this sermon to Harvey Goodwin, the Bishop of Carlisle, is not altogether clear. Dr. Tait was a broad-minded scholar who had once been headmaster of Rugby School, which experience must have conditioned him to the possibility that mankind was from anthropoid stock. Whatever his misgivings may have been, he shied away from the task and so the Bishop of Carlisle at very short notice prepared a sermon which must constitute a historic document in the annals of the Church of England.

Young Goodwin accompanied his father the next day to the Abbey and observed that the congregation was "vastly notable". In fact the choice of the Bishop was an excellent

one, as the following extracts from the sermon will attest. The Bishop of Carlisle was *almost* a Darwinian and, as his son says, "Today it is easy enough to be a Darwinian, but in those days a man holding the position he did, found it not so easy".[7]

The Bishop took as his text "Complete in Him", from *Colossians* ii, 10. He said many important and generous things; his address was one of great dignity and substance and the manuscript was preserved by his son L. E. Goodwin in Massachusetts after he had lent it, somewhat nervously, to *The Times* correspondent the following day. The Rev. Goodwin eventually returned it into the safe-keeping of the Darwin family. The following is a short extract from this sermon.

"It would have been unfortunate if anything had occurred to give weight and currency to the foolish notion which some have diligently propagated, but for which Mr. Darwin was not responsible, that there is a necessary conflict between knowledge of nature and a belief in God. On the other hand it was a happy thing and one of good augury for our country, of good augury perhaps for the world, that it should be thought suitable to bury the remains of the most conspicuous man of science in this generation with the fullest expression of Christian hope, that no objection should be offered by those who had the power of objection and that the course so taken should commend itself to the conscience of the country.

And taking this view of Mr. Darwin, how admirable was his devotion to the one great work of his life; he gave himself to the study of nature with all his heart and soul and strength, in a coarse worldly sense he had nothing to gain by it; nay much of his work seems to have cost him not only labour but suffering and weakness of health through his whole life. Is there nothing to be learnt from such steady devotion and industry? And then like other great men he seems to have been conspicuous for modesty, fancying that other men could do as much as himself if only they tried.

And then so calm and apparently living in an atmosphere so much removed from the storms of passions and controversy. A brave, simple-hearted, truth-loving man; one whom I knew only by his writings and through common friends, and concerning whom thus known I have ventured to make the few remarks which I have now offered to you. I have said that I think like other great men he has presented to us in his life and his works points of character and conduct which we may well admire and imitate, though we ourselves may have no title to greatness, and though also we do not accept as necessarily great and good everything which a great man may have said or done."[8]

Most clerics were by this time of like mind with Dr. Harvey Goodwin and in the *Sunday Magazine* of 1882 the Rev. Henry C. Ewart reported that many pulpit discourses followed the Abbey ceremony.

"So far as we have observed, the general tone of these discourses was one of hearty appreciation, of profound respect, and of gratitude for all light thrown upon the works of God. St. Paul's exhortation 'whatsoever things are true' has been remarkably followed at least recently by Christian teachers in dealing with the works of men like Darwin. The attitude of his mind was always so reverent, his language so modest, his sincerity and straightforwardness so evident, that these qualities did much to attract the sympathy even of opponents."

"Perhaps," the article concludes, "we need not wait to be sure of a man's detailed creed before we acknowledge his labour to be of this high type (seeking the Glory of God). Where reverence is, and patience and self-denial; where all private ends are subordinated to the one desire of making God's universe more intelligible to wondering eyes, there must be no hesitation in recognising the life's work of a scientific man or a sacred ministry in the temple 'that hath foundation, whose builder and maker is God'."

Had it been left at that, dignity would have been preserved on both sides. Unfortunately it was not.

Perhaps the trouble arose from the belief entertained by certain minds of strong conviction that a saintly life cannot be led except by a practising Christian, preferably of the Anglican persuasion. It was impossible to conceive that such a good man as Charles Darwin could not, at least towards the end, have seen the light and been converted to the true faith. Thus there grew up a mythology of Charles' death-bed conversion. A somewhat shadowy figure, Lady Hope, plays a prominent part in this mythology. The story varies somewhat according to its source, but in its most compelling form it relates how Lady Hope, an evangelist who was preaching in the village of Down, paid a visit to Charles as he lay in bed during his final illness (an Indian version published in the *Bombay Guardian* in 1916 says that he was wearing a rich purple dressing-gown). Lady Hope apparently found Charles sitting up in bed reading THE BIBLE, or more specifically the Epistle to the Hebrews and he referred to its wonderful depth and beauty, an asseveration which Charles could easily have made. He might well have been reading this epistle either for its beauty or because the epistle presents Christianity in an evolutionary light.

The story now takes on various versions: one that Lady Hope arranged for the Sunday School to sing to him in the summer-house "There is a Green Hill Far Away", after which Charles said "How I wish I had not expressed my theory of evolution as I have done". Another that Charles told Lady Hope that he desired her to collect a congregation and said "in a clear, emphatic voice that he would like to speak to them of Christ Jesus and His salvation, being in a state where he was eagerly savouring the heavenly anticipation of bliss", and yet another in which Charles besought Lady Hope to preach to his own servants. A good deal of the evidence for these incidents has been thoroughly investigated by Pat Sloan and published in *The Humanist* of March 1960, a source which might be regarded by some people as tainted.

However, this altogether unlikely behaviour of Charles Darwin is rigorously challenged by Henrietta who was at his deathbed, and she says that he never recanted any of his scientific views either then or earlier.[9]

The story of his conversion seems to have been fabricated in the U.S.A. In most of the versions hymn-singing comes in and a summer-house where the servants and the villagers sang hymns to him. Henrietta assures us that there was no such summer-house and no servants or villagers sang hymns to him and that the whole story has no foundation whatsoever. Perhaps Henrietta was carried away by her indignation because there *was* a summer-house at the end of the Sandwalk.

In 1922 Mr. Tucker of the Salvation Army asked Lady Hope *exactly* what happened.

This time she comes up with a slightly different story, that when, after conducting a meeting in the village she visited Charles, she merely found him reading the Epistle to the Hebrews and he referred to its depth and beauty.[10]

However, the manuscript of a letter to Mr. Tucker from Henrietta which is kept at Down avers that Charles never met Lady Hope and this is confirmed by Francis, who was with him throughout his last months.

As late as May 8th 1958 Lady Barlow, another grand-daughter, joins the fray and in a letter to the *Scotsman* she reminds readers that—in no contemporary account of Darwin's death, in no obituary, in no local paper, nor even in the funeral sermon in Westminster Abbey is there the slightest hint that Darwin, towards the end, altered his views of religion or of evolution.

Pat Sloan, in *The Humanist* of April 1965, tries to sort out the facts. There are various reports that Darwin encouraged his servants to attend services conducted by a certain Mr. J. W. C. Fegan, a Plymouth Brother, who preached in the village, but whether this is true or not cannot be substantiated. Mr. Fegan used to bring youngsters from a London boys' home to camp at Down and it is true that before they departed they sang hymns to Darwin in front of the house. He expressed himself as being well pleased with their performances and gave them each sixpence. He then said what good philanthropic work was being done by the organisation. On another occasion Mr. Fegan asked Darwin whether he could use the Reading Room in the village for his services, as the tents were unsuitable, and he readily gave his assent, praising the work that Fegan had done in the village in reclaiming drunkards.

Sloan suggests that the complicated fabric of Darwin's conversion and the story of Lady Hope might derive from the possibility that Lady Hope, as a maiden lady, was Fegan's helper and visited Charles at that time. This would fit in with Henrietta's declaration that a Lady Hope had never met her father without branding this no doubt splendid woman as a liar.

That this troublesome matter is not yet dead is evidenced by a pamphlet published by the Evolution Protest Movement as late as February 1970, which digs into this well-manured soil but comes up with no treasure. The article is a bit weak on facts, describing Gwen Raverat as "Lady Nora's sister" and, without adding any evidence, but with a fascinatingly appropriate metaphor, describes Darwin's anthropology, embryology, and theology as "all at sea"!

My own reaction to all this is—what does it matter?

On a more serious plane the *Contemporary Review* of May 1932, in an article by Frederick Spence, gives some indication of the church's attitude by 1909 when the centenary of Charles' birth and the jubilee of the publication of *The Origin* was celebrated at Cambridge. The Catholic University of Louvain unanimously agreed to accept an invitation to take part in the ceremonies and Canon Dorledot attended as their representative. He subsequently brought out a little book entitled *Darwinism and Catholic Thought*, wherein he maintained that the theory of natural evolution was agreeable to the Catholic conscience. This book received the official papal *nihil obstat* and *Imprimatur*.

Nothing could be more final than that!

The situation with Emma was altogether different. Henrietta recalls how when they were children their mother was not only sincerely religious, but definite in her beliefs.

"She went regularly to church and took the Sacrament. She read the Bible with us and taught us a simple Unitarian Creed, though we were baptized and confirmed in the Church of England. In her youth religion must have largely filled her life, and there is evidence in the papers she left that it distressed her in her early married life to know that my father did not share her faith."[11]

At one time Emma wrote two long letters to Charles gently upbraiding him for his agnosticism. In the first she makes the perceptive observation that his habit in scientific pursuits of believing nothing till it is proved may have influenced his mind in other things which cannot be proved in the same way and which, if true, are likely to be beyond human comprehension.

But this, after all, is just what Charles said in his letter to Asa Gray about the dog and the mind of Newton, so that their views were not poles apart.

In the second slightly shorter letter in 1861, when Charles had been having one of his periods of sickness, she writes:

"When I see your patience, deep compassion for others, self command, and above all gratitude for the smallest thing done to help you, I cannot help longing that these precious feelings should be offered to Heaven for the sake of your daily happiness."[12]

That is, Emma wished and hoped that he might accept the strength and the consolation of prayer.

Going along with this formal devotion, and no doubt at least to some extent deriving from it, was Emma's essential kindness of heart. In 1891 when she was living as a widow in the summer months at Down she would have Eliza, a blind girl, to stay with her and she arranged to have her maid Matheson teach her to knit. When William, the invalid son of her coachman, was in a convalescent home at Seaford, she performed for him endless acts of kindness. Henrietta says that her mind would be constantly occupied with some plan or scheme for giving pleasure or of saving suffering, many of them taking thought or trouble. She had various old men, for whom she had a hungry appetite for all the cast-off clothes of the family. In this connection she writes to Henrietta "I have purloined a lovely suit of clothes from Frank." As Henrietta says, "Giving was the atmosphere in which she lived."[13]

It is easy to scoff at such small-scale acts of consideration and kindness when hundreds of thousands of children in the industrial north were slaves in factories, when poverty and destitution were rampant and when, except for Charles' clubs in the village and his advocacy of the abolition of slavery in America, nothing much is attempted to redress these terrible wrongs. Emma, of course, had maids to serve her needs; when her children had grown up she had no specific occupation to engage her attention; and she and Charles had plenty of money. How easy it was from the comfort of Down to do little things for people not so happily circumstanced. Well, perhaps it was, but the vast majority of families so placed in that period, while following conscientiously the prevailing habit of

worship at church, were neither more nor less concerned about individual suffering than they are today and certainly less affected by major social evils.

The Darwins, Charles and Emma, were not of the stuff of the Frys and the Gurneys, but they were good people and within the radius of their family, their friends and their servants they created a happiness and serenity around them which many families might envy today.

CHAPTER V
CULTURE AND EDUCATION

The culture of the Darwin family was catholic and embraced a wide spectrum of taste. Coupled with this there was their splendid propensity for saying exactly what they thought without fear of appearing either ridiculous or unfashionable.

Thus Emma could describe Tennyson's *Queen Mary* as "not nearly so tedious as Shakespeare", and Bessy, her younger daughter, has endeared herself to posterity by proclaiming that "Henry IV would be such a good play without Falstaff".

It was the habit of all members of the Darwin household to have more than one book going at the same time and Emma strikes a harmonious chord in undedicated minds when she writes to Henrietta in June 1892, "Our *stiff* book is Henry James' stories and our *light* one Leslie Stephens' *Hours in a Library*. He is so pleasant after all that subtlety!"[1]

I dare say that Emma was more critical in much of her speech and writing than in her thoughts because she was entirely captivated by the charms of Imogen in *Cymbeline* and Viola in *Twelfth Night*. However, in writing to her Aunt Fanny Allen in March 1866, in regard to a visit to London, she says, "My event was . . . going to see Hamlet with Fechter. The acting was beautiful, but I should prefer anything to Shakespeare, I am ashamed to say!"[2]

Perhaps she went to see Shakespeare in a conscious effort to improve her mind, which she was not above doing. For instance, she writes to her son-in-law Richard Litchfield saying how glad she is that he is reading Plato because he will be able to tell her whether she could endure any of it. "I have always," she says, "had a curiosity to know something about the ancients."[3] The fact that she imagined that she could fulfil this ambition by reading Plato's *Republic* indicates an endearing simplicity of mind.

Nevertheless, Emma read a number of serious, even profound, books for their interest, although even here she can be eclectic. In Lanfrey's *Memories of Napoleon I* she skips the description of the Russian retreat "as it is too horrid".[4] She reads the life of a nun, Henrietta Kerr, and somewhat acidly says that "It is curious to compare the mind of a real Catholic and that of a semi-catholic like Miss Sewell".[5] Once again before embarking on a serious venture she seeks the advice of her son-in-law Richard Litchfield as to whether she would enjoy reading Milman's *History of the Jews*, which had been recommended in an essay by Lady Verney which she had read recently.

As a student of Mme d'Epinay who sets the scene, she was very interested in Morley's *Life of Rousseau*. This appealed to her particularly because Morley's sense of propriety is very strong and he glosses over nothing of Rousseau's crimes or odiousness. However, she cannot quite excuse him for constantly quoting from *The Confessions* as if he believed in them.[6] It was quite otherwise with St. Beuve's review of Mme d'Epinay's *Memories*,

in which he entirely ignores the horrible indecencies "which I call very immoral". She thinks that Stanley's book on *Darkest Africa* must be the most tiresome book in the world, and I dare say it is, consisting of long verbatim discussions that end in nothing;[7] and Froude's *Life of Beaconsfield* is little better as "he uses it as a medium for his own opinions".[8]

There are, however, still some reserves of acerbity in store. Writing to Henrietta in 1895, aged 88, she says "I am stuck in Balfour (*The Foundations of Belief*). His argument about the uncertainty of right seems so feeble to me that I think I can't understand it. What I do understand makes me think less of his good sense."[9] It is also deemed quite foolish of Balfour to consider that morality is impossible without religion. No doubt she had Charles vividly in mind.

But the real love of her life was the novel. Novels were read aloud in the family circle, generally by Emma, but sometimes by Charles or Henrietta. The art of reading aloud was carefully nurtured and Emma was a considerable authority on style. As late as 1892 when her maid Matheson (who was an excellent reader) was on holiday she engages as a substitute a lady who is described as being "too good and makes the conversations so dramatic that they sound vulgar",[10] and vulgarity, next to lack of good sense, was something that Emma would not endure.

Because of this habit of family reading aloud, Emma's and Charles' tastes were very similar; indeed Charles was prepared to enjoy any moderately well written novel provided it did not have an unhappy ending, "against which", as he said, "there should be a law made", and because, as we have seen, he often fell asleep during the afternoon reading, it probably did not matter very much what was being read provided it was "moderately well written".

Novels were, nevertheless, taken very seriously and their style and characterisation endlessly debated in letters and discussions on the verandah on summer days. There is no denying it, Emma tended to be critical. In fact it is difficult in perusing the family letters to discover unadulterated praise of more than a very few authors or their novels.

Dickens and Thackeray were not popular although extensively read. As Emma has said, "Half of the *Mutual Friend* is quite unreadable, though we like the other half very much".[11] She tantalisingly omits to say which half. Of Thackeray her only recorded comment is "How I hate Thackeray's women. He makes Mrs. Pen and Laura behave exactly like the women in *Ruth* who are so detestable and Thackeray thinks it quite right. I rejoiced when that tiresome Helen died and there was an end to all the praises and raptures about her."[12]

Walter Scott was universally admired, especially *Guy Mannering* and *The Antiquary*, but the real favourites were Jane Austen and Mrs. Gaskell, whose novels were read over and over again until they were known almost by heart.

Middlemarch was rather "strong meat" and of course George Eliot was rendered almost out of court because of her propensity for sad endings.

Trollope's seemingly blameless *Vicar of Bulhampton* is categorised by Emma as "containing some of his best—all about the miller and the Dissenting Chapel troubles and the Vicar's character, but the love affair is simply disgusting!"[13] She is, however,

sufficiently interested to read the *Life of Mrs. Trollope*, whom she admired for working untiringly to support her dying son and her daughter, although Emma considered her book to be somewhat distasteful.

Stevenson is viewed with some caution. Writing to George in 1896 she says, "I had a snug evening with Mildred [her daughter-in-law] reading part of the broken novel of R. L. Stevenson, in which he gives most elaborate descriptions of characters you don't care for. He has no notion of what is tiresome or not."[14]

A novel should obviously be interesting, sensible and moral. Her taste in poetry was very restricted. When quite young she had marked a few of her favourite poems in Charles' copy of Wordsworth, but the only poet that appealed to her was Tennyson and that was more or less confined to *In Memoriam*. In 1889 she read Brimley's *Essay on Tennyson* and writes, "I really think it will set me on reading some of his poems". But the letter continues, "My reading of Tennyson has come to an untimely end, and I shall never really care for anything of his but some bits of *In Memoriam*".[15]

Emma was a competent pianist and would play to Charles on her grand piano each evening after their game of backgammon. Because his compositions were Charles' favourites, she no doubt played a great deal of Beethoven. She would accompany Francis on his bassoon and, if there were a third performer available, play a number of Mozart or Haydn trios. Her taste in music is difficult to discern and there is one very perplexing letter to Henrietta in 1889 in which she writes "I had a visit from Mrs. Newall to-day. She played a movement of Brahms, which satisfied me never to hear another, though there were grand sort of north wind gleams in it, but not the vestige of a tune."[16]

Until she was eighty she would play Mozart trios with Francis taking the violoncello parts on his bassoon and Richard Litchfield taking the violin parts on his concertina. It must have presented a charming picture, like children enjoying themselves quite oblivious of how ridiculous they might appear to the grown-ups, and having the greatest fun.

In matters of art Emma's taste goes unrecorded, but from the original pictures which survive in the drawing-room at Down, these would not be so remarkable as to inspire comment: some tasteful water-colours by Goodwin, some Richmond drawings, some silhouettes and a great deal of functional, strong, comfortable and undistinguished furniture.

Charles' tastes in literature are more readily available to us in his autobiography. We may assume that his choice of novels must have corresponded almost exactly with that of Emma, as reading these was a combined operation. Besides demanding a happy ending to a novel he remarks "A novel according to my taste, does not come into the first-class unless it contains some person whom one can love, and if a pretty woman so much the better". "Novels," he says, "which are works of the imagination . . ., have been for years a wonderful relief and pleasure to me, and I often bless all novelists."[17] Like other members of the family he had two or three books in hand at any one time; for Charles these were usually a novel, a biography and a book of travel. The only novel, other than those referred to above, which is mentioned specifically by Charles is in a letter to Hooker in 1861 when he asks him whether he had read Wilkie Collins' *Woman in*

White. "The plot," he says, "is wonderfully interesting." He tells Hooker that he did not enjoy *The Mill on the Floss*, but he thought *Silas Marner* "a charming little story".[18]

Charles read *The Times* every day, although like others before and since he was sometimes driven to fury by what he read. In a letter to Professor Asa Gray in America in 1863 discussing slavery in relation to the Civil War, he uses a word which even in *oratio obliqua* is almost shocking coming from his pen. "*The Times*," he says, "is getting more detestable than ever. My good wife wishes to give it up [*The Times* was supporting the South], but I tell her that is a pitch of heroism to which only a woman is equal. To give up the 'Bloody Old *Times*', as Cobbett used to call it, would be to give up meat, drink and air."[19]

He was a life-long subscriber to *The Gardener's Chronicle* and to *The Athenaeum* and would read *Nature* regularly, although the physics and mathematics which constituted the main parts of that journal then as they do today were almost entirely incomprehensible to him. He claimed he got a kind of satisfaction from reading articles he could not understand.[20]

Much of his scientific reading was in German, which he hammered away at with a dictionary. This must have been really uphill work with all those compound words which are very difficult to find in a dictionary even if they are there; and his pronunciation of German was completely anglicised, like Sir Winston Churchill's French, so that if he asked his son Francis, who was a competent German scholar, what a certain phrase meant, this was usually completely incomprehensible. In such circumstances one can sympathise with him in replying to Karl Marx thanking him for a signed copy of *Das Kapital* and extolling the virtues of this book of some seven hundred pages, when an examination of his copy shows that it is cut only up to page 105. Many students reading it in English translation reach only half as far.

He managed to get the pith of Bronn's *Geschichte der Natur*, but as he remarked to Hooker, "It is pretty stiff German".

With French he was far more at home and often expressed the wish that the Germans could have expressed themselves as understandably and put their verbs in the proper place.

In regard to the treatment of books themselves Charles was ambivalent. On the one hand he had no compunction in cutting a book in half if it was too heavy to read comfortably lying down, as he did with Lyell's *Elements of Geology*; on the other he was much concerned with the cutting of the pages.[21] He hated to have to cut the pages of a book with a knife because the frayed edges collected the dust. In a letter to *The Athenaeum* in 1867 he thought that this was a habit to which he was forced by the conservatism of the booksellers, only less barbarous than that of a lady of his acquaintance who used her thumb. All the presentation copies of his own books had their pages machine cut.

In regard to poetry, like Emma he admired Tennyson, but extended his approval to *Enoch Arden*, which was much appreciated; and while living in London for two years before his marriage, besides reading some metaphysical books which he failed to understand, he read Coleridge's *Excursion* twice through. On the voyage of the *Beagle* a copy

of Milton's poems was the book that he chose to take with him on his exploratory excursions into the interior of South America.

As he grew older, however, he lost his taste for these pursuits and writing in his autobiography in 1876 he regrets that during the previous twenty or thirty years his mind seemed to have changed. Up to the age of thirty he read a great deal of Milton, Gray, Byron, Wordsworth, Coleridge and Shelley, though Keats was never a favourite. As a boy at Shrewsbury he took an intense delight in Shakespeare, especially the historical plays and *Macbeth*, which he knew nearly by heart. He would sit reading these on a window-sill cut into the thick walls of the school library. Of the ancient poets, only Horace pleased him, and after his school days he was unable to read the Greek poets except in translation.

