

sive kind of plants, whether they be commercially useful or not. Some of these would be purely of scientific interest; but many others might be made as instructive and attractive, if placed in glass cases, as are the corals, shells, or many other departments of natural history, to which crowds now resort.

Believe me, &c.

(signed)

*Cha. Lyell.*

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*Charles Darwin, Esq., to Sir R. I. Murchison.*

My dear Sir Roderick,

Down, Bromley, Kent, 19 June.

I HAVE just received your note. Unfortunately I cannot attend at the British Museum on Monday. I do not suppose my opinion on the subject of your note can be of any value, as I have not much considered the subject, or had the advantage of discussing it with other naturalists. But my impression is, that there is much weight in what you say about not breaking up the natural history collection of the British Museum. I think a national collection ought to be in London. I can, however, see that some weighty arguments might be advanced in favour of Kew, owing to the immense value of Sir W. Hooker's collection and library; but these are private property, and I am not aware that there is any certainty of their always remaining at Kew. Had this been the case, I should have thought that the botanical collection might have been removed there, without endangering the other branches of the collections. But I think it would be the greatest evil which could possibly happen to natural science in this country, if the other collections were ever to be removed from the British Museum and library. Pray believe me,

Yours, &c.

(signed)

*Ch. Darwin.*

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The Sub-Committee then proceeded to the consideration of their Report, which was agreed to as follows:—

The Sub-Committee on Natural History, to whom it was referred to take evidence as to the expediency of transferring the Botanical Collections now in the British Museum to Kew, beg to report that while all the botanists they have examined are of opinion that it would be advantageous to form a botanical establishment at Kew, comprising an extensive herbarium and a good library, as an addition to the garden of living plants, there are differences of opinion respecting the desirableness of also keeping up in the metropolis such a herbarium in connexion with the extensive library of the British Museum.

Sir William Hooker, Dr. J. Hooker, and Dr. Lindley have given reasons in favour of the removal of the Collections from the British Museum to Kew, with the view of rendering that establishment more complete, but Dr. H. Falconer, long at the head of the Botanical Garden of Calcutta, and Professor Henfrey, support the opinion of the late eminent botanist, Mr. Robert Brown, and believe that such a removal would be of great disservice to science by depriving the consulting botanist of ready access to a central Metropolitan Herbarium and Library.

In this view Mr. Bentham coincides, with this exception, that he wishes the herbarium bequeathed by Sir Joseph Banks to be removed to Kew.

In reference to the scientific importance of the botanical collection in its illustration of the geological specimens in the Museum, the opinion of Sir Charles Lyell is decidedly in favour of retaining such a botanical collection in the metropolis.

It is stated in evidence that a herbarium may be eminently useful to the student even when entirely separated from a garden, and such evidence affords an answer to any argument in favour of a removal, which might be apparently derived from a consideration of the expediency of uniting all the constituents of a botanical collection in one place.

The herbaria at Kew, and the library there, are, by far the greatest part of them, private property, and only accessible to the public under certain conditions; there are no buildings belonging to the gardens in which the united collections could be deposited, and no staff sufficient for its care, and the arrangement of necessary accessions. It is also stated that the number of