

DOWN,
BECKENHAM, KENT.
~~RAILWAY STATION~~
~~ORPLINGTON, S.E.R.~~

Oct 2^o 1879

My dear Prof Semper,

I thank you for your extremely kind letter of the 19th, & for the proof sheets. I believe that I understand all, excepting one or two sentences where my imperfect knowledge of German has interfered. This is my sole & poor excuse for the mistake which I made in the second

DOWN
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edit of my Coral book. Your
account of the Pellew Islands
is a fine addition to our knowledge
on Coral reefs. I have very little
to say on the subject: even if
I had formerly read your account
& seen your maps, but had known
nothing of the proofs of recent
elevation & of your belief that the
Islands have not since subsided,
I have no doubt that I should

have considered them as formed
during subsidence. But I should
have been much troubled in my
mind by the sea not being so
deep as it usually is round
atolls, and by the reef on one
side sloping so gradually beneath
the sea; for this latter fact, as
far as my memory serves me,
is a very unusual & almost
unparalleled case. I always
foresee that a bank at the

proper depth beneath the surface
would give rise to a reef which
could not be distinguished from
an atoll formed during subsidence,
I must still adhere to my opinion
that the atolls & barrier-reefs in
the middle of the Pacific & Indian
oceans indicate subsidence; but
I fully agree with you that such
cases as that of the Pellew Islands
if of at all frequent occurrence,
would make my general conclusions
of very little value. Future observers

(2)

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must decide between us. It will
be a strange fact if there has not
been subsidence of the beds of the
great oceans and if this has not
affected the forms of the coral reefs.

In the 3 last pages of the last
sheet sent, I am extremely
glad to see that you are going
to treat of the dispersion of
animals. Your preliminary remarks
seem to me great & excellent
There is nothing about Mr. Wagner
as I expected to find. I

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suppose that you have seen
Moseley's last book,
which contains some good
observations on the subject.

I am glad that you
- B: Ross' will appear in
English, for then I can
read it with ease.

Pray believe me
your very sincerely

Charles Darwin