"But now for many years, I cannot endure to read a line of poetry. I have tried lately to read Shakespeare and found it so intolerably dull that it nauseated me. I also lost my taste for pictures and music. This curious and lamentable loss of the higher aesthetic tastes is all the odder as books on history, biographies and travel (independent of any scientific facts which they may contain), and essays on all sorts of subjects interest me as much as ever they did . . . and if I had to live my life again, I would have made a rule to read some poetry and listen to some music at least once every week; for perhaps the part of my brain now atrophied would thus have kept active through use. The loss of these tastes is a loss of happiness and may possibly be injurious to the intellect, and more probably to the moral character, by enfeebling the emotional part of our nature."[22]

How Charles at any age appreciated music is quite incomprehensible. Throughout his life he was quite unable to recognise any tune, even *God Save the Queen* if the tempo were slightly varied, and the only tune he ever hummed was a Tahitian melody which he had picked up during the voyage of the *Beagle*. Nevertheless, he enjoyed Emma playing to him and even if he could not recognise the tune he had his favourites and he made a little list of these if she told him what they were called. When she played these for him, he vaguely recognised that he had heard them before. When young he went to quite considerable trouble to listen to music. At Cambridge he would go on weekdays to King's College Chapel to listen to the anthem and sometimes invited some of the choristers to come to his room at Christ's College to sing to him.

He was particularly fond of the choruses from *The Messiah*, and Handel was always his favourite, with Beethoven and Mozart close second. One gathers that he liked plenty of decibels and harmonies, what he called "grand harmonies". In singing he was very sensitive to style and much enjoyed the performances of his friend Mrs. Lushington, who would visit the Darwin family at Down, and he was roused to enthusiasm on one auspicious occasion when Hans Richter performed on Emma's piano in the drawing-room.

Whilst still at Cambridge he went all the way over to Birmingham to a "music meeting", where he heard Mme Malibran sing arias from several operas which gave him the most intense satisfaction; and after he passed *Little-Go* he intended, as he says in a letter to his kinsman W. D. Fox, to go to London for a few days to hear an opera.[23]

In 1845, after three years at Down, he was writing to J. M. Herbert, "though you cannot come here this autumn, I do hope you and Mrs. Herbert will come in the winter,

and we will have lots of talk of old times and lots of Beethoven".[24] But, by 1868, he had written to Hooker, "I am glad you were at the 'Messiah', it is the one thing I should like to hear again, but I dare say I should find my soul too dried up to appreciate it as in the old days—I am a withered leaf for every subject except Science".[25]

One can understand, with the onset of old age and with all Charles' other preoccupations, the atrophy of a faculty so fragile, but what remains a mystery is that, tone deaf as he appears to have been, he ever delighted in what Sir Thomas Beecham called the noise music makes. That this was genuine there can be no doubt.

We know little of Charles' views on the graphic arts, but I would suspect that his taste was a little severe. At Cambridge he made friends with an undergraduate called Whitley, who was eventually Senior Wrangler and afterwards a Canon. With him Charles would visit the Fitzwilliam Museum, where he spent hours studying the line engravings of Raphael Morghan and Müller. His taste for pictures lasted for several years and on his return from the *Beagle* he visited the National Gallery not infrequently. Later in life he saw some of Turner's paintings in Ruskin's bedroom, being at the time tactfully noncommital. He said afterwards that he couldn't understand what Ruskin saw in them.

Whatever natural predisposition for the arts Charles may have harboured within his genes this had little chance for development and, as the years went by, it died of inanition. The kind of music that was available to him in the concert halls of the time demanded some concentration to appreciate; Charles required relaxation and this he found in novels. Today he might have been a selective but regular observer of some television programmes. I am sure he would not have missed an episode of *The Forsyte Saga.*

We may well enquire what educational background led to this uncommon cultural atmosphere. In the case of Emma, little has been recorded of her own education and we may assume that it conformed to the usual pattern of an early nineteenth-century household in a large country house. No doubt governesses supervised the reading of approved books, and the study of French and perhaps German would have been encouraged. Certainly in Emma's case piano lessons must have loomed large in her curriculum. Then there was embroidery, at which Emma was expert till her very old age, with perhaps drawing and water-colour painting, although to my knowledge no examples of the latter survive. Arithmetic and spelling would have been early accomplishments. Emma's spelling was always more reliable than Charles', who throughout the voyage of the *Beagle* spelt "broad", "broard"; and "yacht", "yatch". When signing on as a local magistrate this event unfortunately took place on the eighth of the month and throughout the document Charles has written "eightth". Calligraphy may have played a part with pot-hooks and so on because Emma's writing is beautifully clear in contrast to Charles' small and sometimes undecipherable script; so that, when she took over the account books in 1866 they become, relatively speaking, a joy to read.

If we know little or nothing about Emma's own education, there is a lot of information about her views on how it should be conducted. In regard to the education of little children she was, early in her married life, advised by her aunt, Mme Sismondi. She was recommended to supervise her children's education herself and not to endure "the melancholy, the discomfort and the disquiet of keeping a governess". An "upper maid", if of suitable

character and disposition, could teach them to read and Mme Sismondi relates with approval the plan of a friend of hers who never gave her little children lessons of longer than ten minutes at a time.[26] Emma was of like mind and treated her children very liberally with respect to them as individuals. Punishment is rarely if ever recorded and physical punishment never; but after all they were rather exceptional children.

Emma's views on corporal punishment were strongly held. She was actively interested in the welfare of the village school and was horrified to discover the frequency with which corporal punishment was administered, suspecting that there was an element of sadism in it, as the following extract from a letter to Henrietta written in 1884 attests.

"I went to see Mrs. Skinner [the schoolmaster's wife] about the school and she had put down the dates of the punishments. It was four times in the week, besides a flogging for some moral offence. One caning for blotting his copy-book!! one for talking, and another for not doing dictation or sums right . . . I am sure nothing will cure a man who has a habit of caning for such small offences. It shows he must rather like it."[27]

This affair was particularly worrying for Emma, as at that time Mrs. Skinner was engaged to teach her little grandson Bernard.

Despite Mme Sismondi's advice, as the children grew older a succession of governesses was employed. A favourite was Miss Thorley, who stayed for many years, and she was followed by a German governess, Miss Ludwig, who seems to have been in regular employment for some years and then sporadically. One is tempted to wonder whether she might have been helpful to Charles. As Henrietta says, it was an easy-going education and the governesses gave all the children real affection.

A gift for affection and gentleness seemed to be the most important qualities for a governess in Emma's eyes. Speaking of a friend of hers who had engaged a governess whom Emma knew and liked she writes, "I can never be thankful enough that Mrs. X does not know a word of French or German so that the poor little woman's shortcomings will not be perceived I trust".[28]

In 1888 Emma was asked to contribute to the Shaen memorial at Bedford College (Miss Shaen was an old friend of the family), but she refused to do so for the reason, as she explained in a letter to Henrietta, that "the fact is that I do not care for the Higher Education of women, though I know I ought to"![29]

That Emma's philosophy for the education of children worked splendidly in the case of her own children, their subsequent careers provide ample evidence. How far they might be more widely applicable is another question. Charles' education, although well documented, especially in his autobiography, cannot be said to have had much effect on his subsequent career or on the development of his mind. In fact, I suspect that he thought that the whole business was little more than a waste of time.

After a nursery education, Charles attended Mr. Carr's daily school in Shrewsbury. Here, one may imagine, pot-hooks were unfortunately not included in the syllabus. In 1818, at the age of nine, he was sent to Shrewsbury School, then under the headmastership of the great Dr. Butler, where he stayed until 1825. There the education was strictly classical plus a little ancient history and geography. Charles claims that he was "singularly incapable of mastering any language" and was no good at verse-making, which occupied

a good deal of the curriculum. Similarly he was a dunce at 'maths' with the exception of Euclid, which he liked. Apart from a taste for Horace which he acquired while at Shrewsbury, his schooling seems to have had little effect on him. He could learn quickly by heart and was able to memorise forty to sixty 'lines' during early morning chapel, but these were completely forgotten by the next day. He left the school, as he says, "neither high nor low".

From Shrewsbury he went to Edinburgh University, where his brother Erasmus was already an undergraduate. The intention was for him to read medicine and follow in his father's footsteps. However, the plan did not work out. Charles came to dislike almost everything to do with medicine. With the exception of the chemistry lectures by Professor Hope, the other lectures were uninspiring, especially those of Munro Tertius, who had a reputation for reading his lectures on anatomy from his grandfather's notes. Dr. Duncan's lectures on pharmacology might have been acceptable but they were held in what must have been an unheated lecture hall at 8 a.m. and Charles froze. Nevertheless, he enjoyed the lectures of Dr. Grant and Dr. Coldstream on marine biology and those of Professor Jameson on geology and zoology; and he was elected to the Plinian Society, where papers were read by members to each other, and also to the Royal Medical Society.

Perhaps the most useful accomplishment which he acquired at Edinburgh University was how to stuff birds, an art which he was taught by a negro technician, "a very pleasant and intelligent man", to whom he was thereafter eternally grateful.

After two years of this Charles could take no more and his father agreed to remove him from Edinburgh and send him to Cambridge, where, as has been related, it was intended that he should study for the church.

Before going up, however, he was given private tuition in Shrewsbury to brush up his Greek and so it was not until January 1828 that he went up to Christ's College. There the somewhat desultory nature of his studies was repeated. Mathematics, his old bogey, had once more to be faced.

In the summer vacation a private tutor was engaged, not so much perhaps to brush up his "maths" as to try and drive some into him; but he had, as he describes it, "no natural turn" for mathematics and gave up before mastering the first part of algebra and "loathing surds and the Binomial Theorem". In later life he much regretted that he had not mastered the first principles of mathematics as it might have helped him in his work. Indeed, he was right. If only he had been a man with even a nodding acquaintance with mathematics he might have forestalled Mendel, and the mechanism of heredity would have been laid before the world by him instead of having to wait to be pronounced by deVries, Correns and Tschermak following their rediscovery in 1900 of Mendel's work.

In his final year at Cambridge he once more brushed up his classics and applied himself again to the horror of mathematics; still Euclid was the only part which he could understand. He read Paley's *Evidences of Christianity*, which he found immensely stimulating and most importantly he became an intimate of Henslow, the Professor of Botany, whose lectures he attended assiduously and with whom he made many rambles around the countryside. Curiously he never attended any of Professor Sedgwick's lectures on geology and only got to know him after he had come down (with a moderate pass degree) when

he accompanied Sedgwick on a tour of Wales, where he learnt to make out the geology of a country.

During the final year too he read Humboldt's *Personal Narrative* and Herschel's *Introduction to the Study of Natural Philosophy*. Thus equipped the young man set off round the world.

In later years he grieved that he had never been properly grounded in botany and had only studied special points, complaining that his botanical knowledge was "little more than that a daisy is a compositous plant and a pea a leguminous one".[30] This might have been regarded as false modesty were it not for Thiselton Dyer's article in one of the *Nature* series (1862) where he remarks that "notwithstanding the extent and variety of his botanical work, Mr. Darwin has always disclaimed any right to be regarded as a professed botanist".[31] The article then proceeds to give accord to this point of view.

Charles' opinion on education is contained in a letter to his cousin, W. D. Fox. He observes that Rugby, to which William had been sent, was no worse than any other school, but he deplored the time spent on classics, which had "a constricting effect on William's mind and which checked anything in which reasoning and observation came into play. Mere memory seems to be worked. I shall certainly look out for some school with more diversified studies for my younger boys."[32]

At the time, however, when William first went to Rugby he was delighted that he got a good place in the school on entry. The thoughts of all the family were with him in this, his first term. Charles thought that the high place in the school was good for him as he would be in the company of older boys and he writes, "All the servants enquire after you and so they do at Aunt Sarah's".[33] When he got into the sixth form and joined the debating society Charles was pleased because it would "stir him up" to read and he wanted to be told of all the subjects for debate, judging that the habit of speaking would be of the greatest importance to him later.[34]

For his other sons he resolved to put his theories into practice and they were sent to a school in Clapham kept by the Rev. Charles Pritchard, who later became Professor of Astronomy at Oxford and where mathematics and science took the place of classics as the main preoccupation.

His affection for his sons and his concern for their achievements is charmingly expressed in a letter to his son George on becoming second Wrangler. Dated June 24th 1868 from Down he writes:

"My dear old fellow,

I am so pleased. I congratulate you with all my heart and soul. I always said from your early days that such energy, perseverance and talent such as yours would be sure to succeed; but I never expected such a brilliant success as this. Again and again I congratulate you. But you have made my hand tremble, so I can hardly write. The telegraph came *here* at eleven. We have written to W and the boys.

God bless you, my dear fellow—may your life so continue.

Your affectionate father,

Charles Darwin"[35]

And from Freshwater in the Isle of Wight when the unlikely Leonard passed second

into Woolwich, and not knowing his address, he writes to Horace "who would have thought that poor, dear old Lenny would have got so magnificent a place. By Jove how well his perseverance and energy have been rewarded."[36]

This is not the place to describe the brilliant careers of three of his sons, Sir George, Sir Francis and Sir Horace, all of whom became Fellows of the Royal Society; nor the constancy and devotion of William and Leonard.

Whatever the plans for their education may have been, their careers gladdened the heart of the old gentleman at Down and affirms that Charles was not only the first natural scientist of the age, but a father who retained the respectful affection of his family throughout their lives.

CHAPTER VI
ILLNESS

The nature of Charles Darwin's illness puzzled the doctors who were called in to attend him and it has puzzled medical historians ever since. It might be thought somewhat morbid, or at least unnecessary, to dwell on such a subject, but for Charles his illness was an important part of his life and there are those who say that unless he had suffered from it he would never have produced the work that made him famous. The fact is that however much the disease was "real", or somatic, and however much it was "imaginary", or psychological, it certainly protected him from unwanted excursions into social life; it allowed him to bury himself in the quiet of the country where he could get on with his work uninterruptedly, and it encouraged people whom he wished to see—and, apart from his family, there were few—to visit him at Down rather than oblige him to make the time-wasting and exhausting journey to London.

The literature on Darwin's illness, although not quite so extensive as that on his scientific work, is nevertheless somewhat inhibitory in its volume and no one could claim to have mastered it all unless he had devoted much of his life to it and was also an accomplished linguist. After only a decade or so of intermittent study of the subject I would not presume to rush in where angels fear to tread had not this precedent been well and truly set.

In order to make a diagnosis a medical student is enjoined first to take a careful history, 'red herrings' and all, and then to pick out from this history the significant parts. The trouble with doing this for Darwin is that he saw so many doctors during the course of his life. The medical terminology of the time was far from exact and such ill-defined terms as "nervous dyspepsia" and "tired heart" are very unhelpful in trying to picture what was really going on, but we must make the attempt. Except for an eruption on his lips which was probably herpes and for which arsenic may have been prescribed while he was at Cambridge, no record exists of Darwin suffering from other than childish ailments until shortly before the *Beagle* put out from Plymouth in December 1831 while Darwin was living ashore. This must have been an anxious time for a landlubber watching the foam-crested waves rolling in under the darkened skies of December and lashed by the prevailing sou'westerlies. Experienced yachtsmen planning a cruise from Plymouth to Brittany in June or July feel the same when the weather is bad, but for the sake of their crew tend to keep these feelings to themselves. Not so Darwin, who had no such inhibitions. Writing to his sister Susan he tells her to ask his father what was the dose of arsenic as he needs this for an eruption on his hands. This eruption is referred to by many writers as eczema and it may well have been, but perhaps a more likely diagnosis is cheiropompholyx, in which tiny vesicles appear on the back of the hands and fingers when a susceptible subject is under stress. At this time too he noted in his pocket-book: "These

months very miserable, I have only now to pray for the sickness (? illness) to moderate its fierceness." He also had palpitations of the heart but refused to consult a doctor for fear that he would be forbidden to make the voyage and he was determined to sail at all costs! "Palpitations" is a symptom common to many disorders and implies simply consciousness of the heart-beat. It may be experienced normally with the rapid heart-beat following exercise, or with missed beats after partaking of alcohol or tobacco; on the other hand it may be a symptom of more serious heart disease and therefore, by itself, does very little to establish a diagnosis.

During the voyage of the *Beagle*, Darwin was, as we have observed, subject to intermittent bouts of severe seasickness and during the first few weeks was quite prostrated with continuous vomiting. Later he partially accommodated himself to the motion of the ship, but never completely.

In Bahia in Brazil he developed an infection of his leg which turned into an abscess, and in Macae and also in Santa Fé in Argentina he suffered a bout of fever. In Valparaiso he was severely ill with fever and debility so that the sailing of the *Beagle* was delayed owing to the consideration of Captain FitzRoy, who wished to see him completely recovered. It had been suggested that these attacks may have been malarial, but there is no mention of the prescription of cinchona bark which was known to be a remedy for "intermittent fever" by the South American Indians for centuries, or of quinine which Lettsom had been instrumental in introducing as the treatment for malaria in the late eighteenth century, and Darwin was generally inclined to detail the treatments which he received. Moreover, there was no recurrence of a typical attack in later years, which would be likely if these bouts were due to the malarial parasite. Another possibility is that the illness in Valparaiso was typhoid or, according to most Argentinian experts, typhus, which was prevalent at the time in that city. However, these possible diagnoses, as so many questions in this account, must remain undetermined. An important incident in the history took place on March 26th 1835 while Darwin was at Luxan in the Province of Mendoza in Argentina. During the night he was bitten by the Benchuca bug *Triatoma Infestans*. "It is most disgusting," he writes, "to find soft wingless insects, about an inch long, crawling over one's body."[2] In Mendoza nowadays about 70 per cent of these insects are infected with the parasite *Trypanosoma Cruzi* and these parasites, excreted by the insect, may contaminate the bite and lead to the infection known as Brazilian Trypanosomiasis or, as it is commonly called, "Chaga's disease" after the Brazilian pathologist who later became the world authority on the disease. Thus it is necessary not only to have been bitten, but to have had the bite infected before Chaga's disease may develop. This is unlike the situation in malaria where the bite alone of an infected mosquito is adequate to cause infection, whereas one or two bites from an infected *Triatoma Infestans* would be unlikely to produce Chaga's disease. To fill in the picture the Trypanosome invades the muscles, particularly of the heart, causing myocarditis and heart failure in 80 per cent of cases; of the gullet and bowel, causing dilatation of these organs, leading to difficulty in swallowing, regurgitation of food, vomiting and constipation and to general ill-health. At present about 60 per cent of the population of Mendoza give a positive blood test for trypanosomiasis, but many of these subjects are symptomless and all must be

presumed to have been liable to infection throughout their lives, whereas Darwin was exposed very briefly. There is no evidence that any other members of the crew suffered from symptoms which are now known to be characteristic of Chaga's disease and the health reports on the crew of the *Beagle*, which have been preserved, are remarkably good for the time (Woodruff[3]).

On the return of the *Beagle* and for the rest of his long life Darwin suffered intermittently from the following array of symptoms: skin eruptions, giddiness, headache, trembling, affection of the gums, hair falling out, pain in the joints, palpitations, nausea, vomiting, loss of appetite, singing in the ears, loss of weight and exhaustion. It would not be possible in this account to go into the details of the dates of appearance of these many and diverse symptoms except to say that in general they, or some of them, were brought on by emotional rather than physical stress. Thus, his "bad years" were 1831 when he was making up his mind as to whether he would go on the *Beagle*; 1837 when he had to make the adjustments to living in London; 1838 when after much deliberation he decided to get married; 1842 when he set up house in Down; 1848 when his father died and especially 1859 and 1860 when the tumult arose over the publication of *The Origin of Species*.

During the last ten years of his life when things had settled down and until his final illness in 1881, Darwin was relatively free from symptoms.

Having taken a history and elucidated the symptoms, the medical student is then instructed to examine the patient for physical signs, that is those evidences of disease which the doctor himself can discover. In Darwin's case there were none! Admittedly the opportunities for eliciting physical signs during most of the nineteenth century were quite unsophisticated and were confined to what could be learnt from the five senses, the sense of hearing being augmented by the recently invented stethoscope. There were no X-rays, no more than simple blood and urine tests, no electrocardiograms, or electroencephalograms, none of the recent methods of investigation which today are available to the humblest hospital patient. Nevertheless, Darwin was examined by a number of eminent physicians during the course of his life, including Sir James Clark (Physician in Ordinary to Queen Victoria), Sir Henry Holland, Dr. William Brinton, Dr. Bence Jones and Sir Andrew Clark, of whom it was said that the Victorian sick found their ultimate haven in his consoling presence. Other physicians of less eminence, but no doubt equally practised in the examination of a patient, were from time to time in attendance and none of them, not one of them, ever found any physical signs; no heart murmur, no swelling of the ankles, no cyanosis, no abdominal distension nor, so far as the records go, even wax in the ears.

Being thus deprived of the help from physical signs, the next logical stage in coming to a diagnosis is to make a list of the various diseases which might possibly be responsible for the symptoms (and signs if there were any), that is, to consider the differential diagnosis and to try and put these in order of probability. In Darwin's case we have a wide range to choose from, at least it is a wide range if we include all the suggestions made by persons with limited experience of clinical medicine, and these progress in likelihood from the effects of seasickness, chronic brucellosis, malaria, chronic appendicitis,

chronic gall-bladder disease, duodenal ulcer, gastric ulcer, gout and pyorrhoea, to the three more likely ones, chronic arsenical poisoning, Chaga's disease and neurosis.

Recently, John Winslow has published a book called *The Victorian Malady*, in which he purports to show that Darwin's illness was due to the prescription of arsenic over a long period in the treatment of his ailments either real or imaginary.[4] We have already noted that he asked for the dose of arsenic from his father when he developed the skin trouble on his hands while waiting at Plymouth for the *Beagle* to sail, and it is suggested that Dr. Henry Holland, as he then was, had prescribed arsenic for the eruption on Charles' lips while he was at Cambridge.

It is true that arsenic in the form of Fowler's solution was freely prescribed by Victorian physicians for almost every complaint in the book, and, if it were not a specific for that particular complaint, at least it went along well with whatever was, and helped to strengthen the nerves, improve the appetite and refine the complexion. In a time, therefore, when very little effective could be done for a patient, the temptation to prescribe Fowler's solution, which contained arsenic, must have been irresistible; particularly if the prescription was written, as was the fashion, in a form suitably impressive and unintelligible to the patient.

It is claimed that all the physicians in the above list were in the practice of prescribing arsenic, but the evidence for this is not altogether convincing. What *The Victorian Malady* does offer is a list of Darwin's symptoms on one side of the page with a replica of these on the other side, all at one time or another having been attributed to chronic arsenical poisoning. One cannot readily dismiss such a striking comparability, but it must be borne in mind that the symptoms of arsenical poisoning on the right side of the page are culled from many different sources and patients; those on the left-hand side all belonged to Darwin.

The other somatic disease which has been incriminated as a source of Darwin's ill-health, and which must receive careful consideration, is Chaga's disease. This theory was first advanced by Saul Adler of the Hebrew University in Jerusalem. In many ways Darwin's symptoms correspond to those of chronic Chaga's disease. Much of the strength for the view derives from Darwin's "palpitations" and that he complained of "frequent uneasy feeling of fullness, slight pain and tingling about the heart", which according to the theory is attributed to trypanosomal myocarditis in which the heart muscle has been attacked by the parasite.

