

inferior animals, not only in mere physical organization, but still more in all the higher attributes of animal life, be not relative but absolute, then no multiplication of intermediate links can lessen the obstacles to transmutation. One true antidote therefore to such a doctrine, and to the consequent denial of primary distinctions of species, seems to offer itself in such broad and unmistakeable lines of demarkation as Professor Owen indicates, between the cerebral structure of man and that of the most highly developed of anthropoid or other mammals.

Thus the widening range of observation is leading to other, yet related questions and discoveries of no slight importance. The whole compass of that latter one has been embraced in one aspect, in the remarkable introductory essay of Prof. Agassiz, "On Classification," which accompanies the first portion of the great American work now issuing by him under the title of "Contributions to the Natural History of the United States." Like all that comes from the gifted pen of Louis Agassiz, the Essay is bold, comprehensive, and valuable; but also it is not free from conclusions akin to those which in others of that distinguished naturalist's writings have been open to the charge of rash and hasty deductions from imaginary or defective premises. A more recent contribution to the same department of science is Prof. Owen's communication to the Zoological section of the British Association, "On the Orders of Fossil and Recent Reptilia, and their distribution in time." In introducing his subject Professor Owen remarked, that, "with the exception of geology no collateral science had profited so largely from the study of organic remains as zoology. The catalogues of animal species have received immense accessions from the determination of the nature and affinities of those which have become extinct, and much deeper and clearer insight has been gained into the natural arrangement and sub-division of the classes of animals since palæontology has expanded our survey of them." The result of such study in the hands of the great comparative anatomist, has not accordingly been to ignore species, but to reconsider their classifications. The boundary which modern zoological systems maintained between the classes *Pisces* and *Reptilia* is shown to be untenable, and a new group is discerned, within which extensive gradations of development link and blend together fishes, amphibia, and reptiles in one great natural series. No more important contribution has recently been made to