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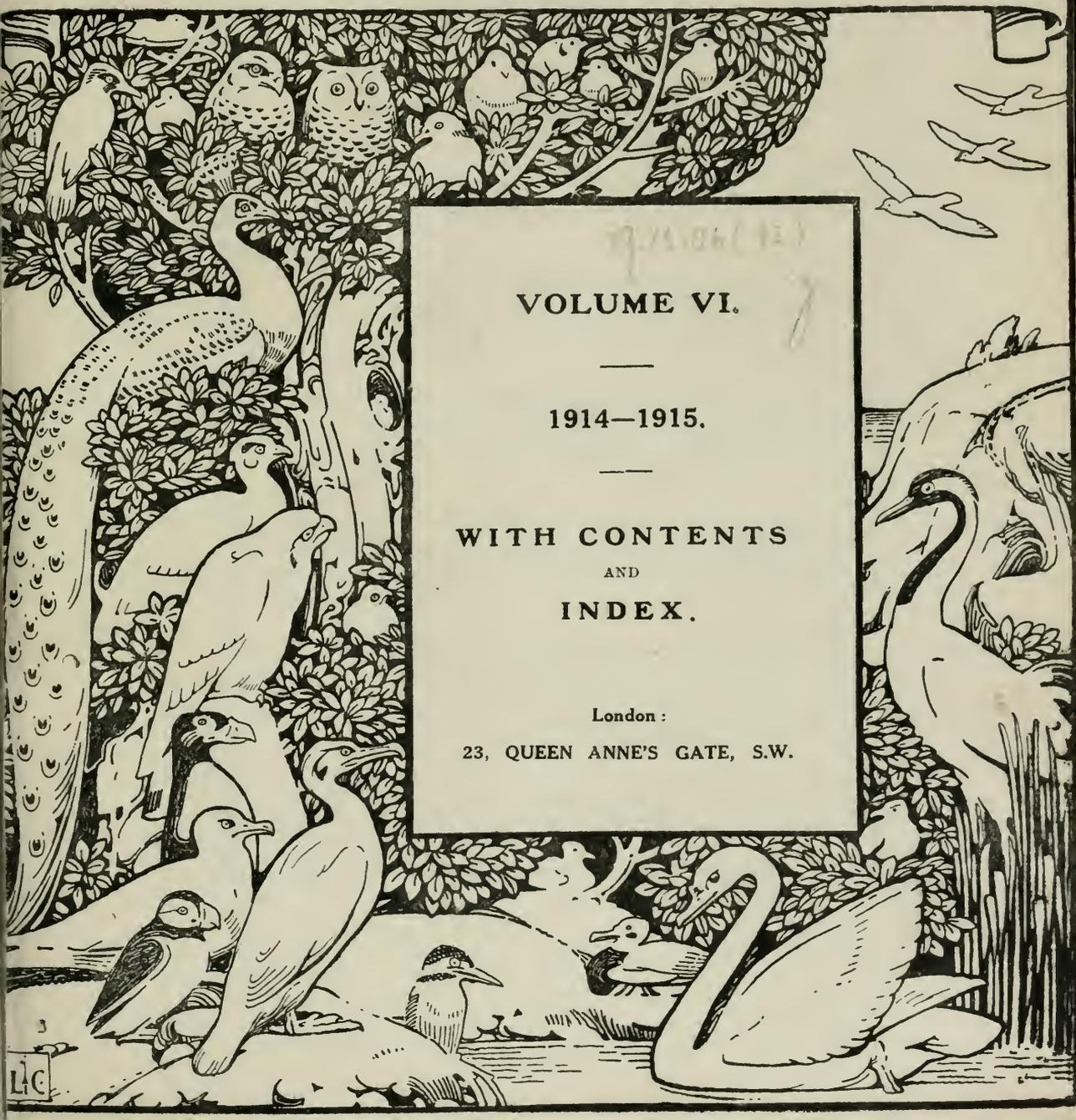
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BIRD NOTES & NEWS

THE JOURNAL OF THE ROYAL SOCIETY
FOR THE PROTECTION OF BIRDS.



VOLUME VI.

1914—1915.

WITH CONTENTS
AND
INDEX.

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The Royal Society for
the Protection of Birds.

FOUNDED
1889.

23, QUEEN ANNE'S GATE, LONDON, S.W.

Incorporated under Royal Charter, 1904.

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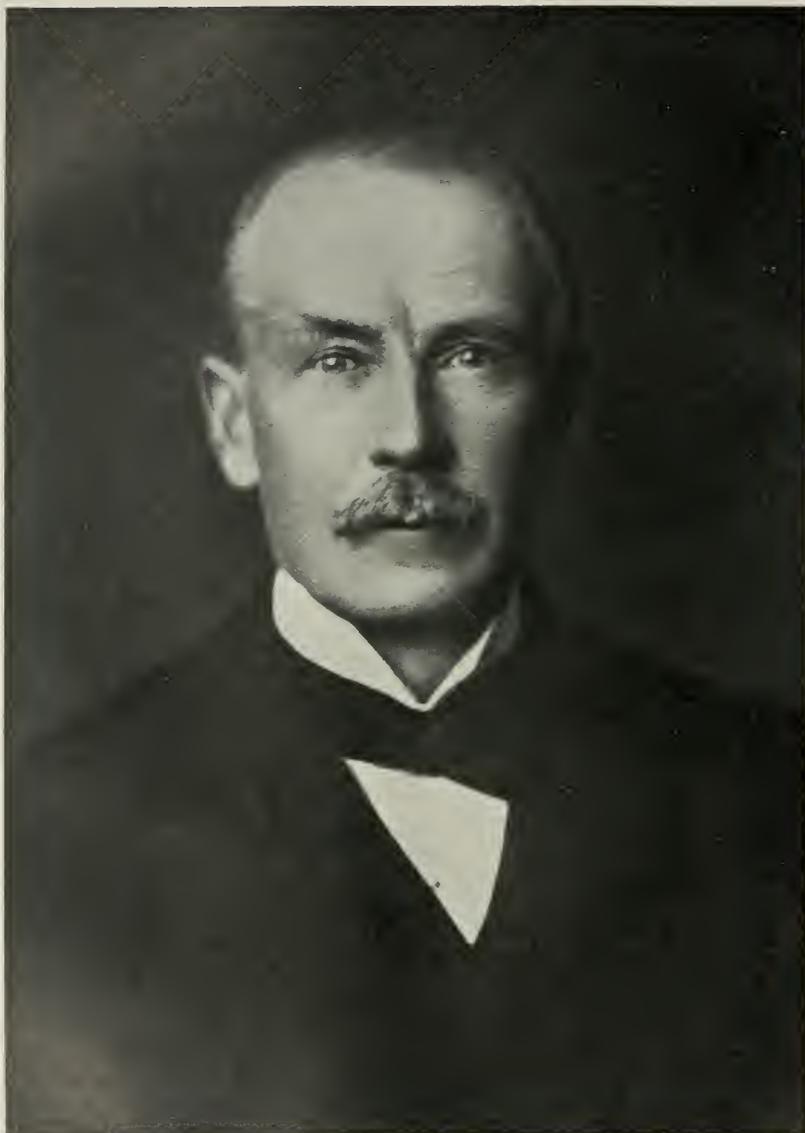


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THE RIGHT HON. SIR SYDNEY BUXTON, G.C.M.G.,
Vice-President and Hon. Treasurer, Royal Society for the Protection of Birds.

Bird Notes & News

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:: FOR THE PROTECTION OF BIRDS ::

Vol. VI.]

SPRING, 1914.

[No. 1.

Sir Sydney Buxton and Bird Protection.

THE RIGHT HON. SIR SYDNEY BUXTON, G.C.M.G., who has been appointed to succeed Lord Gladstone as Governor-General of South Africa, has been, as is well known, an active worker in the cause of Bird Protection for many years, and in many phases of the question. It would perhaps be hardly too much to say that, studiously moderate and quiet as he has been in all that he has written and spoken on the subject, there is hardly a branch of the work which has not received from him stimulus and support. The caging of birds, the guarding of rare species, the charm and utility of British bird-life, the preservation of the rare and finely-plumaged birds of other lands, the prevention of cruel trapping, the effective enforcement of the law, have all in turn had his keen attention; and three of the Bird Protection Acts in the Statute-book owe their presence there largely to his skilful piloting through the House of Commons, as well as to his sympathy with their object.

The intimate association of Sir Sydney Buxton with the Plumage campaign is perhaps insufficiently realised, especially as he was lost to the House of Commons before the present Bill came on for debate. Sixteen years ago he issued an appeal against the wearing of "osprey" plumes, which was published by the R.S.P.B. as Leaflet No. 30 and has been reprinted again and again. Two years later, speaking at the Society's annual meeting, he observed that it

was difficult to say what had been achieved by the fight against this fashion, but that public opinion had been unquestionably aroused. Since then public opinion has hardened and extended perhaps even more than the speaker then deemed probable, and has decreed the second reading of the Government Plumage Bill, which had on its introduction, in 1913, Mr. Sydney Buxton's name to back it. As President of the Board of Trade he has had an opportunity of studying the practical aspects of this business; it was he who suggested the Colonial Office Committee called by Lord Crewe; and there can be little doubt as to his large and important share in the drafting and introduction of the Bill.

As long ago as 1888, the Sandgrouse Act, passed to protect a rush of these foreign visitors to Britain, was steered through the House by Mr. Buxton. In 1902 he was in charge of the Society's Bill which supplements the previous Protection Acts by providing for the forfeiture of birds and eggs illegally taken. In 1904 he secured the passage of the long-desired Act for prohibiting that vilest of traps, the Pole-trap.

In addition to these services to the cause, Sir Sydney took charge in 1898 of a Bill to provide for the enforcement of the Protection Acts by the Royal Irish Constabulary; this was read a second time, but was subsequently withdrawn as the end was attained by other means.

Not even the Plume-trade and the Pole-trap have, however, evoked the indignation of the Governor-General-elect more than has the traffic in the little wild birds of English hedgerow and common. Speaking at the Society's meeting in 1905, he expressed the opinion that a Bill should be introduced into Parliament to deal more effectually with the birdcatcher, "for it is monstrous that public roads and walks should be utilised by trappers, with all the cruelties attendant on their practice, such as the

torture of the decoy birds and the captivity of the victims in suffocating little cages." He promised such a Bill his earnest support. On this subject, too, public is steadily hardening.

Sir Sydney joined the Society for the Protection of Birds twenty years ago, and became a Vice-President in 1895. He succeeded the late Sir George Measom as Hon. Treasurer in 1901. In addition to the leaflet mentioned he wrote for the Society one of its Educational Series of leaflets, dealing with the Tits.

The Government Plumage Bill.

SECOND READING.

THE Government Bill for prohibiting the importation of the skins and plumage of wild birds for millinery purposes was read a first time in the House of Commons on February 13th, 1914.

It will be remembered that the Bill was introduced by the Right Hon. C. E. Hobhouse (then Chancellor of the Duchy) last August, very shortly before the adjournment of the House, so that the trade have had five months in which to marshal their defences and consider the situation. In 1913 the Bill was backed by the Right Hon. Sydney Buxton, President of the Board of Trade, and Mr. E. S. Montagu, Under-Secretary for India. This year Mr. Buxton's name had to be omitted in consequence of his resignation of his seat on appointment to the Governor-Generalship of South Africa. Mr. Hobhouse has become Postmaster-General, and Mr. Montagu Financial Secretary to the Treasury.

The Bill is printed in full in the Society's Plumage Campaign Leaflet No. 2, and it is therefore not necessary to give here more than the principal provisions:

(1) Subject to the exceptions in this Act

contained, a person shall not import into the United Kingdom the plumage of any wild bird, and accordingly section forty-two of the Customs Consolidation Act, 1876, shall be read as if there were included in the table of prohibitions and restrictions therein—

"the plumage of wild birds as defined by the Importation of Plumage (Prohibition) Act, 1914, subject to the exceptions contained in that Act."

(2) A person shall not have in his possession or be concerned in selling the plumage of any wild bird which has been imported in contravention of this Act, or which, having been allowed to be imported on the ground that it is being put to a certain use or intended to be put to a certain use, is being put to some other use.

Exemptions are made in favour of the plumage of birds for the time being included in the schedule; the plumage of birds imported under a licence for supplying specimens for a Natural History or other museum or for scientific research; the plumage of birds ordinarily used as articles of diet and imported for that purpose. The birds named in the schedule are the Ostrich and Eider-Duck; names of birds may be added or removed by an Order in Council. The sub-section

exempting plumage forming part of the wearing apparel of persons entering the kingdom has been omitted; it was pointed out that this would allow of plumage being brought in from other countries in contravention of the intention of the Act, and in a manner prejudicial to British retail traders.

The second reading of the Bill was taken on March 9th, at the close of one of the most momentous of the Home Rule debates; and it is evidence of the interest taken in the question, that so large a number of Members remained for another four hours to debate on the Plumage Bill. Effort was, however, made on the part of the opponents to postpone the question still further. In the first place, Mr. Handel Booth asked the Government to adjourn the House instead of taking the second reading, and when this was refused, Sir Edwin Cornwall formally moved the adjournment, objecting that it had only been known since Thursday that the discussion would be taken on that day (Monday). Mr. Hobhouse said that if the Bill were allowed a second reading he would undertake to hear every possible objection, and there would be ample opportunity for discussion in Committee. It was not a controversial or a party measure.

The motion for adjournment was rejected by 337 votes to 49.

THE PLUMAGE TRADE.

Mr. HOBHOUSE, in moving the second reading of the Bill, said it was designed to protect birds whose plumage was coveted on account of its beauty, and whose numbers were in danger of being reduced to the vanishing point. It was also designed to protect them from cruel and unnecessary and wanton slaughter. The number of birds killed in this trade was really almost

incredible. Five or six sales were conducted in the City of London in the course of the year, and the plumages exhibited in the warehouses in Cutler Street. An article in the "Fortnightly Review," which he had himself checked for the purposes of accuracy, set out comprehensively some of the large number of birds so killed and exposed for sale. In December, 1912, there was put up for auction the plumage of 75,000 Herons. In June, 1913, the plumage of 77,000 Herons, 22,000 Crowned Pigeons, 25,000 Humming Birds, 162,000 Smyrnan Kingfishers, and so on, and the list could be almost indefinitely prolonged. This showed that the contention of the trade that the destruction was not widespread was an idle contention, and had no relation to the facts of the case.