To deal with the cardiac symptoms first; shortly after Darwin was subjected to the possibility of being infected from the bite of the bug in Mendoza, he made the very difficult trek up the Tia-auru Valley in Tahiti, he climbed the 4000ft. high Mt. Wellington in Tasmania, and also Green Hill on Ascension Island, which is 2800ft. high, as we learn, with "a bounding step". These excursions could scarcely have been undertaken by a person with organic disease of the heart. In 1837, following the return of the *Beagle*, he had more "palpitations", but very soon after he made strenuous geological expeditions to Glen Roy wandering over the mountains and in 1842 he went on a hill-walking tour in North Wales. Furthermore, on examination his heart was never found to be enlarged, there were no murmurs, no swellings of the ankles, no breathlessness. To maintain that

Darwin, who lived for another forty-seven years from the time of the bite, suffered from organic heart disease is really straining credibility.

As for the other symptoms no one will ever know whether they could have been caused by Chaga's disease and, if they were not, whether he nevertheless suffered from an almost symptomless form of the disease which obtruded from time to time in an unusual but faintly suggestive form. It must be remembered, however, that symptoms very similar to those from which he was to suffer all his life appeared before the *Beagle* set sail. In clinical medicine, as in other forms of reasoning, it is impossible to prove a negative and if there are those who wish to cling to the view that Darwin suffered from a drop of arsenic or a touch of Chaga's disease no one would dare to deny them this satisfaction.

Diagnoses, however, are far better made on more substantial grounds and there are two circumstances about Darwin's illness which must alert the investigator. First, and of crucial importance, that Darwin suffered from a debilitating illness for forty years which never produced any clinical signs; and second, that he saw many doctors and decided that, as orthodox medicine could do nothing for him, he would resort to unorthodox medicine or, to put it bluntly, quackery. Thus he attended Dr. Gully's hydropathic establishment at Malvern and he visited a similar establishment at Moor Park. Experienced clinicians will recognise this familiar history and regard it with much sympathy. It occurs in two classes of patient: those suffering from incurable disease, particularly inoperable cancer, and those whose symptoms (perhaps equally incurable) are to a greater or less degree psychogenic. Men and women of high intellectual distinction have behaved and will continue to behave in this way and who can blame them? They have nothing to lose except from their purse and for those who frequent such places this is usually well lined.

We are accordingly not only thrown back on a diagnosis of neurosis, but we can muster an unequalled array of evidence in a positive way in favour of it. It is interesting that nearly every medically qualified man who has written on this subject is inclined to the view, with a variable degree of conviction, that Darwin's symptoms were mainly, if not entirely, psychogenic. Those who oppose this view are almost exclusively not medically trained. The exceptions are the Brazilian physicians who, one is tempted to believe with Sir Douglas Hubble, may be influenced by pride that Charles Darwin's illness could be associated with the names of two great Brazilian scientists. One may assume that the layman (as opposed to the medically qualified person) finds it difficult to credit that such a great genius could be affected by a psychogenic disability, whereas the medically trained know that neurosis is a not uncommon accompaniment of genius and are able to recite a long list of names from which we may recall particularly Elizabeth Barrett Browning and Florence Nightingale.

Unfortunately the psychogenic theory has been debased, as it seems to me, by calling in to its support a lot of psychoanalytical "clap-trap", using that term to denote the promulgation of a theory which, whether true or not, has not a vestige of scientific evidence to support it.

A few quotations from this catalogue of effluvia may illustrate what I mean.

"Free assertion for his [Darwin's] rights might have led to a mortal father-son conflict, because both had irrepressible affective cravings for the same love-object."

"These symptoms—a distorted expression of aggression, hate and resentment were felt, at unconscious level, by Darwin towards his tyrannical father, although, at conscious level, we find the reaction-formation of the reverence for his father which was boundless and almost touching. If Darwin did not slay his father in the flesh, then in his *The Origin of Species* he certainly slew the Heavenly-Father in the realm of natural history leading to forty years of severe and crippling neurotic suffering."

And finally one which I particularly treasure:

"The turning to science was the consequence of reaction to sado-masochistic fantasies concerning his own birth and his mother's death."

One psychoanalyst cites the titles of Darwin's books as evidence of his preoccupation with sex: *The Origin* itself (!), *Selection in Relation to Sex*, *The Effects of Cross- and Self-fertilisation in the Vegetable Kingdom*, *The Various Contrivances by which Orchids are Fertilised by Insects*. It shows how careful one must be about the titles of one's books with people like that about. Finally, the same author regards it as highly significant that Darwin retired to Down at the age of thirty-three, *the very age at which Christ was crucified.*

After this daring intrusion into the bizarre we may perhaps return to more solid ground.

There was a strong tendency to neurosis in the nineteenth-century members of the Darwin family. Henrietta, Darwin's eldest daughter, was morbidly interested in ill-health. At the age of thirteen after some trifling indisposition she had been told to take breakfast in bed and she never got up for breakfast again, dying at the age of eighty-four. His uncle Erasmus had committed suicide and some of his other children were regarded as "delicate". In fact the only really robust character was William, his eldest son. Gwen Raverat says that at Down ill-health was regarded as normal. Charles Darwin himself was obsessional about his own well-being. He kept a diary with a day by day record of his ailments, how he felt and what cures he had tried, and for six years he wrote down each morning how he had slept the night before.[5] Throughout his life it was emotional strain which brought on his symptoms; he was unable to attend his father's funeral because of sickness—"this horrible sickness", he could not bear the fatigue of attending Henrietta's wedding and in 1871 the fact that he was to give evidence before a committee investigating the problem of vivisection rendered him "sick and sleepless".

Poor Darwin! He had so many real worries—the opprobrium which he incurred when his views on evolution were made known in *The Origin* and particularly in the *Descent of Man*, the knowledge that his wife, whom he loved dearly, could not but disapprove of the consequences of the revelation of his ideas and the fact that he had so few friends and allies in the battle for what he believed to be the truth. These worries playing upon a naturally reserved and sensitive nature would be likely to affect far more insensitive men than he.

If there were a physical cause for his illness, this played an insignificant part in the overall picture. As Sir Peter Medawar has said, "ill people suspected of hypochondria have to pretend to be iller than they really are to convince others".

Perhaps the last word may be left with Sir Douglas Hubble, who wrote in the *New Statesman* in 1964, "It would be wise to give Darwin and his illness a rest from further inquiry since there are no more facts to be elicited which will contribute to an exact diagnosis".[6]

CHAPTER VII
THE STAFF

Throughout their lives the Darwins were served by a devoted staff of men and women. They, in their turn, were thoughtful for their servants' welfare and Charles was particularly courteous in his manner of address to them. Francis recalls that:

"As head of a household he was much loved and respected, he always spoke to servants with politeness, using the expression 'would you be so good', in asking for anything. He was hardly ever angry with his servants; it shows how seldom this occurred, that when, as a small boy, I overheard a servant being scolded, and my father speaking angrily, it impressed me as an appalling circumstance, and I remember running upstairs out of a general sense of awe."[1]

On one occasion Emma took on an old servant of the Hensleigh Wedgwoods as footman. He was not at all well, but Price the butler at the time said he would make it easy for him and the other servants agreed to do his work during his bouts of asthma.

Frequent outings were arranged, to the Crystal Palace, to the play at Christmas time, and a small fiction library was kept for them. There is no doubt that they all had a splendid time and many of them stayed with the family for years and years.

The doyen of this closely-knit society was undoubtedly Joseph Parslow the butler. He came to service with Charles and Emma at the age of twenty-seven when they got married in 1839 and was with them, employed whole time, for thirty-six years. After that he crops up again and again obviously doing odd jobs on special occasions as when they had a grand party, and as late as 1891, when he was seventy-nine, he was asking Emma to give him a full day's work, which from prudence she declined to do.

In 1840, after Parslow had been in service for one year, Madame Sismondi wrote to her niece, "Your roof, my Emma, brought us good luck while there, everything went to our hearts' content; be it observed that Parslow is the most amiable, obliging, active, serviceable servant that ever breathed."[2]

In 1842 he accompanied the young family to Down and there reigned supreme for the next thirty-three years. It will be recalled that his pantry was enlarged and no doubt he availed himself of the comforts of the large kitchen with its open range occupying most of an end wall.

Parslow is rather a shadowy figure; he suffered from the fact that, at the time when he served the Darwin family, the servants did not figure to any extent in the family archives and it is therefore his successor, so engagingly described by the Darwin grandchildren, that we can picture more clearly. Apart from Madame Sismondi's eulogy and Sir Joseph Hooker referring to him as "an integral part of the family", we learn very little about him. Some time during his period of service he married and in 1875 retired to a cottage in the village, from which he would make sporadic forays to Down House.

At first he appears to have made himself useful and Emma in 1878 writes "I wish Parslow would come and shoot the blackbirds, there are two who spend their whole time in preventing the others feeding."[3]

In 1885 he visited South Kensington Museum for the unveiling of the statue of Charles and said afterwards that "he would never forget the scene as long as he lived". He thought that he was recognised by Admiral Sullivan, who as a young naval officer was a shipmate of Charles on the *Beagle*, and this gave the old man intense pleasure. At the reception afterwards he thought the "Port and Sherry" was delightful.[4]

By 1891 when he applied for "a full day's work" at Down and was refused by Emma, one gets the faintest suspicion that he might have been becoming a bit of an incubus, as Emma writes to Henrietta "his work is not worth 1s a day". Nevertheless, one of the first visits Emma would make, when she returned from Cambridge to Down for the summer, was to Parslow's cottage, though by 1893 he seems to have become a little senile and repeats the old story of how once Mrs. Brodie Innes came to see him and ate bread and cheese. This incident must have been a great occasion for the poor old chap as its telling was often repeated and, as Mrs. Brodie Innes left Down in 1869, his mind was obviously dwelling on the days long gone by.[5]

Joseph Parslow died in 1896 aged eighty-six and was buried in Down churchyard. His grave is marked by a tombstone given by the Darwin family. There were still Parslow grandchildren in the village and Emma would have them up for tea from time to time. In 1893 she writes, "The little Parslows came to tea and some rain stopped them going out. I sent Anne up to say I did not mind how much noise they made; but I need not have taken that precaution as they made plenty."[6]

In 1875 Parslow was succeeded by Jackson as butler. Bernard Darwin has given us a splendid picture of him as seen through the eyes of a small boy. The passion of his life was making models with pieces of cork.

"No doubt he began with humble tasks, but he seems to me to have been engaged for years upon his masterpiece, which was a model, done to reasonably accurate scale, of Down House. The consumption of cork and glue must have been immense and it really was a monument of industry. The treatment of the bow-windows and the glass in the roof of the verandah struck me as the high water mark of human ingenuity. On leaving my grandmother he took the model with him, and when I used to go and see him as an old man in his retirement, it occupied an almost inconveniently large space in his best parlour. He became anxious as to its future, hoping that it might be preserved as a monument to my grandfather, 'Master' as he always called him, and having I think vague hopes of the British Museum. There was a painful and inexplicable reluctance on the part of public institutions to give it space, but ultimately Karl Pearson housed it. Where I am not now sure [it was at University College], but I know Jackson and Mrs. Jackson were bidden to go and see it in its permanent home, and his contribution thus made to the family history, his spirit was at rest."[7]

This remarkable model is now in the Museum at Down House owing to the kindness of the authorities of University College. One can well imagine that it rather overwhelmed

Jackson's parlour because even at Down it is difficult to know quite where to put it. Nevertheless, it is safe and the interested visitor may always ask to see it.

Jackson, who had once been a groom, was by no means an orthodox butler, not being very tidy or smart and not particularly efficient. He used to pay a great deal of attention to what was being said at meals when he was serving and would sometimes burst into roars of laughter. When he was a little boy Bernard once asked his grandmother what the play *Electra* was about and whether it was nice. Emma said it was very nice. "What is it about?" asked Bernard. "About a woman who murdered her mother," said Emma, whereat Jackson became convulsed with uncontrollable laughter.[8]

As Bernard says:

"In a less quiet or more worldly household he might not have kept his place, but he was a beloved creature. He made me a beautiful sentry-box in the orchard and a long tail for a kite and many other things I have ungratefully forgotten. He was a little man with very red cheeks, little loose curly wisps of side-whiskers, and in some indefinable manner he had the aspect of a comic character upon the stage. I would not go so far as to say he was a 'card', but he might have been called in the language of the servants' hall a 'cure'. Jackson could sometimes be lured out to bowl me a few balls on the lawn or on a pitch in the field, and if he allowed himself to be bowled out he exhibited transports of disgust, which did not wholly deceive, but gave pleasure as an exhibition of the comedian's art at its highest."[9]

Sometime after 1882 Jackson was replaced by James Price. Price does not appear to have been such a "card" or a "cure" as Jackson and very little is known about him, except that he slept in an attic with John the coachman and a footman. This attic, which now houses the important components of the hot-water system, is unbelievably gloomy and if Parslow and Jackson were denizens of this eyrie one can only regard it as remarkable that they entertained such happy memories of their periods of service.

Next in order of precedence must come Mrs. Evans, the cook. The "Mrs." was an honorary title bestowed because of her position in the household. Eventually she got married to a most suitable gentleman in the village and became "Mrs. Somebody quite different".

We first hear about Mrs. Evans in 1870 when Jane the housemaid retired to bed with "lumbago and fainting", a curious assembly of symptoms. Whereupon Mrs. Evans undertook to do Jane's work and regarded it as "a capital joke". There were never any demarcation disputes in the Darwin entourage, indeed in the manner of a modern American academic there was a surprising tendency to flit from one discipline to another: John the gardener became John the coachman, and Jackson had no difficulty in making the transition from groom to butler.

Mrs. Evans must have survived at least until 1880 because Bernard remembered her well and in fact called her "Evvy". His most vivid recollection of her was on the occasion of the passage of a comet when he was got out of bed and taken up to the roof to witness the spectacle. This was probably in 1881 or 1882, which were "good years" for comets. 1883 was barren and in 1884 comets were visible in Tennessee and Australia but not remarkable in the English skies. It was, he says, "all very dark and exciting, but the most

exciting thing was that in order to get at a trap door on to a flat piece of roof I must be conducted through one of the maid's bedrooms. The comet sulked and refused to show itself, but I had seen Mrs. Evans in bed and the vision abides."[10]

I must be very cautious in any comment I make on this graphically recounted adventure, but the bald fact remains that in order to get on to the flat roof through the trap door it is quite unnecessary to go through a maid's bedroom or any other room for that matter. Perhaps Bernard just saw Mrs. Evans in her nightgown and this was enough to fire his imagination seventy years later to elaborate a vignette of Darwinian quality.

By about 1890 Mrs. Evans had been superseded by Mrs. Brummidge. She was a superb cook in an uncompromisingly English manner and her roasts and her dumplings were remembered by the Darwin grandchildren for many years. We have no record of what happened to her eventually, but no one with a name like that could have come to any serious harm. Descending a little in the social scale we find that by 1843 and probably in 1842 on arriving at Down a gardener-coachman was employed called, suitably enough, Comfort, who survived in one capacity or another until 1854 when the famous Lettington arrived on the scene and controlled the destinies of the fairly large garden at Down until at least 1872 when he receives his last reference in Emma's account book. He appears to have been assisted throughout the years by a succession of "Johns" and "James's" and "Thomas's". After 1850 a procession of footmen was also employed, but it is difficult from a study of the account books to discover what they were called. Year by year the accounts are kept most meticulously in regard to the money spent, but the recipients are referred to sometimes by their surnames, sometimes by their Christian names and the former were spelt according to the mood of the moment. Furthermore, the accounts do not specify precisely how they were employed—as footmen, assistant gardeners or stable lads. At least we must assume that Moffatt (or Moffat) who came into service in 1858 was probably a footman by the fact that, even if his wages were unspecified in the accounts, his livery with which he was provided in 1859 required renewal, first every eight years and then, perhaps as he was putting on weight, almost every year until 1878 when this interesting character disappears from the records. This assumption is based on the fact that the only other servant who might have worn livery was the coachman, and we can be fairly certain that neither Comfort nor his successor John would have been seen dead in livery and in any event such a conceit would have been "unDarwinian".

In regard to the maids it is quite impossible to be specific because in most years their identity is buried in the accounts under the general heading "wages". However, in 1865 (the early part of the reign of Mrs. Evans) Betsy, Emily Jane and Anne receive the accolade of specific mention and it is not until 1879 that names are mentioned again, by which time Mrs. Evans was being paid £7 10s. 0d. a quarter, Betsy £4 10s. 0d., Anne £5, Jane £3 10s. 0d. and Esther £2 10s. 0d.

We might commiserate with poor Esther, even with Betsy after all those years, until we observe that the great Parslow who started in 1839 at £6 5s. 0d. a quarter was on his discharge in 1875 earning only £15 a quarter.

Towards the end of the century and from the accounts of the Darwin grandchildren, to whom the maids were devoted, a devotion which was mutual, these young ladies

emerge from obscurity and assume characters by which they can be identified. In the first rank was Matheson, the dignified Scottish lady who was Emma's personal maid and who was such a splendid "reader aloud". She is rather an indistinct figure, but we may picture her very erect, very proper and with a due sense of her position in the complicated but precise organisation 'below stairs'. By 1895, however, Harriet had succeeded Jane, who had gone away to get married, as head housemaid, and she was a very different sort of person. Bernard describes her thus.

"Harriet was sonsy and pink and handsome, with a laugh not to be quelled that rang through the house, sometimes penetrating the dining-room at inappropriate moments when solemn people had come to luncheon. In my earlier memories (when Harriet was still under-housemaid) she is connected with the long, mysterious passage on the first floor, not merely because it had a cupboard full of brooms and shadows, but for a more personal and disgraceful reason. The passage was my indoor cricket pitch with a little red fire-engine at one end for the wicket. Almost immediately above it was a skylight so that the batsman could see what he was about. Not so the bowler, who was in comparative stygian blackness and so could not see the projectile, in the form of a lawn-tennis ball which came at him or her head with great velocity at a range of seven or eight yards. The intrepid Harriet bowled very slow lobs which even my juvenile arm could hit straight at the bowler's head with some force, nor, I fear, was I notable for any chivalrous restraint. Harriet, in her pink print gown and her apron, bowling gingerly and then returning at speed to a little refuge by the staircase to avoid the cannonade, is a familiar picture, filling me at once with shame and affection."[11]

Harriet knew that she was beautiful and in afternoon dress wore a black velvet ribbon round her neck. She had a rich voice, a lovely laugh and a strong Kentish accent, and remained long after the rest of the household had vanished. She was never much of a scholar and was probably taught to write by Emma when she first came into the household. Nevertheless, she kept up a faithful correspondence with the family, although this must have cost her a great deal of effort and she "hampered herself by a somewhat antiquated and feudal style".

At about this time, in addition to at least three menservants, we are told that Bernard's first timorous attempts at riding on the back of a horse, supported by William the footman, were viewed with rapturous admiration by six maids from the back regions.

With all this professional assistance one sometimes wonders what the ladies of the house found to do. But then there was reading aloud, letter writing, endless gossip in the drawing-room or on the verandah, in addition to charitable work in the village, and no doubt such a large staff needed "looking after".

By the time the family moved to Down in 1842 Brodie the Scottish nurse had been installed. She turned out to be a perfect treasure and a wonderful nurse to the children with, as the agency who supplied her described it, "a genius for loving". In the early days one of the maids, probably a housemaid or even at that stage a nursery maid, anonymously and tactfully referred to as "A", was stirring things up in the nursery by being cheeky to Brodie. This very much upset Brodie and her condition became so poor that even sending her to a concert in Bromley failed to revive her spirits. Emma took a

strong line and made up her mind to sack "A" unless she mended her ways, a course of action, particularly if accompanied by a poor reference, which was a far more serious sanction than it appears to us today. "I am reserving a sledge-hammer, for her", she writes, "the next opportunity she gives me by pertness to Brodie."[12]

The storm, however, seems to have abated and Brodie, once more secure in her position, stayed on until little Anne died in 1851. This was as much a blow for her as it was for Charles and Emma, and she felt unable to continue working in the house where she had been so much loved. She retired to Portsoy in Scotland, from where she used to pay long visits to Down until she died in 1873.

There were, after 1851, no more new babies in the household and, although successors to Brodie must have been employed, we hear nothing about them. As the children grew up governesses were engaged instead. The accounts show that the year after Brodie left £60 was spent on a governess. This may have been a Miss Thorley, who in 1853 was mentioned specifically as helping Charles with some botanical work. It is recorded that she was "many years" with the family and, as she gave place to a Miss Pugh in 1856, she was probably the first. Miss Pugh, who left after about a year, became insane soon after and Emma would pay £30 a year for many years so that she could take a summer holiday from the asylum where she was confined. After Miss Pugh there was in 1858 a Miss Grant, who stayed for only six months. By this time William would have left Rugby, while George certainly and perhaps Francis were at the school in Clapham. Leonard and Horace were eight and seven respectively and only just out of the nursery. This left Henrietta, aged fifteen, and Elizabeth, aged eleven, so that one must assume that henceforth the governess's main duty would be the education of the two girls who never went away from Down to school.

In 1858 Mrs. Latter arrived but left the following year to become a mistress at a school in the neighbourhood, which the girls attended for a short while, and she turns up seven years later receiving small sums for what must have been special tuition. She was followed in 1859 by the famous Miss Ludwig, sister of an officer on the Hamburg liner *Teutonia*, who drummed German into Henrietta and Elizabeth, stayed for some years and, one suspects, helped Charles over the rough passages in his German books. Finally in 1865 Miss Beob, of unknown nationality, is employed for six months when Elizabeth was eighteen years old and a Mlle Barellien gave French lessons.

There must have been so many people bustling about the house and with the children being encouraged to enjoy themselves there is no wonder that Charles Darwin, author of a dozen books, regarded his study as a sanctuary which should only very rarely be invaded even for string, sealing wax, sticking plaster and scissors.

CHAPTER VIII
ANIMALS

What with the children, the governesses and the servants it might have been thought that these were enough living things inhabiting Down House, but there was still room to squeeze in some pets.

Charles was always fond of dogs and used to steal away the affections of other people's dogs in a way which was not always popular. While he was at Cambridge he captured the affection of his cousin W. D. Fox's dog and it was probably this little creature that used to creep into his bed and sleep like a hot-water bottle at his feet. At Shrewsbury he had a rather surly tempered dog who was devoted to him but to nobody else. This animal was not demonstrably affectionate and when Charles returned after five years from the voyage of the *Beagle*, he went out into the yard at the back of the house and called to the dog, who rushed out and started off on their usual walk as if the same thing had happened the day before.

