

of those to whom they are indebted for the very stuff out of which their flimsy fancies have been woven, and to the disgust of many liberally disposed souls who shrink from giving adherence to any doctrine that appears to be productive of such miserable results. Of this character (the wild-goose theorists) was a German author whose work I read some time ago, and who, in referring to the eye, dared to make the assertion that any optician of these days who could not manufacture a superior article, would be accounted nothing better than a botch!

If I am not mistaken, the rule by means of which to judge of any sect or system, is to take its best men, not its worst; and if this rule be followed in the case of evolution, then evolutionists themselves have nothing to fear.

The study of our poor relations, and of cognate subjects, to which this study inevitably leads, has engrossed the attention of some of the finest intellects and most acute observers the world has been privileged to look upon.

In the somewhat rambling and disconnected remarks made up to this point on "Our Poor Relations," I have avoided as much as possible the use of technical nomenclature; I have, in fact, aimed to make what I had to say rather of a gossipy than of an abstract essay. During holiday times we hate being bored, as I daresay most of us always do, although from the nature of our occupation this is something we not only have to suffer much from, but something of which we have a good deal to inflict—at least I imagine our scholars think so. I shall, therefore, only ask your attention for a few minutes longer, while I attempt to lay before you, briefly, some of the practical objects aimed at by the study of Natural or Physical Science.

Perhaps, first may be named the alleviation of suffering, especially human suffering. In connection with this point, I shall do no more than refer to the foolish outcry recently made against vivisection; an operation, it is true, involving the sacrifice of many poor relations, but looking to the eventual well-being of the superior animal.

Closely connected with the alleviation of human suffering may be placed the prolongation of life; and it is pretty generally acknowledged that the average life-time of a man is longer to-day than ever before in the history of the species, in so far at any rate as may be deduced from the records of profane history.

These two aims and results of the study are of themselves a sufficient reply to the irrepressible query, What good? But the benefits are not wholly confined to them.

The exact use of our observing powers, as cultivated so largely in the pursuit of biology, is not one of its least merits. The eye and ear of a biological student are very different organs in quality, if not in kind, from those of persons who wander listlessly, as it were, through the journey of life, and, as a rule, enter the valley of the shadow of Death much as one might suppose a brother or a sister to do, who had never cared to be on terms of intimacy with the other members of his family, perhaps not even knowing some of them by sight.

Again, and lastly, an intimate acquaintance with our poor relations has an elevating tendency, notwithstanding it may lead us to conclude, with so many eminent thinkers, that our own immediate forbear was a member of the firm of Gorilla, Chimpanzee, Ape & Co. Our thoughts upon merely sublunary objects are not necessarily grovelling. I think it was Sydney Smith who said "Who feeds