

ENCOURAGEMENT OF ORIGINAL RESEARCH :

THE DARWIN PRIZE.

It affords us unfeigned pleasure to have the privilege of submitting to our readers the details of a valuable plan for the encouragement and reward of original research by local Geologists, Naturalists, and Archæologists. The scheme, it will be seen, has grown out of a suggestion warmly received at the Northampton meeting of the Midland Union by the members, and by them referred to the Committee of Management to consider and if approved to carry out. The "Darwin Prize" will, we feel assured, act as an incentive to much real and useful work, and we trust no year will pass without that enviable reward being worthily won. The following extract from the letter in which Mr. Darwin gave his permission for the prize to be named after him was in answer to the unanimously expressed desire of the Committee:—

"I request that you will be so good as to inform the members of the Committee that their wish to name the Medal after me is a very great honour, which I gladly accept. It is particularly pleasing to me to have my name connected, in however indirect a manner, with a scheme for advancing Science—the study of which has been my chief source of happiness throughout life."

This plan for encouraging original work affords the utmost liberty, within given limits each year, for the contributions to deal with subjects deliberately chosen by the writers. If, as we hope will always be the case, the communications to be rewarded by the Darwin Prize are the result of much careful investigation, the pages of this journal will be enriched by them, and they will add to the stores of scientific knowledge. Thus next year the whole range of Geology is open to select from, including mineralogy, petrology, and the application of chemistry, the spectroscope, and the polariscope, to the study of rocks and minerals. The following is the scheme adopted by the Committee:—

THE MIDLAND UNION OF NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETIES.

ENCOURAGEMENT OF ORIGINAL RESEARCH.

THE DARWIN PRIZE.

The Council, at the last Annual Meeting at Northampton, submitted for consideration, with their hearty approval, a proposal made by one of their body, Mr. W. Jerome Harrison, F.G.S., to the effect that an Annual Prize should be provided for the purpose of recognising and encouraging original research by Members of the Societies in the Union. The proposal was favourably received by the Meeting, and referred to the Committee of Management, who were empowered to carry it into effect if they saw fit.

After careful consideration by the Committee, at a Meeting held at Birmingham, on Thursday, July 15th, 1880, the President-Elect (Dr. T. Wright, F.R.S.) in the chair, the following scheme was adopted:—

1st.—That a Prize, (to be called, by permission of Mr. Charles Darwin, F.R.S., "The Darwin Prize,") of the value of £10, to include a Gold or Bronze "Darwin Medal," at the option of the successful candidate, be given annually for a paper indicating original research upon a subject within the scope of the Societies in the Union, contributed by a member for publication in the Journal of the Union.

2nd.—That the subjects for "The Darwin Prize," for the three years ensuing, be limited as under—

In 1881 to Geology,
 In 1882 to Biology,
 In 1883 to Archæology.

3rd.—That a Committee of five, annually elected for the purpose by the Committee of Management, adjudicate the prize to such paper, of sufficient merit, on the subject of the year, contributed as aforesaid to the Journal of the Union, (the "Midland Naturalist,") either actually published, or sent in for publication during the twelve months preceding the 31st of March of that year, and declare the adjudication at the Annual Meeting.

4th.—That right be reserved for the adjudicators to withhold the prize, if in their opinion no contribution has been sent in of sufficient merit.

Contributions for "The Darwin Prize" next year must be forwarded to the Editors of the "Midland Naturalist," Midland Counties Herald Office, Birmingham, on or before the 31st March, 1881.

HEREWALD WAKE, President.

T. WRIGHT, F.R.S., Chairman of the Committee.

EDWARD W. BADGER, }
 HENRY BASEVI, } Hon. Secs.

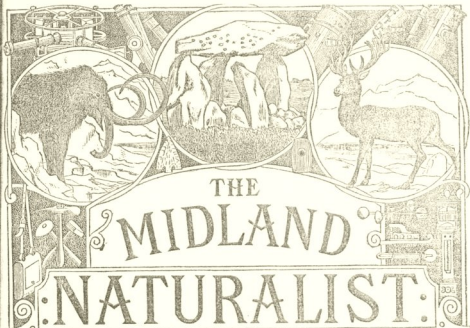
Birmingham, July 20th, 1880.

MIDLAND UNION OF NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETIES.

THIRD ANNUAL MEETING AT NORTHAMPTON,
 JUNE 17TH AND 18TH, 1880.

THE CONVERSAZIONE.

The Conversazione at Northampton was as satisfactory and interesting as those at Birmingham and Leicester at the former meetings of the Union. It was held in the Guildhall, on Thursday evening, June 17th. The suite of rooms was decorated, and the general arrangements carried out by Messrs. M. H. Holding, H. J. Atkins, S. J. Newman, and W. B. Saul, who are to be congratulated upon the result of their labours, and upon the way in which, by the liberal use of placards, they made known to the visitors where the different exhibits were placed in the somewhat complicated building. Valuable help in the same direction was also given in the excellent catalogue, drawn up by Mr. B. Thompson, F.C.S., in which also each exhibit was, as far as possible, carefully described.



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EDITED BY
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