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CONTENTS

<i>The British Association for the Advancement of Science:—</i>	
<i>Address of the President to the Geological Section: PROFESSOR A. SMITH WOODWARD .</i>	321
<i>Entomological Research</i>	331
<i>Second International Congress for the Repression of Adulteration and Frauds in Food and Drugs</i>	332
<i>The Twentieth Anniversary of Clark University</i>	334
<i>The North Pole</i>	334
<i>Scientific Notes and News</i>	334
<i>University and Educational News</i>	338
<i>Discussion and Correspondence:—</i>	
<i>"Mars as the Abode of Life": DR. PERCIVAL LOWELL. The Nomenclature Question: DR. F. A. BATHER</i>	338
<i>Scientific Books:—</i>	
<i>Moritz von Rohr on Die binokularen Instrumente: PROFESSOR W. LE CONTE STEVENS. Vernon on Intracellular Enzymes: PROFESSOR LAFAYETTE B. MENDEL. Plankton Investigations of the Danish Lakes: C. JUDAY</i>	341
<i>Scientific Journals and Articles</i>	346
<i>Special Articles:—</i>	
<i>Salient Events in the Geological History of California: PROFESSOR JAMES PERRIN SMITH</i>	346
<i>The Winnipeg Meeting of the British Association for the Advancement of Science: PROFESSOR G. A. MILLER</i>	351

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THE BRITISH ASSOCIATION FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF SCIENCE¹ ADDRESS OF THE PRESIDENT TO THE GEOLOGICAL SECTION

THE circumstances of the present meeting very clearly determine the subject of a general address to be expected from a student of extinct animals. The remarkable discoveries of fossil backboned animals made on the North American continent during the last fifty years suggest an estimate of the results achieved by the modern systematic methods of research; while the centenary celebration of the birth of Darwin makes it appropriate to consider the extent to which we may begin deducing the laws of organic evolution from the life of past ages as we now know it. Such an address must, of course, be primarily biological in character, and treat of some matters which are not ordinarily discussed by Section C. The subject, however, can only be appreciated fully by those who have some practical acquaintance with the limitations under which geologists pursue their researches, and especially by those who are accustomed to geological modes of thought.

There has been an unfortunate tendency during recent years for the majority of geologists to relinquish the study of fossils in absolute despair. More ample material for examination and more exact methods of research have altered many erroneous names which were originally used; while the admission to scientific publications of too many mere literary exercises on the so-called "law of priority" has now made it necessary to learn not one, but several

¹ Winnipeg, 1909.