

# SCIENCE

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TWO VIEWS OF THE ORIGIN OF MAN<sup>1</sup>

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To speak about phobias in a society that includes so many distinguished psychiatrists may seem like carrying coals to Newcastle. Nevertheless I beg your indulgence for describing a new kind of phobia which is now widely prevalent among the American public. It may be named pithecophobia, or the dread of apes—especially the dread of apes as relatives or ancestors. During the past few years this phobia has become almost pandemic; perhaps we have not yet passed the peak of its incidence, especially in rural communities.

Dr. Osborn and I are now trying out rival prophylactic and therapeutic measures upon our patients. My method, in a word, is to inoculate the patient with the Darwinian theory of the origin of man. Professor Osborn's method is to remove the cause—by abolishing the apes, or rather by disproving their claims to close physical and mental kinship with us. In this way sensitive souls may be able to hear the word "gorilla" without shuddering.

Professor Osborn and myself, sighting the same vastly distant and obscure event, the emergence of man, from somewhat different viewpoints, naturally report somewhat different aspects of it. With unwearied patience and unsurpassed industry Professor Osborn has traced the rise and decline of many long-lived lines of fossil mammals through the long ages of the Eocene, Oligocene, Miocene, Pliocene, Pleistocene and recent epochs, covering, according to the estimates of Barrell, a period not less than sixty millions in years' duration.

Of the generalizations which Professor Osborn has drawn from his paleontological studies the following bear especially on the problem of the evening:

(1) Every great order of mammals is polyphyletic, that is, it includes a large number of genera which may be traced backward along independent lines through amazingly long periods of geologic time. So many are these phyla, as they are called, and so severe the ravages of time upon the fossil record, that one rarely finds the remote common ancestral stocks that gave rise to the many slowly diverging phyla. This has been proved by Professor Osborn and other paleontologists to be the case among the families of horses, tapirs, rhinoceroses, titanotheres, camels, antelopes, deer, pigs, cats, dogs and many other groups of mammals.

<sup>1</sup> Address before the Medical Society of the County of Kings, May 17, 1927.

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