

THURSDAY, AUGUST 30, 1883

THE BRITISH ASSOCIATION

SOUTHPORT has been selected for the meeting of this body in 1883, and the fifty-third annual session will commence on the 19th and end on the 27th of September. It is not necessary to dilate upon the various reasons which led up to this arrangement. Suffice it to say, that there was strong opposition on the part of considerable University and manufacturing cities; and the success of Southport may, no doubt, be in great part attributed to the enterprise and business zeal which, within two generations, have raised it from a seaside village to a populous, well-built, easily accessible corporate borough.

To many people, perhaps the majority, in the southern counties, Southport is a name, and nothing more. It is doubtful whether the topographical knowledge of most educated Southerners would enable them to say, offhand, in what county it is situate. No one, however, has probably once visited the town without finding many things to admire and buildings to surprise. We may be pardoned for saying that Southport is less than eighteen miles from Liverpool, thirty-six from Manchester, sixteen from Preston; Wigan, Blackburn, Bolton, Burnley, Oldham, and other large centres of manufacture being within easy distances. It should be enough to say that a circle, having its centre at the Town Hall, with a radius of forty miles, would include 4,000,000 people. The public buildings are handsome and commodious, and every accommodation is at hand to render the forthcoming gathering, even if very large in number, a perfect success.

Liverpool being so near, a well-founded hope exists that the town will be honoured by a visit from numerous American, colonial, and foreign men of science. It must not be forgotten that Edinburgh and Dublin, Glasgow and Nottingham, Newcastle and Birmingham, are all within ready access of Southport.

Southport is about five hours from London, and has through communication by two railways with every important town in the United Kingdom.

On this occasion the Reception Room will be at the Cambridge Hall; the Council Room in the same building; the evening meetings and *conversazioni* will take place in the Winter Gardens, which have been specially retained wholly for this purpose; the General Committee Room will be at the Town Hall; Sections A and B at the Atkinson Art Gallery; Section C at the Temperance Hall; Sections D₁ and D₂ respectively at the West End and at the Congregational School Room; Section E at St. George's Hall; Section F at St. Andrew's Hall; and Section G at the Town Hall. After this list, no one can doubt that there is ample accommodation, both for the members as a body, and for the several Sections.

There are several first-class hotels, capable alone, it is estimated, of boarding and lodging 1000 people or more. Apart from this, there are houses where apartments are available to any reasonable extent. Probably the various "company"-houses, as they are styled locally, could accommodate between 10,000 and 12,000 persons. In addition to the regular places of this sort, many more householders are prepared to become amateur lodging-

house keepers for the time in case of need. The Secretaries and Recorders of Sections will be boarded and lodged in houses on the Promenade, facing the sea, and within three minutes' walk of the Winter Gardens, or four to six minutes from the Reception Room, which is in the centre of the town.

Dealing in detail with the arrangements for the meeting, it may be mentioned that the Local Executive Committee has for chairman Dr. James Wood, Mayor of Southport. Among other members of the Committee in question, the names are found of the Earl of Derby, the Earl of Crawford and Balcarres, the Earl of Lathom, Prof. Greenwood, and Prof. Roscoe (all of whom are also vice-presidents of the Association for this year). Committees have been formed to deal with hospitality and lodging arrangements, excursions, *conversazioni* and evening meetings, audit and finance, and the lecture to the operative classes. The local secretaries are Mr. J. H. Ellis (the Town Clerk), Dr. H. H. Vernon, and Mr. T. W. Willis (B.A. Cantab.).

The retiring president, we may remind our readers, is Sir C. William Siemens, and the president-elect is Prof. Arthur Cayley, Sadlerian Professor of Mathematics in the University of Cambridge.

The first general meeting will be held on Wednesday, September 19, at 8 p.m., when Sir William Siemens will resign the chair, and Prof. Cayley will assume the presidency and deliver an address. On Thursday evening, September 20, at 8 p.m., there will be a *soirée* in the Winter Gardens; on Friday evening, September 21, at 8.30 p.m., a discourse on recent researches on the distance of the sun, by Prof. R. S. Ball, Astronomer-Royal for Ireland; on Monday evening, September 24, at 8.30 p.m., a discourse on galvanic and animal electricity, by Prof. J. G. McKendrick, Professor of Physiology in the University of Glasgow; on Tuesday evening, September 25, at 8 p.m., a *soirée* in the Winter Gardens; and on Wednesday, September 26, the concluding general meeting will be held at 2.30 p.m.

It must not be forgotten that on Saturday, September 22, at 7 p.m., a lecture to working people will be delivered by Sir F. J. Bramwell on "Talking by Electricity: Telephones"; it is expected that the usual flock of Saturday excursionists will furnish an overflowing audience.

In connection with the *soirées*, it may as well be stated here that there is to be an exhibition of objects of scientific and artistic interest in the covered skating rink, a very prominent feature of which will be an exceptionally complete installation of electric lighting on the Siemens system. We believe that this last is intended to be one of the most complete exhibitions ever yet seen of its kind. There will also be in the large Pavilion (where the presidential address and evening discourses will be given, and concluding general meeting held) an exhibition of Lewis's improved system of incandescent gas lighting. This will also be given on the nights of the two *conversazioni*. The entries for other classes of exhibits (microscopes, &c.) are very satisfactory.

