

REPORT  
OF THE  
FIFTY-THIRD MEETING  
OF THE  
BRITISH ASSOCIATION  
FOR THE  
ADVANCEMENT OF SCIENCE;

HELD AT  
SOUTHPORT IN SEPTEMBER 1883.



LONDON:  
JOHN MURRAY, ALBEMARLE STREET.  
1884.

*Office of the Association:* 22 ALBEMARLE STREET, LONDON, W.

reasonable self-interest shall be man's guide. We do not contend for any such theory. By reasoning we may explain and trace the development of human nature, but we cannot change it by any such process. It is demonstrably unreasonable for the individual man, guided by self-interest, to share the dangers and privations of his brother-man, and yet, in common with many lower animals, he has an inherited quality which makes it a pleasure to him to do so; it is unreasonable for the mother to protect her offspring, and yet it is the natural and inherited quality of mothers to derive pleasure from doing so; it is unreasonable for the half-starved poor to aid their wholly starving brethren, and yet such compassion is natural and pleasurable to those who show it, and is the constant rule of life. Unreasonable though these things are from the point of view of individual self-interest, yet they are done because to do them is pleasurable, to leave them undone a pain. The race has, as it were, in these respects befooled the individual, and in the course of evolution has planted in him, in its own interests, an irrational capacity for taking pleasure in doing that which no reasoning in regard to self-interest could justify. As with these lower and more widely distributed instincts, shared by man with some lower social animals, so is it with this higher and more peculiar instinct—the tendency to pursue new knowledge. Whether reasonable or not, it has by the laws of heredity and selection become part of us and exists: its operation is beneficial to the race: its gratification is a source of keen pleasure to the individual—an end in itself. We may safely count upon it as a factor in human nature; it is in our power to cultivate and develop it, or, on the other hand, to starve and distort it for a while, though to do so is to waste time in opposing the irresistible.

As day by day the old-fashioned stimulus to the higher life loses the dread control which it once exercised over the thoughts of men, the pursuit of wealth and the indulgence in fruitless gratifications of sense become to an increasing number the chief concerns of their mental life. Such occupations fail to satisfy the deep desires of humanity; they become wearisome and meaningless, so that we hear men questioning whether life be worth living. When the dreams and aspirations of the youthful world have lost their old significance and their strong power to raise men's lives, it will be well for that community which has organised in time a following of and a reverence for an ideal Good, which may serve to lift the national mind above the level of sensuality and to ensure a belief in the hopefulness and worth of life. The faith in Science can fill this place—the progress of Science is an ideal Good, sufficient to exert this great influence.

It is for this reason more than any other, as it seems to those who hold this faith, that the progress and diffusion of scientific research, its encouragement and reverential nurture, should be a chief business of the community, whether collectively or individually, at the present day.

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The following Papers were read:—

1. *On the Origin and Development of the Rhinoceros Group.*  
By W. B. SCOTT and H. F. OSBORNE.

The oldest known member of this line is the genus *Orthocynodon* (Scott and Osborne), from the lower strata of the great Bridger basin of Wyoming, belonging to the Middle Eocene of America, which is very rich in perissodactyl types. Among these the *Lophiodontidæ* occupy a prominent position; they are probably the ancestors of both rhinoceros and tapir, and *Orthocynodon* may be characterised as a lophiodont with rhinoceros-like molars. The authors proceed to review the relative positions of *Aceratherium*, *Diceratherium*, and *Hyracodon*.

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2. *On the Differences between the Males and Females of the Pearly Nautilus.*<sup>1</sup>  
By A. G. BOURNE.

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<sup>1</sup> Published in the *Transactions of the Zoological Society*.