

OUR POOR RELATIONS.—II.

BY DAVID BOYLE.

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YOU have all been taught, no doubt, as I was, that the lower animals performed every one of their functions by means of instinct; only man, we were told, was gifted with reason. All this is now changed, and we find some of the foremost writers of the day on Natural History attributing reason to the horse, the dog, the bee, the ant, and many more—reason, that is to say, to a limited extent.

The Rev. Mr. Wood, a voluminous writer on this subject, recently issued a work, upholding the view of immortality for our poor relations. After all, the supposition is not a novel one. The same view has been taken by many great ones of the earth from time to time during the last thousand years, but I confess to having been a little surprised, not long since, when informed that the Rev. John Wesley entertained the same opinion. Not having read the *whole* of his sermons myself, I have probably missed the references; but as it is likely that every reader of the MONTHLY is ahead of me in this as in many other respects, they will know just in how far the statement to which I have referred holds good. If these things be so, wouldn't it almost appear as if Mr. Lo is not so far out of his reckoning when he insists upon the existence of a Happy Hunting Ground beyond the setting sun.

The great stumbling-block on the part of those who not only refuse to accept evolution, but who deny that it contains the germs of common

sense, consists chiefly, I imagine, in the difficulty of accounting for man's ownership of a soul, if he be derived from the apes or baboons. The difficulty in question is more than met half-way, if it be taken for granted that there is a hereafter for our poor relations.

Who is there that would grudge eternal companionship to docile old Dobbin, or poor dog Tray? And is there any one who would not feel the happier in mingling with the spirits of Nature's songsters, or in gliding among the spheres in company with the household pets, whether of one's decrepit age, or of our buoyant childhood days?

But this is a moot question, and one about which nothing can be said with anything approaching to certainty; its chief beauty in my eyes consisting in the thought that if some people could be brought to entertain a belief in the opinion, there would not, at times, be so much cruelty inflicted on those poor relations of ours, to whom we so often refer as the "dumb animals."

At the outset of this paper it was remarked that there were only two theories by means of which to account for the existence of the world as we find it. Of late years, however, a not unimportant class of thinkers have effected what they regard as a compromise between evolution and revolution, acknowledging the truthfulness of the former theory in the production of our poor relations, but denying it