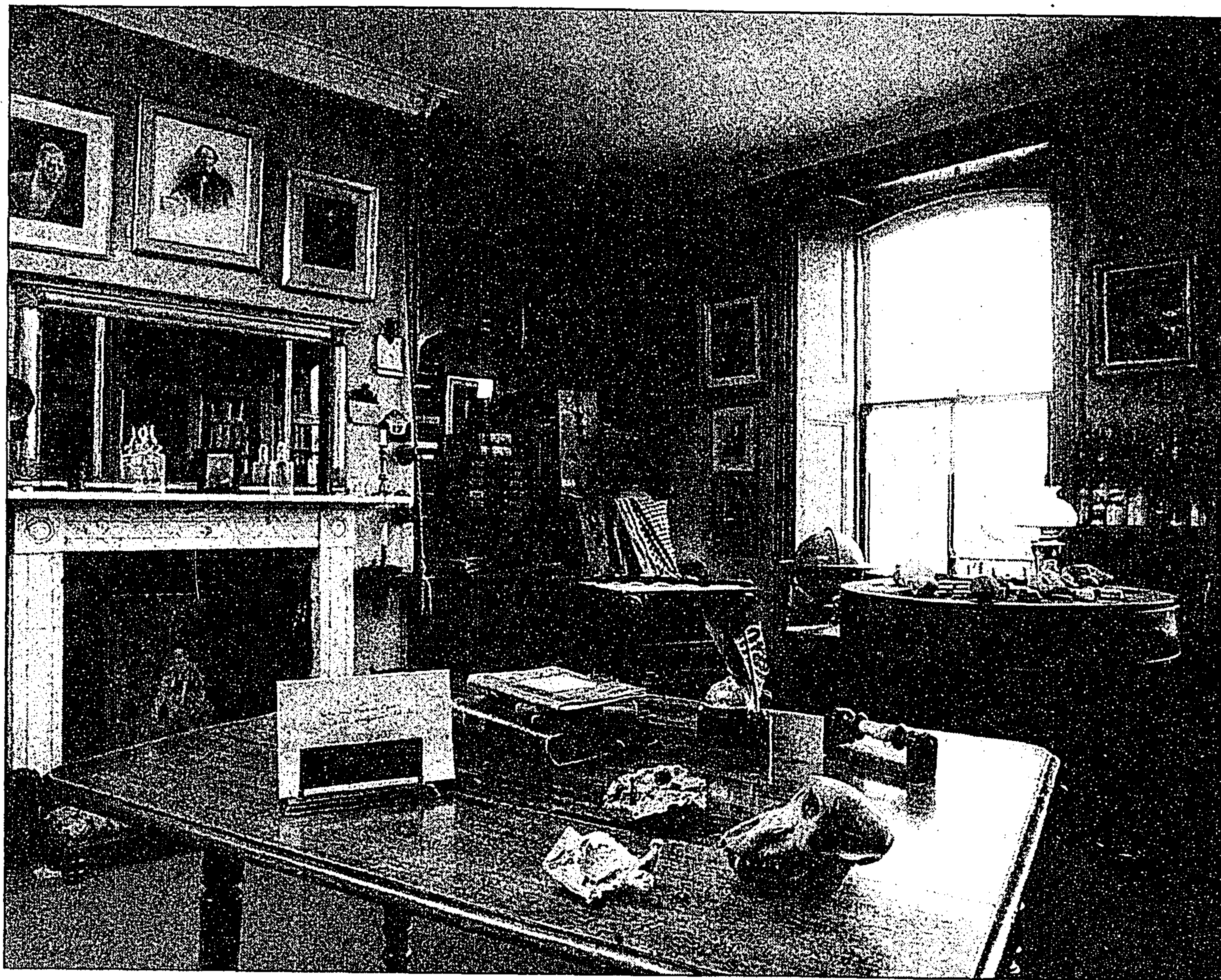




Darwin's study at Down House, where he wrote his great work on *The Origin of Species*

Lottery cash helps to save Darwin's house

BY JOHN YOUNG

DOWN House, near Biggin Hill in Kent, where Charles Darwin lived for 40 years until his death in 1892, has been acquired for the nation.