One of the first dogs that Charles owned at Down was called Bob, a black and white half-bred retriever. This was the dog that used to accompany him round the Sandwalk and who put on a miserable expression when Charles would delay things by first of all pottering about in the greenhouse. Bob's "hot house face" has been immortalised in Charles' book, *The Expression of the Emotions.*

In March 1870 Bob was taken ill and Emma writes to Henrietta, "Poor Bobby is better to-day and has eaten a little. He looked so human, lying under a coat with his head on a pillow, and one just perceived the coat move a little over the tail if you spoke to him."[1]

At about this time Henrietta's little bitch Polly, a rough-haired fox terrier, was having puppies and the letter continues, "Polly is a great size, but her spirits much better. She towzles her rope a little when Bessy looks on. I never saw such a methodical dog. She sits on the *mat* when we go to lunch, to wait for her dinner, and on the *rug* in the chair by the stove when we go into dinner."

Polly's puppies had to be drowned and this caused some psychological upset, for Emma writes, "Polly is so odd I might write a volume about her. I think she has taken it into her head that Francis is a very big puppy. She is perfectly devoted to him ever since; will only stay with him and leaves the room whenever he does. She lies upon him whenever she can and licks his hands so constantly as to be quite troublesome. I have to drag her away at night and she yelps and squeaks some time in Anne's room before she makes up her mind [to go to sleep?]."[2]

Polly, just like the dogs today, had to suffer in her mind from the squirrels, and would sit trembling with emotion in the window watching them going backwards and forwards from the walnut tree to the beds where they hid their treasures.

After Henrietta married in 1871 Polly attached herself to Charles and became his constant companion until he died. We have already seen how Polly would accompany him on his walk, albeit with some reluctance when the weather was wet. However, she was a sharp-witted affectionate little dog who exhibited the usual transports of despair common to most dogs when suitcases appeared, but had the wit to know when Charles was returning by the extra care which was taken to clean up the old study. This made her very excited and she could hardly wait to give him the rapturous welcome which she reserved especially for him.

"She was a cunning little creature and used to tremble," says Francis, "or put on an air of misery when my father passed, while she was waiting for dinner, just as if she knew he would say (as he did often say) that 'she was famishing'. My father used to make her catch biscuits off her nose and had an affectionate mock-solemn way of explaining to her before-hand that she must be 'a very good girl'.

He was delightfully tender to Polly and never showed any impatience at the attentions she required, such as to be let in at the door, or out at the verandah window, to bark at 'naughty people', a self-imposed duty she much enjoyed. She died, or rather had to be killed, a few days after his death."[3]

Polly was buried under the 'Kentish Beauty' apple tree in the garden.

Charles was particularly sensitive to cruelty to animals and subscribed regularly to the Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Animals. On one occasion he got out of his carriage and soundly upbraided the driver of a cart for belabouring his horse; on another, he was very distressed when witnessing the act of some performing dogs at Barmouth. One of the dogs failed in his trick and put on such a frightened expression that Charles knew that he must have been trained by the whip.

Charles' evidence to the Vivisection Committee in 1875 caused him much concern, but his interview was quite a short one, in which he said little more than that cruelty to animals deserved "detestation and abhorrence". However, in numerous letters to other witnesses at about that time his thoughts about the problem, a problem which is still with us today, emerge quite clearly.

In a letter to Professor Ray Lankester on March 22nd 1871, he writes, "You ask my opinion on vivisection. I quite agree that it is justifiable for real investigation on physiology; but not for mere damnable and detestable curiosity. It is a subject which makes me sick with horror, so that I shall not say another word about it, else I shall not sleep to-night."[4]

On January 4th 1875 we find Charles writing to Henrietta, "If stupid laws are passed and this is likely, seeing how unscientific the House of Commons is, and that the gentlemen of England are humane, as long as their sports are not considered, which entail a hundred or thousand-fold more suffering than the experiments of physiologists—if such laws are passed, the result will assuredly be that physiology, which has been until the last few years at a standstill in England, will languish or quite cease."[5]

The report of the Commission was published in the following year.

Sir Thomas Farrer (whose daughter Ida married Charles' youngest son, Horace) recalled that the last time he had any conversation with him, just before one of his last

seizures, Charles was (in 1881) still deeply interested in the vivisection question. Sir Thomas writes, "He was a man eminently fond of animals and tender to them; he would not knowingly have inflicted pain on a living creature; but he entertained the strongest opinion that to prevent experiments on living animals would be to put a stop to the knowledge of remedies for pain and disease."[6]

Emma was perhaps even more devoted to animals than Charles and her letters are full of her concern for them. On her first visit to her eldest son William at Southampton after his marriage, she finds that he had adopted a "charming puppy (though a thorough mongrel)" which had followed him home. William seems at one time to have contemplated drowning him, or perhaps he pretended to do so, because the very idea produced such consternation that it was forthwith decided to keep him. Emma writes that she would certainly have adopted him herself had it not been for Polly. This puppy became "the adorable 'Button', a dog somewhat resembling a minute black and tan collie, with little pointed legs like cut cedar pencils. It was afterwards thought that she belonged to a special breed of dogs from Thibet and was probably brought over by some sailor to Southampton."[7]

Another foreign dog, "foreign" that is in that he was not an inhabitant of Down except sporadically, in whom Emma took a great interest was George's dog, Pepper. Pepper would bite gardeners. William offered to give him another chance, but he bit their gardener. He was then sent to Sir Leslie Stephen in London, where he bit the children. Emma writes, "I am vexed about Pepper. I feel it quite sad to extinguish such a quality of enjoyment as lived in that little body." However, her fears that Pepper was to be "put down" were fortunately not realised. As "a very last chance" he was sent to the Archbishop at Addington Palace and there, no doubt in an odour of sanctity, Pepper is believed to have reformed his ways.[8]

On another occasion Emma writes to her daughter-in-law, Ellen, "I hope your poor puppy will soon be happier. Would not Otter [the older dog] sleep with him?"

After Charles died and Polly had been buried in the garden, Down appears for a few years to have been 'dogless', but in 1885 Mrs. Vaughan Williams found a puppy to console Emma and the famous Dicky arrived in a basket from Leith Hill Place.

At this time Emma lived at Cambridge during the winter months and at Down during the summer but, wherever she was, there Dicky was too and not many inches away. The Dicky saga is voluminous and it would be unfair to Bob and Polly to dwell too long on the exploits of this remarkable, indeed notorious, animal. Even Emma had to admit that "he was certainly naughty and disobedient with a dreadful bark, but very engaging" and he used to snuggle up to her in her bath-chair and get "quite close to my face". It is sad to have to record that Dicky did occasionally try to stray from the bath-chair and had to be wheedled back by the exhibition of partridge bones which Emma kept with her for the purpose. She is afraid that with all his winsome ways "he has no heart and hardly any conscience, but I shall be content if he is fond of me, otherwise I shall return him to his foster-mother", Margaret Vaughan Williams. However, Dicky obviously became very fond of her and so was retained. He seems to have captured the affection of others too and even John the coachman was not immune. On the way to Orpington Station on

one occasion as the first stage of the journey to Cambridge, Dicky was set to run beside the carriage, "there were so many flocks of sparrows on the road, and he always hoped he would catch them and then barked furiously. Afterwards he was put on the box with John, who received him with kisses and rapture to my surprise (I saw him from the window)."[9]

On one occasion at Cambridge, Dicky was attacked by a large dog that "muddied him and made him squeak. He came up to me for pity and protection. I don't think he was really hurt and when we returned the dog was still there and Dicky kept his tail up with great spirit, though he kept very close to me."[10] On another occasion Dicky met some "very pleasant dogs" who no doubt put up with his squeaking bark.

He used to climb up on Francis' lap and they would both go off to sleep; and he was a great favourite with the grandchildren. "The children," she writes, "were very happy all day out of doors. It was pretty to see Margaret (Lady Keynes) walk up to Dicky on the hard gravel with her naked feet and put her head down on his back 'to love him'."[11]

It was at Cambridge, however, that Dicky made his greatest conquest. He used to lay on Emma's bed whilst she breakfasted, but when Drury the postman arrived with the second post Dicky would rush down and insisted on accompanying him for a short way on his rounds, about the only time when he became separated from Emma. When Drury fell ill Dicky was sent round to see him and there was a tender meeting on both sides, "the postman kissing Dicky".

There were, in addition to the various dogs, plenty of cats in attendance at Down to keep down the mice and to be fussed over as pets. Charles did not particularly care for cats but he liked the pretty ways of kittens. Despite this relative coolness, however, he always remembered the habits and character of the more remarkable cats years after they had died. Emma was really the cat-lover and always liked to have one about the place. When the family went to Malvern for the water-cure the atmosphere was rather dismal. Charles derived no benefit and Horace became ill. The only "bright spot" we are told was "Phisty" (Mephistopheles), Henrietta's cat, which had been brought along and was a constant source of amusement. But it was her own cats that occupied most of Emma's attention and about which she writes in her letters. As with children, her affection was kept within the bounds of common sense and, when need be, she could be ruthless. "I despatched a hamper of kittens yesterday, and am not sorry to be free of their meals, poor little ducks. They would all sleep in the mowing machine and did not look clean, so I was obliged to apologise for them."[12]

In 1867 she acquired a Persian kitten which came from Paris and was found to be more charming and confiding than a common one. He was getting very big but still insisted on sitting on Emma's shoulder and "smudgeing" his face against hers. On another occasion this cat kept "smudgeing" against her face and her pen so that she was unable to get on with her writing.

In 1871 the kitten Cindie, belonging to Elizabeth Wedgwood, was missing for two days. "It caused a burst of indignation through the house; Jane was sure it was starved, Mrs. Taskie turned her out at night, etc. However, she was found safe at John Lubbock's, and now the evil tongue takes another direction, *viz.* that the Lubbocks meant to keep her and so did not tell when enquiries were made."[13]

If Charles was not particularly attracted to cats, his brother Erasmus was very fond of them, so the children arranged to give Uncle Ras a kitten when he came to Down. Unfortunately, the one selected was a bit too big because he really "liked a baby to sit still in his waistcoat for hours". Such an agreeable habit would, however, have demanded a constant supply and this was not available even from Down. Dicky became rather disgusted at all this cat business, but there is no record of any battle royal or even of chasing up a tree.

In 1842, when the family moved to Down, the account book shows that, in addition to horses, sums of money were spent on cows and pigs; but horses were the main expense and in that year items such as saddles, bridles, a phaeton, corn, oats and clippers appear. Although Charles was as a young man, and particularly on the pampas in Argentina, a good horseman, he did not take up riding again on moving to Down until Dr. Bence Jones recommended it for his health and he acquired the cob Tommy, who gave him an unfortunate fall, as has been recounted, and after a brief trial of another horse he gave up riding for ever.

Francis writes:

"He was not, I think, naturally fond of horses, nor had he a high opinion of their intelligence, and Tommy was often laughed at for the alarm he showed at passing and repassing the same heap of hedge clippings as he went round the field. I think he used to feel surprised at himself, when he remembered how bold a rider he had been, and how utterly old age and bad health had taken away his nerves. He would say that riding prevented him from thinking much more effectually than walking—that having to attend to the horses gave him occupation sufficient to prevent hard thinking. And the change of scene which it gave him was good for his spirits and health."[14]

On one occasion Tommy was taken by rail to the Isle of Wight and the therapeutic riding was continued. It was there that Charles observed that Tommy always went better when facing towards the east, which he attributed to the fact that he knew in which direction his home stables lay and he wanted to get home to them. In fact, Charles wrote a letter to *Nature* about it and cited it as an example of a horse's sense of direction.

However in general, Charles was so unconcerned with the horses that he used to ask a little doubtfully whether he might have a horse and cart to send to Keston for *Drosera*, or to the Westerham nurseries for plants.

Emma took more interest in the horses, upon which of course practically all excursions away from Down depended. The only horses whose characters emerge are the two very slow old cobs Tara (pronounced quite unsuitably "Tearer" by the coachman) and the equally inappropriately named Flyer.

In 1881 we learn that "there are men working at the wall so it will get on pretty fast. Poor old Flyer, literally muddy up to her eyes, is carting manure into the enclosure before the breach in the wall is built up—she looks so virtuous".[15]

After Tara came to an end, Emma, then aged eighty-seven, bought a new mare called Nancy. There had been a short interval between Tara and Nancy when a lame horse named Peter had been hitched to the carriage and which in his own interest Emma wished to keep. However, Leonard told her that it was quite disreputable to be seen being

driven around by a lame horse so it was sold to "a Careful fly-owner" of Cambridge and used often to carry the Darwin family around for many years after. Nancy, on the other hand, was eminently satisfactory and Emma observes typically, "I am charmed with the mare—her ears look so happy."

The other horses are merely entries in the account book:

"1862 New horse of £37 16s. 0d.
1863 Jenny bought for £35.
1865 Poney (sic) for William £32 10s. 0d. and another horse for £30.
1867 Dandy for £69 (an enormous price).
1868 Short carriage horses £109 [these may be the "fast little grey horses" who drew the carriage to Bromley Station in 1867, but were paid for the next year; no other pair of horses is mentioned].
Sold Dandy for £40 13s. 6d. including a dead cob (not a very satisfactory deal).
1873 Dead horse sold for £1.
1875 Bought a horse for £85.
1881 Sold a horse to Mr. Ward for £47."[16]

From which it may be gathered that, although Charles was pretty shrewd in his financial dealings, he was no horse coper.

An account of the menagerie at Down would not be complete without mention of the birds. These were Emma's and to a less extent Henrietta's province. She was very fond of birds and in 1880 there was a bullfinch which conceived an unrequited passion for Mrs. Ruck (Francis' mother-in-law) on her long annual visits to Down. "It fluffs itself into a ball when she comes in and sits on her head and plucks her hair. It flew out of the room, and she went after it and returned into the room, when it followed her in again. It kept up this passion as long as its life lasted, which was ended by a lady not noticing it in an armchair and sat on it."[17]

During the hot, dry summer of 1893 Henrietta had tamed a robin to eat out of her hands and come into the drawing-room at Down. She gave the caretaker board-wages for him and he continued to come into the house, once getting shut up behind the shutters and running the risk of being starved to death. Emma writes, "Poor Bobby how sorry we should have been and I can't conceive how he got there unless he was fast asleep and the shutters shut over him". Unfortunately, "Poor Bobby" came to an untimely end. He flew into the snow and was never seen again. As an old servant wrote on hearing the bad news, "he was so tame he would have flown down a cat's mouth".[18]

Emma, however, was not to be denied and as late as 1894 she bought a parrot called Jacko, who amused her greatly. "Yesterday he began a new noise, a quiet inward musical note. He clucks most of the time interspersed with growls and sometimes a shout."[19] And later, "Jacko walked out of his cage and found his way up to my wicker table. He was interested in my shut-up scissors and took it in his hand and tugged at it. The electric bell he held firmly and tried for a long time to get out the little white end (button). I did not know parrots were so like magpies. He is utterly without fear and I believe would walk over Dicky with a little encouragement."[20] Poor Dicky! what with the cats and Jacko, no wonder he stuck close to Emma.

Jacko had a passion for primroses, which he would gobble up as if they were delicious. Emma tried to coax him on to her lap with an offering of primroses, but it appears that, in the way of parrots, Jacko was a bit independent not to say contrary.

Charles kept pigeons in a loft in the garden, but these were bred for a strictly scientific purpose. He would seek the company of fanciers and once visited a "gin palace" in the Borough to listen to their talk and try to pick up some tips as to how the different characteristics might be brought out by selective breeding.

His other interests in the fauna at Down were confined to the bees and to the worms on whose habits he wrote a book which sold 3500 copies in 1881. Between 1854 and 1861 Charles studied the movements of the male Humble Bees and particularly the places where, on their wanderings, each bee would stop and buzz for a few moments before resuming its journey. This habit fascinated him and he enlisted the help of his children who were stationed at intervals along the bees' pathway and reported the "buzzing places". In his notes of this investigation he spelt chestnut "chesnut" in fine Darwin fashion, but the original manuscript describing the work has been mislaid, although a German translation exists, recently translated back into English by R. B. Freeman. Most of the "buzzing places" can still be identified round the Sandwalk.

CHAPTER IX
COMINGS AND GOINGS

Charles' chronic ill-health made it difficult for him to entertain visitors to Down as he would have wished; he nevertheless enjoyed their company when he felt well enough and had no compunction in excusing himself and retiring to the sanctuary of his own room if he felt exhausted. There was no visitors' book at Down.

Members of the family, the Wedgwoods, and his brother Erasmus were always welcome and frequent visits were paid by them; but then the burden of entertaining would fall upon Emma and, as they were part of the family circle, this made few demands—they looked after themselves.

Emma, although perhaps not so sociable as Charles, was nevertheless infinitely kind and we have seen how in 1867 she took the seven Huxley children under her wing. Parties of visitors would from time to time make the pilgrimage to Down; these were often from Working Men's Clubs or charitable institutions. In 1880, for instance, fifty members of "The Scientifics" visited Down and were received in the drawing-room, while claret-cup, wine and biscuits were dispensed on the verandah. Francis, who seemed to have been responsible for this invitation, was utterly "done in" after the party, even though he addressed them for only five minutes, and Charles appears to have played no part at all in their reception or entertainment.

It was when scientists came to stay that Charles was called upon to exert himself and on these occasions he was at his very best and the times when he had to retire "exhausted" were few and far between. It is little less than a scientific tragedy that Mendel never visited Down when he was in England in 1862, though Lawson Tait did in 1875.

It would not be possible to enumerate the many world-famous scientists who made the pilgrimage to Down. In 1876 Huxley brought Mr. Gladstone to visit Down. Darwin and Gladstone had never met and Gladstone was full of conversation, Darwin a contented listener. The latter afterwards said how honoured he was that "Such a great man should come and visit me". As an example of his kindness to foreign visitors who had as yet to make their reputation, Dr. James Rogers[1] relates the occasion when a young Russian, Kliment Timiriazev, who had just been appointed Professor of Botany at Moscow University, was on a visit to England in 1877, encouraged by Kovalersky's visit in 1867.

"Timiriazev had taken to Western Europe a copy of his own book on Darwin's theory in the hope that he might be able to use it as an excuse to visit Darwin. He had inscribed the book to Darwin in English 'with profound respect and unbounded admiration'. Timiriazev had also obtained a letter of introduction to Sir Joseph Hooker, director of the botanic gardens at Kew and a close friend of Darwin's.

When Timiriazev arrived at Kew, he was received not by Hooker but by his assistant, W. Thiselton Dyer, who showed him about the gardens. Dyer kindly but firmly told

Timiriazev that it was impossible for him to visit Darwin at Down. He finally agreed, however, to give Timiriazev a letter to Darwin's son, Francis. Timiriazev took the train out from London to a station near Down. But when he asked the station-master where he could get a carriage to take him to Down he was told, 'I fear you are in the wrong place'. Timiriazev nonetheless found the road to Down and walked the long distance to Darwin's house, where he was admitted by a servant to see Francis Darwin. Timiriazev was again told politely that it would be impossible for him to talk with Charles Darwin. He presented his book to Francis Darwin and prepared to leave. But Francis asked him to stay a minute and meet his mother. Timiriazev did so and talked for several minutes with Mrs. Darwin when, without advance notice, Charles Darwin entered the room. Timiriazev was quite startled at the sudden appearance of his hero. He was greatly relieved that Darwin did not diminish his stature by beginning their conversation in the manner Timiriazev had too often encountered in Western Europe where the polite inquiry concerned only the degree of frost and the quantity of bears in Russia.

Instead they talked of science in general and of botany in particular, since Darwin at this time was just beginning his work on the power of movement in plants. Darwin showed Timiriazev some of the experiments he was then carrying out. Darwin remarked that he took great pleasure in the young Russian scientists, who had become such warm partisans of his theory, and he mentioned in particular Kovalevsky (who had visited Down in 1867). Timiriazev asked him which Kovalevsky brother he meant, suggesting that he probably had in mind Alexander. 'No, excuse me,' replied Darwin, 'in my opinion the work in paleontology of Vladimir has greater significance.' Timiriazev, recalling this anecdote, explained that he stressed it for his Russian readers because the unfortunate Vladimir was not appreciated at his true worth in his own country. After about two hours of conversation, Darwin took leave of Timiriazev to rest. He remarked to Timiriazev before leaving: 'At this minute you will meet in this country many foolish people, who think only of involving England in a war with Russia, but rest assured that in this house there is sympathy for your side, and every morning we pick up the paper with the wish to read news of your victories.'

Timiriazev later wrote Dyer to thank him for indirectly arranging the interview with Darwin: 'Never will I forget that thanks to you I had the good fortune to see in the course, alas, of several hours, the greatest genius of all time.' Dyer thanked Timiriazev for the details of the visit and added, 'Darwin often told me after your visit what pleasure it gave him meeting and talking with you.' "

Charles Darwin and Karl Marx never met, but a number of letters were exchanged and Marx sent a copy of the second edition of *Das Kapital* to Charles inscribed on the fly-leaf:

"Mr. Charles Darwin
On the part of his sincere admirer
Karl Marx"

This copy is kept in the museum at Down.

It is also probable that Marx wished to dedicate the English translation of *Das Kapital*

to Darwin, an invitation which Charles courteously declined in a letter from Down dated October 13th 1880.

In 1881 Edward Aveling, the only man who knew both Marx and Darwin, visited Down and it was he who later published an article defining the relation of these two great Victorian philosophers.[2]

In 1857 Captain FitzRoy paid a visit to Down, but this was not a success. The comradeship of the old days aboard the *Beagle* had evaporated and their paths had diverged. Darwin was absorbed in his scientific work; FitzRoy's preoccupation was with the Bible. It was the last time that the two met.

Professor John Tyndall was a most welcome visitor. He was eleven years younger than Charles and as a physicist was perhaps not directly concerned with Charles' scientific work in the biological field. However, Tyndall, who was made Professor at the Royal Institution in 1853 and became Superintendent in 1867, had wide-ranging scientific interests and was a great friend of Huxley. In 1856 Tyndall and Huxley visited the Alps together, following which they produced a joint work on the structure and motion of glaciers. Tyndall was an accomplished mountaineer, by the standards of his day, and was the first to make the ascent of the Weisshorn. He must have been a stimulating companion for Charles and one can readily understand why he was often invited to make up a weekend party. There are two letters at Down to Tyndall. One dated October 20th 1868 is signed but not written by Charles.

"My dear Tyndall,

The Asa Grays and Hookers are coming here on Saturday next, and it would give us all very great pleasure if you cd. spare the time to come to us on that day and stay the Sunday with us. We dine at 7.30 and your best route will be by S.E. Railway from Charing Cross to Orpington Station which is four miles from the house.

I am sure you will excuse me in taking the privilege of an invalid and often leaving my guests.

My dear Tyndall,

Yours very sincerely,

Charles Darwin

P.S. You will find 4.18 or 5.8 from Charing Cross convenient trains and if you will let me know which I will send a fly from here.

If you come to Bromley (6 miles off) flys are plentiful."[3]

The second is from Emma dated Thursday October 7th, but the year is not mentioned. October 7th occurred on a Thursday in 1869, 1875 and 1880. From other evidence the year was probably 1875.