Many of these birds were among the most beautiful objects in nature, and if once a species was destroyed, no force known to man could replace it.

PREVIOUS BILLS.

It could hardly be said that the Bill had been sprung on the House. It was almost identical with that of Lord Avebury's of 1908, introduced into the House of Commons by Lord Hugh Cecil and Mr. Ramsay Macdonald. In 1910, 1911, and 1912, Mr. Alden proposed similar legislation; in the early part of last year Mr. Page Croft introduced a Bill into the House. There was, therefore, neither novelty nor party bias about the proposals; they were inspired by love of nature and by the promptings of humanity. In 1908 a Select Committee of the House of Lords held a most searching inquiry into the trade and the methods by which it was conducted, and the facts elicited undoubtedly startled many

persons who had not previously given any attention to the matter. The Government wished to put a stop to a traffic which was not founded on reason, which brought no profit to this country, and which was a dishonour to the people by whom it was conducted. The reason why Government had taken the matter up was that the danger was very urgent; already species had disappeared through the persecution of the traders and their savage allies, and if they waited for a private Member to be successful in the ballot, they might have to shut the door upon an empty stable.

DESTRUCTION OF BIRD-LIFE.

It was not merely that there had been considerable slaughter; it was not merely that where they had been plentiful birds were now scarce; it was that species had absolutely disappeared from their breeding-places and haunts. There were regions in the world at one time densely inhabited by bird population, which had been absolutely swept clear of their beautiful denizens. It would be easy to multiply instances of destruction. Knowledge of them had not come in single letters, or from the experience of an odd traveller or an odd explorer; the communications received had come from every part of the world; they had found their way into every newspaper in this country; they had been forwarded by travellers, sportsmen, explorers, and even agriculturists, who suffered from the disappearance of many species of birds. The evidence was unimpeachable and overwhelming. The breeding-places for most of these birds were in swamps and jungles, and upon such places the advance of civilization inexorably pressed. They could not help that; but why should they permit a silly and debasing fashion which was

nothing but a relic of savagery and barbarism to do harm to these most innocent and beautiful creatures? It was really a case of the vanity of women going hand in hand with the rapacity of men, and the sphere of their joint mischief ought to be limited as far as possible.

OSTRICH FEATHERS.

The Textile Trades Section of the London Chamber of Commerce had circulated a leaflet in which, among other things, it was suggested that if the Bill became law the markets of this country would be shut to the sale of Ostrich feathers; but the Bill expressly exempted the plumage of the Ostrich. The total import of feathers last year was £3,570,000, of which £2,500,000 represented Ostrich feathers; other fancy feathers amounted to £1,070,000; the total exports were £2,100,000, of which Ostrich feathers were £1,750,000; and fancy feathers, with which alone this Bill is concerned, came to £326,000. From the export point of view the value of feathers which would be affected by the Bill was only £160,000 a year. Figures, obtained in advance, of the second census of production showed that the total output of all the feather workshops in this country was £710,000. Of that £520,000 represented Ostrich feathers, and all feathers prohibited by this Bill came to a total value of £120,000. That was the measure of trade that was going to be affected.

THE LABOUR QUESTION.

What about the number of persons employed in the trade? for that, after all was the most important point. It had been said that thousands would be thrown out of employment in London alone. A census of persons engaged in the trade gave the total

number at 3,800, the centres being largely London and Manchester. Of the 3,800, 3,200 were engaged on Ostrich feathers or Ostrich feathers and artificial flowers, leaving between 600 and 700 engaged upon fancy feathers. An enormous proportion of the workers were girls and young women, the total of the adult male workers being between 60 and 70. These astonishingly small figures would surprise hon. gentlemen who had been led to believe that thousands and thousands of persons would be deprived of work by the operation of the Bill. The real fact of the matter was that the trade was in the hands of a small number of foreigners, who came over from Vienna, Paris, or Berlin, on Monday and returned on Saturday morning. They took the whole trade abroad practically for manufacture and distribution.

INTERNATIONAL AGREEMENT.

It had been asked why should Great Britain take the lead in this matter? We had not taken the lead.

We were not the first country nor the first part of the British Empire to promote this legislation. We really were acting *qua* our Colonies as receivers of stolen goods. The United States had set us an example and we ought to be ashamed that we were not the first in the field.

The people of the States had been stimulated by the knowledge of what had occurred in their own country and under their own eyes. Their own forests and swamps had been devastated by those guilty of participating in this trade. The Colonies had legislated against export. They had no manufacture of these goods, and therefore clearly no need of provisions against import. The Government had

invited the self-governing Colonies and foreign countries to a conference in London upon the condition that every country attending should do so on the express understanding that it should prohibit the entry into that country of the skins and plumage of wild birds, and that every country taking part should undertake legislation for the prohibition of their export. Many European countries, besides South Africa, Canada, America, and China, had accepted the invitation. Holland, Spain, Austria, and Russia had not yet answered, but all accepted invitations to a similar conference two or three years ago which fell through because of the absence of France. Greece, France, and Denmark were the only European countries which had refused to attend. The French Government was apparently afraid to face the opposition of the 50,000 people engaged in the feather trade in that country. France would be responsible for her own action, but henceforth she would not manufacture, as she did now, for the markets of all those countries which had agreed to come to the conference.

In conclusion Mr. HOBHOUSE referred to the list he held of some twenty distinguished societies interested in the preservation and protection of natural life which had passed resolutions in favour of the Bill; there was not a profession in this country which would not send distinguished men, opposed to each other perhaps on every other conceivable subject, to support and advocate the passage of the Bill.

Mr. DENNISS moved the rejection of the Bill. He took it up purely as a trade question in order that a home industry might not be destroyed. The Bill would

not save the life of a single bird. The trade would be diverted to Paris or Berlin. The figures as to people engaged in the trade were not complete because they did not include the distributing trade. The Bill was founded on secret information, which was entirely inaccurate and misleading. The Port of London dues on feathers were £31,400, of which £8,000 went in dockers' wages. Questioned by Mr. Page Croft, the speaker admitted that this included Ostrich feathers, but contended that they, too, would be shipped to Paris. The enormous bulk of the trade, he asserted, consisted of moulted feathers. Two-thirds of the Egret plumes imported were moulted. (Mr. ALDEN: What is their value if they are moulted?) Those taken from the bird after it was shot were more valuable, because in many cases the moulted feathers got injured, but many of the moulted feathers were in perfect condition—"No.") The British Minister at Venezuela reported as long ago as the 14th of January, 1909, in a letter addressed to the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, that 25 per cent. of the plumes that came to this country were moulted plumes.

Mr. HOBBHOUSE, interposing, said that if the hon. gentleman looked at a very interesting and eloquent article in the *Fortnightly Review* for March, he would see the actual words of the British Minister, and would find that they bore no relation to the transcript quoted by the Chamber of Commerce.

[The actual words, quoted later by Mr. Page Croft, are as follows:—

"From the evidence before me I have no manner of doubt that the vast majority of the Egret plumes exported to Europe are obtained by the slaughter of the birds during or about the breeding season, and that no effective regulations exist or,

indeed, owing to local conditions, can exist for the control of this slaughter."]

Mr. DENNISS proceeded to contend that the moulted plumes were carefully collected by the people who kept these Heronries in Venezuela, and who gave shelter and protection to hundreds and thousands of the birds. The natives could not be prevented from shooting the birds for food, or for the aigrette, and the Bill would do nothing to stop it. Green Parrots were killed just the same in India because of the damage they did to crops, but as the feathers might not be exported, they were waste products of nature. Venezuela passed in 1910 a law to protect all the birds needing to be protected—(Mr. HOBBHOUSE: I think it only refers to two provinces). That might be, but two provinces might cover a considerable area. Persons were licensed, reared the birds, killed them, and exported them and their feathers. He always thought that animals and birds were made for the use of man, and 98 per cent. of these birds were in the tropics, where nobody but the travellers ever saw them. It was the collector who killed the rare birds, the trade demand being only for an abundant and continual supply year after year. Mr. Denniss concluded by referring to the Committee for the Economic Preservation of Birds, and the manner in which it proposed to control the trade in fancy feathers, and urged that this body and the Government should cooperate, instead of interfering with the trade for sentimental reasons based on improper evidence. The figures as to the workers might be correct, but he did not think they were—(Mr. HOBBHOUSE: They were prepared by the Board of Trade with the assistance of the trade itself). The traders refused to give accurate figures. After all, the lives and sustenance of human beings

were more important than the lives of birds, 98 per cent. of which were never seen by the eye of man.

Sir E. CORNWALL seconded the Amendment. He thought the House ought not to go forward until the people employed in the trade had an opportunity of stating their case. He was given to understand that the Bill would merely transfer the trade to France. The Bill proposed to hand over to the Privy Council the right to add to or remove the names of birds on the Schedule. The Privy Council might schedule the Ostrich, and what then would become of that trade? This was a business proposition to be dealt with on business lines, and it was unfair to the business community to force the Bill through the House.

Mr. PAGE CROFT expressed his warm approval of the Bill. He himself introduced a Bill last session which was obstructed night after night, and yet their opponents now raised the complaint that they had not had time to consider the measure! He believed it had the support not only of the vast majority of Members of the House, but that, throughout the length and breadth of the British Empire, the desire for the passing of this Bill was greater than for the passage of any other Bill they had had an opportunity of considering. The Hon. Member had once again put forward the plea that this House should not be hurried, although they had been considering this question for the last eight years. He said he was quite prepared to be reasonable so long as he was not hurried. That had been the position taken up by the opponents of this Bill from the very start. The House was tired of procrastinating with this question, and wanted to

get to business. Figures had been quoted as to the number of persons employed in this industry, ranging from 1,000 to 3,000. If they believed the trade bad in principle from start to finish, they ought not to let these numbers weigh with them, even if they were 300,000; but it was clear to anybody that so long as women wore hats or desired to decorate their heads, they would want decorations of some kind, and if they could not have the feathers of these beautiful little birds, they would use other things, for the production of which none would be more fitted than the girls in these factories. This was admitted by the London Chamber of Commerce to be only a seasonal employment associated with the making of other trimmings at other seasons.

Ostrich feathers constituted the bulk of the trade coming to this country, and the greatest Ostrich-farmers in the British Empire, with whom he had discussed the subject, were desirous that this Bill should pass, because they believed it would be an enormous encouragement to the Ostrich trade of South Africa. He himself first became interested in the question through meeting a large number of agriculturists in various parts of the Empire, especially in Australia, who from time to time pointed out that whatever the Dominions were doing to prevent this export traffic in the birds, which they desired to keep, and which they considered the property of their country, we, by creating this great market in London, were encouraging smuggling to go on notwithstanding that legislation. He put it to the House that it would be a great Imperial act to pass this Bill. Only two or three days ago he presented a petition collected in some six weeks in

the Exhibition at Melbourne, with 23,000 signatures. The Dominions had discovered the economic value of birds to the crops. It had been argued that the Indian Parrakeets were injurious, and ought not to be excluded from commerce. On 4th March, 1910, the Bombay Chamber of Commerce, after pointing out that prohibition was resorted to, not only to prevent beautiful birds being exterminated, but also to prevent useful birds being reduced in numbers, took separately the species in which the London feather dealers were interested, and showed how each was distinctly beneficial to the agriculturalists. Lastly they dealt with the Parrakeet.

"Their main food consists of the fruit of the wild fig-tree and other berry-bearing plants and trees which are of no use to mankind. They occasionally appear amidst cultivation, but the toll they exact in grain and garden fruit is comparatively insignificant, and the damage they do in this way is probably exaggerated by those who have an interest in their destruction. Unless the ryot himself desires their extermination it is not considered advisable to even make them an exception of the law. Besides, it may be pointed out that Lord Morley has already laid it down in his Orders to the Government of India, dated 2nd July, 1909, that he would not create an exception that might endanger the whole measure."

So much for Parrakeets. The Bombay Council knew as much about their birds as the London Chamber of Commerce knew about the birds which they were engaged in smuggling into this country out of our own Dominions, contrary to the expressed wish of those Dominions.

Mr. HINDS went back to the contention that the trade had not had time to go into the question. It was only on Friday that the City awoke to the fact that the Bill was going on, and so they had not organised their forces. Many trade associations, numbering thousands, had passed resolutions dead against it. The Hon. Member

proceeded to quote some figures apparently to show that while the plumes were at their best in May at nesting-time, and began to wear and get torn and damaged in July, the greatest quantity of feathers came to London in October and November, and therefore were not obtained till the young birds could fend for themselves, and the moulting season was over; but time had not allowed him to verify these statements, nor could he say when the feathers were collected. So far as could be ascertained, the number and variety of Paradise Birds in British New Guinea increased; trade only wanted them in large quantities, and therefore no extermination was going on. The trade claimed the right to use the plumage of birds that were plentiful. It did not use any birds that were rare, and had accepted an arrangement that these should not appear in the imports.

Major GUEST said the Government had been attacked for not adopting international action, and it had been stated that nothing but international action would be effective in dealing with this question. The Government had tried to get international action, and though the proposed conference had failed for the time being, Germany and France had in their own dominions taken steps to stop the destruction of birds. France had stopped the traffic in Egrets from Madagascar, and Germany had issued stringent regulations in German New Guinea. The Member for Oldham said that collectors did more harm than those who killed for trade. This Bill dealt with collectors, and if the Hon. Members thought the provisions insufficient, perhaps some of them would take means to make them more efficient. The figures

given by the Postmaster-General proved clearly that the trade was not a British industry. There was a British market and a good many dealers and brokers, but practically no industry. A Committee had been started, which he believed was organised and financed by the dealers, called the Committee for the Economic Preservation of Birds, but he did not believe it was the intention of that Society in the slightest degree to stop this traffic in birds, nor did he see how any recalcitrant trader who refused to accept its suggestions could be compelled to follow them. The only means whereby it was possible to stop this trade was by legislative action. It was high time, after five years' of persistent agitation for this, by Members of this House, and many others outside the House, to waste no more time in taking the legislative step essential to prevent the traffic existing and increasing.

