

business. The proceedings open with a public address by the president for the year. The Association then divides into sections, each taking up a special subject, and organising itself with a president, vice-presidents, and committee. The sections at the Birmingham meeting were those of mathematical and physical science; chemical science; geology; zoology, botany and physiology; geography and ethnology; economic science and statistics; and lastly mechanical science. These sections are known respectively by the letters A to G. Each has its own room, and the meetings take place simultaneously, so that persons interested in different subjects are often sorely perplexed by the claims of rival papers; and it is not uncommon, after a popular paper, to see a section-room almost emptied, by the rush to be in time for some other topic of interest, in another section.

The committees of the sections meet every morning to arrange the business for the next day. The section meetings usually extend without intermission from 11 to 3 or 4 in the afternoon, and the evenings are occupied with social entertainments and lectures. It has of late years been the practice to organise excursions to local objects of interest on the Saturday, instead of the close of meetings as formerly, keeping the sections, or some of them, open at the same time. At the Birmingham meeting there were several interesting excursions of this kind; but there was much difference of opinion as to the propriety of having such excursions on a regular day of meeting: some objecting to this, others saying that the sections should adjourn; the result being that those which did not adjourn were very thinly attended. Those who come for scientific purposes would prefer the sections; those who love pleasure, the excursions; and the local authorities do not wish to postpone the excursions to the end, knowing that, in this way, they lose most of the leading men.

The evening entertainments are not merely great crushes of well-dressed people; but they furnish an opportunity for meeting friends, and they are made the occasion of exhibiting many objects of interest in art, in manufactures, and in natural history. One of the evenings at Birmingham was occupied with an interesting lecture by Mr. Jukes, of the Geological Survey, on the probable extent and duration of the coal of South Staffordshire.

In organising the sections, any person, who is a member of a society publishing transactions, may be placed on the committees, and a few leading men are appointed vice-presidents. In some