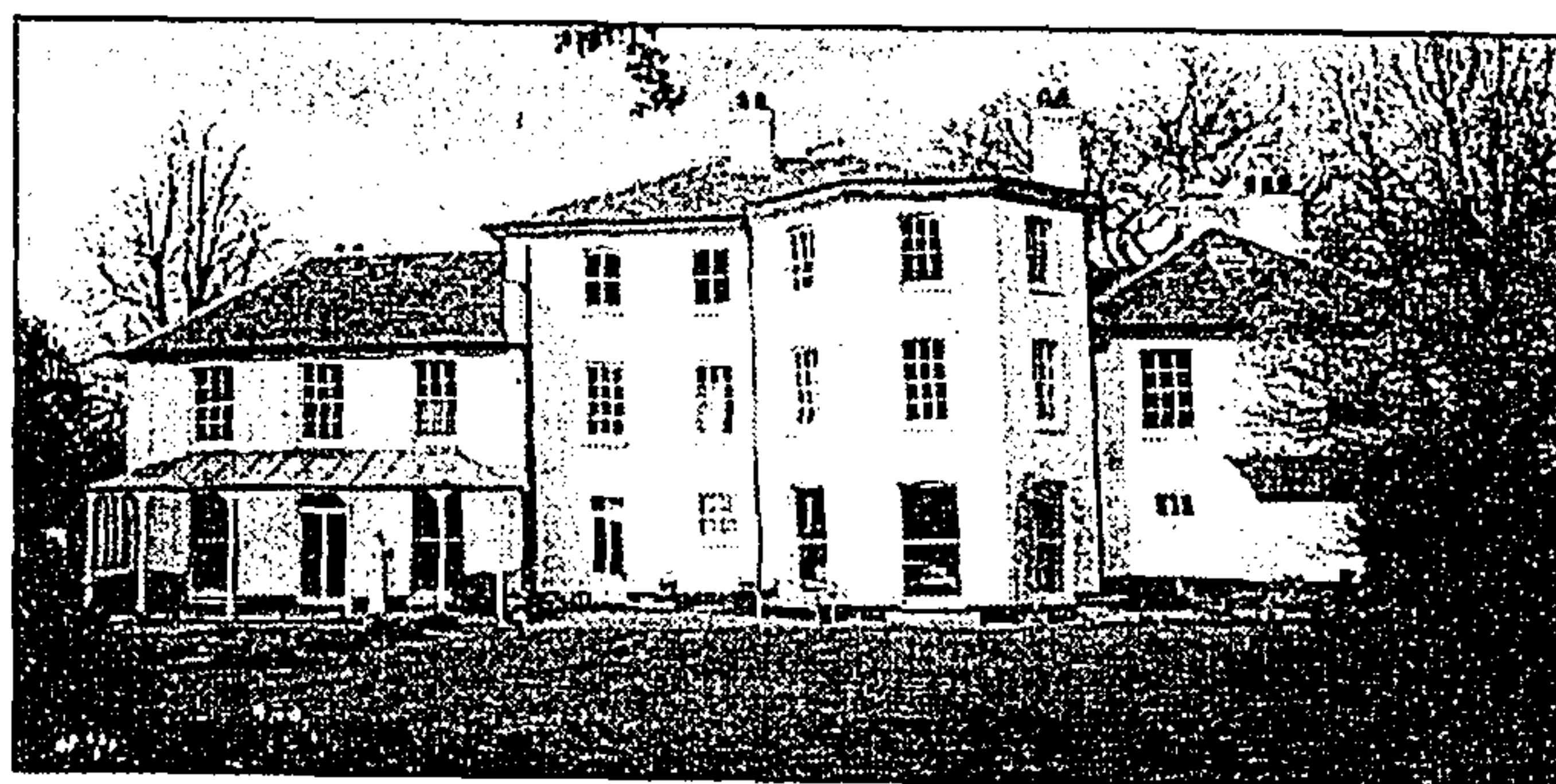
The purchase was made possible by a unique joint effort involving government

heritage bodies, a national museum, a professional institution and a private charitable trust.

In 1952 the house was acquired by the Royal College of Surgeons of England which has maintained it ever since. But three years ago the Natural History Museum took a lease on the house and has since raised £625,000 for its future preservation.

During its lease, which expired last year, the museum also secured a grant of £1.783 million from the Heritage Lottery fund, which will be given to English Heritage for the building's restoration.

