asleep; the muscles are at one moment in severe exercise, the next in complete repose; the liver, which before a meal is inactive, during the process of digestion is turgid with blood, and busily engaged in the chemical work which belongs to it. For all these vicissitudes the tract of grey substances which we call the *vascular centre* has to provide. Like a skilful steward of the animal household, it has, so to speak, to exercise perfect and unfailing foresight, in order that the nutritive material which serves as the oil of life for the maintenance of each vital process, may not be wanting. The fact that this wonderful function is localized in a particular bit of grey substance is what is meant by the expression "automatic action of a centre."

But up to this point we have looked at the subject from one side only.

No state ever existed of which the administration was exclusively executive—no government which was, if I may be excused the expression, absolutely absolute. If in the animal organism we impose on a centre the responsibility of governing a particular mechanism or process, independently of direction from above, we must give that centre the means of being influenced by what is going on in all parts of its area of government. In other words, it is essential that there should be channels of information passing inwards, as there should be channels of influence passing outwards. Now what is the nature of these channels of information? Experiment has taught us not merely with reference to the regulation of the circulation, but with reference to all other automatic mechanisms, that they are as various in their adaptation as the outgoing channels of influence. Thus the vascular centre in the medulla oblongata is so cognizant of the chemical condition of the blood which flows through it, that if too much carbonic acid gas is contained in it, the centre acts on information of the fact, so as to increase the velocity of the blood-stream, and so promote the arterialization of the blood. Still more strikingly is this adaptation seen in the arrangement by which the balance of pressure and resistance in the blood-vessels is regulated. The heart, that wonderful muscular machine by which the circulation is maintained, is connected with the centre, as if by two telegraph wires—one of which is a channel of influence, the other of information. By the latter the engineer who has charge of that machine sends information to headquarters whenever the strain on his machine is excessive, the certain response to which is relaxation of the arteries and diminution of pressure. By the former he is enabled to adapt its rate of working to the work it has to do.

If Dr. Whytt, instead of cutting off the head of his frog, had removed its brain—*i. e.*, the organ of thought and consciousness—he would have been more astonished than he actually was at the result; for a frog so conditioned exhibits, as regards its bodily movements, as perfect adaptiveness as a normal frog. But very little careful observation is sufficient to show the difference. Being incapable of the simplest mental acts, this true animal automaton has no notion of requiring food or of seeking it, has no motive for moving from the place it happens to occupy, emits no utterance of pleasure or distress. Its life processes continue so long as material remains, and are regulated mechanically.

To understand this all that is necessary is to extend the considerations which have been suggested to us in our very cursory study of the nervous mechanism by which the working of the heart and of arteries is governed, to those of locomotion and voice. Both of these we know, on experimental evidence similar to that which enables us to localize the vascular centre, to be regulated by a centre of the same kind. If the behavior of the brainless frog is so natural that even the careful and intelligent observer finds it difficult to attribute it to anything less than intelligence, let us ask ourselves whether the chief reason of the difficulty does not lie in this, that the motions in question are habitually performed intelligently and consciously. Regarded as mere mechanisms, those of locomotion are no doubt more complicated than those of respiration or circulation, but the difference is one of degree, not of kind. And if the respiratory movements are so controlled and regulated by the automatic centre which governs them, that they adapt themselves perfectly to the varying requirements of the organism, there is no reason why we should hesitate in attributing to the centres which preside over locomotion powers which are somewhat more extended.

But perhaps the question has already presented itself to your minds. What does all this come to? Admitting that we are able to prove (1) that in the animal body, Product is always proportional to Process, and (2) as I have endeavoured to show you in the second part of my discourse, that Descartes' dream of animal automatism has been realized, what have we learnt thereby? Is it true that the work of the last generation is worth more than that of preceding ones?

JURASSIC BIRDS AND THEIR ALLIES.*

By Professor O. C. Marsh.