A feature of these yearly gatherings is the arrangement for excursions to places of interest in the neighbourhood of the town selected from year to year. These are very numerous this time, and include Knowsley, Lathom House, Ince Blundell Hall, the Abram Colliery, Stony-

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hurst College and Whalley Abbey, the Lake District, Haigh Hall, St. Helen's and Widnes, the Wigan Coal and Iron Company's Works, Chester and Eaton Hall, Liverpool (including a visit to a White Star steamer and a run along the dock's front), Clitheroe District (Geological), and others which may be announced in these columns next week.

Rufford Park and Rufford Old Hall will also be visited, as well as the county town, Lancaster, which deserves more than passing mention. There is the old church there, the ancient castle (the residence, ages ago, of John of Gaunt), aqueducts of some importance, the Roman camp in the vicarage grounds, the assize courts, and many other objects of attraction and public buildings, including asylums and hospitals of ancient and of modern establishment, and of very various character.

There will be garden parties at Knowsley (by the kindness of the Earl and Countess of Derby), at Lathom House (on the invitation of the Countess of Lathom), and at Ince Blundell (the residence of Mr. T. Weld Blundell). In addition, the Mayor of Southport will give a garden party at Hesketh Park on Friday, September 21; and it is rumoured that he will also have two afternoon receptions, on days to be arranged hereafter, at his own residence, Woodbank. The Rev. C. Hesketh Knowlys, the rector of the mother parish of North Meols, will also give a garden party in his grounds.

The three railway companies running into the town, two of which have terminal stations at Southport, are all offering advantages and facilities in order to help making the meeting a success. For instance, the London and North Western Railway will run through carriages to Southport on September 17, 18, and 19, from London (Euston Station), Willesden Junction, Northampton, Stafford, and Crewe, by the 7.15 a.m., 11 a.m., 1.30 p.m., 3.0 p.m., and 4.0 p.m. trains, and similar arrangements will be carried out for the return journey.

Liberal arrangements have also been made by the local railway companies for the benefit of excursionists to the many attractive districts in the north and west of England.

The arrangements at the Reception Room in Cambridge Hall will be of the usual complete kind at these gatherings, including postal, telegraph, ticket, reserved seats, lodgings, inquiry, lost property, daily journal, members' lists, local programme, guide-book, and other departments. The hall has been newly decorated throughout for the occasion, and, when furnished and in full work, will doubtless bear favourable comparison with similar rooms at previous meetings of the Association. The telephone will also be brought into play, so as to connect all the Section Rooms both with the Reception Room and the Winter Gardens, as well as with the principal hotels and other large establishments in the town.

A local fund has been raised of over 2600*l.*, and strenuous efforts are being made to increase that amount to 3000*l.* This will most probably be accomplished.

Looking to all these facts—bearing in mind that Southport has a promenade of over a mile facing the sea, on which are three of the chief hotels and a string of handsome private residences and lodging-houses; a pier, which, with its extension, is within a few hundred yards of a mile in length; the boulevards (in Lord Street and

its continuations east and west), bordered by handsome edifices, public buildings of no mean architectural pretension, banks, &c.—enough has been said to justify the hope that Lancashire will once more distinguish herself as the hostess of the British Association, as she undoubtedly did in 1870 (the last time that it met within her borders), when, under the presidency of Prof. Huxley at Liverpool, one of the most characteristic, as well as one of the most numerous attended and in every way brilliant and successful meetings of the British Association was held.

PROFESSOR HAECKEL ON CEYLON

A Visit to Ceylon. By Ernst Haeckel; Translated by Clara Bell. (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, and Co. 1883.)

WHEN a man of scientific genius writes a popular book, it will generally be found to be either a great success or a great failure; mediocrity, as a rule, does not attend the work of such a man in either direction. Now Prof. Haeckel is already well known to all the world as one of the few leaders in science whose literary ability is on a level with his more professional attainments, and whose genius is therefore exhibited in exposition as conspicuously as it is in research. Thus it was that when we heard he intended to publish a popular account of his six months' travel in the tropics, we expected a great treat in the way of literary performance. We had, of course, read a good deal about Ceylon before, and thus knew that it was a part of the world which in point alike of natural scenery and natural history was well calculated to arouse the enthusiasm of such an artistic-minded naturalist as Prof. Haeckel; and knowing that his pen can paint almost as vividly as his brush, we were prepared for something of unusual interest in the story of his "Visit to Ceylon." Perhaps, therefore, it is not possible to say anything in higher praise of his book than that it has even surpassed our anticipations. The man of science has retired, as it were, into the background, and left the way clear for the man of letters, the shrewd observer of men and things, the poetic lover of Nature—the frank, open-hearted, wide-minded German character which finds so admirable an expression in this great German biologist. Whether he is diving down among the coral reefs, forgetting his wounds in the keen joy of exploring the beauty and the wonder of those biological treasure-houses, or whether he is scrambling to the "World's End" through almost untrodden and untreadable jungles 8000 feet above the sea; whether he is moving in English society and deeming it needlessly formal in the matter of dressing for dinner under a tropical climate, which has turned his carefully-provided swallow-tail coat as white as a sheet with mildew; or whether he is living for six weeks at a time zoologising in a remote native village without ever seeing a white man—wherever he is and whatever he is about, we are alike charmed by the character of the man which unconsciously looks out at us in every page, and throws around him, as it were, a halo of romance.

We have said that in all this the man of science has been allowed to retire into the background. But not on this account has the man of science been idle. Prof.