"Dear Professor Tyndall,

We are expecting Professor and Mrs. Huxley on Saturday 16th to stay over the Sunday with us and Mr. Darwin and I would be so glad if we could persuade you to come for the same time. I am in hopes we may have a remnant of summer to receive you.

Believe me,

Very truly yours

Emma Darwin"[4]

So it seems that Professor Tyndall was called upon as an agreeable companion for distinguished guests. This incidentally is the only mention of a visit by the American biologist, Professor Asa Gray, with whom Charles corresponded regularly.

A more frequent visitor from abroad was Professor Ernst Heinrich Haeckel. Professor Haeckel, who was born in 1834, studied medicine under Müller, Virchow and Kölliker. From 1861 he worked at the University of Jena, becoming Professor of Zoology there in 1865. At one time Haeckel stood alone as the great champion of Darwin in Germany. However, his own contributions to science were considerable and in his great work *Generelle Morphologie* he enunciated the theory that the life-history of an individual is a more or less accurate recapitulation of its historic evolution, or as scientists put it more briefly: "Ontogeny repeats Phylogeny."

Huxley called Haeckel the Coryphaeus of the Darwinian movement in Germany and he and Charles corresponded intermittently until Charles' death. In a letter dated May 21st 1867 Haeckel, still a young man of thirty-three, is taken somewhat to task for the vehemence with which he defended Darwinian theories. "I do not at all like that you," Charles writes, "towards whom I feel so much friendship, should unnecessarily make enemies, and there is pain and vexation enough in the world without more being caused."[5]

Haeckel's devotion to Darwin may have derived from his teacher, Professor Kölliker, who visited Down some time between 1860 and 1864, but Kölliker was more an interested observer of the progress of the theory of evolution than a disciple of its mentor.

Dr. William Benjamin Carpenter, who was Professor of Physiology at the Royal Institution, was born in 1813 and died in 1885 as a result of burns sustained by upsetting a spirit lamp. His interests were closely allied to those of Charles and his specialty was marine biology so that Charles was able to discuss many evolutionary problems with him as they affected the *Foraminifera.* Carpenter visited Down some time after 1861. There is a letter from Charles to him dated June 17th of that year reminding him of his promise to come to Down one Sunday. However, Henrietta was in bed with "a low fever" and she would have to be taken to the seaside to recuperate; Carpenter himself always went to his seaside house in Scotland for the summer vacation and so the visit was put off until the autumn. Carpenter was a qualified supporter of Darwinian theory and Charles concludes the letter, "I have been of late sufficiently pitched into to please anybody about my Book [*The Origin*]—But I can say little which I entirely and absolutely owe to the generous and kind support of a very few men—when I reflect, as I often do, that such men as Lyell, yourself, Hooker and Huxley go a certain way with me, nothing will persuade me that I am wholly and egregiously in error as many of my reviewers think."[6]

Sir Charles Lyell was, as a lifelong friend, a frequent visitor to Down, and young Francis Maitland Balfour (b. 1851), Professor of Animal Morphology at Cambridge, was always welcome. "He is very modest," writes Charles, "and very pleasant, and often visits here and we like him very much." Balfour was desperately ill with typhoid at Cambridge in February 1882 and the failing Charles on hearing of this writes, "Good Heavens, what a loss he would be to Science and to his many loving friends."[7]

In the event he survived Charles by only a few months, being killed with his guide on the Aiguille Blanche near Courmayer in July of that year.

Of all Charles' friends outside the family, Sir Joseph Hooker—Director of Kew Gardens—and perhaps the first of his scientific friends to embrace Darwinian theory, was the most frequent visitor from 1844 to 1847 and from then on there are many allusions in letters to visits from Hooker and his wife.

Charles must from time to time have visited Hooker at Kew Gardens, but the "Darwin Window" in Hooker's house at Sunningdale was so called because, on looking at the plan, Charles suggested that a bow window should be put in at a corner of the house to capture a particular view of the garden. A desk was placed for him just behind it, but Charles did not live either to sit at the desk or admire the view through 'his' window.

In 1854 Charles writes to Lyell telling him that Hooker stayed at Down for a fortnight and that his old friend Professor Henslow came down from Cambridge to see them both. "It does one good to see so composed, benevolent and intellectual a countenance," as that of the ageing professor of botany.[8]

Soon after Charles' death Sir Joseph paid a mournful visit of condolence to Emma and there was on the same day a farewell visit from Lady Derby, wife of the then Secretary of the Colonies.

Hooker, writing some time after Charles' death, observes:

"A more hospitable and more attractive home under every point of view could not be imagined—of Society there were most often Dr. Falconer (Hugh Falconer the eminent botanist and palaeontologist), Edward Forbes (at one time Professor of Botany at Cambridge, later Professor of Natural History at Edinburgh, a marine biologist), Professor Bell (President of the Linnaean Society) and Mr. Waterhouse (probably Alfred Waterhouse the architect of the Natural History Museum)—there were long walks, romps with the children on hands and knees, music that haunts me still. Darwin's own hearty manner, hollow laugh and thorough enjoyment of home life and friends, strolls with him all together, and interviews with us one by one in the study to discuss questions in any branch of biological or physical knowledge that we had followed and which I at any rate always left with the feeling that I had imparted nothing and carried away more than I could stagger under. Latterly, as his health became more seriously affected, I was for days and weeks the only visitor, bringing my work with me and enjoying his society as opportunity offered. It was an established rule that he every day pumped me, as he called it, for half an hour or so after breakfast in his study, when he first brought out a heap of slips with questions botanical, geographical etc. for me to answer, and concluded by telling me of the progress he had made in his own work, asking my opinion on various points. I saw no more of him till about noon, when I heard his mellow ringing voice calling my name under my window—this was to join him in his daily forenoon walk round the sand-walk . . ., during which our conversation usually ran on foreign lands and seas, old friends, old books and things far off to both mind and eye. In the afternoon there was another such walk, after which he again retired till dinner if well enough to join the family; if not, he generally managed to appear in the drawing-room, where seated in his high chair, with his feet in enormous carpet slippers, supported on a high stool—he enjoyed the music or the conversation of his family."[9]

Charles has the reputation of being a bit of a "stay-at-home" and it is true that, except for a visit to Paris with his uncle Josiah Wedgwood as a very young man and the circumnavigation of the globe in the *Beagle*, he never thereafter left the British Isles. A more detailed examination of his activities, however, does not substantiate the view that "He practically never left Down". His son Francis has conveniently catalogued the periods away from Down between 1843 and 1854 as follows:[10]

Table 2:
Periods Away from Home

"1843, July.—Week at Maer and Shrewsbury.
,, October.—Twelve days at Shrewsbury.
1844, April.—Week at Maer and Shrewsbury.
,, July.—Twelve days at Shrewsbury.
1845, September 15.—Six weeks, Shrewsbury, Lincolnshire, York, the Dean of Manchester, Waterton, Chatsworth.
1846, February.—Eleven days at Shrewsbury.
,, July.—Ten days at Shrewsbury.
,, September.—Ten days at Southampton, etc., for the British Association.
1847, February.—Twelve days at Shrewsbury.
,, June.—Ten days at Oxford, etc., for the British Association.
,, October.—Fortnight at Shrewsbury.
1848, May.—Fortnight at Shrewsbury.
,, July.—Week at Swanage.
,, October.—Fortnight at Shrewsbury.
,, November.—Eleven days at Shrewsbury.
1849, March to June.—Sixteen weeks at Malvern.
,, September.—Eleven days at Birmingham for the British Association.
1850, February/March.—Many visits to London *re* drawing of Cirripides.
,, June.—Week at Malvern.
,, August.—Week at Leith Hill, the house of a relative.
,, October.—Week at the house of another relative.
1851, March.—Week at Malvern.
,, April.—Nine days at Malvern.
,, July.—Twelve days in London.
1852, March.—Week at Rugby and Shrewsbury.
,, September.—Six days at the house of a relative. Visited Birmingham for meeting of British Association.
1853, July.—Three weeks at Eastbourne.
,, August.—Five days at the military camp at Chobham.
1854, March.—Five days at the house of a relative.

1854, July.—Three days at the house of a relative.
,, October.—Six days at the house of a relative."

As will be seen, most of these visits were to the family either at Shrewsbury or at Maer, some scientific meetings, a visit to Rugby, where William was at school, and from 1849 the fruitless visits to the hydropathic establishment at Malvern in unavailing attempts to rid himself of his continuing sense of illness.

The visit to the military camp at Chobham seems an unlikely enterprise for a member of the Darwin family, but this visit was a great success. Charles and Emma took their second son George, who as a boy was fascinated with soldiers, and Henrietta, who looked back on it "as an extraordinarily delightful and unique experience, still fresh in my memory although it is fifty years ago."[11]

In fact an analysis of this catalogue of visits reveals that in twelve years Charles was away from home for sixty weeks, and five weeks away from home each year is not bad going even for these days. If Charles' recorded travels are to some extent mundane, he too had his dreams. Writing to Hooker in 1854 he says, "I am always building veritable castles in the air about emigrating, and Tasmania has been my headquarters of late."[12]

However, we have through the years some circumstantial evidence as to Charles' movements which must serve instead of the far more substantial calculations of Francis between the years 1843 and 1854.

At the end of 1854 Charles and Emma took a house in London for a month, but we are not told precisely where. This was an abysmal failure. The weather was terrible, all the children were unwell and Charles and Emma between them caught so many colds that there was no day during the course of the whole of this month when they could both go out together.

From 1854 until 1858 there are no readily recoverable records of journeys away from Down, although one feels that there must have been some unless the awful experience of a month in London determined them to stay in Down, just as a day in London would do today.

By July 1858, however, Charles is writing to Lyell from the King's Head Hotel in Sandown to tell him that they are spending ten days there before moving on to Shanklin in the Isle of Wight.

In 1859, after several visits in the summer to Moor Park for hydropathic treatment, the family was transported to Ilkley in Yorkshire to give Charles a rest after correcting the proofs of *The Origin* and to enable him to "take the waters". On October 2nd the party set out and three days were taken up with the journey. On December 2nd he once more writes from Ilkley to Lyell saying that they will return to Down on December 7th but break the journey by spending the night with his brother Erasmus.[13] He writes to Hooker on December 21st, "Ilkley seems to have done me no essential good", but adds that he attended the bench as a magistrate a few days before.[14]

If the visit to Ilkley did his health no good, at least it gave Charles an opportunity for correcting the second edition of *The Origin*. The break in the visit may have been due to his intention to visit Moor Park for more hydropathic treatment as he tells his cousin W. D. Fox in a letter before they all set out for Ilkley.

In 1860 the whole year was spent at Down except for a visit to Dr. Lane at Sudbrook Park, and visits to Elizabeth Wedgwood at the Ridge, Hartfield, in June. From September 22nd to November 16th the Darwins took a house in the Marine Parade, Eastbourne, from where Charles writes to Lyell a long letter about the relationships of the marsupials to the placentals.

1861 was a year when the family took their summer holiday from July 1st to August 27th at a house in Hesketh Crescent in Torquay. Hesketh Crescent was a pleasantly placed row of houses close above the sea, somewhat removed from the main body of the town, but near Anstey's Cove. While there Charles worked on the fertilisation of orchids. He could never really get away from the all-absorbing interests of his life.

In April of this year he made one of his rare visits to London for a social occasion and dined with Dr. Bell at the Linnaean Society, "and liked my dinner—Dining out is such a novelty to me that I enjoyed it. Bell has a real good head",[15] despite the fact that in his Presidential Summing-up in 1858 after the papers by Charles and Alfred Russell Wallace had been given he declared that no very important papers had been delivered during the year!

In 1862 one of the boys caught scarlet fever and it was decided to take him to Bournemouth for convalescence. Unfortunately, Emma contracted the disease on the way and they had to break their journey at Southampton, presumably at William's house.

In April 1863 there was a visit to Miss Wedgwood at Hartfield and then in September Charles became ill and went to Malvern for the water-cure returning in October. This could not have done him much good, as we learn that he was ill for six months.

In 1864 he was too ill to go to London to receive the Copley medal of the Royal Society, which was presented on St. Andrew's Day, November 30th. This period of prolonged sickness may account for the fact that there is no record of his leaving Down until 1868 except for two periods of a week each in 1866 and 1867 when he stayed with his brother Erasmus in Queen Anne Street.

In February 1868 he writes to Hooker that, "we go to London on Tuesday first for a week to Queen Anne St. and afterwards to Miss Wedgwood's in Regents Park (her London home) and stay the whole month". That year Charles was very unwell in the spring and on July 16th he left with the family to convalesce at Freshwater in the Isle of Wight. It was on this occasion that he met Lord Tennyson, who failed to impress him, and also the famous photographer Miss Julia Cameron, who took the treasured photograph which is still so often reproduced.

In 1869 after the usual week with Erasmus in London he went off with the family to Caerdeon on the north shore of the Barmouth estuary in Wales. They took "a beautiful house with a terraced garden", but he was unwell during the whole of his visit. As he writes to Hooker on June 22nd, "I have hardly crawled half a mile from the house, and then been fearfully fatigued. It is enough to make one wish oneself quiet in a comfortable tomb."

In May 1870 he visited Cambridge to "see the boys (George and Horace)". He called on Professor Sedgwick, then aged eighty-six, and found, as is so common with old people, that he was a bit befuddled in the morning but that later in the day he was very bright. In

fact he insisted on showing Charles round the museum in the afternoon and, whereas this completely exhausted Charles, the old professor was quite unaffected. "But," says Charles, "Cambridge without Henslow was not itself." He tried to get out to see Henslow's old house, "but it was too far for me". The time was coming when these excursions were taking a heavy toll and there is no record of him leaving Down during 1871. In 1872 he took a house for three weeks in October at Sevenoaks and it was during this visit that the idea of building a verandah at Down captured the imagination of both Charles and Emma.

From 1873 the times which Charles spent away from Down can best be set out in a table such as the one concocted by Francis up to the year 1854.

1873, March.—A rented house was taken in Montague Street for a month, much against Charles' inclinations.
,, August.—A visit to Sir Thomas Farrer at Abinger Hall in Surrey.
1874, January.—The usual visit to brother Erasmus and again in the following March.
1875, August.—A visit to Abinger Hall, then on to William at Bassett.
1876, May.—To Hensleigh Wedgwood at Hartfield in Sussex.
1877, At the end of the summer term.—Cambridge to receive the Ll.D. and some time in the summer to Josiah Wedgwood at Leith Hill Place and then on to Bassett.
1878, June.—To Bassett and later to Frank Wedgwood at Barlaston.
1879, May.—To Bassett; August, to Coniston in the Lake District.
1880, April.—To Abinger Hall.

The records of departure from Down now become very sparse, but in 1880 too there was a determined effort to visit Horace at his house in Botolph Lane, Cambridge. A private carriage was hired from Bromley and a special train conveyed the carriage, with numerous shuntings, through London to King's Cross, where it was attached to the Cambridge train. The course taken by the train through London must have been very circuitous; Ludgate Hill was seen written up and there was a glimpse of St. Paul's Cathedral. Emma enjoyed the excitement and the variety, Charles' reaction is not recorded, but Francis' comfort was upset by the shunting. However, the visit was a great success and Emma writes characteristically that "Ida [Horace's wife] was so well and hungry and merry"![16]

In June 1881 the family went to Patterdale by Ullswater, but Charles found that he could not walk. In a letter to Wallace he writes, "everything tires me, even the scenery . . . life has become very wearisome to me".

Despite this gloomy letter from Charles, Henrietta thought that the second visit to the Lake District was nearly as full of enjoyment as the first and she recalls that Charles and Emma did take little strolls together.

In December he was staying with his daughter, Henrietta Litchfield, in Bryanston Street, and it was there, while calling on Dr. Romanes, that he had his first seizure.

Romanes writes:

"I happened to be out, but my butler, observing that Mr. Darwin was ill, asked him to come in. He said he would prefer going home, and although the butler urged him to wait at least until a cab could be fetched, he said he would rather not give so much

trouble. For the same reason he refused to allow the butler to accompany him. Accordingly he watched him walking with difficulty towards the direction in which cabs were to be met with, and saw that, when he had got about three hundred yards from the house, he staggered and caught hold of the park railings as if to prevent himself from falling. The butler therefore hastened to his assistance, but after a few seconds saw him turn round with the evident purpose of retracing his steps to my house. However, after he had returned part of the way he seems to have felt better for he again changed his mind, and proceeded to find a cab."[17]

Charles eventually reached Down safely, but he never left home again.

CHAPTER X
INCOME AND EXPENDITURE

The story of the Darwin family; the enjoyment of Down, the education of the children, the engagement of a large staff of servants and holidays when they were needed have all been related without any concern as to how they were paid for. In order to lead this sort of life even in the middle of the nineteenth century you had to be fairly rich and, for most of his life, Charles Darwin was a rich man. We must also remember that until 1859, when *The Origin of Species* was published, Charles had lived almost entirely on unearned income. Even after the publication of his books the amount of money that he earned from their sale would not have gone far to support him and Emma in the style in which they lived.

By the end of 1871 Charles had earned a total of £4729 10s. 0d. from his various publications. Thus from 1859 his average income from sale of books was just under £400 a year.

By 1872 immediately after the publication of *The Descent of Man* things were looking up. This work brought him in £735; *The Origin*, £210; and his American publishers, Appleton, sent a money order for £1489. In 1872 *The Expression of the Emotions in Man and Animals* was published and the following year the income from the sale of books was: *The Expression of the Emotions*, £1050; an order from Appleton for *The Descent of Man* and *The Origin* for £201, and a small cheque from Murray's for £36 19s. 6d., making a total of £1287 19s. 6d. for the year, and the thousand guineas for *The Expression of the Emotions* was a commissioned payment, unlikely to be repeated or even increased.

By 1881, the year before he died, Charles had received a total of £10,248 for his various publications, an average since 1859 of a little over £460 a year.

It was from the interest on his investments therefore that Charles obtained his income, the capital for which had been either given to him or left to him by his father. In addition there was, in the early years, an allowance of £400 a year from his father-in-law.

Following his marriage in 1839 Charles kept scrupulous accounts of his income and expenditure until 1866, when mercifully they were taken over by Emma and became legible. By dint of careful scrutiny and the aid of a magnifying glass, however, it is possible to make out what was happening financially to the Darwin family in the early years. The development of his finances is difficult to follow in the transition period 1865–1866 because Charles kept his accounts from September to September and, when Emma took them over, they were calculated from January the first to the end of the calendar year.

In the year that he married, Charles' income, including £500 a year from his father and the £400 from "Uncle Jos", came from the interest on shares in canals, and from consols, making a total of £1244. That year he spent £848 5s. 5d., so that a sizeable sum was put away in the bank or invested. In this way, by keeping his expenditure less than

his income by ever-increasing amounts, he gradually built up some capital and, by the time he came to live at Down in 1842 he had a small portfolio of investments and £475 11s. 1d. in the bank. Dr. Darwin died in 1848 having amassed a considerable fortune. Charles' share of the estate was probably over £40,000, so that as the years went by his portfolio increased and by 1865 he had investments in:

The Great Northern Railway
The Lancashire and York Railway
Maryport and Carlisle Railway
The Monmouth Railway
The Great North of Scotland Railway
Penarth Railway
The Mid Kent Railway
The Lancashire and Carlisle Railway
The North Eastern Railway
The Massachusetts Railroad
The Pennsylvania Railroad
The Shropshire Union Canal
The East & West India Docks
The London Docks
Etruria (the Wedgwood factory)
The Beesby Estate in Lincolnshire
Interest on a mortgage to a Major Owen
and a loan to a Mrs. Ransome

which brought him in a total of £5483 per annum.

In 1881 his portfolio was:

North Eastern Railway
London and North Western Railway
London and South Western Railway
South Eastern Railway
Great Northern Railway
North Eastern Railway
Leeds and York Railway
Great North of Scotland Railway
Pennsylvania Railroad
Albany and Boston Railroad
New South Wales Bonds
Metropolitan Consols
Consols
Holborn Viaduct Co.
East and West India Docks
St. Katharine's Docks
United States Funded Loan
Penarth Harbour Co.
Blackfriars Bridge Stock
Leeds Corporation Stock
The Beesby Estate and the interest on the mortgage to Major Owen

which brought him in a total of about £8000 per annum.

All through the years Charles with his modest tastes kept his expenditure well below his income, so that from 1848 when his father died the sums available for fresh investments were substantial, as Table 3 (opposite) from 1854 shows.

It is to these well-kept accounts that we must now turn to see how his money was spent. It would not be possible to go into them in detail here as they are very complicated and compendious, but some extracts may be made which throw light on the life-style of the family at Down.

On the expenditure side there is a bill from Lambert and Rawlings of 11 Coventry Street, at the time of Charles' marriage, for cutlery and silver amounting to £179 12s. 6d. and an additional sum of £59 15s. 0d. being the value of cutlery and silver as wedding presents. This stock seems to have lasted for the rest of his life, as there is no further entry in the accounts under this heading.

In the early years every penny which was spent was entered such as "haircut 2/-", and "haircut and nightcap, 4/6", but as time went on such trivia were put under more general headings and the details, which were in themselves fascinating, are lost. After

Year	Surplus for Investment	Income
1854	2127	4603
1855	2270	4267
1856	2250	4048
1857	2173	4187
1858	1174	4963
1859	1378	5187
1860	2734	5079
1861	2073	5797
1862	1981	4743
1863	1249	5847
1864	2196	5553
1865	1952	5828
1866	1418	5483
1867	1897	5737
1868	2157	6779
1869	2274	6839
1870	2031	7186
1871	2558	7897
1872	2402	8107
1873	4819	8475
1874	790	8708
1875	4658	8530
1876	3053	8259
1877	1543	7916
1878	3157	7997
1879	802	7650
1880	499	7937

In 1871 Charles calculated that the value of his stocks was £86,310 having made a profit of £7,239 over their purchase value.

Table 3 Annual Income and Surplus

the birth of William, "asses' milk" and expenditure on a "wet nurse" appears. The wet nurse appears again after the birth of Anne, but she seems to have got on quite well without "asses' milk". Snuff receives constant mention until little Anne died in 1851, when it disappears until 1856. It will be remembered that it was Anne who would bring him a little snuff "as a present" and perhaps the memory of this was for a while too poignant. Beer for the servants was bought in casks and workmen on the road were given beer and lunch. Sundry "poor women" or "poor men" are given a few shillings.

In 1849 wine appears for the first time and gradually increases in amount as the family grows up and in 1866 "brandy" is mentioned. That year the subscription to the Athenaeum went up from £6 6s. od. to £7 7s. od. In 1868 the drink bill was "Beer £61, Wine £5, Brandy £32", but this amount of brandy lasted until 1873, when another stock is taken in. Thereafter a bill is received each year from Pamphilon, probably a Bromley wine merchant, for what has been suggested was a type of brandy.