About twenty years ago, two fossil animals of great interest were found in the lithographic slates of Bavaria. One was the skeleton of *Archæopteryx*, now in the British Museum, and the other was the *Compsognathus* preserved in the Royal Museum at Munich. A single feather, to which the name *Archæopteryx* was first applied by Von Meyer, had previously been discovered at the same locality. More recently, another skeleton has been brought to light in the same beds, and is now in the Museum of Berlin. These three specimens of *Archæopteryx* are the only remains of this genus known, while of *Compsognathus* the original skeleton is, up to the present time, the only representative.

When these two animals were first discovered, they were both considered to be reptiles by Wagner, who described *Compsognathus*, and this view has been held by various authors down to the present time. The best authorities, however, now agree with Owen that *Archæopteryx* is a bird, and that *Compsognathus*, as Gegenbaur and Huxley have shown, is a Dinosaurian reptile.

Having been engaged for several years in the investigation of American Mesozoic birds, it became important for me to study the European forms, and I have recently examined with some care the three known specimens of *Archæopteryx*. I have also studied in the Continental Museums various fossil reptiles, including *Compsognathus*, which promised to throw light on the early forms of birds.

During my investigation of *Archæopteryx*, I observed several characters of importance not previously determined, and I have thought it might be appropriate to present them here. The more important of these characters are as follows:—

1. The presence of true teeth, in position, in the skull.
2. Vertebræ biconcave.
3. A well-ossified, broad sternum.
4. Three digits only in the manus, all with claws.
5. Pelvic bones separate.
6. The distal end of fibula in front of tibia.
7. Metatarsals separate, or imperfectly united.

These characters, taken in connexion with the free metacarpals, and long tail, previously described, show clearly that we have in *Archæopteryx* a most remarkable form, which, if a bird, as I believe, is certainly the most reptilian of birds.

If now we examine these various characters in detail, their importance will be apparent.

The teeth actually in position in the skull appear to be

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in the premaxillary, as they are below or in front of the nasal aperture. The form of the teeth, both crown and root, is very similar to the teeth of *Hesperornis*. The fact that some teeth are scattered about near the jaw would suggest that they were implanted in a groove. No teeth are known from the lower jaw, but they were probably present.

The presacral vertebræ are all, or nearly all, biconcave, resembling those of *Ichthyornis* in general form, but without the large lateral foramina. There appear to be twenty-one presacral vertebræ, and the same, or nearly the same, number of caudals. The sacral vertebræ are fewer in number than in any known bird, those united together not exceeding five, and probably less.

The scapular arch strongly resembles that of modern birds. The articulation of the scapula and coracoid, and the latter with the sternum is characteristic; and the furculum is distinctly avian. The sternum is a single broad plate, well ossified. It probably supported a keel, but this is not exposed in the known specimens.

In the wing itself the main interest centres in the manus and its free metacarpals. In form and position these three bones are just what may be seen in some young birds of to-day. This is an important point, as it has been claimed that the hand of *Archæopteryx* is not at all avian, but reptilian. The bones of the reptile are indeed there, but they have already received the stamp of the bird.

One of the most interesting points determined during my investigation of *Archæopteryx* was the separate condition of the pelvic bones. In all other known adult birds, recent and extinct, the three pelvic elements, ilium, ischium and pubis, are firmly anchylosed. In young birds these bones are separate, and in all known Dinosaurian reptiles they are also distinct. This point may perhaps be made clearer by referring to the two diagrams before you, which I owe to the kindness of my friend Dr. Woodward, of the Britism Museum, who also gave me excellent facilities for examining the *Archæopteryx* under his care. In the first diagram we have represented the pelvis of an American Jurassic Dinosaur allied to *Iguanodon*, and here the pelvic bones are distinct. The second diagram is an enlarged view of the pelvis of the *Archæopteryx* in the British Museum, and here too the ilium is seen separate from the ischium and pubis.

In birds the fibula is usually incomplete below, but it may be coossified with the side of the tibia. In the typical Dinosaurs, *Iguanodon*, for example, the fibula at its distal end stands in front of the tibia, and this is exactly its position in *Archæopteryx*, an interesting point not before seen in birds.