Mr. W. R. GREENE was opposed to the Bill, and suggested that the Government should turn their attention from the destruction of bird-life in foreign countries to cases of cruelty at home.

Mr. T. M. HEALY said it was a matter of ill-omen that the Government found time for a Bill dealing with the ornaments which women wore, while the women themselves were being forcibly fed in prison because they were unable to get the suffrage they had claimed so long, and for the discussion of which time could not be found. In South Africa, where there was a British Ostrich trade, all the tail feathers might be pulled out of the live bird, causing the most exquisite agony, but British virtue held up its hands in indignation if a nigger in Borneo brought down a bird with bow and arrow. He considered that

there should be some restriction with regard to bird-life, and that it should be treated as the seals were treated, for the protection of which careful measures were passed, year in, year out. If the right hon. gentleman had been in the feather trade would he have brought in this Bill? The country had not heard about it; let it be enquired into by a Select Committee, and compensation provided for the workmen who would be thrown into the gutter.

Mr. HENDERSON said that with regard to women and the Bill, three of the principal supporters of Women's Suffrage in his constituency sent him an urgent appeal to support it. With regard to Ostriches, he could emphatically state that there was no cruelty; and, with regard to the market, it was a mere bagatelle compared with the market for Ostrich feathers. If the destruction went on, the birds would be exterminated, and the people employed would lose their work in that way.

Sir. J. D. REES contended that the Bill would be a dead letter, because England could not affect the slaughter of birds at the uttermost ends of the earth. Lord Curzon admitted in his speech before the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds that his own administrative Order was unsuccessful, and led to wholesale smuggling.*

The larger part of all the plumage birds from the British possessions came from

* What Lord Curzon said was: "When I was in India we were able to do something really substantial there . . . I believe this Order has, been a good deal evaded in practice. The fact is our line of attack is not complete, and perhaps the weakest link is that at our end of the chain in this country there is no prohibition of the import or sale." This can hardly be twisted into an argument against a Bill to support the action of India by prohibition of import.

India, and, as regards foreign countries, no Act could have the slightest effect. It was said that there was growing a feeling in favour of the Bill in almost every European country, not excepting France, which would be stimulated by the action of England.* This was the sort of stuff that was circulated by sentimental friends of the Bill, and was absolutely contrary to facts.

Mr. E. S. MONTAGU said it was impossible to take seriously the accusation that the Bill was being rushed. For years the matter had been before the House of Commons, a Select Committee of the House of Lords had sat upon it, and he believed the opinion behind the Bill was so overwhelming that it was comparable to the public opinion behind no other measure. The assertion was made that if this Bill was passed the trade would be driven to France. If so, it was a little curious that the French trade should have taken the trouble to draw up, print, and circulate, and send to every Member of the House a request that Parliament should not pass the Bill! The fact was that, as soon as the demand for feathers in this country was destroyed, following the lead of the United States, as soon as other countries in Europe were free to join, then the trade in France would diminish so much that it would be impossible for her to resist coming into line with the generality of civilization. He had taken some pains to study the Economic Committee that had been referred to, but it was really not worth considering. It did not contain the name of a single ornithologist. The distinguished scientists who were members were experts on fish, or protozoa, or the coloration of

* See R.S.P.B. Plumage Campaign Leaflet No. 3.

shrimps. The only ornithologist, Mr. Lutley Sclater, was put on by the British Ornithologists' Union to hold a watching brief, and as soon as that Union discovered what use had been made of his name they called upon him to withdraw from the Committee, which he had done. Professor Cossar Ewart also had withdrawn, as had several others; and as soon as these other distinguished scientists knew that their names were being used to oppose the Bill, he believed they would all withdraw. The Committee claimed to have "protected" seven birds. Three of these, the Lyre-bird, Bower-bird, and Rifle-bird, were strictly protected in Australia, and could only be obtained with difficulty, and by smuggling. The Chatterer hardly came in at all. The Flamingo and Spoonbill were not wanted. The seventh was the Cow-Egret. This also was protected in its countries of origin, India and Egypt, and therefore illegally exported; but the trade thought they must put an Egret on the list in deference to public opinion, and accordingly put on one that was already protected, and the plumes of which were of little value. This was the result of eighteen months' activity on the part of the Committee! It might be that future generations would inherit, owing to the march of civilization, a world poorer in respect of natural life than at present, but it was out of harmony with England's history that citizens of this country should be allowed any further part in this cruel and wanton destruction.

Mr. HILLS urged the Government to start without a moment's delay the getting of an international agreement, as essential to the successful working of the Bill.

Mr. HOBBHOUSE moved the closure, which was carried by 284 to 27.

The House divided on the second reading,
when there voted:

For 297
Against 15

Majority for 282

The Bill was then read a second time.

A motion by Mr. T. M. HEALY to refer
the Bill to a Select Committee was rejected
by 255 to 27.

AYES.

Abraham, Wm. (Dublin, Harbour)
Acland, Francis Dyke
Adamson, William
Agar-Robartes, Hon. T. C. R.
Agg-Gardner, James Tynte
Ainsworth, John Stirling
Anson, Rt. Hon. Sir William R.
Armitage, Robert
Arnold, Sydney
Astor, Waldorf
Baird, John Lawrence
Baker, Harold T. (Acerington)
Baker, Joseph A. (Finsbury, E.)
Baldwin, Stanley
Banbury, Sir Frederick George
Baring, Sir Godfrey (Barnstaple)
Barlow, Sir John E. (Somerset)
Barlow, Montague (Salford, South)
Barnes, George N.
Barrie, H. T.
Bathurst, Hon. A. B. (Glouc., E.)
Bathurst, Charles (Wilts, Wilton)
Benn, Arthur Shirley (Plymouth)
Benn, Ian Hamilton (Greenwich)
Benn, W. W. (T. Hamlets, St. Geo.)
Bentinck, Lord H. Cavendish-
Bird, Alfred
Black, Arthur W.
Boland, John Pius
Brady, Patrick Joseph
Bridgeman, William Clive
Bryce, John Annan
Buckmaster, Sir Stanley O.
Burn, Colonel C. R.
Butcher, John George
Buxton, Noel (Norfolk, North)
Bytes, Sir William Pollard
Campion, W. R.
Carr-Gomm, H. W.
Cator, John
Cave, George
Cawley, H. T. (Lancs., Heywood)
Cecil, Lord R. (Herts, Hitchin)
Chaloner, Colonel R. G. W.
Chancellor, Henry George
Chapple, Dr. William Allen
Clancy, John Joseph
Clay, Captain H. H. Spender
Clive, Captain Percy Archer
Clough, William
Clyde, James Avon
Collins, Sir Stephen (Lambeth)
Cotton, William Francis
Courthope, George Loyd
Craig, Ernest (Cheshire, Crewe)
Craig, Herbert J. (Tynemouth)
Crooks, William

Cullinan, John
Dalziel, Rt. Hon. Sir J. (Kirkcaldy)
Davies, Ellis William (Eifion)
Davies, Sir W. Howell (Bristol, S.)
Dawes, James Arthur
Delany, William
Denman, Hon. R. D.
Devlin, Joseph
Dickinson, Rt. Hon. Willoughby H.
Dillon, John
Doris, William
Doughty, Sir George
Duffy, William J.
Edwards, J. H. (Glamorgan, Mid.)
Esmonde, Dr. J. (Tipperary, N.)
Esmonde, Sir Thomas (Wexford, N.)
Essex, Sir Richard Walter
Falconer, James
Farrell, James Patrick
Fell, Arthur
Fenwick, Rt. Hon. Charles
Ferens, Rt. Hon. Thomas R.
French, Peter
Field, William
Fiennes, Hon. Eustace Edward
Fitzgibbon, John
Flavin, Michael Joseph
Gelder, Sir W. A.
Gibbs, George Abraham
Gill, Alfred Henry
Gilmour, Captain John
Gladstone, W. G. C.
Glanville, Harold James
Goldsmith, Frank
Goldstone, Frank
Gordon, John (Londonderry, S.)
Grant, J. A.
Gretton, John
Guest, Hon. F. E. (Dorset, E.)
Guest, Major Hon. H. (Pembroke)
Guinness, Hon. W. E. (Bury St. Ed.)
Gulland, John William
Gwynn, Stephen Lucius (Galway)
Hackett, John
Hall, F. (Yorks, Normanton)
Hamilton, C. (Ches., Altrincham)
Hancock, John George
Harcourt, Rt. Hon. L. (Rossendale)
Harcourt, Robert V. (Montrose)
Hardy, Rt. Hon. Laurence
Harrison-Broadley, H. B.
Harvey, A. G. C. (Rochdale)
Harvey, T. E. (Leeds, West)
Haslam, Lewis (Monmouth)
Hazleton, Richard
Helme, Sir Norval Watson
Hemmerde, Edward George

AYES—

Henderson, Arthur (Durham)
 Henderson, Sir A. (St. Geo., Han. Sq.)
 Henderson, John M. (Aberdeen, W.)
 Herbert, Hon. A. (Somerset, S.)
 Hibbert, Sir Henry F.
 Higham, John Sharp
 Hills, John Waller
 Hoare, Samuel John Gurney
 Hobhouse, Rt. Hon. Charles E. H.
 Hogge, James Myles
 Hohler, Gerald Fitzroy
 Holmes, Daniel Turner
 Hope, John Deans (Haddington)
 Hope, Major J. A. (Midlothian)
 Horne, Charles Silvester (Ipswich)
 Howard, Hon. Geoffrey
 Hume-Williams, William Ellis
 Hunter, Sir Charles Rodk.
 Illingworth, Percy H.
 Ingleby, Holcombe
 Jardine, Sir John (Roxburgh)
 John, Edward Thomas
 Jones, Edgar R. (Merthyr Tydvil)
 Jones, H. Haydn (Merioneth)
 Jones, J. Towyn (Carmarthen, E.)
 Jones, Leif (Notts, Rushcliffe)
 Jones, William (Carnarvonshire)
 Jowett, Frederick William
 Joyce, Michael
 Kennedy, Vincent Paul
 Kilbride, Denis
 Kyffin-Taylor, G.
 Lambert, Rt. Hon. G. (Devon S. M.)
 Lambert, R. (Wilts, Cricklade)
 Lardner, James C. R.
 Larmor, Sir J.
 Levy, Sir Maurice
 Lewis, Rt. Hon. John Herbert
 Lewisham, Viscount
 Lockwood, Rt. Hon. Lt.-Col. A. R.
 Lough, Rt. Hon. Thomas
 Lundon, Thomas
 Lyell, Charles Henry
 Lynch, A. A.
 Lyttelton, Hon. J. C.
 Macdonald, J. Ramsay (Leicester)
 McGhee, Richard
 Macmaster, Donald
 MacNeill, J. G. S. (Donegal, S.)
 Macpherson, James Ian
 MacVeagh, Jeremiah
 M'Callum, Sir John M.
 McKenna, Rt. Hon. Reginald
 M'Laren, Hon. F. (Lines., Spalding)
 M'Micking, Major Gilbert
 Malcolm, Ian
 Markham, Sir Arthur Basil
 Mason, David M. (Coventry)
 Meehan, Francis E. (Leitrim, N.)
 Meehan, Patrick J. (Queen's, Leix)
 Millar, James Duncan
 Molloy, Michael
 Molteno, Percy Alport
 Mond, Rt. Hon. Sir Alfred
 Money, L. G. Chiozza
 Montagu, Hon. E. S.
 Morgan, George Hay

Morrell, Philip
 Morrison-Bell, Capt. E. (Ashburt'n)
 Morison, Hector
 Morton, Alpheus Cleophas
 Muldoon, John
 Munro, Rt. Hon. Robert
 Murphy, Martin J.
 Murray, Captain Hon. Arthur C.
 Neilson, Francis
 Newton, Harry Kottingham
 Nolan, Joseph
 O'Brien, Patrick (Kilkenny)
 O'Connor, John (Kildare, N.)
 O'Connor, T. P. (Liverpool)
 O'Doherty, Philip
 O'Donnell, Thomas
 O'Dowd, John
 O'Kelly, Edward P. (Wicklow, W.)
 O'Neilly, Dr. Charles (Armagh, S.)
 Ormsby-Gore, Hon. William
 O'Shaughnessy, P. J.
 O'Shee, James John
 O'Sullivan, Timothy
 Parker, Sir Gilbert (Gravesend)
 Parker, James (Halifax)
 Parry, Thomas H.
 Peto, Basil Edward
 Phillips, John (Longford, S.)
 Pointer, Joseph
 Pollock, Ernest Murray
 Pratt, J. W.
 Pretymen, Ernest George
 Price, C. E. (Edinburgh, Central)
 Priestley, Sir W. E. B. (Bradford, E.)
 Pringle, William M. R.
 Radford, George Heynes
 Raffan, Peter Wilson
 Ratcliff, R. F.
 Rawson, Colonel Richard H.
 Rea, Rt. Hon. Russell (S. Shields)
 Reddy, Michael
 Redmond, John E. (Waterford)
 Redmond, William A. (Tyrone, E.)
 Rendall, Athelstan
 Richardson, Albion (Peckham)
 Richardson, Thomas (Whitehaven)
 Roberts, Charles H. (Lincoln)
 Roberts, Sir J. H. (Denbighs)
 Roberts, S. (Sheffield, Ecclesall)
 Robertson, John M. (Tyneside)
 Robinson, Sidney
 Roch, Walter F. (Pembroke)
 Roche, Augustine (Louth)
 Roe, Sir Thomas
 Rothschild, Lionel D.
 Rowlands, James
 Rowntree, Arnold
 Russell, Rt. Hon. Thomas W.
 Rutherford, W. (L'pool, W. Derby)
 Samuel, Rt. Hon. H. L. (Cleveland)
 Samuel, J. (Stockton-on-Tees)
 Sanders, Robert Arthur
 Sanderson, Lancelot
 Scanlan, Thomas
 Scott, A. MacC. (Glas., Bridgeton)
 Sheehy, David
 Sherwell, Arthur James
 Simon, Rt. Hon. Sir J. Allsebrook

AYES—

Smith, Albert (Lancs., Clitheroe)
 Smith, H. B. Lees (Northampton)
 Smyth, Thomas F. (Leitrim, S.)
 Spear, Sir John Ward
 Spicer, Rt. Hon. Sir Albert
 Stanley, Albert (Staffs, N.W.)
 Strauss, Edward A. (S'thwark, W.)
 Talbot, Lord Edmund
 Taylor, Theodore C. (Radcliffe)
 Taylor, Thomas (Bolton)
 Terrell, George (Wilts, N.W.)
 Thorne, G. R. (Wolverhampton)
 Thynne, Lord Alexander
 Touche, George Alexander
 Toulmin, Sir George
 Valentia, Viscount
 Verney, Sir Harry
 Walker, Col. William Hall
 Walton, Sir Joseph
 Ward, John (Stoke-upon-Trent)
 Warner, Sir Thomas Courtenay T.
 Wason, Rt. Hon. E. (Clackman'n)
 Wason, John Cathcart (Orkney)
 Watson, Hon. W.
 Webb, H.
 Weigall, Captain A. G.
 Weston, Colonel J. W.
 White, Major G. D. (Lancs., S'port)
 White, J. D. (Glasgow, Tradeston)
 White, Sir Luke (Yorks, E.R.)
 White, Patrick (Meath, North)
 Whitehouse, John Howard
 Whittaker, Rt. Hon. Sir Thomas P.
 Whyte, Alexander F. (Perth)
 Williams, Aneurin (Durham, N.W.)