In addition the Wellcome Trust has provided £230,000 for English Heritage to acquire the freehold of Down House, contents including a number of Darwin's papers, the five acre garden and 28 acres of parkland. It has also provided a further £475,000 to acquire the adjacent three



Down House, near Biggin Hill, Kent, where Darwin lived and worked for 40 years

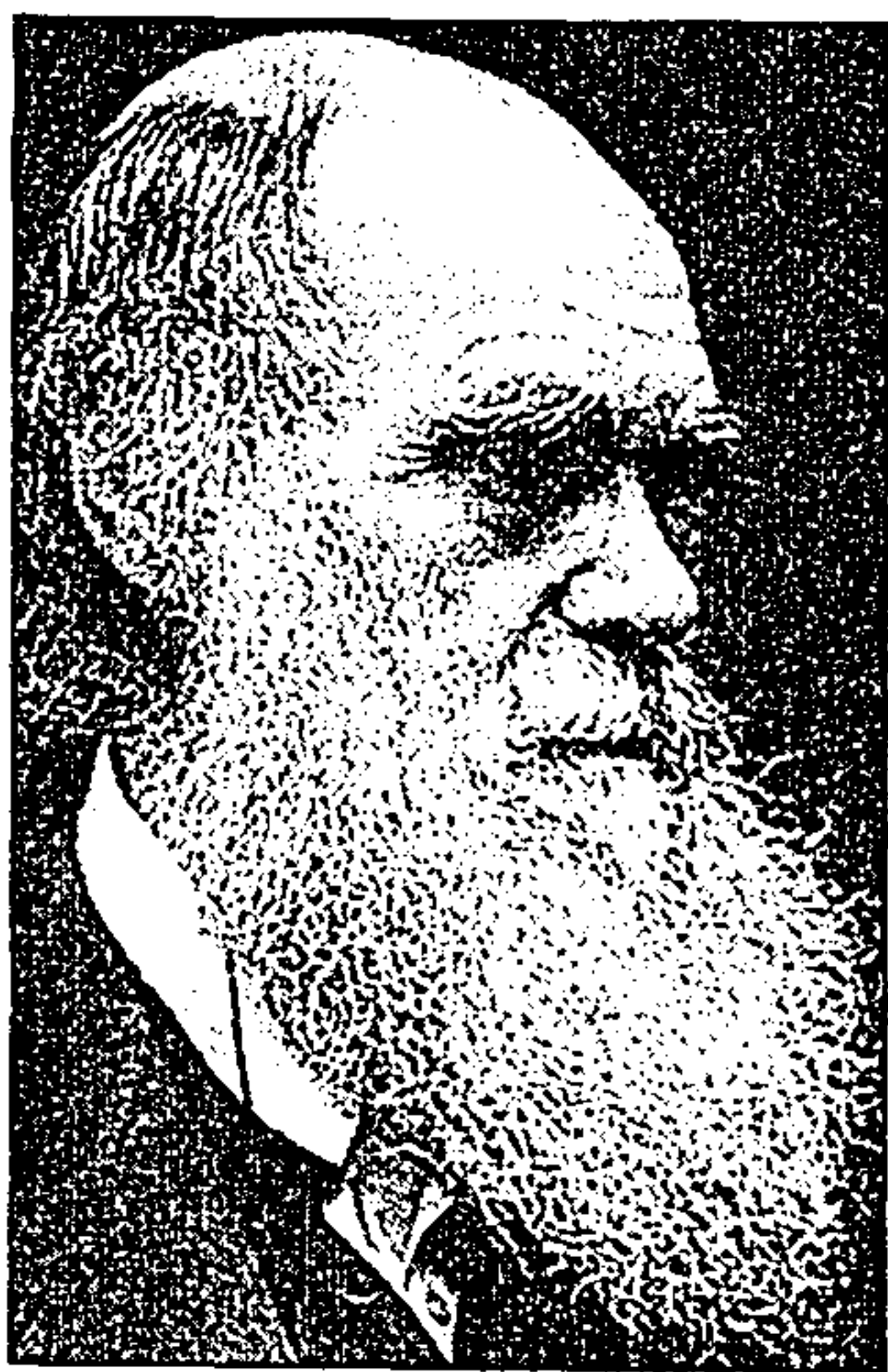
acre Buckston Browne research farm. The arrangement is conditional on the Darwin Museum being maintained in perpetuity.

Sir Jocelyn Stevens, chairman of English Heritage, said yesterday that without the generosity of the Wellcome Trust and the efforts of the college in maintaining the property, the house and possessions of one of the most influential thinkers in world history would almost certainly have been lost and dispersed. Now it would be preserved as a museum and as an education and scholarly resource.

Sir Rodney Sweetnam, president of the Royal Col-

lege of Surgeons, said that the maintenance of the house and museum had been a considerable expense for more than 40 years. "We are very grateful to the Wellcome Trust for making it possible for English Heritage to take over this responsibility and thereby allow the college to concentrate its resources on its surgical responsibilities."

Down House, which attracts some 5,000 visitors a year, is to be closed for restoration but numbers are expected to increase at least four-fold once it reopens. The Natural History Museum will also be closely involved in the future management of the house and garden.



Charles Darwin, the naturalist