The metatarsal bones of *Archæopteryx* show, on the outer face at least, deep grooves between the three elements, which imply that the latter are distinct, or unite late together. The free metacarpal and separate pelvic bones would also suggest distinct metatarsals, although they naturally would be placed closely together, so as to appear connate.

Among other points of interest in *Archæopteryx* may be mentioned the brain-cast, which shows that the brain, although comparatively small, was like that of a bird, and not that of a Dinosaurian reptile. It resembles in form the brain-cast of *Laopteryx*, an American Jurassic bird, which I have recently described. The brain of both these birds appears to have been of a somewhat higher grade than that of *Hesperornis*, but this may have been due to the fact that the latter was an aquatic form, while the Jurassic species were land birds.

As the *Dinosauria* are now generally considered the nearest allies to Birds, it was interesting to find in those investigated many points of resemblance to the latter class. *Compsognathus*, for example, shows in its extremities a striking similarity to *Archæopteryx*. The three clawed digits of the manus correspond closely with those of that genus; although the bones are of different proportions. The hind feet also have essentially the same structure in both. The vertebræ, however, and the pelvic bones of *Compsognathus* differ materially from those of *Archæopteryx*, and the two forms are in reality widely separated. While examining the *Compsognathus* skeleton, I detected in the abdominal cavity the remains of a small reptile which had not been previously observed. The size and position of this inclosed skeleton would imply that it was a fœtus; but it may possibly have been the young of the same species, or an allied form, that had been swallowed. No similar instance is known among the Dinosaurs.

A point of resemblance of some importance between Birds and Dinosaurs is the clavicle. All birds have these bones, but they have been considered wanting in Dinosaurs. Two specimens of *Iguanodon*, in the British Museum, however, show that these elements of the pectoral arch were present in that genus, and in a diagram before you one of these bones is represented. Some other *Dinosauria* possess clavicles, but in several families of this subclass, as I regard it, they appear to be wanting.

The nearest approach to Birds now known would seem to be in the very small Dinosaurs from the American Jurassic. In some of these the separate bones of the skeleton cannot be distinguished with certainty from those of Jurassic Birds, if the skull is wanting, and even in this part the resemblance is striking. Some of these diminutive Dinosaurs were perhaps arboreal in habit, and the difference between them and the Birds that lived with them may have been at first mainly one of feathers, as I have shown in my Memoir on the *Odontornithes*, published during the past year.

It is an interesting fact that all the Jurassic birds known, both from Europe and America, are land birds, while all from the Cretaceous are aquatic forms. The four oldest known birds, moreover, differ more widely from each other than do any two recent birds. These facts show that we may hope for most important discoveries in the future, especially from the Triassic, which has as yet furnished no authentic trace of birds. For the primitive forms of this class we must evidently look to the Palæozoic.

THE LIMITED BIOLOGICAL IMPORTANCE OF SYNTHETIC ACHIEVEMENTS IN ORGANIC CHEMISTRY.*

By Professor Albert B. Prescott.

The solicitude shown for half a century as to the biological import of chemical synthesis arises from a misapprehension of the scope of chemical action. From all we know of chemism, it must be accepted, (1) that all the matter of protoplasm and cell is carried strictly in a state of chemical combination, but (2) it cannot therefore be accepted that chemical composition supplies the essential conditions or impulses for organization or other vital functions. The synthesis of all the chemical compounds of the living body may or may not be attainable in the laboratory, but its success would give no whit of promise for the development of organization. Chemical action is distinct from cell organization as it is from heat, cohesion, etc., and its corelations with all these forces have to await demonstration by experiment. Cell growth appears to be a necessary factor in the simple splitting of sugar into alcohol and carbon dioxide, and it may or may not be an essential factor in the chemical synthesis of proteids or of cellulose.

A gentleman of Milan, Signor Lorin, deserves high credit, for the public spirit of philanthropy he has shown in offering 20,000 francs to the municipal authorities to maintain a mortuary and post mortem room wherein the bodies of all persons dying of unexplained causes shall be rigidly examined before they are cremated.

* Read before the A. A. A. S., Cincinnati, 1881.