Williams, Penry (Middlesbrough)
 Williams, Colonel R. (Dorset, W.)
 Wills, Sir Gilbert
 Wilson, W. T. (Westhoughton)
 Wilson, Capt. Leslie O. (Reading)
 Wing, Thomas Edward
 Wright, Henry Fitzherbert
 Yate, Colonel C. E.
 Yeo, Alfred William
 Young, William (Perthshire, E.)
 Younger, Sir George
 Yoxall, Sir James Henry

TELLERS FOR THE AYES.—

Mr. Alden and Mr. Croft.

NOES.

Booth, Frederick Handel
 Carlile, Sir Edward Hildred
 Cornwall, Sir Edwin A.
 Davies, Timothy (Lincs., Louth)
 Esslemont, George Birnie
 Greene, Walter Raymond
 Hambro, Angus Valdemar
 Hamilton, Lord C. (Kensington, S.)
 Healy, Timothy M. (Cork, N.E.)
 Hodge, John
 Hope, Harry (Bute)
 Hope, James Fitzalan (Sheffield)
 Pearce, Robert (Staffs, Leek)
 Rees, Sir J. D.
 Watt, Henry A.

TELLERS FOR THE NOES.—

Mr. Denniss and Mr. Hinds.

The Bill went into Committee on March 17th. Every possible obstruction in the form of "amendments" has been put forward by Mr. Denniss, Mr. Timothy Davies, Mr. Hinds, and Sir E. Cornwall, assisted on occasion by Mr. Glyn-Jones. The proposals have included the following: that the operation of the Act should be postponed until an international agreement has been arrived at with the Governments of France, Germany, and Austria; that prohibited instead of exempted plumages should be named in the schedule; that the list of exemptions should include all the birds most in demand by the trade, the plumage of any "domesticated" species, birds "killed as pests in the country of origin" (a field for endless discussion and disagreement), birds found to

be "plentiful and not in need of protection" in the country of origin, birds protected in the country of origin, birds used as food in the country of origin (by which any species could be dragged in as having at some time formed a meal for a native of Brazil or Papua); "moulted feathers"; and so on. The general effect of the trade proposals would be either to make the Bill unworkable by demanding expert examination of plumage, thus rendering smuggling practicable, or to throw the onus of proof on the Customs or the exporter, and relieve the importer from responsibility and fine.

Clauses 1 and 2 have now been passed, the only alteration being the strengthening insertion of the italicised words in sub-

section (d), Clause 2, "Wild birds ordinarily used in the United Kingdom as articles of diet and imported for that purpose."

PUBLIC MEETING.

Hearty support was given to the Plumage Bill by a distinguished and representative gathering at Caxton Hall, S.W., on March 19th. The interest taken in the subject was indicated by the demand for tickets, which was great enough to have filled the hall twice over. The Duke of Marlborough presided. Sir Sydney Buxton said it had been contended that unless the question was dealt with internationally the trade would only be diverted to France or Austria, but now that wearing apparel coming into this country was not to be exempted, the argument disappeared; much as ladies would do for their adornment, he did not think they were prepared to go and live in France in order to wear egret plumes. At present plumage was smuggled from lands which were trying to protect their birds, and the admission and sale of them constituted an "unfriendly act" towards those countries. Mr. H. Page Croft dwelt on the economic value of birds in the Colonies.

A resolution urging the passing of the Bill was proposed by Sir Harry Johnston, seconded by the Hon. Thomas Mackenzie, supported by Mr. F. C. Selous (who bore testimony to the vast destruction of bird-life), and carried unanimously. Letters of sympathy were received from the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Earl of Cromer, and Earl Curzon of Kedleston.

The meeting was under the patronage of the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, the R.S.P.C.A., Zoological Society, Avicultural Society, British Ornithologists' Union, Society for the Promotion of Nature

Reserves, Society for the Preservation of the Fauna of the Empire, Animals' Friend Society, and Our Dumb Friends' League; but the whole of the organization and arrangements rested with Major Henry Guest, M.P., to whom are due the heartiest thanks of all bird-lovers.

PROHIBITION OF EXPORT.

Many British Colonies and Dependencies have realised that it is necessary to prohibit export of bird-skins and plumage in order to give effect to their own Bird Protection laws and ordinances.

India has possessed a law prohibiting the export of all skins and feathers (except Ostrich) since 1902.

The Australian Commonwealth by a Proclamation of April 11th, 1913, prohibited exportation of certain plumages, including Emu, Terns and Gulls, Egrets and Herons, Parrots, Rollers, Rifle-birds, Grebes, Albatross, Orioles. The Northern Territory by Ordinance 2 of 1913 also prohibits export of scheduled birds. The New Zealand Prohibition dates from 1908 (No. 6), amended by No. 22 of 1910.

The following Crown Colonies have export laws bearing date prior to 1913: British Guiana, 1877; Cyprus, 1911; East African Protectorate, 1909; Nyassaland, 1911; Ceylon, 1909; Bahamas, 1904; Montserrat, 1912; Trinidad, 1890; Grenada, 1911; St. Vincent, 1911; St. Lucia, 1885.

In 1913, Ordinances were enacted in: Antigua, St. Christopher, Falkland, Fiji, and Somaliland.

In 1914, up to the present: Barbadoes, Bermudas, Dominica, Gold Coast, Mauritius, St. Helena, Seychelles, Straits Settlements and Virgin Island.

The subject has received the direct attention of the present Colonial Secretary, Mr. Lewis Harcourt, and many colonies beside those named have the matter under consideration.

PLUMAGE BILL MANIFESTOS.

A LETTER in support of the Bill has been published widely, signed by the Duke of Rutland, the Earl of Leicester, Viscount Galway, Lord Lilford, Rev. the Hon. E. L. Lyttelton, Bishop Welldon, Sir Herbert Maxwell, Sir Godfrey Baring, M.P., Sir Harry Johnston, Sir Ernest Shackleton, Sir A. Conan Doyle, Sir Owen Seaman, Mr. W. R. Ogilvie-Grant, Mr. J. St. Loe Strachey, Mr. H. Hesketh-Prichard, and Mr. E. B. Waggett. In the writers say:—

“We are most heartily in accord with this measure, as we believe that it is the duty of this country to put an end to the traffic in the skins and plumes of wild birds. The evidence is abundantly clear that many rare and beautiful species are being ruthlessly exterminated, and that the trade creates a demand for the plumes of certain birds which these birds only acquire in the breeding season, thus encouraging the horrible and cruel practice of killing birds when the young are in the nest.

“The argument that the trade in prohibited feathers will not be diminished, but simply diverted to the Continent, is, in our opinion, absolutely a false one; on the contrary, we believe that the passage of this Bill will greatly strengthen the hands of the various societies and individuals who are endeavouring to promote prohibition upon the Continent.

“In particular we do not believe that the passage of the Bill will bring about any shortage of work among those employed in the trade. A great part of the work done in connection with this fancy plumage is performed on the Continent, and the bulk of feather-workers employed in England work, not upon wild-bird plumage, but upon Ostrich feathers, whose entry will be permitted and even stimulated by the provisions of the Bill. Also in the natural course of things, substitutes and imitations will be found, which will divert to British labour much work that is now done in Paris and Vienna.”

A manifesto, signed by a number of representative ladies has also been published in the Press:—

“Attempts to regulate the traffic would,” it urges, “be futile on account of the insurmountable difficulties with respect to laws and their enforcement in the countries from which a large proportion of the birds come; therefore, the most effectual way to preserve wild birds is by the enactment of laws prohibiting importation, in support of the regulations which forbid export.

“In 1908, when a Select Committee of the House of Lords took evidence on the importation of plumage, the official returns showed that under £100,000 represented the value of ‘fancy feathers’ annually imported into England, 80 per cent. of which are immediately re-exported to be worked up abroad. Although the financial interests involved are not large, the destruction of useful and precious bird-life is stupendous, as is well known. It is our belief that the passing of the Bill will be immensely beneficial, and will inflict no hardships either on merchants or on workers in factories and warehouses.

“Finally, we approve of the provisions made by this Bill for the confiscation (as in the United States of America) of forbidden plumage forming part of the wearing apparel, or in the possession of any person landing in England.

“In our opinion, it will be only right and fair that women who persist in wearing plumage not permitted by the Bill should be compelled to surrender it.”

The signatories are the Duchess of Portland, the Countess of Aberdeen, Miss Clementina Black, Mrs. Bramwell Booth, Rosalind Countess of Carlisle, Mrs. Creighton, Mrs. Garrett Fawcett, Mrs. Bedford Fenwick, Mrs. John Galsworthy, Lady Lilford, Lady Catherine Milnes-Gaskell, the Hon. Lily Montagu, the Countess of Portsmouth, Lady Laura Ridding, the Ranee of Sarawak, Mrs. Philip Snowden, Lady Henry Somerset, the Duchess of Somerset, Mrs Sumner, Miss Ellen Terry, and Lady Rose Weigall.

VERDICT OF SCIENTIFIC SOCIETIES.

THE Trustees of the British Museum, the Zoological Society of London, the Society for the Promotion of Nature Reserves, the British Ornithologists' Union and the Council of the R.S.P.C.A. are all in favour of the Bill, and have passed resolutions accordingly. The B.O.U., it should, however, be mentioned, endorsed the principle without binding themselves to all the details of the measure, on account of the regulations with regard to collectors.

Resolutions in support of the Bill have also been passed unanimously by the following among other societies; and the list might no doubt have been largely added to had opportunity occurred to elicit the opinion of the members of a greater number, since the Bill was brought in in February.

The Royal Physical Society of Edinburgh.
Ashmolean Natural History Society of Oxfordshire.

Birmingham Natural History and Philo-
sophical Society.

Birmingham and Midland Institute Scien-
tific Society.

Birmingham Field Naturalists Society.

Bradford Natural History Society.

Buteshire Naturalists Society.

Cheltenham Natural Science Society.

Croydon Natural History and Scientific
Society.

Eastbourne Natural History Society.

Glasgow Natural History Society.

Hastings and St. Leonards Natural His-
tory Society

Kirkcaldy Naturalists Society.

Malvern Field Club.

North Staffordshire Field Club (over 700
members).

Nottingham Naturalists Society.

Preston Scientific Society.

Somersetshire Archæological and Natural
History Society.

Stirling Natural History Society.

Warrington Field Club.

Worcestershire Naturalists Club.

Yorkshire Naturalists Union, representing
over forty societies, among them being:
the Bradford Scientific Association;
Cleveland Naturalists Club; Craven
Naturalists Association; Crosshill
Naturalists Society; Darlington and
Teesdale Naturalists Field Club; Don-
caster Scientific Society; East Riding
Nature Study Association; Halifax
Scientific Society; Huddersfield Natu-
ralists and Photographic Society; Hull
Scientific and Field Naturalists Club;
Leeds Naturalists Club and Scientific
Association; Malton, Ravensthorpe,
Barnsley, Rotherham, Thirsk, Wake-
field, and York Naturalists Societies;
Scarborough Field Naturalists Society;
Selby Scientific Society; Sheffield
Naturalists Club.

The Hon. N. Charles Rothschild, M.P.,
Chairman of the Society for Promotion of
Nature Reserves, writes to the *Times*
(March, 3rd, 1914) to point out that
the self-constituted committee designated
"The Committee for the Economic Preser-
vation of Birds," whose executive includes
several well-known dealers in plumage,
appear to have induced the trade generally
to give, by a kind of self-denying ordinance,
a pledge that they will not deal in the
plumage of seven species of birds. As,
however, three of these are strictly protected
and only to be obtained by smuggling,
while the remainder are little used in the
trade, one is forced to the conclusion that
the object of the committee is less in the
interests of preserving rare birds than in
those of preserving the principal part of
the trade in their plumage.

"One thing is certain, that many of the
most beautiful birds have never been in
greater need of protection than at the present
time, and it is to be hoped that every effort
will be made to accelerate the passage of
the Bill."

The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds.

ANNUAL MEETING.

THE Society's 23rd Annual Meeting was held on March 5th, 1914, at the Westminster Palace Hotel, S.W., Lord Newton in the chair. The President of the Society, the Duchess of Portland, was also present, and the Vice-Presidents and members of Council attending included the Ranee of Sarawak, the Duchess of Somerset, Sir Herbert Maxwell, Bart., Hon. Mrs. Drewitt, Hon. Mrs. Arthur Henniker, Mr. Montagu Sharpe (Chairman of Council), Sir John Cockburn, Mrs. R. W. Williamson, Miss Clifton, Dr. F. D. Drewitt, Mr. F. E. Lemon (Hon. Secretary), Mrs. F. E. Lemon, Miss Hall, Mr. E. G. B. Meade-Waldo, Mr. W. R. Ogilvie-Grant, and Miss E. L. Turner. Mr. H. E. Dresser, Mr. Hastings Lees, and Captain Tailby were prevented by absence from England, and Mr. W. H. Hudson by ill-health, from being present. There was a large attendance of Fellows and supporters of the Society, including Lord Lilford, Mr. H. Page Croft, M.P., Mr. Laurence Hardy, M.P., Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, Major the Hon. Henry Guest, M.P., Rev. H. R. Gamble, Lady Forester, Countess Hahne, Mrs. Montagu Sharpe, Mrs. Grove Grady, Mr. J. R. B. Masefield, Mr. C. E. Fagan, Mr. W. P. Pycraft, Mr. F. W. Headley, Mr. Richard Curle, Mrs. Hesketh Prichard, Mr. and Mrs. Yorke Smith, Mrs. Burdon, Mrs. and Miss Vaudrey, Miss Winifred Austen, Captain and Mrs. Tunnard, Mrs. Dixon Davies, Mrs. Key, Mrs. Herdman, Miss Emily Smith, Miss Mace, Miss E. G. Woodd, Mrs. Wynnard Hooper, Mr. A. H. H. Matthews, Dr. Graham Renshaw, Mr. J. J. Cash, Hon. Mrs. Egerton Warburton, Hon. Mrs. Lumb, Mrs. Herbert Leaf, Mrs. Willis Bund, Mrs. Sherwood, Mr.

