

of Ann Arbor, Michigan, U.S.A., announces that he has made a remarkable zoological discovery in the Philippine Islands. In the interior of the little-known Island of Mindoro he has procured specimens of a strange animal, which, although much talked of in the Philippines, is little, if at all, known elsewhere. This is the *Tamaron* of the natives, a wild species of the family Bovidae, allied to the Anoa of Celebes, which Prof. Steere proposes to call *Anoa mindorensis*. Its general colour is black, the hairs being short and rather fine. A greyish white stripe runs from near the inner corner of the eye towards the base of the horn. There is also a greyish white spot above the hoof on all the feet, and a greyish white patch on the inside of the lower fore-leg. The height of the male at the shoulder is about 3 feet 6 inches, the length from the nose to the base of the tail about 6 feet 8 inches. The horns are about 14 inches long. Prof. Steere obtained two males and one female of this animal, of which his full description will be read at the first meeting of the next session of the Zoological Society. The discovery is of much interest, as giving an additional instance of the similarity between the faunas of Celebes and the Philippines, which was already evident from other well-known cases of parallelism between the natural products of these two countries.

P. L. SCLATER.

Functionless Organs.

IN reference to the Duke of Argyll's letter, I should wish to say that I am not aware of any reason for regarding the electric organ of any Skate as a "prophetic structure," using that term in the sense given to it by the Duke. And I should be very glad if he, instead of confining himself to a simple assertion that it is so, would explain the reasons which lead him to regard it as being so. It might then be possible to combat those reasons.

Further, I think it is only right to say that my own observation of the progress of the doctrine of evolution during the last quarter of a century leads me to a conclusion diametrically opposed to the Duke's in regard to the balance of evidence in favour of, or opposed to, the doctrine of creative design in variations on the one hand, and that of the non-significance of variations on the other hand.

I do not hesitate to say that what may be called "pure" Darwinism—the doctrine of the origin of species by the natural selection in the struggle for existence of non-significant congenital variations—is everywhere being more completely demonstrated by reasoning and observation as the single and sufficient theory of that origin; to the exclusion of Lamarckism, and still more certainly to the exclusion of any vestige of the doctrine of design.

E. RAY LANKESTER.

45 Grove End Road, N.W., August 4.

WITH a certain class of thinkers, when endeavouring to disparage the labours of Charles Darwin, no argument appears absurd. Does the Duke of Argyll, in his letter which appeared in your last issue (p. 341), mean to imply by his "prophetic germs" that such cases as the mammary in the male indicate a time when he will be able to take part with the female in suckling the young, and that the coccyx is prophetic of a tail to the human family, or that a time is approaching when the rudimentary covering of hair on the human body will develop into a warm coat similar to that of the bear or the beaver? For myself, I fail to see how a "functionless organ" can build *itself* up. Perhaps the Duke of Argyll will explain.

J. T. HURST.

Raymond Villa, Geraldine Road, Wandsworth, S.W.,

August 11.

Dr. Romanes's Article in the "Contemporary Review."

ABSENCE from England has hitherto prevented me from seeing Mr. Poulton's letter in your issue of July 26 (p. 295). Having just read it, I am not a little surprised that he should have deemed it necessary to refer me to the titles of two of the most notorious essays in the recent literature of Darwinism. Nor can I fail to wonder that, without a particle of evidence, he should accuse any man of "not making himself acquainted with views which he professes to express."

If I could think it worth while to discuss a somewhat lengthy matter with a critic of this kind, it would be easy enough to justify the incidental remark in my paper to which he has drawn attention. But my only object in noticing his criticism is to

observe that, if its tone is due to his supposing that I have not sufficiently appreciated the importance of his own experiments in this connection, he is entirely mistaken. For, although I do not agree with his theoretical interpretation of them, it has always appeared to me that the experiments themselves are among the most valuable which have hitherto been made regarding the causes of variation. But it has also appeared to me that my appreciation of their importance in this respect depends upon what he calls "the Lamarckian conception," *i.e.* a conception which he expressly repudiates. Were it not for the attitude of theory which he thus adopts, of course I should not have alluded to him as a naturalist who concerns himself less with the causes of variation than the other (or Lamarckian) writers whom I had occasion to name. But, as the matter stands, I have merely forestalled the expression of his opinion as stated by himself, where he says in his letter to you, "I agree with Dr. Romanes in the belief that my work does not throw any light upon the causes of variation."

My paper was concerned only with the opinions of others, and I nowhere expressed the "belief" thus attributed to me. In point of fact, "the Lamarckian conception" enables me to hope that work of the kind on which Mr. Poulton is engaged is more calculated than any other to throw light upon the problem in question; and it seems to me a curious corroboration of the remark to which he objects that, on account of his loyalty to the school of Weismann, he is obliged to regard his own experiments as destitute of significance in this respect.

August 9.

GEORGE J. ROMANES.

Taxation in China.

NATURE (vol. xxxvii. p. 269), in its review of M. Simon's "China: its Social, Political, and Religious Life," represents on that author's authority that in China "taxation is very light—not one-hundredth part of what it is in France," a statement so misleading to publicists, so illusive to economic science, that I take upon myself the task of exposing its fallacy, both as regards direct and indirect taxation.

Taking for illustration the amount of taxation at Ningpo (M. Simon was the efficient Consul of his country at that port, where he won golden opinions of foreigners generally, and natives as well), it will be seen that he has been led into egregious errors by incompetent interpreters.

M. Simon says that "five francs per *hectare* is the utmost that is paid for the best land."

From municipal archives I tabulate the following relative to the three qualities of rice land:—

Quality of Land.	Relative Quantity.	Taxation per Mou.	Taxation per hectare.	Taxation per acre.
1st	60%	\$0.35 ...	\$5.25 ...	\$2.10
2nd	25	0.28 ...	4.20 ...	1.68
3rd	15	0.25 ...	3.75 ...	1.50
Average ...	100	0.29½	4.40	1.76

Six mou = one acre. Fifteen mou = one hectare.

Hill land, \$0.13 per mou. From the second quality only one crop is obtained.

Instead, therefore, of the *best land* being five francs per *hectare*, it is (according to present rate of exchange) about 21 francs, and for the average about 17 francs per *hectare*.

With regard to indirect taxation, that author affirms that the Chinaman has no excise duties to pay. So far from that being the case, his octrois (*likin*) contribute far more to the State demands than the levies on his land; but from lack of trustworthy data, that is altogether an incomputable quantity.

Nevertheless, with such levies, and the salt gabel and so forth, it may be shown that the Chinese are not overburdened with taxation; albeit to imagine that their taxation is "not one-hundredth part of what it is in France" is sheer economic hallucination.

D. J. MACGOWAN.

Wenchau, June.

Partial Eclipse of August 7.

THE above eclipse was observed at Cambridge, and the times of contact were estimated as follows:—

	h.	m.	s.	G.M.T.
First contact ...	6	44	50	
Last contact ...	7	7	20	

At the time of greatest eclipse, 6h. 56m., a photograph was taken which on being measured gives a magnitude of about