Every year after 1870 there is a substantial sum paid to "Carbonell", which is the Darwinian version of Messrs. Charbonnel et Walker, the chocolate manufacturers, of 31 Old Bond Street, but then a high-class general grocery store. In 1875 champagne appears for the first time under "Carbonell and champagne", so that it is not possible to tell how much was for champagne and how much for the Bond Street grocers' other confections.

Allowances for the children and household expenses assume an ever-increasing proportion of the budget as the years go by. A typical entry in 1878 is "Sons and daughters £1520; Beer £73; Pamphilon, brandy £10; Carbonnel £57; Household £1174". In 1843 the household expenses were £380 and they had been increasing regularly year by year. The wages of the servants have already been referred to and they seem unbelievably small today: a first-class butler for £9 10s. od. a quarter and maids between £2 10s. od. and £5 a quarter, even the famous Mrs. Evans, upon whom the welfare of the family largely depended, was paid only £7 10s. od. a quarter. If the wages seem small then the amount of tax paid is almost incredible. During the 'sixties rates and taxes together amounted to a little over £60 a year; in the 'seventies these had risen to over £70 a year, and in 1881 to £83, but even in 1881 only £32 14s. 4d. was paid in income tax, and the maximum income tax Charles ever had to pay was in 1872 when the Exchequer mulcted him of £52!

If Charles was meticulous in drawing up his accounts, Emma was even more so and Table 4 opposite shows the major items of household expenditure in a family with seven children and, over the years, roughly the same number of servants to be fed.

In 1879 Charles began to take thought for the disposal of his property on his death. Various scraps of paper are in existence at Down on which he has jotted down his thoughts, sometimes in pencil. He calculates that each boy will receive about £40,000 on his death and this includes "Mr. Rich's be quest". Mr. Rich, a stranger, was an admirer of Charles and wanted to show his admiration in a substantial way by leaving his whole estate to the Darwin sons and daughters, but the family, while appreciating the kindly thought, felt unable to accept the gift. However, Mr. Rich refused to change his will and a sum of about £1000 a year eventually came to the Darwin family from this source.

Figures in £'s Eggs and milk were produced on the estate	1867	1868	1869	1870	1871	1872	1873	1874	1875	1876	1877	1878	1879	1880	1881
MEAT	250	259	275	268	272	281	290	246	221	267	330	292	251	246	223
BUTTER	5	10	11	9	9	5	6	8	5	9	10	9	12	12	15
CHEESE	18	14	18	22	18	20	19	21	13	15	10	12	15	12	11
CANDLES	16	12	11	16	20	12	39	37	19	27	39	37	24	17	25
OIL	7	8	8	12	13	16									
BACON	10	11	15	14	10	16	17	17	19	9	16	14	12	9	4
SOAP	10	8	8	9	11	7	6	8	3	2	2	2	—	8	4
GROCERY	53	63	76	63	67	67	77	56	57	80	70	61	91	103	79
SUGAR	16	16	19	19	17	14	15	8	12						
BREAD	63	22	41	47	43	59	38	50	36	42	42	33	57	51	34
FISH & GAME	20	30	23	23	28	36	46	31	31	36	23	31	27	27	38
SERVANTS	71	81	57	74	93	89	100	82	86	116	68	106	108	114	117
POULTRY	38	34	34	28	37	31	40	28	30	36	41	31	41	39	31
TEA FOR SERVANTS and BEST TEA	27	18	26	23	14	19	11	26	11	21	13	12	17	23	21
COFFEE	11	14	25	20	14	19	21	12	13	19	13	14	8	8	21
WASHING	6	10	18	6	13	8	10	34	36	56	35	36	49	40	34
DRESS: Emma and the Girls	28	205	215	193	174	129	152	126	119	133	80	60	65	91	63
GIFTS	79	102	13	87	123	105	116	110	147	120	121	126	114	170	174
MISCELLANEOUS	75	53	53	67	49	79	55	75	60	57	77	101	72	75	28
DRIPPING	3	2	2	2½	3	2½	2	2¾	3	2	4	3	—	—	—

Table 4 Annual Household Expenditure

Charles thinks that he can assure for each of his sons a sum which would make them secure for life financially, "but", as he ruefully observes, "of course my income may fall off a little".

In 1853 he had set up a Trust for Emma, who was to retain Down House and surrounding land for life. In 1881 his brother Erasmus died and Charles was again seriously concerned about the disposition of his estate.

A black-edged letter dated 8th September from his banker son William from Bassett must have been sent soon after Erasmus' death in response to one from Charles.

"My dear Father,

I have been so pressed with Uncle Eras' affairs I am not sure I can finish yours.

Boston and Albany cannot be valued in London. I am sure I made a mistake before, therefore I shall put it at £300 unless I hear (differently) tomorrow. I am certain your fortune and ½ Uncle Eras' together with No 6 (Queen Anne St., Erasmus' London house) and land will bring you up to *at least* £280,000 *without* mother's.

If Division is put at 7 : 12 i.e. boys have 12/74 and girls 7/74 (each), girls in all will have about £34,000 and boys £53,000, if it is put at 2 : 3 or girls 2/19 to boys 3/19, girls will have nearly £37,000 to boys £56,700.

Your fortune does not pay more than an average of $3\frac{1}{2}$ to $3\frac{3}{4}$ per cent at present prices. Say £1000 will produce £37 per annum. For girls so as to be a safe investment, then £35,000 gives an income of £1300 which will probably go as far as £1100 25 years ago.

I see the total comes to £282,000 taking Beesby (the estate mentioned above) at 30 years as by telegram to-day from Higgins. But as rents are likely to fall I should take it at 28 years.

Uncle Eras' total is higher than I thought.

In great haste

Goodbye dear Father

Your affectionate son

W. E. Darwin.

Did you ever expect to be worth over a ¼ of a million?"

Indeed the young man whose income in 1839 was £1244 almost certainly did not!

CHAPTER XI
FATE UNCERTAIN

After Emma Darwin's death in 1896 the fate of Down House property was in the balance and no doubt there was a great deal of discussion in the family circle about what should be done with it, although we have no records of this. However, a letter which is rather difficult to read from Sir Joseph Hooker, then aged 78, to Sir George Darwin, dated January 30th 1898, reveals that its fate was still undecided.

"My dear Darwin,

I have over and over again thought over the possibilities of Down being preserved either for some practical scientific object, or as a (?) shrine for pilgrims—but to no purpose. Difficulty of access is itself an all but fatal obstacle: but there are others that appear to me as insuperable.

The most enticing project that was entertained and discussed was that of making it a biological station for experiments on breeding, practically a zoological Rothampsted, but without a covenant to support its scientific objects, and with infinitely more difficult and delicate researches to be undertaken, how is this possible?

To superintend such an institution a first rate man would be indispensable and this not only in point of knowledge, industry and so forth, but in that of possessing original views, and who would be content to undergo banishment for years from any active part in scientific society.

Then as regards keeping up the study and garden for pilgrims—to make these really living evidences of your father's life and times, they should be furnished as he left them; or at any rate, as in the case of Shakespeare's house, be filled with memorials of him. In the cases of Voltaire's or Rousseau's houses all you expect to see (I am told, as I never saw either) are the rooms in which they wrote and thought and no other object is expected. In the case of Down it is there where a man worked with books, microscopes and specimens —without these I would far rather visit the rooms as furnished by whoever inhabited the house.

No doubt it is conceivable that some millionaire might be disposed to give or leave a sum large enough to establish and *endow* a zoological station at Down—but I do not see that it would, *as a matter of course*, be wise to accept it. The prompting of the donor would be half sentimental if not wholly so, and all considerations of suitability of site must be sacrificed to this.

I feel a difficulty in advising in the matter of this paragraph—and should be glad to talk it over with you. If you will fix a day to lunch at the Athenaeum I will, weather permitting, be there at 1 p.m.

We were indeed glad to hear of you from Mrs. Gray and of the success of your lecture—thank you for your good news of her, which is most acceptable.

With my wife's kindest regards to you both,

yours (?) affectionately,

Jos D. Hooker"[1]

Despite this letter and, no doubt, an earnest discussion over lunch at the Athenaeum, nothing came of this project, nothing that is to say until 1927, as will be recorded later.

Towards the end of 1898 a Mrs. Wilder evinced interest in leasing part of the house, but leaving the study as a memorial to Charles. The correspondence with Mrs. Wilder is voluminous and, as she never settled at Downe, there would be no purpose in dealing with it in detail. William, Charles' banker son, had a good deal to do with these abortive arrangements and in October 1898 he writes to George, "I had a very pleasant lunch with Mrs. Wilder and quite fell in love with her".[2] We may conclude that this lunch was not at the Athenaeum, which at that time rigorously excluded females and even now there is no evidence that anyone has fallen in love there. Despite this auspicious beginning, more and more complications seemed to arise. Mrs. Wilder, despite her no doubt considerable attractions, seems to have been a person who knew what she wanted and this did not always correspond with what the Darwin family wished. There is no doubt that some agreement was signed because the susceptible William describes her as "a most careful tenant and is doing a great deal to get the place into order". Whether she ever lived in the house is uncertain because her butler could find nowhere to live in Downe, and although William described her as "a tenant" she subsequently expressed doubts as to whether she could afford to live there. However, as late as February 1899, Mrs. Wilder is still getting specifications from Hampton's for decorations and there is some discussion as to whether new-fangled electric bells should be installed. In April the gardener, Hills, faced with the prospect of serving Mrs. Wilder and by no means "in love with her", gave notice, and by May 1899 more trouble arose with Mrs. Wilder's solicitors. In June there is a sale of some of the effects at Down House. Thereafter the beguiling Mrs. Wilder disappears from the scene, and notices are put in the newspapers in respect of the property. In June of that year a Mr. Arnold Budgett writes a number of letters to Sir George Darwin addressed either from Bickley or Beckenham, in the first of which he remarks: "In view of recent notices in the papers in reference to the property at Down I have taken the liberty of making enquiry as to the facts—whether the property is to be disposed of. Should such be the case I would further ask whether it would meet with your approval were the property purchased and held by a committee as a place of national interest."[3]

Mr. Budgett was duly invited to the Athenaeum, but at 10 a.m. and was not given lunch. In any event, we hear no more of his proposals.

By 1900 the problem was still unresolved and the family were no doubt by now becoming desperate, but the situation was saved by the emergence of a Mr. Whitehead. He appears to have been a most satisfactory tenant, although William, still no doubt smarting from the disappearance of Mrs. Wilder, writes to George, "You give a very satisfactory account of W as a tenant. What a villain that Mrs. W is I am told she is no

better than she ought to be".[4] I suspect that Mrs. W probably used make-up, but is he referring to Mrs. Wilder or Mrs. Whitehead?

Mr. Whitehead was chiefly remarkable for being the first person to own a "horseless carriage" in Downe. It was like a landau and seated four people, two a side facing each other, with a steering wheel in the middle. Regrettably nothing more is known about either of the Mrs. W.'s.

If the Whiteheads are rather shadowy figures, the goings on in the village at this time are well recorded for us in a special newspaper entitled for the occasion the *Downe Gazette* and published at the time of the Festival of Britain in 1951. This contains reminiscences of the older inhabitants about the village at the turn of the century and very revealing they are.

Mr. Burch, who was the estate carpenter to the Earl of Derby at Holwood Park, recalls that:

"In the summer time Downe was invaded by whole families. They arrived for the fruit picking season and they came in dog-carts, on foot, push prams piled high with their belongings and every conceivable vehicle one can imagine brought them to Downe from outlying villages, but mainly from Cudham. The noise was stupendous: every night there were quarrels and fights outside the Queen's Head and the George and Dragon. Horses were bought and sold under the limetree, children rushing to and fro, shrieking and laughing. The Old Jail (an inn) had an overflow of fruit-pickers too, with much the same carrying on.

In the strawberry fields the women were not allowed to pick the fruit, because of their long skirts. The pickers had to bend and they were forbidden to kneel when picking the fruit. When the men had filled a shallow with strawberries, they walked to a shed where the women sat round a table and emptied the contents in front of one woman. She would sort the fruit and arrange them on strawberry leaves in a flat punnet [*sic*]. Three dozen it held. A deep punnet, with a projecting shelf, held five dozen. The fruit was perfect; any blemished or bird-pecked fruit had to be discarded."

Mrs. Margaret Gibbs, after describing how her uncle Dr. Alexander Muirhead and Sir Oliver Lodge established a wireless telegraphy station in 1902 on Ditchfield, which is next-door to the Down House estate, goes on to describe how Mr. Capon used to run a service of horse-drawn buses to Orpington and Bromley.

"The Orpington 'bus used to leave Downe at 8 o'clock in the morning, and took many of the business men to Orpington station, returning there in the evening to meet trains coming in about 6 o'clock. The Bromley 'bus went three times a day. These 'buses were of the closed type in winter, but in the summer were open brakes with canopy tops. . . . In the days before the coming of motor cars, the Forge owned by the grandfather and father of the present Mr. Reeves was a busy place. There were always horses being shod and farm equipment of all sorts being repaired. It had a great attraction for the children, who loved to watch the activities going on inside."

Mr. Nichols, the retired postman, writing at the age of eighty-seven, has further information on the Orpington 'bus, which held about twelve people.

"There used to be great larks when three bright gentry's sons travelled on it to

school. Mr. Findon's son and Sir Hugh Lubbock's son from Gorringes. They blew the bugle all the way and sat on top of the 'bus!"

Mr. Saffery writes:

"Tennis parties in those spacious days were tennis parties, the Village versus the 'Nobs', and what good fun they were. Going from court to court, Petleys, Tower House (Trowmers), Down House, Orange Court. Many a pleasant afternoon was spent and many a hard battle fought, ending with a large and very adequate tea, and finalised by a village dance."

Lastly a more general view was contributed by Miss Canning, aged eighty-two, whose memory carried her back to the Darwinian days.

"My father went to Billingsgate three times a week with his pony cart and he served the neighbouring villages with fresh fish on alternate days. Every night my mother fried fish, while he sat and read the paper, he was lame in one foot. Sometimes my mother fried fish until 11 p.m. at night.

I remember how enormous the laundry maid at Down House appeared to us. In fact there were many large ladies in Downe—my grannie said it was due to the lime-water.

Mrs. Darwin held a library every Sunday for the village children. We were allowed two books if we were ten years and over. Those under ten were only allowed one book. We had to behave ourselves. My mother always knew if we had misbehaved, we could not go to the library for two or three weeks, as a punishment. She was very kind, Mrs. Darwin, and she crotcheted white jackets with pink borders one year, and blue borders another year. The age limit for boys was eight years for wearing these jackets.

When Mrs. Parslow (Mrs. Darwin's personal maid) married the butler at Down House, she went to live in a cottage in Back Lane. She started a dressmaking room, and Mrs. Darwin apprenticed three village girls to learn the art of sewing.

We had a large family. One of my brothers was born the same day Mr. Bernard Darwin was born and my grandmother Canning, who lived with us, was always being called to assist at the many births, the village mid-wife really. I used to get very cross when my school friends so often said to me, 'Your Grannie had another baby last night'.

I went as under-housemaid to the Vicarage at the age of twelve. My sister was housemaid and Mr. Ffindon was the Vicar and the new Vicarage had just been completed.

The Summer treats we looked forward to, consisted of 'Hay Afternoon' at Mrs. Forrest's, who lived at Gorringes. Afternoon tea in the Paddock at Downe Hall. Tea at the Vicarage and Down House.

My brother and I walked every day to Orange Court to fetch our milk. Mr. Harris was the farmer and a gentleman farmer too.

The first Lady Lubbock used to visit the school, and I shall never forget the excitement she roused when she was lost in 'Cuckoo Wood'. She walked about all night. The wood stretches from Gorringes to Farnborough.

My grandmother walked every Sunday to a Wesleyan Chapel at Cudham. She took sandwiches and stayed to the afternoon service before walking home. She did this right up to the end of her life. She died when she was seventy-six.

Plate V: Emma Darwin

Plate VIa: Miss Willis' Style of Conducting a Rehearsal

Plate VIb: Miss Willis swimming at Lerici

(both by courtesy of Messrs. John Murray)

When the walnut trees were thrashed down by the Cross Ash wooden cottages, we children would scamper for those nuts falling in the road.

The pump (now behind the Church wall) was the only drinking water for years, and some villagers preferred to drink the pond water because they imagined the water ran through the graves."

O tempora! O mores!

CHAPTER XII
DOWNE HOUSE SCHOOL

At the end of 1906 Mr. Whitehead decided to surrender his lease and the remarkable Miss Olive Willis established herself as chatelaine, and much else, of Down House. That Miss Willis competes for attention with the members of the Darwin family attests the unique qualities of her personality. She made Down House almost as well known for its school, called Downe House School (with an 'e') and now near Newbury in Berkshire, as it is for being the home of the Darwin family.

Olive Willis was born in 1877 at 65 Thistle Grove (now 16 Drayton Gardens, S.W.10). Her father was an inspector of Schools and her mother, Janet Crawford, came from a very religious family who believed in the imminence of the 'second coming', so that as a little girl Janet wore a clean nightdress every night so as to appear respectable for the occasion.

The Willis family consisted of four girls and a boy, Olive being the second oldest girl. Quite early on she showed evidence of a sturdily independent nature. Grown-ups disapproved of her untidiness, her unpunctuality and her studied lack of interest in their conversation. She refused to make friends with the children selected by her parents as suitable for her company and could on occasion, even more than most children, be alarmingly tactless. At the age of ten and in the midst of a family gathering she sought to display her agility of mind by asking a riddle which she is believed to have made up. "Why is Aunt Anita like a poker?" and triumphantly: "Because she is useful, not ornamental"!

Olive herself recalls that life was full of restrictions. "You are not to climb the mulberry tree . . . You are not to play on the way home from school; you are not to tease your little sister and call her a grizzly bear; you are not to leave your preparation to be done in the morning after breakfast; you are not to run away from your nurse when you go out for a walk."[1] This catalogue of restrictions does not seem to be altogether unreasonable, but then Olive was not a conformer and at fourteen she was judged to be altogether unmanageable and was packed off to school. Wimbledon House, afterwards called Roedean, was the unlucky academy chosen and here she earned more "order marks" than any other girl in the school, a record of which one may suspect Olive was secretly proud.

At the end of her first year Miss Lawrence writes to Mrs. Willis that she "has spoken very seriously to Olive and hopes to see a more decided improvement next term"; then with some discernment, "She is so talented and has so much promise in so many directions that we ought to make something of her if she meets us half-way".[2]

How far Olive responded to this appeal is not recorded, but at the age of eighteen her family regarded her as sufficiently acceptable socially to be presented at Court and she even developed what is called "dress sense", which, judging from photographs of her later in life, must have been resolutely discarded.

Aged twenty-one, Olive had achieved sufficient scholastic distinction to be accepted at Somerville College, Oxford, and here for three years she enjoyed an atmosphere of scholarship and an opportunity to develop her capacity for friendship. She was disappointed at the end of this time to gain only third class Honours, but then Olive was never an intellectual or an academic and, like many before and after her, she got more out of the University than a facility to impress the examiners.

She maintained her keen interest in and devotion to religious exercises and she played hockey for Somerville. Rose Macaulay was a contemporary and friend. In those days women students were not officially members of the University and so could not take a degree, but the enlightened University of Dublin arranged for women who had satisfied the examiners in their "final schools" to receive what came to be known as a "steam boat" degree and so, for the price of the ticket and a fee to the University, Olive became M.A. of Dublin in 1906. Later, when Oxford granted women students degrees, this was made retrospective and in 1922 she became M.A. of Oxford.

In the meanwhile Olive undertook various teaching jobs, as a history teacher at Queen Anne's, Caversham, two years at Roedean, one year as a supply teacher at the State schools in London and for short periods at Chesterfield, Haberdashers' Aske and as a governess.

Then in February 1907, having borrowed £1500 from her father, she joined with her friend Alice Carver, an international hockey player, who had raised a similar sum from her father and leased Down House, where she opened a school for girls. Unfortunately, only one pupil could be found, so a cousin of Olive's, Hilary Wearne, who had already "come out" and put her hair up, sportingly put it down again and was conscripted to save the solitary pupil from feeling lonely and became a schoolgirl once more. However, such a situation was not to last long. After two years there were thirty pupils, each paying £52 10s. 0d. a term with advanced music and painting extras; and by the end of 1918 there were fifty-two.

In some ways Miss Willis, as I suppose we must now call her, adopted many of the more liberal practices of Roedean. Thus, lessons lasted only forty minutes, there were no 'crocodiles' on the way to church and the staff who were later accumulated were given one free day off a week. In the evenings Miss Willis read aloud whilst the girls sewed or mended their clothes and, certainly in the early days, it was more like a family than a school. The 'New Study' was used as a common room and plays were performed on the mound under the shade of the ilex tree.

Writing in the School Magazine in 1915, Miss Willis confesses that her girls were "on the whole not well grounded academically and rather plain, with hair glossy and straight, brushed back very firmly and plaited, sometimes rather frivolously in two plaits" (Elizabeth Bowen recalls that, "our hair was so skinned back that our eyes would hardly shut").[3] An inspector reported of the school that, "Transition from First Latin Reader to Cicero's letters has been too rapid"! He commended the high standard in languages and history, but remarked on the low standards in geography, mathematics and sciences.

Discipline was maintained in a characteristically original way. When some girls were

caught having a midnight feast, Miss Willis remarked, "If I had only known, my dear children, that this was what you wanted, I would have arranged it all for you and we'll have a midnight feast next week for the whole school". And so they jolly well did. At the stroke of midnight sleepy-eyed girls were got out of bed and made to eat dry biscuits. On another occasion, having ascended the platform in front of the whole school, she lifted up her skirt and scratched her thigh, simply observing, "That's what you do, I thought you wouldn't like it".

An epidemic of excessive adoration for older girls or members of the staff persuaded Miss Willis and one of the members of the staff involved to write a play in which Miss Willis herself took the part of an ogre-like headmistress and an adoring pupil in plaits with a love-lorn expression and exhibiting amorous antics was lampooned. So, by ridicule, it fell out of fashion. On another occasion when a mistress detected an unhealthy passion Miss Willis said that she was glad to know that "so and so", "such a selfish little toad", was capable of caring for anyone but herself! Graffiti in the "loo" were described by her as a normal stage of development like puppies rolling in their excreta.

The church services at Downe were in Miss Willis' view excessively dull and she joined the large number of persons who at this period deserted Downe for neighbouring churches. In her case she marched her school off to Cudham. Later a chapel was built in the grounds of the school and the Sunday services were held there. Her old girls have said that Miss Willis made Christianity exciting. She herself once remarked, "I have not found anything better than Christianity; if I do I shall certainly change my religion".[4]

Her only recorded observation on parents was that she preferred "the horrid little parents, covered with scent and powder, to the dull worthy ones".