Spencer Holland, Mr. Harold Russell, Mr. W. T. Lye, Mrs. Walter Baily, Mrs. Charles Lyrell, Miss C. Paterson, Miss I. M. French, Miss L. Macnaghten, Miss Scillon, Miss L. Gardiner (Secretary) and many others.

Letters were received from all the Vice-Presidents of the Society who were unable to be present, regretting their inability to attend and expressing hearty support of the Plumage Bill. Among the messages sent were the following:—

From the EARL OF CROMER:—

“I am wholly in favour of the Bill.”

EARL CURZON OF KEDLESTON —

“I am sure you will have a very successful meeting, and that public opinion will be roused to support the Society in the efforts it is making on behalf of the Plumage Bill. That Bill has many enemies, some open, some concealed, and those who wish to put a stop to the thoughtless but detestable traffic in the spoils that are torn from the loveliest of God's creatures, must concentrate all their strength and secure the passage of the Bill into law.”

EARL LOREBURN:—

“I very heartily support the Plumage Bill, and trust that no delay will occur in checking the odious system of which we complain.”

The Right Hon. SIR EDWARD GREY,
Bart., M.P.:—

“I am very sorry that it is impossible for me to come to the meeting; I must be in the House of Commons that afternoon at the time when the meeting is to be held.

“I am, of course, strongly in favour of the Plumage Bill. I cannot see that any of the suggestions that have been made for alternative measures would be as effective as this Bill: indeed, it seems to me that they would all be ineffective.

“The need for some step to be taken to stop the wholesale killing of birds for the sake of their plumage, especially in the breeding season, is urgent, and the Plumage

Bill is the best contribution that we ourselves can make to this object."

The Right Hon. SIR SYDNEY BUXTON,
G.C.M.G. :—

"I think public opinion is greatly hardening in favour of the Government Bill."

The COUNTESS OF STAMFORD :—

"I am particularly sorry to be absent on this occasion, as I feel strongly that it is most desirable that the Plumage Bill should be passed as soon as possible."

The LADY THEODORA GUEST :—

"I have very much at heart the objects of the Society in promoting the passing of the Government Plumage Bill. The example of America ought to stimulate us to do at least as well as they have done, and I trust we shall not be behindhand; but even twenty years ago, when I was in America, I was struck by finding their laws, even then, far more stringent than ours, both in Canada and the States. I find in the country here that the suppression of the bird-snarer's trade has had immense effect in favour of our wild birds, and it will be to England's credit if the Egrets and Birds of Paradise can also be protected from ruthless slaughter."

The LADY LAURA RIDDING :—

"I feel keenly the need of the passing of the Plumage Bill, and I hope that real pressure will be put upon the Government to get it through the House. Several years ago one used to see three and four aigrette feathers in bonnets. Now, the milliners put a forest of aigrettes like a soft sweep's brush. The number of birds which must be killed to make these terrible brushes is beyond calculation. The Bill is really the only means by which this nauseating trade can be stopped."

The Right Rev. BISHOP WELLDON :—

"I wish with all my heart it were possible for me to support the Duchess of Portland and Lord Newton at the meeting on March 5th. Every year strengthens my conviction that the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds is doing, and is the only body which is capable of doing, a work of great mercy and utility—a work that is indispensable to the economy as well as to

the beauty of Nature, and to the credit of humanity."

The Right Hon. C. G. MILNES GASKELL :—

"Nothing short of drastic legislation and international action can save our vanishing fauna and flora. Some architect in future ages may be able to build something worthy of his century when all buildings and monuments of beauty have been destroyed by our municipalities, but it will be beyond the wit of man to replace Birds of Paradise and Egrets and Humming Birds by more exquisite fauna.

"The task of the Society is a terribly uphill one, for there are no more powerful forces than those of stupidity and vulgarity."

The Rev. Dr. LYTTTELTON (Headmaster of Eton) :—

"I greatly regret that I cannot be present on Thursday to add my voice to those of other lovers of birds at this critical time. I am convinced that if a hideous waste of life is to be checked, England must take a decided step without delay, and one strong reason for supporting the Plumage Bill is the hope that we of this generation may yet save ourselves from lasting reproach, not to say indelible shame, from those who come after us."

The Rev. CANON RAWNSLEY :—

"I am grieved that I cannot be with you at your meeting to support your President and Lord Newton in the matter of the Plumage Bill. That such birds as the Egret and the Scarlet Tanager, the Smyrnan Kingfisher, the Lesser Bird of Paradise, the Lyre Bird, the Scarlet Ibis, and many Humming-Birds should be swept from the face of the earth to satisfy a barbarous fashion only fit for savages, should be permitted in a Christian country is a lamentable fact; and as one who believes that each of these birds was a revelation of the mind of God to man, I feel that no words are too strong to speak of the short-sighted wickedness of the plumage trade, or to plead for the passing into Act of the Plumage Bill that is now before the House."

The Rev. A. L. HUSSEY :—

"I believe that I was nearly the first of

the male sex to join the Society for the Protection of Birds. I did so hoping that the plumage fashions prevalent even then would be exposed, as they were, in all their cruel thoughtlessness, and that women, in response to the entreaties of those forming the Society, would be persuaded no longer to aid the slaughter and eventual extermination of the most lovely creatures in God's creation. This was many years ago; how much there is still to do!

"That the Government's Plumage Bill, politics quite apart, will be passed, and thus follow the excellent lead set by the United States, must be the ardent wish of us all."

MR. WILFRID SCAWEN BLUNT:—

"Nobody can feel more strongly than I do the abominations connected with the feather trade against which you are protesting, nor could any Plumage Bill be too severe to please me.

"In the whole history of mankind—and Heaven knows it is an ugly record—there is nothing in my view of things to equal the criminality of the destruction which in our own day has befallen whole races of wild animals, especially of birds, at our civilized white hands—nothing so wanton, nothing so irreparable, nothing where the evil wrought has been less mixed with advantage, where the dignity and order and beauty of the world has been more unpardonably wronged.

"To my mind, the race of birds is, without exaggeration, better and happier and wiser and a hundred times more beautiful than that of man, and as such far more worthy to survive in the struggle of life. All the happiness we have in our sordid human lives, birds have more perfectly in theirs; all the wisdom of domestic cheerfulness; all the power of enjoyment without hurry; all the acceptance of good and evil at the hand of Providence. Nor is it too much, from an æsthetic point of view, to say that, if the whole artistic production of our modern humanity were lumped together, it would not be found to contain so much of beauty as may be seen in the plumage of a single species of the tropic birds we are destroying. What is absolutely certain is that the whole skill of our

European scientists, great as it is, could not re-create a single species in its existing beauty, once it is exterminated. Perhaps not God himself could quite do this; most certainly not Man.

"My view of what legislation should aim at is that the destruction of these birds, for the mere whim of slaughter or the gratification of vanity, ought to be made a criminal offence, punishable by every Government as a kind of piracy committed against the Commonwealth of the World."

A report of the proceedings will be published in the Society's Annual Report, which will be issued shortly. It is therefore only necessary to allude in brief to the speeches. The principal topic dealt with was the Government Plumage Bill, a resolution in support of which was moved by Mr. Page Croft, M.P., seconded by Sir A. Conan Doyle, supported by the Rev. H. R. Gamble, and carried enthusiastically. The Chairman, in alluding to the same subject, congratulated the Society on the remarkable success it had achieved in persuading the Government to adopt what might be termed without exaggeration the Society's Bill. The arguments against that Bill were as inconclusive as anything he had ever heard. His Lordship also alluded to other activities of the R.S.P.B., especially its educational work in the Public Schools and the Elementary Schools, and its endeavours to check the senseless slaughter of rare and interesting species of birds in this country.

Mr. Montagu Sharpe (Chairman of Council) said that the Report indicated satisfactory progress in all branches. The public had confidence in their organization and were every year supporting it in greater numbers. He referred in particular to the work carried out by the Watchers Committee, and to the experiment, which had been so far successful, of erecting perches at the

Lighthouses to prevent the destruction of migrating birds.

The Duchess of Portland, who was re-elected President on the motion of the Ranee of Sarawak, seconded by Lord Lilford, presented the medals, certificates, and books awarded in the Public School Essay Competition.

The election of the Council and other officers of the Society was proposed by Mr. Lawrence Hardy, M.P., seconded by Mr. J. R. B. Masefield, and carried; and the proceedings closed with a vote of thanks to Lord Newton and to the Duchess of Portland, proposed by Sir John Cockburn and seconded by Major the Hon. Henry Guest, M.P.

COUNCIL MEETING.

THE Council of the Society met at the Middlesex Guildhall, on January 23rd, 1914, Mr. Montagu Sharpe, Chairman, presiding.

Hon. Secretary's Report.

The Hon. Secretary reported that twelve lectures had been given, and special thanks were voted to the Hon. F. S. O'Grady for arranging meetings at Bradford-on-Avon and Holt, and to Mr. Masefield, for lecturing. The Chairman and Hon. Secretary of the Society had given evidence before the Departmental Committee on the W.B.P. Acts. Twenty-two Bird-and-Tree Festivals had been held.

Finance and General Purposes Committee.

The statement of accounts for 1913 was presented and passed. Mr. Norman G. Hadden, of Malvern, was appointed Hon. Secretary for South Worcestershire. The following Fellows and Members were elected:—

FELLOWS: S. Castle (Bidston), Mrs. Clarke (Bournemouth), Fleming Crooks (London, W.), Miss Gaskell (Midhurst),

Norman Graham (Godalming), Major Boyd Horsbrugh (Oxsted), Miss E. M. Jones (Market Harboro'), Clementina Lady Lilford (Wimbledon, S.W.), Miss E. M. Melvill (London, S.W.), Arthur D. Nix (Truro), W. J. Palmer (Dover), Miss E. Piers-Duncombe (Hollington), Mrs. Rosenthal (Chislehurst), R. J. Cambridge Syrett (Bury St. Edmunds), Mrs. Tempest (High Wycombe), Miss Ethel Thesiger (Market Harboro'), E. Russell Thompson (Redhill), Colonel W. Tremayne (Cornwall).

MEMBERS: Lewis Balfour (Chipstead), Mrs. Frank Brown (Tring), T. B. Beavan (Trowbridge), Miss Barclay (Holt), Mrs. Boden (Derby), Hon. John Boscawen (Perranwell), Mrs. Clifford (Westgate-on-Sea), Sidney T. G. Dark (London, S.W.), Viscount Falmouth (Truro), Mrs. Fleming (Bradford on Avon), Edmund Halstead (Burnley), Henry Halton (Newburgh), Miss F. Lightfoot (Newcastle), Miss Rhona Mason (Witney), Dr. N. Marrett (Sandon), Mrs. Walter May (Woodford Green), T. C. Myddelton (Woodhall Spa), Miss P. Moore (Hove), Miss Evelyn Naylor (Derby), J. Ohlenschlager (Isleworth); Mrs. Parker (Bournemouth), Miss M. Phillips (St. Leonards), Albert E. Pullar (Perth), Rev. T. Roberts (Holt), Lord St. Levan (Marazion), J. Stewart Selby (Nottingham), Arthur Stephens (Beaconsfield), John Strachan, M.D. (Dollar, N.B.), Miss F. Wilson (Belfast).

LIFE MEMBER: Lord Newton.

AFFILIATED: Junior "Beautiful Oldham" Society.

General Business.

Consideration of the Annual Report and Annual Meeting, arrangements for Competitions in 1914, and the programme for the Plumage Bill Campaign, and various other matters, further occupied the attention of the Council.

Next Meeting, April 24th.

PUBLIC SCHOOL ESSAY COMPETITION, 1914.

The following are the subjects for the Essays invited from boys at Public Schools in Great Britain, in 1914:—

The Owl Prizes.—A Special Prize or

Prizes of the value of One Guinea will be offered annually by a Member of the Council of the R.S.P.B., for the best Essay or Essays on "The British Owls: the necessity for their better Protection, and the means to be adopted for the Preservation of rare and useful Birds of Prey." Special reference should be made to the economic value of Owls, and notes on Kestrel, Kite, Buzzards, and other Raptors may be added at the option of Competitors.

Silver and Bronze Medals.—"Our Summer Migrants, including Observations on the Food and Song of twelve selected species, and a comparison with members of the same or allied Families which remain in Great Britain throughout the year."

Full particulars can be had from the R.S.P.B., 23, Queen Anne's Gate, S.W.

The Silver Medal Essay, 1913, will be published in the Summer number of *B. N. & N.*

PLUMAGE BILL FUND.

THE expenses of printing, postages etc., in connexion with the Plumage Bill campaign being exceedingly heavy, a special fund has been opened to help in meeting them. It is headed by the Hon. Mrs. Drewitt, Mrs. Yorke Smith, Captain Tailby, and the Rev. A. L. Hussey, and further donations will be gladly received. Cheques should be made out to the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds. It may be mentioned that some 20,000 of the Plumage Cards and over 50,000 of the Campaign Leaflets have been individually addressed by post, in addition to the hundreds of personal letters sent to influential and interested persons.

Notes.

