

Selections.

The session of the British Association, at Cheltenham may be said to have closed with the dinner on Tuesday, given by Dr. Daubeny at the Old Wells. Among the foreigners present were, Dr. Brenneke, from Prussian Posen; Lieutenant Osew, from Russia; Dr. Hornbeck, a Dane; Dr. Dia, of Norway; and Professor Rogers, of the United States; but no Frenchman. In replying to the toasts after dinner, "The Army" found a representative in Colonel Rawlinson; "The Navy," in Captain Robertson, who had served under Nelson. The Earl of Ellenborough proposed "The President, and prosperity to the Association," commenting on the daring with which Dr. Daubeny, Sir Robert Murchison, and others, had persevered, and had overcome the difficulties that beset the early path of the Association. Professor Sedgwick proposed "The Bishop and Clergy of the Diocese." The Rev. F. Close acknowledged the compliment, saying "he believed in the truths of science as firmly as he did in the revelations of Holy Writ;" and he would recommend its pursuit of one of the most interesting which the human mind could be called upon to contemplate. Sir Robert Murchison proposed "The Science of Foreign Countries." Of further papers read, only a few call for notice:—

In the Geological section, Mr. Vivian, of Torquay, read a paper on the earliest traces of human remains found in Kent's Cavern. "The peculiar interest in this subject consisted in its being the link between geology and antiquities, and the certainty afforded, by the condition in which the remains were found, of their relation; the successive deposits being sealed up in situ by the dropping of carbonate of lime, which assumes the form of stalagmite. The sources from which the statements in the paper were obtained were principally the original manuscript memoir of the late Rev. J. M'Enery, F.G.S., which was deplored by Professor Owen, in his *Fossil Mamalia*, and by other writers, as lost to science, but which has been recovered by Mr. Vivian, and was produced before the section, also, the report of the sub-committee of the Torquay Natural History Society, and his own researches. The conclusions to which Mr. Vivian has arrived are mainly in accordance with those of Mr. M'Enery. The cavern called Kent's Cave is situated beneath a hill about a mile from Torquay, extending to a circuit of about 700 yards. It was first occupied by the bear (*ursus spelæus*), and extinct hyæna; the remains of which, with the bones of elephants, rhinoceroses, deer, &c., upon which they preyed, were shown upon the rocky floor. By some violent and transitory convulsion a vast amount of the soil of the surrounding country was injected into the caverns, carrying with it the bones, and burying them in its inmost recesses. The cave appears to have been subsequently occupied by human inhabitants, whose rude flint instruments were found upon the mud beneath the stalagmite. A period then succeeded during which the cavern was not inhabited until about half of the floor was deposited, when a streak containing burnt wood and the bones of the wild boar and badger were deposited; and again the cave was unoccupied by men or animals, the remaining portion of the stalagmite being, both above and below, pure and unstained by soil or any foreign matter. Above the floor traces were found of early Celtic, British, and Roman remains, together with those of more modern date. Amongst the inscriptions was one of interest as connected with the landing of William III. on the opposite side of the Bay—"W. Hodges, of Ireland, 1688." In the discussion which followed, and in which Sir H. Rawlinson, the Secretary of the Ethnological Society, and others, took part, the position of the flints beneath the stalagmite seemed to be admitted, although contrary to the generally received opinion of ancient geologists; thus carrying back the first occupation of Devon to a very high antiquity, but not such as to be at variance with Scriptural chronology, the deposition of stalagmite being shown to have been much more rapid at those periods when the cavern was not inhabited, by the greater discharge of carbonic acid gas. Without attempting to affix with any certainty more than a relative date to these several periods, or forcing a Scriptural interpretation upon natural phenomena, which, as Bacon remarked, "too often produces merely a false religion and a fantastic philosophy," Mr. Vivian suggested that there was reason for believing that the introduction of the mud was occasioned, not by the comparatively tranquil Mosiac deluge, but by the greatest convulsion alluded to in the first chapter of Genesis, which destroyed the pre-existing races of animals (most of those in this cavern being of extinct species), and prepared the earth for man and his contemporaries."

