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ON MONDAY OF THIS WEEK the executive branch of the committee on site and buildings for the World's Fair held its first meeting in the committee rooms in the *Times* building. The members present were Charles A. Dana, chairman; John Foord, secretary; ex-Mayor Grace, Henry R. Towne, Isidor Straus, Samuel Gompers, C. F. Chandler, and John H. Starin. On motion of Mr. Towne it was resolved that Central Park, as a site for the fair, be excluded from immediate consideration. It was also decided to lay aside, for the present at least, all suggestions in regard to sites not on or near Manhattan Island, and to divide the water front and inland site propositions into two groups for separate consideration. Accordingly the secretary was requested to organize two excursions for a personal inspection by the committee of all the sites deemed worthy of examination. The first trip was on the water, starting from the foot of East Thirty-second Street at 12 o'clock Wednesday, Mr. Starin supplying the steamer. As Randall's, Blackwell's, and Ward's Islans have been suggested for consideration, the committee decided to invite the presidents of the board of charities and correction and the board of emigration to join the excursion party. The trip was continued up to Pelham Bay Park and other available water-front plots. The second excursion was fixed for Thursday, but the hour and place were left open. The New-York Central Railroad Company has offered a special car for the use of the committee on its inland trip, which will probably be largely devoted to the annexed district. Whatever conclusions the committee reach will be reported to the main committee for approval or rejection. While the committee was in session Mr. Erastus Wiman called to recommend certain sites on Staten Island. The committee spent considerable time in looking over the scores of suggestions as to sites. The work of sorting was not an easy task, but the sifting process resulted in a list of a dozen or twenty.

IT IS ONE of the self-evident truths that the grounds of neat and painstaking farmers and gardeners should not be permitted to become annually seeded with weeds from the lands of their more slovenly neighbors. It seems that in Wisconsin there is on the statute books a law intended to prevent this injustice, and which needs only to be enforced to accomplish much good. This law does not, as is pointed out in a recent bulletin of the agricultural station of the University of Wisconsin, demand the destruction of all pernicious weeds, but it is aimed at the principal offenders, and if these can be kept under subjection by its means, the damages from these pests on the farm will be materially reduced. It is a matter of interest that all the weeds condemned in the law were introduced into this country from Europe. There are, it is true, native species of the cocklebur, but Dr. Gray believes that the one that has become a troublesome weed, and has very justly been included in the weed law, is not native, but has been naturalized here. The fact that these troublesome weeds have invaded our country from other continents, and, despite the efforts that have been put forth for their destruction, have spread themselves over so many of our farms, illustrates how great is their power to cope with conditions, and emphasizes the importance of vigorous concerted action to keep them under subjection.

MR. WALLACE ON DARWINISM.[1]

TO ALL who have read the life and letters of the late Mr. Darwin it must appear that, over and above the personal and scientific interest which attaches in so high a degree to that admirable biography, there is what may be termed a dramatic interest. The antecedents of Charles Darwin, the Sir Isaac Newton of biology, in Charles Darwin, the undergraduate at Cambridge — hitherto unconscious of his own powers, and waking up to a love of science under the guiding influence of a beautiful friendship; the delight and the diffidence which attended his nomination by Professor Henslow as a suitable naturalist for the "Beagle" expedition; the uncertainty which afterwards marked the course of negotiations between his family on the one hand, and the Admiralty on the other, wherein issues of incalculable importance were turning and re-turning in the balance of chance, determined this way and that by the merest featherweights of circumstance; the eventual suddenness of a decision which was destined to end not only, as his father anticipated, in an "unsettling" of his own views, but also, and to a never paralleled degree, in the unsettling of the views of all mankind; the subsequent dawning upon his mind of the truth of evolution in the light of his theory of natural selection, and the working out of that theory during twenty years of patient devotion in the quiet retirement of an English country life; the bursting of the storm in 1859, and all the history of the great transformations which have followed; — these in their broadest outlines are some of what I have ventured to call the dramatic elements in the records of Mr. Darwin's life.

Now, not least among these dramatic elements is the relation in which Mr. Darwin's work stood to that of Mr. Wallace. For assuredly it was in the highest degree dramatic, that the great idea of natural selection should have occurred independently and in precisely the same form to two working naturalists; that these naturalists should have been countrymen; that they should have agreed to publish their theory on the same day; and last, but not least, that, through the many years of strife and turmoil which followed, these two English naturalists consistently maintained towards each other such feelings of magnanimous recognition, that

[1] From the Contemporary Review.