

Scientific.

SCIENTIFIC LECTURES IN THE HALL OF Y. M. C. A.

The Lecture of January 30th, was upon the Human Skeleton, by Dr. J. Ewing Mears of this city. The lecturer was favored with interesting anatomical specimens, both of the higher and lower order of animals.

The Doctor then proceeded to speak of the bones in the body, their number, positions, various uses, composition, and the conditions to which they are reduced when tested by certain acids.

The number of bones in the human skeleton was 200 according to some, but others had found as many as 208 and even 220; but this discrepancy was owing to the fact that in the last two numbers were included certain bones which appear separate in human subjects when young, but which become united as they grow older.

Thus, the two temporal bones, from the Latin word Tempus meaning time, were so named because the ancient doctors held that the hair first commenced to turn gray from the temples.

The cranium bone in the cranium is so called from its resemblance to a sieve; cranium, a Greek word meaning sieve. The clavicle bones get their name from their resemblance to an ancient key; the Latin word clavis meaning a key; the parietal bones from paries a wall, and so on.

It is a remarkable and singular fact that there is not a single straight bone in the whole body; the bones being all more or less curved, and to this circumstance is man indebted for the grace and gracefulness of his daily movements, and for the less liability of the bones themselves to be fractured.

Doctor Mears also exhibited specimens of the three different orders of human skulls as typified in the skull of the Esquimaux and the Osip of Southern Europe. The Esquimaux's skull is a very curious and interesting study.

Referring to the thickness of the skull, in various persons, he related the case of a negro laborer, who, at the corner of 12th and Chestnut Streets, fell from the scaffolding to the ground, a distance of seventy-five feet, striking directly on the top of his head, and had, thereby, merely sustained a fracture of the outer bone of the cranium, and who is now in a fair way of recovery.

Whilst speaking of the feet, the well-known case was narrated of a man in Antwerp who, having been born without arms, by means of his feet, cuts, drinks, paints, and even shaves himself with a razor, without so much as scratching himself.

5. The material of comets is similar to that of gaseous nebulae, and both contain but few elements, pointing to their common origin. The hypotheses already based upon these recently established facts are numerous and varied, of which some appear quite reasonable, others quite the opposite.

The hypotheses already based upon these recently established facts are numerous and varied, of which some appear quite reasonable, others quite the opposite. The argument may be stated thus: The earth was once a nebula, and as some nebulae contain only three or four elements, while the earth has many more, the latter are but transmutations of the former.

Turning from these far-fetched and unsafe analogies, we can not but be impressed with the real value of the evidence which celestial chemistry affords in favor of the popular doctrine of the "plurality of worlds." It is true that previous to these spectroscopic discoveries we had inferred from analogy that the stars were suns like our own, with planets revolving about them, but we had no positive evidence, such as recent analysis furnishes, concerning their very close resemblance as to structure, condition, and relation to heat, light, and life.

THE HUMAN VOICE.

Dion Bouciault, commenting on the Albert Hall of Science and Art, in the Pall Mall Gazette, says: "The human voice, when speaking with clear articulation, and supplied from good lungs, will fill 400,000 cubic feet of air, or more, and the voice placed and directed advantageously, the same voice, directed advantageously, can fill with equal facility, 600,000 cubic feet."

When singing, the vowels are principally used, because it is necessary to dwell upon a note, and we cannot prolong a consonant. In speaking, on the contrary, we depend for articulation on the consonants; but their short percussive sound does not travel. When we shout, or in open-air speaking, in which partakes of shouting, we prolong the vowels, drawing the syllable of each word; but what we gain in sound, we lose in clearness of articulation, expression is lost in monotony, because its fitness depends upon the infinite variety of which the consonant is capable and bestows on the vowel.

Two thousand voices, singing or speaking together, travel no further than one voice: they may fill a certain area more completely with the intricacy of waves which, when very troublesome, we call a din; but each voice exerts its own influence on the air according to its power, and dies away within certain limits. A second voice, acts independently, and produces its own separate effect, not fortifying the first, but distinct from it.

And so with any number of voices—say 10,000—shouting together, if a single trumpet were placed among them, the note of the trumpet would be heard clearly, at a distance where the babel of voices would have expired in murmur. Yet, among the din produced by 10,000 voices, the trumpet would be inaudible. To illustrate this theory more clearly, it is plain that 2,000 persons, cannot throw stones further than one person; it is true that the air within certain limits will be more full of stones, but they will all come to the ground within a limited area.

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