In the section of Geography, Sir Roderick Murchison read extracts from letters written by Dr. Livingston the African traveller, who has recently passed from St. Paul de Loando to the Western coast, conducted by the faithful natives whom he had converted to Christianity. The third and last letter, which was written when the author's perils and labours have terminated, gave a general view of the ethnology and habits of the various tribes of Africans. Among these Dr. Livingston lived, and became familiar with their language. He assigns a manifest superiority to the inhabitants of the hilly countries, and particularly to the Caffre-Zulu race. He also states that the Bible has been nearly all translated into Socherana, or the dialect of the Bechnar, the most regularly developed of the Negro languages. "Of its capabilities," he adds, "you may judge when I mention that the Pentateuch is fully expressed in considerably fewer words than in the Greek Septuagint, and in a very greatly less number than in our verbose English version." After a sketch of the zoology and botany of those regions, and an account of the prevalent diseases of the natives, Dr. Livingston having given the history of the successive accounts narrated by the Portuguese of their efforts to penetrate into the interior, modestly expresses his belief that he is the first European who has travelled across South Africa in the same latitude. He then speaks of his intention to revisit Great Britain, but with the firm resolve to return to South Africa and prosecute his sacred mission, and concludes in these words—"I feel thankful to God, who has preserved my life while to many who could have done more good have been cut off. But I am not so much elated as might have been expected, for the end of the geographical feat is but the beginning of the missionary enterprise. Geographers labouring to make men better acquainted with one another, soldiers fighting against oppression, and sailors rescuing captives in deadly climes, are all, as well as missionaries, aiding in hastening on a glorious consummation of God's dealings with man. In the hope that I may yet be permitted to do some good to this poor long trodden down Africa, the gentleman over whom you have the honour to preside will, I doubt not, cordially join."

Apropos of some remarks on the Arctic explorations by Dr. Rae, Sir Roderick Murchison referred with much feeling to the failure of the expeditions sent to search for Sir John Franklin, his dear friend. Sir Roderick was president of the Royal Geographical Society when Sir John Franklin undertook his last and fatal enterprise; and he held the opinion—an opinion shared by the President of the Royal Society, by Lord Ellesmere, and by many other learned and distinguished persons—that it was the bounden duty of this country not to leave unsearched the small area in which the *Erebus* and *Terror* must still be frozen up. It was well known that in those frigid regions everything was preserved for many years without the symptoms of decay; and as the Esquimaux, even if so minded, had not the means of breaking up the heavy timber and iron work of the vessels, they must still be lying with, in a radius of some 200 or 300 miles. If a diligent search were made in that locality, he had no doubt but that the long boats might be recovered, and with them in all probability, the records of the expedition. He was sure the public would be interested to hear that the committee of the section of Geography and Ethnology had passed a resolution that day to present a memorial to the First Lord of the Treasury, in common with other learned societies, praying that the Government would sanction another expedition to make a renewed search for the remains of Sir John Franklin and his gallant band.

At the meeting of the Mathematical section on Saturday, Mr. Symons read a paper "on Lunar Motion," recapitulating the doctrine which he lately started, but in a corrected form. He admitted that the astronomers accurately describe the motion of the moon; but he argued, that in using an arbitrary and twisted form of the word "rotation," they prevent their language from being intelligible to the people, and impede the development of a technicology precise and available for legal as well as scientific purposes. He believed that the old astronomers really mistook the moon's movement, and that the modern astronomers had inadvertently copied these descriptions, knowing better. The attendance was numerous; and it is said that Mr. Symons, who was frequently interrupted by a few gentlemen on the platform, had the astronomers against him and the audience with him. Professor Walker, the President of the Section, writes to the *Times*, without contradiction, that this account was evidently forwarded by Mr. Symons, and must not be taken as in any way authorised by the association.