Where a cause is essentially bad, its supporters and defenders are seldom logical or consistent. One will try to prove that black is white while another dwells upon the inherent superiority of blackness. The plume-merchants have taken as their primary bed-rock argument the assurance that if England deports the feather-trade it will merely betake itself to France, that is waiting eagerly to annex so profitable a business. It was surely then bad tactics that a letter from the French "Chambre Syndicale des Fabricants de Plumes" should reach every Member of the House of Commons on the morning of the Second Reading of the Bill, appealing for consideration for the trade *qua* trade, and offering to send over a deputation from Paris. The president of the Syndicate, in the course of an interview published in *Le Journal*, March 14th, gives further and convincing proof of the truth of the view held by the R.S.P.B. that it

is and always has been the profits of the trade, and not a patriotic devotion to British interests, which the plume-dealers are anxious about.

* * *

It is true that the trade now place "the workers" in the place once occupied by British interests. It is the "thousands and thousands" of men, women, and children, whose bread is going to be taken out of their mouths, who are mustered in the foreground. "It is heart-breaking," says the president of the Syndicate, "and it is true. If England follows the example of America, what will be their misery! For us, it is a cataclysm."

* * *

This obviously knocks the bottom out of the one argument, repeated by every speaker opposing the Bill, that the English trade will merely go to France "without saving a single bird." If the feather-dressers are going to lose all their work

it must be because feathers are not going to be used, and consequently birds will not be killed to furnish them. If the trade were only going to France, obviously the French workers would have more, not less, work.

* * *

In point of fact, it would appear that the birds will be saved, and there will be very little dislocation of labour, because fancy-feather dressing is not a staple industry either in Paris or London. The thousands of British workpeople who were to be deprived of their livelihood, according to Mr. Downham, have been reduced by unimaginative statistics to six or seven hundred girls who occupy part of their time with fancy feather work, and are not paid remarkably well for doing it. So with regard to the workers in France, a well-known member of the Société d'Acclimatation de France writes to the R.S.P.B. :—

“The interests of workpeople—men, women, and children—will not be affected by the suppression of the plume trade. They have many other openings for their activity. It is only a very small batch of speculators on the wholesale traffic in feather goods that can have to suffer. They are very rich.”

The feather-trade had another contention which has been led out continually in company with British-trade. If the fancy feathers went to France, the ostrich-feather trade would inevitably go also. The president of the “Fabricants de Plumes” puts another complexion on this argument also. England is not now going to lose her ostrich-feather business; on the contrary, it is for this business that she is ruining the fancy-feather trade :—

“The public may think that the English and the American are right to protect the

birds. That is false. It is not a question of humanity in the least, it is merely a question of money . . . The Hobhouse Bill is designed to protect the ostrich-feather industry of the Cape. The association of ostrich-farmers, numbering 1,700, welcomes with both hands the proposed law which will give the final blow to our industry.”

* * *

It is worth noting that Mr. T. M. Healy, who so bitterly attacked the Bill, and the Government for thinking about such a thing, nearly wrecked the Bird Protection Act of 1896. Ireland has to thank him that she alone of these islands is unable to protect her own birds throughout the year, to give Sunday protection, or to establish bird sanctuaries.

* * *

Allusion was made by Lord Newton at the Society's Annual Meeting to the undesirable leniency of a public body in allowing one of its servants to shoot wild birds on a sewage farm, and thereby inviting the destruction of rare and interesting species. Another case has been reported to the R.S.P.B., in which the keeper of a public park was actually using, and apparently accustomed to use, bird-traps for catching the small birds of the park. The place, writes a correspondent of the Society, is admirably adapted to form a bird-sanctuary, “but in two hours spent in the park we saw only one bird; many of its companions have, no doubt, been caught, and are now breaking their hearts in the filthy, crowded bird-shops of the neighbouring big city.” Happily, this writer was prompt to act by protesting to the authorities, and the trap has, at any rate, disappeared. Some further step seems necessary to bring back and ensure the safety of the bird-life, without which a park, however wooded and flower-bedded, is only a mockery of nature.

Bird-and-Tree (Arbor) Day.

THERE is, unfortunately, no space available in which to chronicle the very numerous Festivals held in celebration of Bird-and-Tree Day, 1913-14. The Woburn Boys' School, winners for the second time of the Inter-County Shield, were treated to a cinematograph exhibition of the bird pictures from the Scott Expedition, through the kindness of the Duchess of Bedford, and many pleasant fêtes, entertainments, and lectures, with tree-plantings, have taken place. Others are yet to come.

Cadets should now be at work for the 1914 Competition; and all schools not entered are invited to send for particulars to the Secretary, Royal Society for the Protection of Birds.

* * *

Speaking at the annual meeting of the Midland Re-afforesting Association, at Birmingham, on March 9th, Sir Oliver Lodge said that the most satisfactory feature of the year's work was the school planting, the interest taken by the education authorities and teachers, and the instruction and inspiration given to the children to take care of trees and assist in the planting. Tree-planting was a real educational movement, for it was highly desirable that the younger generation should realise their responsibility as guardians in trust of such things. Warwickshire, where Sir Oliver was speaking, has a Bird-and-Tree Challenge Shield. It would seem that the Re-afforesting Association should associate this with their work, the Bird with the Tree.

* * *

Special Prizes are offered by a member of the Council of the Society for the best essays on any one of the British Owls: the Barn- or White Owl; Brown, Wood-, or Tawny Owl; Long-eared Owl; Short-eared Owl—written by Bird and Tree Cadets. The bird is to be selected by a cadet in the usual way, and the essay should form one of the three Bird essays sent in by the school team.

Personal observation is desired; and the competitor should say in what way the bird is useful and why it should be protected. One kind of Owl should be chosen for study, but size, colour, etc., may be compared with those of other Owls.

CHILDREN AND "BIRD-NESTING."

The wanton destruction of nests, and the sometimes atrocious cruelty to young birds by children, form one of the ugliest features of English country life. The following letter has been sent to teachers of schools in the neighbourhood of his own residence by the Rev. A. L. Hussey, and the example is one which might well be followed by every member of the R.S.P.B. living in the country. The acts he mentions are far from the worst that come to notice, and it is well that the attention of teachers should at least be called to this notorious evil. If the police could be induced to notice it also, so much the better:—

"As a resident for some years in this neighbourhood, as well as being a Vice-President of the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, I venture to express an earnest hope that the boys and girls

who come under your instruction and influence may be entreated this spring to refrain from what is called 'bird-nesting.'

"Every spring, when the nesting-time comes round, they may be seen day after day searching along the hedge-rows and elsewhere for nests; and they rifle every one which they find, often under circumstances of much cruelty. Thus a great charm of this beautiful country-side is seriously impaired, by the loss of sweet song, when 'the flowers appear on the

earth and the time of the singing of birds is come' (Song of Solomon 2, v. 12).

"Nightingales, which used to be common in this part of Sussex, are now seldom heard, and other interesting and harmless birds are becoming scarce. This cannot be wondered at, when the children, quite regardless of laws which have been passed for the protection of birds, are allowed without check to harry their nests, to take their eggs, and even to wring the necks of the callow nestlings."

Plumage Bill Literature.

THOSE who are following the progress of the Plumage question and wish to obtain publications on the subject may be glad of the following references, which indicate some sources of information:—

Report of the Select Committee of the House of Lords, 1908, with Minutes of Evidence. Government Blue Book, House of Lords, No. 137 of 1908. (Wyman & Sons.)

Report of the Debate on the Second Reading in the House of Commons, March 9th, 1914. Parliamentary Debates, Vol. 59, No. 20. (Wyman & Sons.)

Feathers and Facts: a reply to the Plume-Trade. 1911. (R.S.P.B.)

Pros and Cons of the Plumage Bill, by James Buckland. 1911. (The Author, Royal Colonial Institute.)

Protection of Wild Birds in India and Traffic in Plumage. By P. T. L. Dodsworth, F.Z.S. *Journal of the Bombay Natural History Society*, May 20th, 1911.

The Plumage Bill, by G. A. B. Dewar. *Standard*, March 29th and May 3rd, 1911.

The Trade in Feathers, by Christian Richardson. *The Westminster*, Toronto, December, 1911.

Victims of Woman's Vanity, by M. Morrison. *Lady's Realm*, April, 1910. (Reprinted by the R.S.P.C.A.)

The Plumage Bill, by Sir H. H. Johnston and Dr. H. O. Forbes. *Nature*, Dec. 11th and 25th, 1913.

The Government Plumage Bill. *Country Life*, Dec. 27th, 1913.

Wild Birds' Plumage. *Times* leader, Dec. 31st, 1913.

The Egret, by Bentley Beetham. *Country Life*, Jan. 10th, 1914. (Reprinted by R.S.P.B.)

The Plumage Bill. *Nation* leader, Jan. 10th, 1914.

England's Duty toward Wild Birds, by Dr. W. T. Hornaday and Frank E. Lemon. *Nineteenth Century*, Feb., 1914.

The Need for the Plumage Bill. *Spectator* leader, March 7th, 1914.

Plumage Campaign Leaflets. 1. The Plume Question in a Nutshell; 2. The Government Plumage Bill; 3. Traffic in Birds' Feathers. (R.S.P.B., 1913-14.)

Slaughtered for Fashion, by H. Hesketh Prichard. *Pearson's Magazine*, March, 1914. (Reprinted by R.S.P.B.)

The Fight for the Birds, by L. Gardiner. *Fortnightly Review*, March, 1914. (Reprinted by R.S.P.B.)

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St. Catherine's Lighthouse, I.W., showing Bird-Rests.

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[No. 2.

Round the Lighthouse Lantern.

PERHAPS none of the many branches of the work undertaken by the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds—not even the salvation of the solitary Raven and fairy-like Roseate Tern from the collector, or the attempt to save the aerial Linnet from the birdcatcher, or the awakening of sympathy and love for nature in schoolchildren—appeals to the general public so directly as does the preservation of migratory birds at the Lighthouse. The simple fact that the beacon which informs and guards the seaman should lure little birds to destruction, and that these birds should be such as are on their own long, mysterious journey through the air, steered only by the distant lights of heaven—cannot fail to touch the imagination. The sea with its romance, the Lighthouse with its stories of peril and daring, are eloquent to all British folk; and the small flying thing that drops suddenly, as from the clouds, on gorse-bush or bare bough in April, with its twittering tale of summer to come, is dear for association's sake even to those who have no care or interest for bird-life in general.

Rather more than a year ago the Society started, at the Annual Meeting in 1913, a special fund for the protection of migrating birds. The history of the movement has been told in a previous number of *Bird Notes and News* (March, 1913). A tremendous loss of bird-life results from the fatal attraction of the

Lighthouse lantern; it had long been deplored, but was supposed irremediable. The birds, it was said, flew at the dazzling light like moths at a candle, and dashing against the lantern were killed or stunned and fell into the sea or into the Lighthouse gallery. A Dutch naturalist (Mr. Thijsse), however, held that only a small proportion were lost in this way, and that the majority merely flew, dazed and weary, round and round the incomprehensible gleam until they dropped down exhausted. During three years he tested plans for providing resting-places for the small travellers round about the bewildering rays, and at the end of that time he was able to report that the loss of bird-life at the great Terschelling Light had been reduced from thousands in a night to something like a hundred in the whole migration season.

The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds entered into correspondence with Mr. Thijsse, obtained from him all particulars of his invention, and sought an interview with the authorities of Trinity House. Here they met with most courteous hearing and with permission to have the scheme tried at one or two British Lighthouses, the engineers of Trinity House to carry out the work according to the Society's plans and at the Society's expense. St. Catherine's in the Isle of Wight, and the Caskets off Alderney, were selected for the experiment. The plan

and details of the apparatus had to be adapted and altered for the purpose, and this entailed not a little skill and labour, as the shape of the construction of the building had to be considered. Moreover it was essential that the light seaward should be in no way interfered with, and perches in the dark were comparatively useless, since the birds are apparently unable to use these. Mr. Thijsse's co-worker, Mr. Burdet, came over from Holland to visit the installation at St. Catherine's in company with members of the R.S.P.B. Council.

The autumn migration is not greatly affected at the Lighthouses already chosen, the birds being then mostly outward bound; but the reports received at the end of 1913 were satisfactory. The keepers stated that large numbers of birds had settled on the rests on many nights, and expressed the opinion that the lives of considerable numbers must be saved because they did undoubtedly, as Mr. Thijsse had said, flutter round about the light, and when they found the perches, would remain on them until dawn.

The spring of 1914 was exceptionally favourable to migrants arriving on the English coast, owing to the fine clear nights prevalent in April and May. The occasions of mist and cloud and rain were, however, sufficient to prove beyond doubt the value of the scheme. Thousands of birds on these nights, instead of fluttering on weary wings about the baffling light, discovered the long line upon line of perches and crowded upon these until, with the break of morning, they could safely take wing once more and find the land in whose green woods and hedgerows they were born. It was a strange sight, the lighthouse-keepers told with evident interest to members of the Council, to go into the

gallery at night and see these little birds—thousands of little birds—huddled together thickly wherever places could be found, birds of many species and varying sizes, but all alike in their strange passion to reach their native place—some quickset hedge, some primrose-starred wood, some lichen-tinted barn—and in their tiredness of wing and their longing for light and rest. It was, said one witness of the scene, the most wonderful sight he had seen in his life.

It has been pointed out that most of our spring migrants are insectivorous birds of economic importance to the land, and that the greater number of them are also song-birds. The Warbler tribe—Willow and Wood, Reed, Sedge, and Grasshopper, Garden and Blackcap—the two Whitethroats, the Tree-Pipit, and the Nightingale furnish the summer songs that make English country what it is for music; and these, together with the Swallows, Flycatchers, Nightjar, Swift, Corncrake, Wryneck, and Wheat-ear feed throughout their time here on insect food and are thus invaluable at the season of the year when insect life is reproducing itself as by miracle.

In the autumn a different stream of migrants sets in, visitors whose northern nesting-grounds have grown cold and foodless; while other species are passing south, and many partial migrants, such as Skylarks, Starlings, and Thrushes are on the move. Woodcock also come over in considerable numbers in October and have notably been victims to the Lighthouse lantern. Such birds stand in need of protection in the stormy autumn nights no less than do the spring immigrants in April drizzles.

