

12. ZOOLOGY—ANIMAL MORPHOLOGY AND PHYSIOLOGY.

(*Notices of Works recently published and Transactions of Societies.*)

The alleged Failure of Natural Selection in the case of Man.—A writer in a recent number of 'Fraser's Magazine' endeavours to point out that although there is a struggle for existence of a more or less intense kind, between different *races* and *nations* of men, yet that between man and man in a civilized condition there is no such struggle—the weak being protected, and the feeble inheriting wealth which they have not won. Thus, the fittest do not survive contends this writer, and the law of selection is so far interfered with as to fail, and indeed we may expect degeneracy rather than improvement in civilized men. The 'Spectator,' in one of its clever articles—written, however, in this case with a hasty and mistaken idea of the question at issue—accepts the view propounded by the writer in 'Fraser' in part, but, making use of the mysterious term "supernatural selection," asserts that a new source of benefit is opened up to man by the cultivation of his moral nature, which counterbalances any attendant evils. The error in this view of the case arises from a neglect of the fact that civilized man is a social animal, in a truly zoological sense. There is no struggle for existence between the various bees of a hive, nor among polyps of a polypidom: the struggle is between hive and hive, and polypidom and polypidom. So with the communities of civilized men—the struggle is between one society and another, whatever may be the bond uniting such society: and in the far distant future we can see no end to the possible combinations or societies which may arise amongst men, and by their emulation tend to his development. Moral qualities, amongst

the others thus developed in the individual necessarily arise in societies of men, and are naturally selected, being a source of strength to the community which has them most developed: and there is no excuse for speaking of a failure of Darwin's law or of "supernatural" selection. We must remember what Alfred Wallace has insisted upon most rightly—that in man, development does not affect so much the bodily as the mental characteristics; the brain in him has become much more sensitive to the operation of selection than the body, and hence is almost its sole subject. At the same time it is clear that the struggle between man and man is going on to a much larger extent than the writer in 'Fraser' allowed. The rich fool dissipates his fortune and becomes poor; the large-brained artizan does frequently rise to wealth and position; and it is a well-known law that the poor do not succeed in rearing so large a contribution to the new generation as do the richer. Hence we have a perpetual survival of the fittest. In the most barbarous conditions of mankind, the struggle is almost entirely between individuals: in proportion as civilization has increased among men, it is easy to trace the transference of a great part of the struggle little by little from individuals to tribes, nations, leagues, guilds, corporations, societies, and other such combinations, and accompanying this transference has been undeniably the development of the moral qualities and of social virtues.