In 1910 Maria Nickel, a Polish lady, who had been "a companion" in an aristocratic Russian family and who had studied medicine in Paris, arrived to teach geography and chemistry. If more colour were needed to bedeck the staff of the Downe House School for Girls, Miss Nickel certainly provided it. She arrived on a bicycle wearing an old felt hat and shortly assumed what was to be her uniform for many years: a brown serge overall reaching to her ankles and stained with machine oil, a packet of cigarettes obtruding from the breast pocket. The origin of the machine oil relates to the purchase by Miss Willis of a green De Dion Bouton motor car with a cane-coloured basketwork pattern along the sides. It was soon clear that Miss Nickel's genius lay rather in manual than academic pursuits and she became mistress of the De Dion, architect of new building projects and general handyman.

As a chauffeuse her performance was handicapped by her failure to recall that in England vehicles kept to the left-hand side of the road and there were many accidents. These became so notorious that in the 1913 School Magazine Miss Willis was constrained to write: "Parents and friends are warned to take school stories about the motor with several grains of salt! Strange tidings had come back to the school, due to romantic flights of fancy—but as a matter of fact, it has never gone more than fifteen miles an hour, and it does not go round corners on one wheel only!"

Not all these accidents, however, depended upon Miss Nickel being unaware, or at least forgetful, of the rule of the road, because Miss Willis, writing to me about a visit to

Downe in November 1962, says, "In the old days when we were very poor and had an old car with very poor brakes, my friend Miss Nickel drove the front of the car into the back of an equally old taxi-cab at Bromley South Station. Our oil lamps set fire to the petrol tank and the taxi-cab was reduced to ashes, but she quickly reversed and saved our car. I can't think how, but we were always having adventures".

Miss Nickel's creations included the installation of an electric heating system designed by herself and the construction of a summer house in the branches of the elephant tree where, so Miss Willis has told me, "the more responsible of the senior girls" were allowed to sleep on hot nights in the summer term.

Miss Nickel herself slept on the floor outside Miss Willis' bathroom because it was "good for her rheumatism". She probably had a spinal disc protrusion and had stumbled on the treatment which at certain stages of this disorder is now universally prescribed for lumbago, its most obtrusive symptom. Later, because of draughts, she slept on a slab of wood laid across the bath. The girls of Downe House School may have been weak in geography, mathematics and science, but they were certainly introduced to a wide spectrum of human behaviour.

At last in 1922 the school had grown so large that, even by renting accommodation in the village, it was unable to contain the increasing number of pupils and so it was decided to remove lock, stock and barrel to Cold Ash near Newbury in Berkshire, where it now flourishes. The move was made on April 1st in a snowstorm. The lately erected buildings such as the chapel had to be knocked down and parts of these were removed in open charabancs. When the summer term started, several girls had at first to sleep in the open, but were soon under cover and the greatest attraction for the younger girls was a pool set in the middle of the cloisters. A letter was immediately sent to Harrods ordering "three goldfish, all of different sexes".

On her retirement Miss Willis lived in a cottage in the school grounds and on the first Sunday of term she would entertain the new girls to tea. In 1962, aged eighty-five, she had a coronary thrombosis, but this did not deter her from making a visit to Down House as soon as she recovered. I met her at Bromley South Station, which must have conjured up for her memories of previous "adventures" in the De Dion, but was, on this occasion, unremarkable to the point of dullness until we set out for Down House, when Miss Willis began straight away to tell me all about the village of Downe "in her day". Her taste for the humorous and the scurrilous had not deserted her nor, be it said, her gift of forceful expression which was kept up throughout the day. At that time a programme was being produced each week on the television screen which was saved from banality only by the supreme talents of Miss Millicent Martin. My wife and I were not, even so, often beguiled into observing it unless our son, who was an addict, was at home. Then when the hour approached we had to 'switch on'. On this occasion the usual appeal was made, but I said "No, Miss Willis doesn't want to see this", to which she replied, "Indeed I do, it's my favourite programme"!

My abiding memory of Miss Willis is of an old lady of eighty-five and a young man sitting together on a long footstool, their heads two feet away from the screen, enjoying each other's company and, in point of taste, in complete accord.

The next year she had a second coronary thrombosis and was admitted to St. Mary's Hospital, Paddington, and on March 11th 1964 she died.

Not to have been born in time to meet Charles and Emma is a deprivation which I regret, but to have met Olive Willis still in her prime at the age of eighty-five is a privilege which almost makes up for it.

CHAPTER XIII

BUCKSTON BROWNE TO THE RESCUE

With the departure of Miss Willis on April 1st 1922, Down House once more became empty and the Darwin family was again faced with the problem of what to do with it. In May 1923 Sir Arthur Shipley, Master of Darwin's old college, Christ's College, Cambridge, writes to Arthur Keith, at that time Conservator of the Hunterian Museum at The Royal College of Surgeons of England:

"My dear Keith,

Mr. R. S-S. was at Down at Easter, and he tells me that Charles Darwin's house is empty and rapidly deteriorating. It seems to me that that house ought to be a national possession. Do you know of any means by which this can be brought about?

Yours very sincerely,

A. E. Shipley"[1]

At that time Arthur Keith could produce no solution, and so in 1924 the house once more became a school, but this school did not prosper and by 1927 the family, tired of these recurring crises, decided to put the property up for sale in the open market. By a stroke of fortune which was little short of miraculous Arthur Keith was that year President of the British Association for the Advancement of Science which was to meet at Leeds in August. Before the public business the Council of the Association met and, towards the end of a long and tiring session, Keith asked whether the Fellows would "give their leave to appeal for the preservation of Darwin's home should an opportunity occur at the end of my [Presidential] address. Their lukewarm assent showed that they had no high hope of such an appeal meeting with success. Nor had I; it was desire rather than hope that moved me".[2]

When the address, entitled Darwin's Theory of Man's Origin as it Stands Today, came to be delivered, Keith recalls that, "On the platform, Sir Oliver Lodge, the Senior ex-President, was waiting to install me in office. My address, which was to be broadcast, was timed to begin punctually at nine o'clock." "After my address Sir William Boyd Dawkins moved a vote of thanks. In replying I plunged almost at once into a plea for the preservation of Darwin's home. By great good fortune a reporter from *The Times* was present. My plea received a prominent place in the issue of next morning. On going to the Central Office that morning (Thursday, September 1st) I met Howarth (Secretary of the Association) flourishing a telegram in his hand. It had just arrived from Buckston Browne who, as he sat at breakfast in London, reading *The Times*, had noted my plea, and at once despatched this telegram,"[3] which said that he would provide the necessary funds to preserve Down House as a National Memorial.

Who was this latter-day St. George who providentially slew the dragon of neglect?

George Buckston Browne was born at Chorlton-on-Medlock, near Manchester, on

April 13th 1850. He came from a strongly religious family and in his home there were no such frivolities as pictures, no games or sports were played, and novels and poetry were never mentioned. He was often birched for trivial offences and, as he recalled in later years, "Everything that seemed pleasant was denied me". In conformity with this environment he was sent to a particularly Spartan school at Amersham where, despite his diminutive stature, but being of a somewhat pugnacious nature, he engaged in many fights. He once broke a slate over the head of one of the masters. In the holidays he collected the skeletons of birds and small animals as he rummaged in the jetsam on the beach at Blackpool, whither on these occasions the family repaired.

At the age of sixteen he was sent to Owens' College in Manchester, where he excelled in chemistry and during which time he acquired the habit of walking over the countryside which was to be characteristic of him for the rest of his life.

In 1868, at the age of eighteen, young George left Manchester for London and enrolled at University College in the course for the first part of the degree of Bachelor of Medicine. At this time he attended the lectures of T. H. Huxley at the Royal School of Mines in Jermyn Street and on one occasion saw Charles Darwin at one of these lectures, who made a great impression on him. Like many students at this stage of their careers he became an inveterate player of cards—Whist, Loo and *Vingt et un*, but later gave up these diversions in favour of the study of anatomy.

In 1869 he faced the Examiners for the 'First M.B.' and, despite his record at Owens' College, failed in chemistry! This was a serious blow. He could either go back to the beginning and regard the past year as wasted, or decide to give up the idea of obtaining the M.B. degree, pursue his studies in clinical medicine and accept the less prestigious diploma of Member of the Royal College of Surgeons—M.R.C.S. In order to keep up with his colleagues and sacrificing any possibility of obtaining a University degree or the prospect of a future hospital appointment, he opted for the latter and in 1872 entered University College Hospital as a clinical student.

Despite this rather unpromising start, he won the Lister Gold Medal in Surgery and in 1874 qualified as a doctor with the M.R.C.S. diploma. Without the benefit of the M.B. degree the only path to distinction from the academic point of view was to obtain the diploma of the Fellowship of The Royal College of Surgeons—the much coveted F.R.C.S. Unfortunately in the practical examination for this diploma conducted on the cadaver the Examiner claimed that he had ligatured the brachial vein when he had been asked to ligature the brachial artery! Buckston Browne, who had made a special study of anatomy as a student, ever thereafter claimed that the examiner was a fool and that he had been the victim of a miscarriage of justice. He felt this so keenly that he refused to enter for the examination again and, one suspects, that for many years he carried 'a chip on his shoulder' on account of this traumatic experience. Nobody will ever know who was right, but Mr. Buckston Browne was not infrequently mistaken, especially later in life in his purchase of 'Old Masters', and it may well be that his somewhat assertive self-confidence let him down on this occasion. In any event he was launched on a career in medicine with somewhat meagre academic qualifications and he was lucky to have attracted the attention of the leading urologist of the day, Sir Henry Thompson, who was

on the staff of University College Hospital. Before the débâcle of the final F.R.C.S. examination Sir Henry had discerned the particular qualities of young Buckston Browne and had engaged him as his assistant in his extensive private practice. Thus, for fourteen years he did the donkey work for Sir Henry, which, in this specialty and at that time, consisted in passing catheters on male patients whose urinary flow was obstructed by enlargement of the prostate. We may well imagine that with all this experience, and this is also supported by his own opinion of his prowess, Buckston Browne became the most skilful "passer of a catheter" in the business.

Another skill in which Buckston Browne became adept was lithotrity, that is the crushing of a stone inside the bladder by means of a sort of miniature vice which was passed into the bladder and was made to grope about for the stone, which was located only by the sense of touch. Buckston Browne used to practise this particular trick by cracking filberts under a cloth and no doubt became as adept in this as he must have been in guiding a catheter through the tortuosity of the urethra into the bladder.

With these accomplishments at his command he was able to launch out on his own and became somewhat independent of Sir Henry Thompson, inheriting his patients on the death of the latter. During his fourteen years as his assistant he claims that Sir Henry never gave him a present, he was impatient and rude and rarely, it would seem, went so far as to praise him.

Posterity, be it said, does not regard Sir Henry Thompson in quite this light and perhaps at the time the burden of the chips on his shoulder made young Buckston Browne inordinately critical of a senior colleague who was loaded with academic distinction. All the same, he devoted himself utterly to his profession. His days and many of his nights were given over to unremitting toil. In 1875 he became a tee-totaller, he took no holiday for thirty-five years and he accumulated an enormous private practice. He never owned a car, preferring to walk everywhere, even in later years from Orpington Station to Downe, and after an aggravating experience with the telephone he never had one in his house. If a patient required his services in the night, a footman was sent round with a message. As he himself once said, the prescription for a successful life was "work, water and walking".

Soon after joining Sir Henry Thompson, Buckston Browne married Helen Vane, a nurse from University College Hospital. Sir Henry only reluctantly gave his approval to this match, as the lady did not come from the highest social stratum and could not therefore be expected to add lustre to the practice. However this may have been, Buckston Browne enjoyed fifty-two years of married happiness. In 1909 he forsook his usual practice and took an extended holiday with Helen on a trip round the world. Their only son, who was born in 1877, was wounded in the First World War and died in 1919 from pneumonia. His grandson, born in 1903, died in 1924 in South Africa from typhoid fever, and his adored Helen died in 1926. His only daughter married Sir Hugh Lett, at one time President of the Royal College of Surgeons, and was much engaged in the supportive role that that position demands, so that in late 1926 this dedicated, if somewhat dubiously qualified, surgeon from the academic point of view became a lonely and very rich old man.

At that time Sir Berkeley Moynihan (later Lord Moynihan) was President of the Royal College of Surgeons. Sir Berkeley was not one to ignore the susceptibilities of one so circumstanced and in 1926 Mr. Buckston Browne was awarded the diploma of F.R.C.S. under a rule that Members of the College of twenty years' standing may be admitted to the Fellowship. In a stroke the chips had been removed from the shoulders of Mr. Buckston Browne. Perhaps there has never been a Fellow made under this rule more appreciative of the honour. The examiner who had accused him of ligaturing the brachial vein instead of the artery had, after half a century, been avenged. George Buckston Browne, F.R.C.S., was a match for any man. Bread had been cast upon the waters and in 1927 the Buckston Browne dinner, still held every second year at the College, was endowed by him with a sum of £5000. During his lifetime Buckston Browne would attend all the dinners, which at that time were held every year, and he would make a speech. In 1938 he presented each guest with a silver snuff-box containing "Kendal's Brown", which he maintained was a sovereign remedy for colds and, in his case, prevented him from ever having one, or so he averred. Through the advocacy of Lord Moynihan, Buckston Browne was later to be knighted, but this was in connection with a further munificent donation to the College—the Buckston Browne Experimental Research Station, which was built on land adjacent to Down House and, in an indirect way, influenced its subsequent fate.

Following the award of the F.R.C.S., Buckston Browne's affection for and interest in the College was fostered, particularly for its Hunterian Museum, of which he was eventually made a trustee. In this way he came to know Arthur Keith, the conservator; he made visits to Downe, walking over the countryside, and he came to appreciate the unique value to the nation of Down House only a few hundred yards from Homefield, which eventually became Keith's country cottage.

So it was that on the valuation of Sir John Oakley, Buckston Browne bought Down House for £4,250, spending an additional £10,000 for repairs and endowing the estate with £20,000. The British Association bought out the remainder of Miss Ram's (the Schoolmistress) lease and, by gift, the property was handed over to the care of The British Association to be preserved in perpetuity as a Memorial to Charles Darwin. Through the agency of Sir Arthur Keith, Down House had been saved once more. (Pl. VIII.)

Buckston Browne immediately set out to fulfil his objective. He personally supervised the restoration of the house and went to immense trouble to collect original Darwinian furniture, in which project he was helped most generously by members of the Darwin family.

In November 1927, Leonard Darwin writes to his brother Horace:

"I have had two interviews with G. Buckston Browne who is buying Downe [*sic*]. I found him rather talkative, but very pleasant to deal with. He is rather solitary, having lost his wife recently, and his son and grandson before that. He has a daughter whom I did not hear much about. In giving me his ideas he spoke of Dizzy's saying about a great man. It was to the effect that he was one who had altered the ideas of his own generation. My Father, he said, had changed the current of thought of the whole world and was

proportionately great. He believes that in the future Downe will become a Mecca for the scientific world and his aim is to make it a worthy Mecca. I fancy he is somewhat disappointed at the small amount of sympathy he has received from the scientific world in regard to his action. He did not say so, but I believe that he feels that in doing this, he ought to receive the warm support and help from the family. Some of us are certain to differ with him in regard to details, but I feel strongly that we should give all the help we can.

It is rather easy for me to preach, for I have very few Downe relics to give back. I am giving the print of J. Wedgwood, which formed one of the three over the mantelpiece in the Study. The other two were C. Lyell and J. Hooker. I am also giving a couple of candlesticks, together with a print of the new Study and a photograph of the old Study and some other items.

He was not very definite as to his plans, but his idea seemed to be to furnish one or two rooms, including the old Study, as nearly as possible as it was and with as much of the old furniture as the family will give back. He will be very grateful if you will let him know what you are willing to give, and from what room the various objects came. You could send it direct or through me as you please.

Henrietta will, I believe, make a stipulation that anything that she sends is to be used in a memorial room, and not as ordinary furniture in living rooms where it would be worn out in time. If you have any condition to attach to your gifts, please say so. He may furnish other rooms with pictures, etc., of interest, having some indirect bearing on the family history. For example, copies of portraits of my Father and Huxley, and a fine original portrait of Mr. Seward, father of the Swan of Lichfield. Such rooms would in no way represent Downe as it was.

Yours affectionately,

L. Darwin

Please show this letter to Ida (Darwin) and Ruth (Barlow)."[4]

So the collection of Darwiniana began. Furniture and pictures came pouring in. On one occasion Buckston Browne asks: "Can you obtain a rough-haired white fox terrier? I want it stuffed and coiled in its basket in the old study." This unfortunate relic of Polly was duly obtained and lay exposed to the public gaze for a few years before the moths got at it and it mercifully had to be destroyed. Even without this the old study assumed precisely the appearance that it had in Charles' day.

Sam and Harry Robinson, who had acted as picture cleaners for Buckston Browne in his house in Wimpole Street, were engaged whole-time on the job of restoration. Sam's son, Sydney (still acting as custodian in 1974), moved into the house on February 2nd 1929 to look after the premises while the Robinson's family shop in St. John's Wood was being cleared up, and he was followed a fortnight later by his uncle Harry, whilst his father moved into the gardener's cottage. Harry eventually returned to Wimpole Street to look after Sir George, retiring to Hayes after Sir George's death, and Sam moved from the gardener's cottage into the main house in April 1939, where he remained as custodian until his death in 1958.

Gradually the house and grounds came to be made as nearly as possible as they were

during Charles' lifetime. It was Buckston Browne's dearest wish that Sir Arthur Keith would agree to live in the house and act as custodian, thus linking the scientific work of the College of Surgeons with the British Association, but this Sir Arthur refused to do and this refusal led to some temporary ill-feeling between the two men. Sir Arthur already had a house of his own in Highbury and he probably did not wish to be diverted from his anthropological and anatomical studies by assuming the responsibilities of the care of Down House. Eventually Dr. O. J. R. Howarth, Secretary of the British Association, was appointed curator, a post which he held until his death in June 1954. During his curatorship, Dr. Howarth wrote a history of Downe Village, from which the material for the first part of this book has been taken. He was a scholarly, somewhat taciturn man who did not mix freely in the village. The care with which he compiled his history and the vast amount of research which this entailed is a worthy memorial to him.

Buckston Browne wanted the money which he had given for the preservation of Down House to be in memory of his only son. He stipulated that admission of the public should be free, thinking that the endowment of £20,000 would be adequate for all time. With hindsight we now know that this could not be so and since 1959 a charge for admission has had to be made.

Buckston Browne was a keen collector of pictures, and was inclined to rely on his own judgement which was adventurous rather than tutored. Many of his pictures were "genuine". Those by Lely, Greuze and Angelica Kauffman, which he gave to University College, and an exquisite painting on enamel by George Stubbs of a Horse Attacked by a Lion (not to be confused with A Horse Frightened by a Lion), which he presented to Down House, have stood up to the critical scrutiny of experts. A number of pictures by Joseph Wright of Derby which were connected with the Darwin family—portraits of Erasmus Darwin and his second wife Elizabeth, of Dr. Seward of Lichfield and a self-portrait—were donated to Down House together with two large conversation pieces (The Academy and The Forge) by the same artist and these are genuine; but one, for many years regarded as the treasure of the collection and alleged to be by Stubbs (a version of A Horse Frightened by a Lion), has lately been attributed to Sawrey Gilpin. He gave a portrait of John Hunter, which he firmly asserted was by Gainsborough, to the College of Surgeons; also a portrait of Wesley which he bought as a Romney and a carving of Charles II thought by him to be by Grinling Gibbons, which all turned out to be the work of far less distinguished artists. Perhaps in this field he was just a little too sure of himself.

He commissioned The Hon. John Collier to paint reproductions of his portraits of Charles Darwin and T. H. Huxley, the originals of which hang in the National Portrait Gallery, and there are two other artist's reproductions in the Athenaeum Club. These two paintings are of excellent quality and serve to set the scene in what has become the 'Charles Darwin Room', where they now hang.

One last prize remained to be secured, Emma's Broadwood drawing-room grand-piano on which she would play to Charles every evening. This had been located, and on April 23rd 1929 Ida Darwin writes to the Hon. Secretary of Positivist Society:

"Dear Sir,

It has lately come to the knowledge of the family of Charles Darwin, the naturalist, that an old piano on which his wife used to play to him is in the possession of the Church of Humanity and is at present in their Church in (19) Chapel Street, Lamb's Conduit Street (W.C.1).

My reason for writing—and I venture to approach you with great hesitation—is that the house at Downe, Kent, where Mr. Darwin lived and worked and died has lately been bought by Mr. Buckston Browne for presentation to the British Association and is now being restored thro' his generosity, as far as possible to the condition it was in before Charles Darwin's death nearly fifty years ago. The family are making contributions of furniture and pictures etc. which still belong to them towards the refurnishing of the study and sitting rooms used by Charles Darwin and his wife.

As the widow of his youngest son Horace [Horace had died the year before], I have vivid memories of him resting in the Downe drawing-room and listening to her playing. This must be my excuse for asking you whether you might consider the possibility of restoring the piano to its old home and allowing me to offer another to take its place.

Ida Darwin"[5]

On May 5th Mr. T. S. Lascelles replied:

"Dear Madam,

. . . I have pleasure in informing you that my Committee had already, some time ago, thought of the return of this piano to its old home at Downe in Kent and had decided to offer it when the arrangements in connection with the house had reached a more advanced stage. Your letter shews that this is the case and therefore I am glad to tell you that we are ready to accede to your wishes. The Committee is not sitting at the moment but will meet at the end of this month. I have however spoken to the chairman and some members to-day and they concur in this letter, therefore. With regard to your very kind suggestion that you should allow us to have an instrument in return, I have to thank you very kindly for the offer and to say that we accept it. The Darwin piano is, of course, a drawing-room grand but an ordinary upright piano would be quite sufficient for our purposes and would actually be a little more convenient, taking up less room in the church. I mention this in case you have some instrument in view but do not wish you to go to any trouble to get an upright piano if you have another pattern which you thought of handing to us. I shall be glad to make arrangements for sending the piano away or to co-operate with you in whatever arrangements you have in mind, on hearing from you.

With much regret that this reply has been so long in reaching you and thanking you for your kind letter again.

I am, dear Madam,

Yours very truly,

T. S. Lascelles

Hon. Secretary"[6]

What a charming letter!

The consequence was that after some correspondence with Broadwoods about the

condition of the piano (it turned out that it had been tuned only a fortnight before) this unique relic was conveyed to the drawing-room at Down House and took up its old position by the window on to the verandah, where it is today.

A suitable upright piano was not immediately found, but the kindly Positivist Society gratefully accepted £20 to buy one of their own choice.

In April 1929 the famous Wormstone used by Charles in his experiments to see whether earthworms created the topsoil was reconstructed by the Cambridge Instrument Company which had been started by his son Horace. The piano stool and a couch had been acquired for the drawing room, Lady Avebury had returned the simple microscope given by Charles to the young John Lubbock, the first Lord Avebury, and all was ready for the official opening.

