

MONDAY AFTERNOON POPULAR LECTURES.

CONCHOLOGY.

By Rev. G. W. Taylor.

(Delivered March 10th, 1890.)

After some preliminary remarks concerning the scope of the study of Conchology and the best way to make a collection of shells, the lecturer proceeded to give an outline sketch of the classification of the Mollusca. He showed that they are divided into four large divisions, in accordance with the form and position of their organs of progression. These divisions are—

- I. CEPHALOPODA, as the Nautilus and Squid, which have their feet grouped around the head.
- II. GASTEROPODA, or stomach-footed, as the common snail which progresses by the regular movement of the muscles of the ventral surface.
- III. SCAPHOPODA, or boat-footed, a very small order containing only the *Dentalia* or Tooth Shells and their allies.
- IV. PELECYPODA, or axe-footed Mollusca. This order contains all the bivalves, such as oysters, clams, mussels, etc.

Under each of the heads an account was given of the anatomy, geological age and present distribution of some of the better known species, and attention was drawn to the importance of studying the animal of the different shells.

Before closing his interesting lecture Mr. Taylor went on to speak of the way in which the study of the variations of species in the mollusca brought the conchologist face to face with the great theories of evolution and development. He said:—"A paper on evolution was read before this Club a week or two ago and in the discussion that followed, a remark fell from one of the speakers concerning the *conflict* between evolution and theology. Now, as I know, that there are many of you who would hesitate to accept evolution, if at variance with theology, while there are others, perhaps, who would eagerly throw overboard their theology, if apparently contradicted by evolution. I think that it may be useful to state the opinion on these matters of one who has

studied, and who conscientiously accepts the teachings of both theology and science.

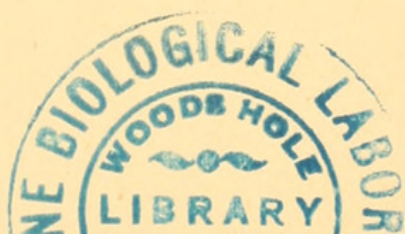
Science, of course, should be primarily an independent study. Scientists have no time and little inclination usually to study theology, and neither have theologians, as a rule, the opportunities to become masters of science. When science has demonstrated a *fact* there can be no gainsaying it; it will over-ride any theological dogma; but a scientific *theory* does nothing of the kind. For instance science has *proved* that our world was not made in six days of 24 hours, as it used to be believed, and theologians accept the *fact* and find it in no way inconsistent with their Bible.

Science has *proved* that evolution has taken place, and is taking place, in both the animal and vegetable world, and theologians accept these facts also.

But science has *not yet proved* that evolution is the cause of *all* the various forms of life we have to-day, and it has *not yet proved*, and I am confident never can prove, that any life can originate *of itself*. Let it prove even the former of these propositions, let it trace back every animal and vegetable to one original speck of protoplasm, and even then science will not do away with the necessity of a creator."

Mr. Taylor went on to explain how Dr. Bastian's theory of abiogenesis had been completely upset by the experiments of Prof. Tyndall, and then said: You will see therefore that there is no necessary conflict between the theory of evolution and theology. Both parties (the theologians and the scientists) are often rather unreasonable. Theologians have sometimes been tempted I know to dogmatise unnecessarily, but on the other hand scientific men are constantly asking them to swallow pounds of theory with every few grains of fact. I for one am ready to accept the facts, and I believe that the principles of evolution have been conclusively proved, but I do not feel called upon to accept at present all the extravagant theories that the more extreme disciples of Darwinism have put forward.

In conclusion, my excuse for introducing this subject into an address on conchology must be the fact that from this science evolutionists have drawn some of their strongest arguments, while in it also they have met with some of their greatest difficulties.





Taylor, George W. 1890. "Lecture on Conchology." *The Ottawa naturalist* 4(7), 128–129.

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