Lord Dalhousie's opinion on mesmerism has been elicited by some Exeter Poor-law guardians who, contemplating the introduction of mesmeric operations into their hospital, were anxious to know whether Lord Dalhousie (quoted in Dr. Esdaile's pamphlet on cures in India) was really an advocate for mesmerism as a curative agent. Lord Dalhousie says:—

"Of the efficacy of Dr. Esdaile's practice of mesmerism in surgical cases, I am able to speak with confidence. Dr. Esdaile undoubtedly did possess the faculty of so influencing the sensations of natives of India by means of mesmerism, as to reduce them to a state of insensibility, not less complete than that which is now produced by use of chloroform. While they were in that state of insensibility, he performed upon them surgical operations of every kind, many of them tremendous in their magnitude, duration, and severity, without any apparent consciousness in the patient, without pain to him, and usually with great success. Accordingly, I appointed Dr. Esdaile, in 1848, to be one of the Presidency surgeons. I did this in acknowledgment of the service he had rendered to humanity by mitigating largely its sufferings within his own sphere, and in order that he might be able to continue his services at the capital. Having thus replied to your question, and testified (as I shall always be ready to testify) to what Dr. Esdaile actually effected in India by what he termed mesmerism, I wish to be permitted to add, that I must not be considered as a disciple of the doctrines of mesmerism generally."

The following royal anecdotes are going the round of the press. The Duchess of Kent found certain biscuits supplied by an Edinburgh baker to be peculiarly nice, and ordered the host of her hotel to continue the supply. On Sunday the landlord found he had none left, and sent for a fresh consignment. The baker indignantly replied he would not serve the Queen herself on Sunday. Mr. Barry represented the case to the Duchess just as it stood; whereupon her Royal Highness called in person for the baker, and ordered twelve dozen biscuits to be sent her every week. The Queen, to whose ears the story came, gets every week a similar supply. Her Majesty, in her walks about Balmoral, dropped into the hut of an old Highland widow, and talked very familiarly upon ordinary topics. At last the widow ended—"Ye n'er say anything about the Queen; I reckon ye're Mrs. Albert's bachel?" Calling in at another bothy, her Majesty found a very aged woman alone at tea. In the course of chat she observed—"You are very bld to be alone?" "Oo," was the reply, "I've walth (plenty) o' folk to tak care o' me; but they're a'oot to see the Queen." "Tell them," rejoined her Majesty, "when they return, the Queen was aot to see you." Subsequently her Majesty took shelter in the same hut from an evening shower, and received a very free but very kindly scold for venturing out so late.

"It is curious, sir, the vanity of many of these women," whispered our intelligent guide, in a tone through Milbank Prison. "Those straw bonnets none of them can bear, and it is as much as ever we can do to make them put them on when they are going to see the doctor. They think they look better in their caps. One woman, I give you my word, took the ropes off her hammock, and put them round the bottom of her dress, so as to make the skirt seem fuller. Another had filled her gown with coals round the bottom for the same object; and others, again, have taken the wire from round the dinner cans, and used it as stiffeners to their stays. One actually took the tinsoil from under the buttons, and made it into a ring. You would hardly believe it, perhaps, but I have known women to scrape the walls of their cells and use the powder of the whitewash to whiten their complexion. Indeed, there is hardly any trick they would not be at, if we did not keep a sharp eye upon them."—*The Great World of London.*

Mr. Morton, the agricultural essayist, sends to the *Times* the following remedies for destroying the turnip fly, as employed by two eminent practical farmers, Messrs. Dickson and Hobbs:—The former took some road-dust, some soot, and a little guano, and, mixing these together, sowed them along the rows in the middle of the day. In a short time he found that the crowds of flies had altogether disappeared. Mr. Fisher Hobbs has long used a mixture of a similar sort, only he employs a little sulphur instead of guano, and thinks it better to apply it in the night season, when dew has fallen, than in the day-time. Either system is likely to be effective, and it is well that farmers should know how simple a cure they have at their command for this pest.