At a garden party on June 7th, Sir William Bragg, that year President of the British Association, received the gift of Down House plus twenty-three acres of land from Mr. George Buckston Browne, and Sir Arthur Keith declared the house open. Standing in the verandah he said:

"Thanks to the munificence of Mr. Buckston Browne, we are to-day able to throw open to all the world the home of an English gentleman, Charles Darwin. From henceforth it becomes a national possession, entrusted to the care of the British Association for the advancement of Science. Its rescue was made just in time. In another generation Darwin's home would have gone the way that all human homes go sooner or later; widespread decay had set in, and Greater London, spreading into Kent, would have eaten up this retreat from which Darwin spoke to the great world of his day.

All danger of such a fate overtaking one of the historical homes of England is now past. Mr. Browne has not only made Down House a national gift; he has repaired it, inside and out, top and bottom; at great personal pains and expense he has restored the chief rooms of the house to the state they were in when Darwin occupied them; thanks to the generosity of the Darwin family and to their ever-ready co-operation, he has been able to place in their appropriate niches pieces of furniture actually used by Darwin, and to exhibit personal relics of the great naturalist. Further, he has secured his gift against the ravages of time by an ample endowment for maintenance."

At this ceremony there were present representatives from the Museum of Natural History of Paris, the American Association for the Advancement of Science and of the Philadelphia Academy of Natural Sciences.

"Thus", Sir Arthur continued, "our ceremony to-day has an international character, and it is right that this should be so. The truth is that Darwin, quite unwittingly, made these few acres of Kentish upland an international possession."[7]

And so everyone was proud and happy. Guests at the garden-party returned to London in their cars believing that this national monument had been preserved for ever. Perhaps no one at that moment reflected that the £20,000 of endowment had been invested to bring in only £800 a year to support a commodious country house and twenty-three acres.

It was not long, however, before some of the Fellows of the British Association for the Advancement of Science began to take a hard look at the situation and thought that, financially speaking, the care of Down House would be like a millstone round their necks.

But on June 7th 1929 their murmurings, if they had been noticed at all, were but as thunder heard in the distance on a fine summer's day.

Nevertheless, Mr. Buckston Browne was conscious of these rumblings, although he could not believe that they were of consequence. Writing to Sir Arthur Keith on September 23rd 1930 he says:

"I believe I am credited with having *burdened* the British Association with Down House. I do not like writing about myself, but this is an opportunity of telling you exactly what I have done for Down House: Purchased the property—paying all expenses of valuation, law, etc. Restored the fabric (electric lighting plant £1000); Kitchen ranges, baths etc., etc., for Mr. Howarth and Robinson; Decorated, floored and furnished the lower part of the house. For example—show case £120, portraits of Darwin and Huxley £250 etc., etc.; £20,000 endowment. £30,000 is very much under what I have really spent and I am very glad to have had the privilege of spending my professional savings in this way. I am satisfied and that is everything."[8]

Poor old gentleman! He lived on for another fifteen years, dying on June 19th 1945 within three months of his 95th birthday. Towards the end of his life he became very short-sighted and on one occasion he was prevailed upon by Sir Cecil Wakeley to take a lift home in his car from the Buckston Browne dinner instead of walking as was his wont. Lord Horder also availed himself of the offer and sat in front next to the chauffeur. On arrival at Sir George's house in Wimpole Street, Lord Horder jumped out of the car and opened the door for Sir George to alight. Thinking that Lord Horder was the footman, he tipped him, then groping his way to the front door he haltingly let himself into his house and into the care of Harry Robinson.

He happily never learnt of the problems that his munificent gift were to pose for the British Association.

CHAPTER XIV
A NATIONAL TRUST

From 1929 until the outbreak of war in 1939 Down House fulfilled its purpose. Dr. Howarth was in charge of the ground floor, which had become a Museum, and all the rooms, except two, displayed pictures, manuscripts, diaries, various editions of Charles' books and much of the furniture which was used when the Darwin family lived there. The New Dining-room was reserved for some of the treasures which Sir George Buckston Browne had collected which were not necessarily Darwinian and was known as the Donors' Room. In this room a portrait of Sir George, painted by Charles' great-grandson, Robin (afterwards Sir Robin) Darwin, hung over the mantelpiece, and the Old Dining-room was used as an office for the British Association. Relics of Charles' grandfather, Erasmus, were displayed in several rooms. Dr. and Mrs. Howarth lived on the first and second floors and until 1939 Mr. and Mrs. Harry Robinson with their two children occupied the servants' quarters.

Sir George would often visit the house, walking the five miles from Orpington Station and back, and he must have been pleased and proud to see the hundreds of pilgrims who visited the house free of charge. The Old Study had been remodelled just as it was in 1859 when *The Origin of Species* was written, with Charles sitting in his lofty chair, a board across his knees, and this was the shrine which the visitors entered with awe.

At this time George Annett was the gardener and Stuart Udall, son of the village policeman, was the under-gardener, but in 1939 Mr. Udall became the gardener and he and Mrs. Udall moved into the adjoining cottage. Harry Robinson went up to Wimpole Street to look after Sir George, so his brother Sam and his wife, with their twin children Sydney and Beatrice, came to live in the main house. Sam died in 1958 and Mrs. Robinson in 1966; the "children" are still there, but on the point of retiring.

During the war an air-raid shelter was dug out and bricked up under one of the mounds by the lime trees, the Old Kitchen became a nursing station and the New Drawing-room was used by the Home Guard. Mrs. Howarth slept in the Old Study, but Dr. Howarth and the Robinsons took refuge in the capacious cellars, although when everyone was asleep young Sydney would creep up to his own bed on the top floor. Some of the treasures were stored for safety in these cellars, but life in Downe, although noisy because of the R.A.F. fighter station at Biggin Hill only a mile away, was relatively undisturbed. With the exception of the damage caused by some small bombs dropped on the village, Downe was spared any considerable destruction and Down House escaped scot-free.

During these stirring times battles took place in the air overhead; crippled fighters returned to Biggin Hill, some only to burst into flames on landing; parachutes descended,

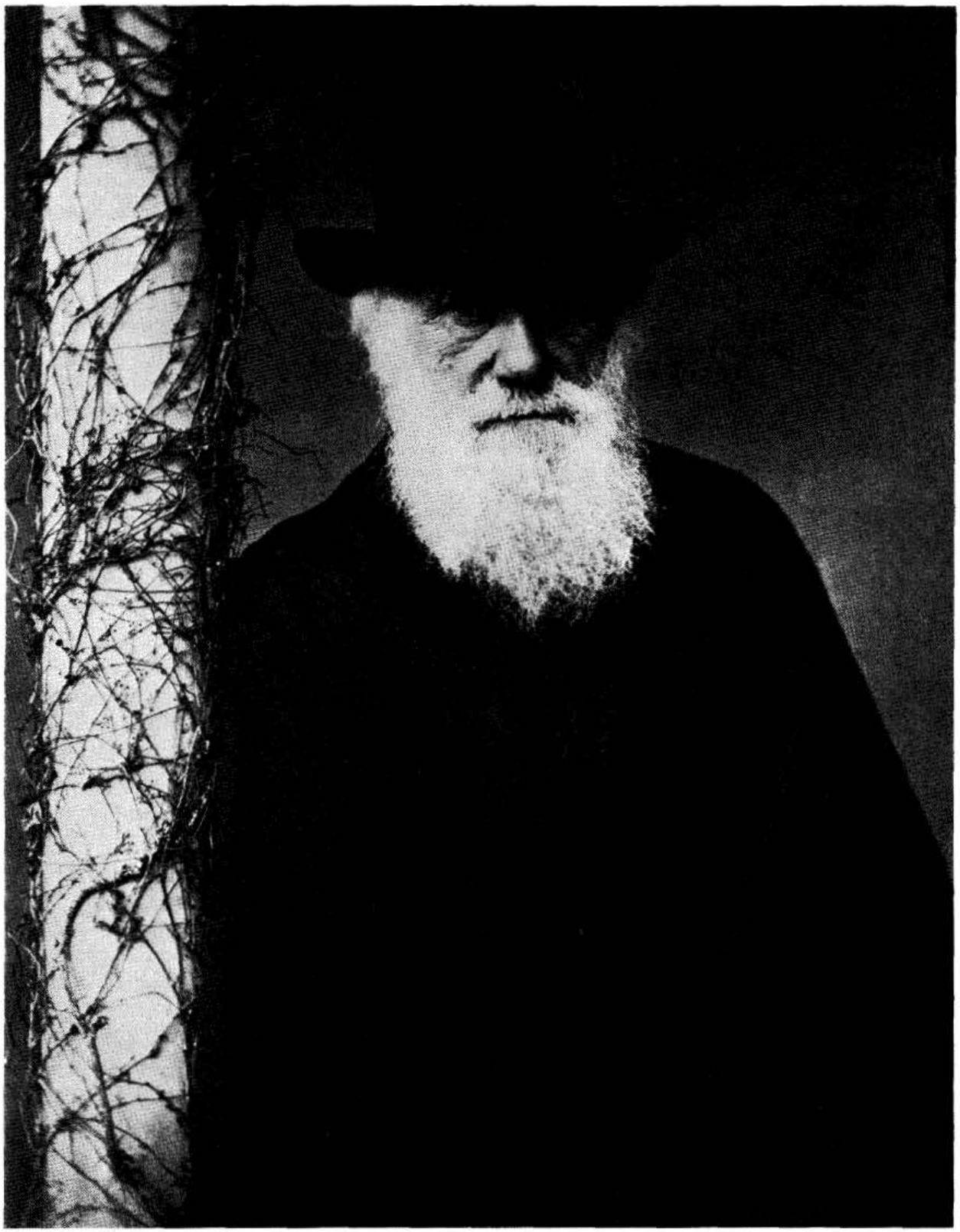


Plate VII: Charles Darwin the last years

Plate VIII:
Sir Arthur Keith and Sir George Buckston Browne in the Garden
(by courtesy of Messrs. Churchill Livingstone)

men were wounded and died, but the house itself, rather like its illustrious owner a century before, seemed to stand aloof from the fray as if conscious that the treasures which it contained and the philosophies that had been born there would survive in man's memory for as long as the Battle of Britain which had made their survival possible.

In 1945 things returned to normal. The crowds came back, the Museum flourished and the Howarths, the Robinsons and the Udalls returned to their several avocations. But clouds were appearing over the horizon. Sir George Buckston Browne had died that year and the Cassandras of the British Association were beginning to feel that their forebodings might be justified.

By March 31st 1951 the £20,000 endowment, all of which had been invested, had shrunk to £17,754 and by March 1952 it stood at £16,847.

The Treasurer of the Association in that year wrote:

"During the year under review expenditure exceeded income by the substantial amount of over £900, which, in common with other deficits in recent years, has been written off against the Down House Endowment Fund. This Fund, originally of £20,000, is now reduced to less than £17,000, against which a further charge of several thousand pounds ought in fairness to be made in respect of payments by the Association from its general funds during the early years of possession of the property."[1]

The further charge to which the Treasurer referred was, in fact, never made. A month earlier the Council of the Association had received a long report on Down House and decided that its future should be determined, if possible, in the next twelve months.

This report[2] dealt in some detail with the various options which it was thought might be open to the Association.

1. That the Kent County Council or the University of Oxford or both jointly should acquire the property for a College.
2. That it should become a Field Station for London University, or
3. A Field Station for the Animal Health Trust.
4. That the Ministry of Education should buy the property and use it for one of their special schools.
5. That it should be sold in the open market, just as the Darwin family had decided to do in 1927, but that the Old Study should be removed to the Natural History Museum in South Kensington. If this were done, however, there would be difficulty in scheduling Down House as a building of historic interest.

   Finally:
6. That it should be offered as a gift to the Royal College of Surgeons of England.

This, on the face of it, rather unusual means of disposal came about because of a gift by Sir George Buckston Browne to the College of Surgeons in 1933 of a plot of land of some fifteen acres upon which he built a Surgical Research Station where, to this very day, important surgical and dental research is being carried out and which marches with the Down House estate. It was thought by the Officers of the British Association that the College of Surgeons might well be favourable to the idea of extending and rounding off their property at Downe by acquiring Down House and its extensive grounds, particularly if this were offered as a free gift.

For one reason or another all the other options came to nothing and so it was that in October 1953 the Royal College of Surgeons of England came once more to the rescue by accepting this offer—and the responsibility—and very nearly got enmeshed in the same financial problems as a result.

On the take-over a hard look at the finances by the College Finance Officer revealed that the Market Value of the endowment investments was £12,776 and by June 1957 losses on the running expenses had reduced the endowment to £11,310. The National Trust had been approached to see whether they would take over the property, but one look at it and its balance sheet was enough, and they prudently declined.

Some amelioration of the situation occurred when a tenant was found who took up residence in 1957 at a rental of £490 a year. This tenant was a Mrs. Sibley. She and her husband kept a café just outside Bromley, where they lived. Part of the garden was used to grow vegetables and, for a short period, as a chicken farm to supply the café, but the distinction which this tenancy added to Down House was that Mrs. Sibley's elder daughter Antoinette became a famous ballet dancer. I am sure that Charles, and undoubtedly Miss Willis, would have been delighted to think of Antoinette Sibley pirouetting on the lawn where so much family and artistic activity had been enjoyed.

Despite this easement of the financial crisis, deficits were still being made and in 1958 much work had to be done to arrest the ravages of dry rot, wet rot and deathwatch beetle and to make the house and grounds presentable. In this year therefore a charge was made for admission and a limited appeal was made for funds. From this appeal £6742 was raised. Such a sum, as might have been expected, was insufficient to stem the tide. By June 1961 the endowment was valued at £10,000 and by June 1962 at £6699.

The Finance Officer of the College, necessarily a realist, remarked at this time that, "If the investments have to be sold and produce £8000 and this sum has to be used to wipe off an overdraft of at least £6073 . . . the remaining endowment will be no more than £1923".[3] What *would* Sir George Buckston Browne have said!

Early in 1962 my wife and I had become tenants of that part of Down House previously occupied by Dr. Howarth and then by Mrs. Sibley so that, as I was also on the Council of the College of Surgeons, I became very much involved in the problems which faced them. Meetings were called, a Down House Committee was formed and all the old solutions were trotted out, including selling the estate on the open market and transferring the Old Study to the South Kensington Museum. This committee, prodded vigorously by the faithful, eventually decided to take no action and Down House, together with its treasures, remained for the time being intact in the hands of the Royal College.

The Museum needed some reorganisation so that it could tell a consecutive story. The New Study was made into an exhibition room, where the progress of evolution was displayed in murals starting with 4,500 million years ago, proceeding through unicellular organisms and ending with the emergence of man. In the same room the history of the development of the theory of evolution was set out in a display cabinet, assembled by Miss Jessie Dobson, starting with Aristotle and ending with T. H. Huxley. In planning this exhibition, which was drawn and designed by Sylvia Treadgold, I came to learn much about evolution and hoped that visitors would do the same. The Old Study was left

inviolate just as, except for the Willisian era, it had always been. The Donors' Room was devoted to Erasmus Darwin, his letters, his books and his portraits; and the portrait of Sir George Buckston Browne was given a place of honour in the hall. The New Dining-room became the Charles Darwin Room containing all his relics, his diaries, many of his letters, his instruments, various editions of his works, his genealogical tree traced back to Charlemagne in two lines of descent, his collection of beetles, and many pictures, including the Collier portraits of Charles and Huxley. The Drawing-room, with the assistance of two of his grandchildren—Lady Barlow and Lady Keynes—was restored to its original appearance.

Money was still a problem, but a sum of about £25,000 was collected for Down House, and in addition £10,000 for the restoration of Sir Arthur Keith's old cottage—Homefield. Two pictures by Joseph Wright which were given to the estate by Sir George Buckston Browne, but which had no Darwinian relevance, were sold to Mr. Paul Mellon for £10,000 each. One of these, "The Academy", is now in the Tate Gallery. With this £20,000 adjoining cottages were almost rebuilt and were made available for letting.

In the last ten years the attendance at the Museum has increased regularly year by year, the raising of the entrance charge making no dent in the graph showing the continuing rise in receipts from this source. Three television programmes have been made in the house at a charge which, after some bargaining, reflected the disturbance to the amenities of the Museum which such enterprises occasion.

One of the most delectable gifts of Sir George Buckston Browne was the painting, already referred to, of A Horse *Attacked* by a Lion, by George Stubbs. This little gem was painted on copper for Josiah Wedgwood I and hung in the Erasmus Darwin Room. From the first I was worried about security; it could so easily have been slipped under a macintosh, and I mentioned this to the Council of the Royal College of Surgeons. They appreciated the problem and agreed to have the little picture brought up to their building in Lincoln's Inn Fields. Here it was hung, first in one place, then in another, but nowhere did it seem to be safe, so, when I became more responsible personally for all the College property, including that of the Down House Estate, I arranged for it to be stored in the silver vaults of the College, where it would be protected by steel doors yielding only to a laser beam. It occurred to me, however, that it was a shame that such a beautiful object should be stored away where nobody could see it and so I persuaded my colleagues on Council to allow me to sell it on behalf of the estate. We had it valued and this was assessed at £15,000. At first I offered it to the Tate Gallery, who said they would give £12,000, but this was not enough, so I next approached the Metropolitan Museum of New York, who offered £15,000. I was sorely tempted to let them have it, but I did not wish it to go out of the country and so I procrastinated. Six weeks later a well-known picture dealer came into my office in Lincoln's Inn Fields and said, "I hear you have a little Stubbs for sale, may I see it?" I rang the bell and got the porter to bring the picture up from the vaults and put it on my desk. The dealer looked at it for a few moments and said, "I'll give you £xy,000 for it", a stupendous sum. I said, "You may have it, on condition that it does not go out of the country." He replied, "My client has no intention of letting it go out of the country, but one can never be certain whether in ten or twenty

years' time it might be necessary for him or his family to let it go." This seemed as good a guarantee as one was likely to secure and so the picture disappeared and the Down House Estate endowment was enriched by £xy,000. Six months later the Director of the Tate Gallery wrote to me to say that the little Stubbs had, after all, come into their possession and was on view in the Gallery. I believe, though it would be improper to make more detailed inquiries, that the client of Mr. S. the dealer had died within a few months of possession of the Stubbs and had lent it to the Tate.

A reproduction of this picture now hangs in the Erasmus Darwin Room. Six months after the receipt of the letter from the Director of the Tate Gallery I was taking a Canadian family round the Museum at Down. When we came to the Erasmus Darwin Room one of the children exclaimed, "Look, Mummy, that was the picture we saw in the Tate yesterday!" Occasionally, very occasionally, the Down House Estate has a stroke of luck. Some handsome wrought-iron gates were presented by Mr. W. T. Robins, the pillars of which are decorated with ornaments from John Hunter's house in Earl's Court and many of the tumble-down walls have been rebuilt in their original style.

More than 5000 visitors now see the Museum each year and these, together with a grazing lease for the meadows and rent from the cottage, together with the interest on the endowment now standing at about £60,000, have ensured that a modest profit of over £2000 has been made by the estate for the last three years. Only recently Mr. George Darwin has made a gift of priceless Darwinian relics to Down House.

No account of these developments can omit mention of the indefatigable work of my wife in the garden. When we came here in 1962 this garden, except for a very small portion adjacent to the house well cared for by Mr. Udall, was a shambles. By her constant devotion and skill, and assisted by only one whole-time gardener, this, without being a "show piece", is now tidy, bedecked with flowers and, although there may be some weeds, is a source of joy to both adults and children who flock here during the summer months. Throughout this period of reconstruction, Sydney Robinson, who succeeded his father Sam as custodian on the death of the latter in 1958, has been a tower of strength. His knowledge of Darwin family history is extensive, his kindliness to visitors is much appreciated literally from China to Peru, and the skilful way in which he repairs the machinery of both house and garden has made this rehabilitation possible. After all, he has lived in the house for forty-four years so that he knows where the drain pipes run and which manhole to uncover when they get blocked, he knows which switch is governed by which fuse, and it is a marvel what he can do with pliers and wire when mowing machines cough to a standstill.

Furthermore, I know that Charles and Emma would approve of my mentioning Tom. He is *almost* a pure bred golden labrador with all the endearing qualities of the breed. Until the house was protected from intrusion by the most sophisticated electronic devices, it was Tom who was our main defender. The discrimination which he showed between those who had business on the premises and those who did not was, and still is, unerring. Small children are allowed to climb all over him and put their fingers in an exploratory sort of way up his nostrils. The only reaction is an exaggeration of his normally resigned look as if to say, "How much longer have I got to put up with all this?" But, if

a suspicious character is around, his hackles rise, he gives vent to a deep-throated bark and it is all one can do to restrain him from hurling 40lb. of dog at the unfortunate object of his wrath. As I write this in my library his head is resting on my foot and I know he would appreciate this slight commendation.

What of the future? For the time being, perhaps for the whole of the 1970's, with luck even for part of the 1980's, Down House Estate and its Darwinian treasures are safely preserved for the enjoyment and edification of the public from all over the world. Their preservation is in the truest sense a national trust and, if sufficient funds can be accumulated, one must hope that the only body sufficiently endowed to guarantee their preservation in perpetuity will assume its rightful responsibility and this designation, "a national trust", will come to be spelt with capital letters.

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Abbreviations used in this section

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CFL *Emma Darwin, A Century of Family Letters*; H. E. Litchfield, John Murray, London, 1904. Vol. II.

DH Manuscripts and other material at Down House.

GBB *Sir George Buckston Browne*; Jessie Dobson & Sir Cecil Wakeley, Bt., Livingstone, London, 1957.

HDP *A History of Darwin's Parish*; O. J. R. & Eleanor K. Howarth, Russell, Southampton, 1933.

L&L *The Life and Letters of Charles Darwin*; Edit. Francis Darwin, John Murray, London, 1888.

OW *Olive Willis & Downe House*; Anne Ridler, John Murray, London, 1967.

PP *Period Piece*; Gwen Raverat, Faber & Faber, London, 1952.

WFM *The World that Fred Made*; Bernard Darwin, Chatto & Windus, London, 1955.

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Chapter VIII: Animals

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Chapter XII: Downe House School

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Chapter XIII: Buckston Browne to the Rescue

1, DH; **2**, AK, 506; **3**, 507; **4**, **5**, **6**, **7**, DH; **8**, GBB, 112.

Chapter XIV: A National Trust

1, **2**, **3**, DH.

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THIS BOOK traces the history of Down House (now preserved as a memorial to Charles Darwin) from 1651 to the present day. Sir Hedley Atkins, who has lived there for many years, has had access to a number of hitherto unpublished documents relating to the life of the Darwin family, and he records, during the period 1842 to 1882, their daily life; their attitude to religion; their cultural interests; their inimitable staff of servants; the love which they bestowed on their animals; how they got their money and how they spent it. We learn more about Darwin's mysterious illness and a great deal about the personalities of Darwin himself and his wife, Emma, as revealed in the intimate circle of their family life.

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