The installation of bird-perches and resting-places at a Lighthouse costs in the first place from £60 to £100, according to the work required, and the running

expenses will probably amount to from £10 to £15 a year each. For cleaning and other purposes the perches and resting-places have to be taken down and re-erected after and before each migration, that is to say twice a year, and the labour involved is considerable, especially at Lighthouses which stand out at sea. In addition to the two Lighthouses completed, the Society now propose to undertake, with the kind permission of Trinity House, the Spurn Head Lighthouse, Yorkshire, and the South Bishop Lighthouse, off Pembroke-shire. At both of these the destruction of birds is frequently most grievous; and as the route of numbers of autumn as well as of spring migrants passes them, it is hoped to have the work completed by the end of the present summer. Knot, Dunlin, Woodcock, Whimbrel, Ring-

Plover, Golden Plover, Lapwing, Sky-lark, Song-Thrush, Redwing, and Starling are noted among the autumn passers-by, with records of 148 birds killed on one night, seventy of a single species on another. Dotterel (one of our disappearing birds), Little Grebe, Storm-Petrel, and Water-Rail are among the species which have been picked up dead at Spurn.

Should funds permit, it is intended subsequently to erect perches and resting-places at Bardsey (Carnarvon), the Outer Fern, and the Skerries Lighthouses. At Bardsey in particular, the numbers of birds which have perished have sometimes been very great, on one occasion the fields for a quarter of a mile round the Lighthouse being strewn with dead birds. The Society's scheme seeks to convert these death-lures into refuges of safety and rest on the way.

The Plumage Importation Bill.

A RESOLUTION calling for legislation in all countries to prevent the destruction of birds for millinery purposes, was carried at the Women's International Congress, in Rome, on May 9th, on the motion of Mrs. Creighton.

At the feather-sale in London on June 4th, 1914, there were offered 16,358 oz. of Egret and Heron plumes—"osprey"—representing about 100,000 birds killed in the nesting time. Among other lots were 8,531 Birds-of-paradise, including 746 *P. rubra*; 4,209 heads and crests of the Goura Pigeon, 1,017 Impeyan Pheasants of the Himalayas, 11,600 Japanese Jays, and 2,840 Kingfishers.

Preaching the annual sermon on humanity to animals, at St. John's (East) Church, Perth, on March 29th, the Rev. Matthew

Stewart, B.D., spoke on various forms of inhumanity to birds, and especially of the most widespread evil of all—the destruction of hundreds of thousands of wild birds to supply an article of trade useless for health, comfort, or happiness, and the witness of an appalling and iniquitous cruelty. Happily the Plumage Bill could not be much longer delayed.

The story is still circulated of bird-protection in Venezuela, and of "garceros" where moulted plumes are laid by protected egrets with the regularity of eggs by a barn-door hen. No naturalist has ever endorsed this story; but one of the latest works on South America, "A Naturalist in the Guianas," by Mr. Eugene André, F.R.G.S., F.Z.S., speaks in the strongest terms of the slaughter

that is going on in the country of the Apure and the Arauca; of the money made by the owners of the breeding-grounds or "garceros" by hiring out the privilege to kill the birds in the nesting-time, and of the "ever-diminishing number of the birds."

In their endeavours to jockey with the plain truths of the case, the trade have found themselves on more than one occasion between the devil and the deep sea. Thus, for example, they protest (1) that France is thirsting for the British Bill which will transfer the business to Paris "without saving a single bird"; (2) that the feather-workers of Paris (estimated now at 5,000, and now at 50,000) will lose their livelihood through the British Bill because the Paris trade will be killed; (3) that French traders are alarmed not because fewer feathers will be used but because they will have to be sold cheaper and therefore profits will be less; (4) that the ostrich-feather trade also will be ruined; (5) that the Bill is a conspiracy to promote the British-Colonial ostrich-feather business at the expense of the Parisian fancy-feather trade; (6) that the trade in London has "nothing to do with the people who kill the birds," cannot control supplies, and is therefore not answerable for the slaughter; (7) that the trade are the only people who can protect the birds and ought to be entrusted with the task. The list might be indefinitely lengthened; for if the many tergiversations of these apologists have proved nothing else they have proved that there is no trust whatever to be put in any one of their statements.

The Government Plumage Bill passed through Committee and was reported to the House, with certain amendments, on

May 19th, ten weeks after the Second Reading. The committee was Standing Committee B, with 17 Members specially added, comprising 8 of the 297 Ayes, 8 of the 15 Noes, and one who was not present at the Second Reading. From the first it was evident that the tactics of the opposition lay mainly in efforts to delay the measure by every possible means: by every "amendment" that could be devised, by inordinately long speeches, and even by the trick, practised on two occasions, of quitting the room to prevent the forming of a quorum. Vigorous efforts were made, inside and outside the House, to confuse the issues, to float suppositions that feather pillows would be illegal, that the ostrich-feather trade would be involved, that ladies would be challenged and molested in the street, etc., etc. An attempt was also made to rouse the suffragists, by the argument that man-made laws should not interfere with women's dress; but this deceived only the "extreme left" of the suffragettes, the main body appreciating the insult conveyed in the jeer that they must be allowed "either votes or feathers." A motion to have "person" defined as not including women, which would have provided an eminently convenient loophole for the business to be "carried on as before," was rejected, though a portion of it remains, declaring a "person" not to be a woman unless she is importing or selling plumage.

In the Report 42 amendments and new clauses appear against the following names: Mr. Glyn-Jones, 19; Sir E. Cornwall, 15; Mr. Denniss, 4; Mr. Watt, 1; Mr. Mooney, 1; Mr. Timothy Davies, 1. These were mostly the joint work of Messrs. Davies, Denniss, Hinds, Glyn-Jones, and Sir E.

Cornwall. As a matter of fact, however, this number by no means covers all those put down, some thirty others being ruled out of order or for other reasons not considered. Generally speaking the majorities were substantial, especially on the principal points, such as the attempt to exempt "moulted" feathers, feathers of "domesticated" birds or "pests"; to empower a warning only for first offence; to exempt Ireland from the Bill; to permit a warrant obtained by a dealer to save him from conviction; to relax the Customs Act, so that goods with which plumage might be smuggled should not be forfeited.

Six pages of "amendments," of precisely the same character with those thrashed out and rejected in committee, have been put down for consideration on the Report Stage by the same small knot of Members.

Great Britain, the Colonies, the Continent, and naturalists the world over, ask "How long?"

The Grand Medal of Honour of the Société Nationale de France and the affiliated Ligue Française pour la Protection des Oiseaux, has been this year awarded to Dr. W. T. Hornaday, of New York, as a token of the appreciation of French *savants* of the leading part taken by him in the successful anti-plumage campaign in the United States.

The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds had an exhibit of "The Story of the Egret" pictures, and of literature, at the International Exhibition of Insects, Fishes, and Birds, held at Paris, June 6th to 21st, 1914. Through the efforts of the Ligue Française, special attention was called to the destruction of birds for millinery, and a thousand copies of the card "Quelques victimes du commerce des plumes" were given away. Captain Tailby visited the Exhibition as representative of the Society.

Economic Ornithology.

THE SWALLOWS.

THE plague of gnats and midges, which has been on the increase for some years, has become well-nigh intolerable this summer in some districts, although the worst season for these pests is yet to come. Once more the question is asked: Where are the Swallows who feed on these insects of the air, and whose decrease has been noted for over a dozen years? There is now little need to ask the question. It is definitely known that the Swallows have in past years been killed by the thousand on migration between this country and their winter home in Africa; that the valley of the Rhone,

and especially the provinces of Gard, Vaucluse, and the Bouches du Rhone, with the Carmague country, have witnessed the wholesale destruction of these precious allies of man, three million, it is reported, being taken in one season at Crau. The flashing wings that should have brought them across the channel to their British homes, have gone to the *plumassiers* of Paris or New York or London to upstand in mockery in women's headgear; the delicate bodies that should have glanced over our meadows and streams have gone to the restaurants to gratify gourmands. M. Severin Baudouy and

others have worked with passionate zeal to have these things brought to light and put an end to. It is believed that of late they have improved to some extent, and that there is real intention on the part of the French authorities to have the law respected and the birds saved. But the consequences of the past are with us, and will be with us for many years to come.

The question is: Will the lesson be learned? Will Great Britain do her part to stay the destruction of other birds of other lands where the plume-hunter is working in league with the insect pests? Will her agriculturists pause to consider that, as the Swallow is to the midge, so are other species of field and garden birds to the wire-worm, the caterpillar, the greenfly, the weevil?

BIRD-PROTECTION IN THE UNITED STATES.

At the annual meeting of the British Science Guild, at the Mansion House, on May 22nd, Sir Boverton Redwood quoted statistics as to the vast loss caused in the United States by the destruction of birds. It was estimated that the birds of Nebraska ate one hundred and seventy cartloads of insects a day, that those of Massachusetts destroyed twenty-one thousand bushel daily, that a single species of hawk saved the farmers of the Western States 175,000 dollars a year by destroying grasshoppers and field-mice. Yet, he added, millions of people engaged in destroying the birds that ate destructive and disease-spreading insects; and the moral of these facts applied also to England.

In many respects America is in advance of Great Britain, having devoted serious and careful study to the economic question. A

Swanley correspondent writes to the R.S.P.B.:—

“I enclose a cutting of an American florists' paper (*The Florists' Exchange*, April 25th, 1914), which may be of interest as showing how much more they seem to realise the value of bird-life than does the average English gardener. We are continually coming across paragraphs in our own papers abusing and blaming the birds for every harm that befalls a crop, and a certain paper recently advised that it was the duty of every farmer to destroy as many Black-birds, Thrushes, etc., as he possibly could. The U.S. have beaten us in their success with the Plumage Bill, and they will probably be the first to obtain an efficient law for the protection of all useful birds.”

The *Exchange* reports a lecture before the Tuxedo Horticultural Society, in which the lecturer alludes to “the fact that no successful agriculture or horticulture would be possible without the help of birds,” whereas it was estimated that the loss to the country through harmful insects was over seven hundred million dollars a year. “Would it not well become our profession,” asked this horticulturist, “if we showed some interest in the welfare of the birds? I think the time is not far off when we shall have to.”

THE FIRST BIRD MEMORIAL.

Mr. Page Croft, M.P., speaking at the Annual Meeting of the R.S.P.B. (March, 1914), referred to the first monument erected in gratitude to birds—the tall column unveiled last October in Salt Lake City commemorating a State's recognition of the value of the Gull. In the days of the early colonists of Utah, when the growing wheat-crop represented the sustenance of the pioneer people, dense swarms of grasshoppers clouded the air and attacked every

green thing in the valley. Starvation stared Utah in the face. Then from the lake advanced an army of Herring-Gulls, coming up in white waves like an aerial sea, and flung itself on the grasshoppers and fed upon them for days until the plague was annihilated and the crops were saved. The tall granite shaft has two Gulls in gilt bronze on its summit, and bronze plaques tell the story. The incident is not unparalleled: but the gratitude is unique.

The Aberdeenshire County Council, having procured an Order entirely exempting every Gull from any protection whatever under the W.B.P. Acts, are offering to provide persons and ammunition for killing all species, including the Kittiwake, which, being a cliff-bird, does not come inland.

SEA-BIRDS AND THE FISHERIES.

The following letter from Mr. J. H. Gurney, of Keswick Hall, Norfolk, appears in the *Ibis* for April, 1914:—

“The allusion made by Mr. W. P. Pycraft to the injudicious action taken by certain Fishery Boards (*Ibis*, 1914, p. 142), who imagine that they are doing service by advocating the slaughter of Cormorants and Gannets, gives rise to a good deal of reflection. If the toll of fish which these birds take is so serious, why are there still so many fish in the sea? This seems a fair argument for the non-advocates of slaughter, especially as the European Gannet (*Sula bassana*) is believed to be on the increase.

“Will you permit me to communicate the following returns—which indeed would seem almost incredible were they not made on the best authority—of the celebrated Herring-fishery at Great Yarmouth in this country, for 1913. They are taken from the official figures, which the Harbour-master is required to issue annually at each of the great ports. The Herring season in

the North Sea lasts approximately from September to December, and last year (1913) it ended, as far as Yarmouth trawlers were concerned, on December 20th. In three months *eight hundred and twenty-four million, two hundred and thirteen thousand* (824,213,000) herrings were brought into the port of Great Yarmouth, and nearly five hundred and thirty-seven millions into the adjoining harbour of Lowestoft. This takes no account of the seventy-five millions which were brought into Grimsby Docks, or of the multitudes carried into Lerwick, Stornoway, and various other places where the fishery is carried on. Having regard to such figures as these, who can question there being enough fish in the sea for man and the birds too?

“The fecundity which the herring, mackerel, whiting, sprat, etc., display, is something altogether astounding; in fact, the process of thinning out their numbers which Gannets and other sea-birds perform, should, as Mr. Pycraft has well remarked, be regarded as beneficent rather than otherwise.

“Near the shore, and at or in the vicinity of river-mouths, or near their breeding-places, it is conceivable that Gannets and other sea-birds may be inimical to the interests of the fishermen. That much may be admitted, but so long as such vast numbers of fish continue to be netted in British seas, it is impossible to argue that Gannets, Cormorants, Shags, Guillemots and Puffins affect the fish supply, except locally, and accordingly it is wrong policy altogether to destroy them.

“If Gannets do harm, why is it that the trawling grounds on the west Hebridean coast, all of them within easy flight of St. Kilda, are among the best that are known to Scotch fishermen? St. Kilda and adjacent islands are the largest metropolis of Gannets and Puffins in the world, but it is evident that the fecundity of herrings, mackerel, haddock, coal-fish, etc., is more than equal to the consumption by these birds, helped as they are by Guillemots, Razorbills, Shags, and Gulls, which breed there in tens of thousands, as many visitors to Borrera, Stack Armine, and Stack Lii testify.

J. H. GURNEY.”

The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds.

COUNCIL MEETING.

THE quarterly Council Meeting was held at the Middlesex Guildhall, S.W., on April 24th, 1914, when there were present: Mr. Montagu Sharpe (Chairman), Mr. Ernest Bell, Miss Clifton, Dr. Drewitt, Hon. Mrs. Drewitt, Miss Hall, Mr. F. E. Lemon (Hon. Sec.), Mrs. F. E. Lemon, Mr. Ogilvie-Grant, Miss Pollock, Mr. Trevor-Battye, and Miss Gardiner (Secretary).

Hon. Secretary's Report.

