

MENTAL EVOLUTION IN ANIMALS. By GEORGE JOHN ROMANES, M.A., LL.D., F.R.S. With a Posthumous Essay on Instinct, by Charles Darwin, M.A., LL.D., F.R.S. [London: Kegan Paul, Trench, and Co.]

This important volume on a branch of the great theory of evolution, as applied to the mental growth of animals, will be found to be one of the most original, valuable, and readable essays of modern times; and the work has the additional importance that thirty of its pages include a posthumous publication of the late Charles Darwin on Instinct. Mr. Romanes has been somewhat severely censured for publishing this fragmentary or at least incomplete essay; but as the late Mr. Darwin left him as his literary executor he was fully within his powers in giving to the Linnean Society, and finally in this volume, a chapter on Instinct which, in his judgment, is complete enough to be worthy of the fame of its distinguished author, and valuable enough to form an excellent supplementary chapter to the long series of works in which the theory of evolution is launched, explained, and proved. As a psychological contribution from Charles Darwin, and as the result of long and careful observations and researches, the essay will be welcomed by all who care to study the boundary line which so mysteriously separates instinct from reason, and to trace out the details of the marvellous powers of instinct which the lower—perhaps we should rather say the inarticulate—animals possess and transmit, and which we are beginning to find are the results of ages of transition, development, and growth. Neither the nature of the subject nor the limits of our space will allow any details to be given of the book. All we can hope to do is to assure our readers of its excellence and value. One of the great charms of the volume is that its subject and its style are alike attractive. Its subject is necessarily subtle, abstract, profound, its treatment is minute, careful, detailed, scientific; but its illustrations are so curious, so almost human, so nearly personal, that we read, and ponder, and wonder, while we learn; one by one door after door is opened and we look into the hidden secrets of the strange world of life. While much of the earlier part of the volume, on the Physical Basis of Mind, is necessarily abstract, or at least technical, the analysis of the consciousness, sensation, perception, imagination, leads up to instinct and its manifestations, which are so lavishly illustrated from the records of naturalists in all parts of the world, that the seven chapters become almost as exciting as a novel of which the plot is only gradually disclosed. In the closing chapters on Reason and the Animal Functions, with a summary of Intellectual Faculties, we have the crown of the work, the gathering up of all the scattered facts and remarkable inferences, and a new and brilliant picture of the mental development of the animal world. Profound science has rarely, if ever, been made so popular as in this remarkable volume. All readers of "Animal Intelligence" will remember the grace of Mr. Romanes' style, and will be readily persuaded to read and study this admirable volume; which is to be followed, some day, by another on "Mental Evolution in Man," in which the author proposes to show that the same great unvarying law which has produced during countless ages the changes in the animal world is traceable as the cause of similar changes in the mental capacity and development of man.