The Hon. Secretary reported on the Annual Meeting, held on March 5th, and the issue of the Annual Report. Thirty lectures had been given since January 23rd, and fourteen Bird and Tree Festivals held. Notice had been sent to all Schools entered for 1914 of the special Owl Prizes offered by a member of the Council; and arrangements were being made with the Director of Education for Wiltshire, through the Hon. F. S. O'Grady, to invite entries from the elementary schools in that county. Bird Protection Orders had been issued for Bedfordshire, Birmingham (new Order), Norwich, Stockport (new Order), and Tynemouth, and for the county of Waterford.

Finance and General Purposes Committee.

The accounts for the quarter were presented and passed. The following Hon. Secretaries were appointed: Alfreton, Mr. Harold W. Daykin; Hampstead, N.W., Mrs. F. E. Baines, in succession to Mrs. Richard Roscoe, resigned; Tunbridge Wells, Miss Hilda Beeching, The Priory, Tonbridge, in succession to Miss Ellen Beeching, retired.

The heartiest thanks of the Council were voted to Mrs. Roscoe and Miss E. Beeching, who have been connected with the Society almost from the first and who for twenty and twenty-three years respectively have worked for it as Hon. Secretaries. The following Fellows and Members were elected:—

FELLOWS: Russell Coombe (Exeter); Miss M. B. Gamlen (Dawlish); Linnaeus Greening, F.Z.S. (Grappenhall); John Grubb (Winscombe); Alfred Gathorne-Hardy (Donnington); Miss Marie Kleinwart (London, S.W.); Lieut.-Col. Sir C. Wyndham Murray, C.B. (London, S.W.); Lord Newton (Cheshire); G. F. Ormerod (Elland); J. E. Pearson (Bristol); Beville Stanier, M.P. (Shrewsbury); E. J. Stephens (London, S.W.); Mrs. Arthur Tharp (London, W.); Lieut.-Col. Trotter (Midlothian); Colonel Unwin (Sandown, I.W.); Miss Julia B. Williams (Tunbridge Wells).

LIFE FELLOW: A. Goodinch Williams (Plymouth).

MEMBERS: E. P. Alexander (Holt); Allen G. Ambrose (Swanley Junction); Miss B. Berkeley (Sherborne); Tom Broad (London, N.); Miss S. M. Bushell (Formby); Miss F. C. Compton (Holt); Miss W. A. Conn (Lowestoft); Lieut. E. Culme-Seymour (Yelverton); Harold W. Daykin (Alfreton); Miss B. Duff (N. Walsham); Miss M. Elliott (Harpenden); W. H. Fear (Bristol); Mrs. Lawrence Glen (Glasgow); Mrs. Hunter Gray (London, S.W.); T. G. Hewitt (London, W.); Mrs. R. H. Hudleston (Taunton); Mrs. Hutchinson (Bridlington); Mrs. Jones (Bridlington); Miss E. C. Lemon (Blackheath); Mrs. Hamilton Leigh (London, W.); A. R. Lewis (Lingfield); Miss Love (Glasgow); Mrs. C. Mackinlay (Glasgow); Mrs. Maynard (Boroughbridge); Mrs. Nash, Miss R. Nash (Hampstead, N.W.); Mrs. J. J. Pawson (Lesbury); Philip Peabody, Miss Olive W. Peabody (Boston, U.S.A.); Miss M. N. Peel (Clitheroe); Miss Esme Pigott (Horsham); Miss Plumb (Nottingham); Mrs. Pontifex (Bournemouth); J. R. Rodd (Launceston); Mrs.

George Robbins (London, S.W.); Dr. Graham Renshaw (Manchester); Mrs. R. H. S. Scott (Bournemouth); H. Macadam Smith (Hastings); W. H. Smith (Whitchurch, Salop); J. Allen Tregelles (Hoddesdon); Miss Amy Tyrell (Sidmouth); Charles E. Venning (Heamoor); Mrs. Winnington (London, W.); Mrs. Henry Wyllys (Great Yarmouth).

The Publication Committee

Reported the issue of a further edition of Plumage Bill Campaign Leaflets 1, 2, and 3, the card, "Some Victims of the Plume-Trade," and other literature. A large number of copies of the card had been supplied also to the Bird Protection Societies of France, Holland, and Denmark.

Watchers Committee.

In addition to the appointment and supervision of the Society's Watchers, this Committee reported on work at the Lighthouses, the evidence given by Mr. Sharpe and Mr. Lemon before the Departmental Committee on the Bird Protection Acts, and a large amount of correspondence dealing with measures necessary for the preservation of rare birds in various districts.

General Business.

Mr. J. R. B. Masefield, of Cheadle, Staffordshire, was elected a member of the Council in the room of Mr. Conrad Russell, resigned. The Viscountess Galway and Lord Newton were elected Vice-Presidents. The Committees for the year were appointed. Considerable discussion took place with reference to the progress of the Plumage Bill, the proceedings in Committee, and future action; and the donations to date to the Special Fund opened to meet the heavy expenses entailed, were reported.

BIRD PROTECTION IN GREATER BRITAIN.

A most interesting account of the Bird Protection movement in and around Ottawa is given by Dr. Gordon Hewitt, Dominion Ornithologist, in the *Ottawa Naturalist*, March, 1914. The city, like many English localities, "is gaining in population and taxes at the expense of natural beauty"; but two areas unequalled by natural beauty for the purpose, are to be made sanctuaries if only sufficient support is given to the scheme in hand. Seeing that warm sympathy and interest are accorded by the Duke of Connaught, as Governor-General, Mr. Borden, and Sir Wilfred Laurier, success should be assured. One area is a fine natural park, a piece of woodland and forest rescued from lumberman and builder, on the shores of the Ottawa River. The other consists of the grounds and botanical garden of the Government Experimental Farm, where an abundance of trees and shrubs of all kinds, especially those bearing wild fruit, will make it a happy bird-home, and where the Dominion horticulturist has zealously interested himself in bird-protection. Over four hundred nesting-boxes are to be provided by the Ottawa Improvement Commission. Apart from æsthetic motives, Dr. Gordon Hewitt comments:—

"The practical value of the encouragement of birds in both these places is of inestimable importance, as they constitute the most efficient protective agencies of the trees that can be secured, and the cost of their assistance—the cost of the nesting-boxes, etc.—regarded in the light of an insurance premium against insect depredations, is at the lowest rate imaginable."

* * * *

A New Zealand Forest and Bird Protection Society has been successfully organized for the conservation of Wild Nature. Its objects are the inculcation among the public, especially children, of an intelligent interest in native flora and fauna; the preservation of native forests; and the assistance of any

movement, public or private, for protecting forest land. The need for such an association in New Zealand has long been felt, and all members of the R.S.P.B. will heartily wish it prosperity. The Hon. Sec. is Mr. H. G. Ell, M.P., Christchurch, N.Z.

Notes.

ONE feature of the Bird Protection movement in Canada should commend itself to those interested in the matter on this side. With a view to suppressing the wanton destruction of nests and birds by boys in and around the city, the assistance of the Boy Scouts is being secured. "It seems to me," says Dr. Gordon Hewitt, "that as protectors of bird-life and as policemen, the Boy Scouts would furnish an unrivalled auxiliary." There can be no doubt of the advantage to both in associating the two movements, or as to the sympathy of the Chief Scout, General Baden Powell, with the principles of Bird Protection. In England, Mr. Oliver Pike and other writers have sought to strengthen the link; but there is still wanted a definite, practical and recognised co-operation. Three or four years ago the Council of the R.S.P.B. offered to extend to Scouts the Bird and Tree Challenge Shield Competitions if a plan of operation could be satisfactorily organized, and the offer was accepted by the Scouts Council. But the scheme unfortunately got no further.

* * * *

The gradual "uglification" of England in deference to motorists, farmers, and county councils, is calling forth more and more the protests of those who love

the old England of unkept hedgerow, unlopped tree, singing birds, and abundant wild-flowers. What other country could show such hedges and hedge-banks, what country could listen to such exquisite bird-music? Now three destroyers are let loose on the land, says Lord William Cecil in a letter to the *Times*: the flower-collector who has nearly rooted out the primrose and the foxglove; the up-to-date agriculturist, who fells all trees and abolishes hedgerows; and the county council, which mows the roadside so that not even the humblest flower can seed and perpetuate its charm. "We spend thousands of pounds on cultivating the often hideous exotics of other climates where no one can see them, and will not spend pennies to perpetuate the far greater natural beauties of our own country where all the world can admire them." As a fourth factor comes the motorist with his dust and stench, for whom banks must be scraped and trees cut and lopped. From an eastern county a correspondent writes: "Every farmer cuts down hedges to the ground, not a part is left. The country is bare of hedge and tree, and trees are lopped into brown stalks." Some little time ago Lady Laura Ridding put up the same complaint from Hampshire. In parts of Devon the celebrated lanes are reduced to a dusty

trackway between high walls of earth and stones.

* * * *

Lovers of birds have special cause for deploring the loss, in the disaster to the *Empress of Ireland*, of Sir Henry Seton-Karr. Sportsman and big-game hunter though he was, Sir Henry was keenly interested in the protection of birds from the plume-hunter, the collector, and the bird-catcher; and at the annual meeting of the R.S.P.B. (of which he was a member) in 1913, he spoke with special feeling against the killing of Larks to please the gourmand, and the caging of wild birds, whether the Eagle at the Zoo or the Linnet and Chaffinch in its 5-inch cage in the bird-shop, "in violation of every law of their being." He was also a donor to the fund for the protection of migrating birds at lighthouses.

* * * *

"A German Friend of Birds" writes to the R.S.P.B.:—

"Having read in the *Manchester Guardian* the account of the annual meeting of your Society, may I, as a German, venture to make a suggestion in regard to the killing of Larks in this country?"

"While I am by no means certain if a law to that effect exists in Germany, I can say that—at least to my knowledge—hardly anyone would think of killing that lovely

little bird, which it is a delight to see rising towards the sky and warbling its little tune. Coming to England, I was surprised to learn that such a beautiful and innocent singing bird should be allowed to be killed, and the fact that Lark-pie, etc., is considered as a special delicacy corroborates my assumption that there exist no legal measures in England prohibiting the destruction of Larks.

"If I should be correct, may I herewith appeal to you to take steps to save that little bird from further destruction?"

The Lark is, of course, protected by the Bird Protection Acts, being a scheduled bird. But it is little wonder that foreigners come to a contrary conclusion. It is not possible, they might argue, that a common-sense nation would "protect" a bird and yet allow it to be netted by thousands for cage and table, and to appear on the *menu* of the "smart" world even in the nesting-time.

* * * *

Through the efforts of a member of this Society, the Committee of the Albemarle Club decided some little time since to discontinue providing Larks as an article of food at the Club. This is another instance to be added to many previous ones, of the good work that may be done by individuals who have the cause of the birds sufficiently at heart to take personal trouble. It is not, however, every such effort that is successful.

Public School Essay Competition.

All Essays for the Public School Essay Competition should be sent in to the R.S.P.B., or to the school representative by September 30th, 1914, and in any case should reach the Society by October 7th. The subjects are "The British Owls," and "Our Summer Migrants." Full particulars and entry forms can be had from the Secretary, R.S.P.B., 23, Queen Anne's Gate, S.W.

HOW BIRDS USE THEIR FEET.

By C. H. ANDREWES.

["The Legs and Feet of Birds, and their Adaptation to various Habits and Purposes," formed the subject of the Public School Essay Competition (Senior Division) for 1913. The Silver Medal was gained by Christopher H. Andrewes (Highgate School), whose work received high praise from the

judges. The paper is illustrated with good drawings of the feet and footprints of various birds, and it begins with a description of the anatomy of the leg and its structural variety in different bird families. The writer then proceeds:—]

The functions of the feet and legs of birds are many; and they may be roughly divided into three classes: locomotion, prehension, and miscellaneous functions.

The first class comes under many headings.

(i.) *Walking or Running.*

There is considerable variation in the methods in which different birds walk or run, from the rapid rushes of a Sandpiper to the hurried gait of a Starling or the slow walk of a Heron. In the last-named bird the motions can be very clearly seen. The Heron lifts up its foot above the ground, slowly moves it forwards, carefully spreads out the toes, and deliberately places it on the ground again. But sometimes, when the bird sees any likely-looking prey below it, the foot stops still in mid-course, often for some time, and in the most ridiculous position. A Starling does not lift its feet far above the ground, and as do most walking birds, always turns its toes in. In most birds which haunt the ground a great deal, the first toe is rudimentary, and does not give any support in walking. Such birds as Starlings and Rooks often hop a little when in a hurry; and habitual hoppers, such as Blackbirds, and occasionally Hedge-Sparrows, sometimes run for some distance when pressed by time. This seems to me a somewhat peculiar circumstance.

(ii.) *Hopping.*

It is rather difficult to analyse the motions of a bird in hopping. If a common House-Sparrow is watched, it will be seen to raise itself forwards and upwards a little, partly straightening its ankle joint in so doing. Next it pushes itself up and lifts its feet under it; it then gains the ground once more and repeats the process. A Hedge-Sparrow acts in a similar way, but raises its feet less above the ground, and takes hops of varying length. This gives rise to the well-known shuffling motion of the bird.

Occasionally a Hedge-Sparrow hops as much as a foot.

The Chaffinch has a gait of its own. It does not lift its feet far above the ground, and it does not seem to raise both feet simultaneously. They are both in the air at once, but do not leave or reach the ground together. Occasionally the bird takes several typical hops, and often walks a few steps, but a strange combination is its usual practice. The Robin has a cheerful hop, and always points its feet, and especially its legs, outwards.

(iii.) *Wading.*

Wading birds all have long legs, to enable them to walk through fairly deep water, and large feet, to support them on soft mud or sand. A Redshank often wades almost up to its ankle-joints in its search for food. This bird—as, to a much greater extent, the Heron—always walks very slowly through the water, as it thereby encounters less resistance, and does not splash itself.

(iv.) *Climbing.*

The majority of climbing birds have two toes directed backwards. This enables them to obtain a surer grip on rough surfaces. The climbing of a Parrot is very different from that of a Woodpecker. The former grasps the branches of its tree; the latter hangs on to them. Some birds hop-climb, while others walk-climb. Most of the birds of the Parrot's habits walk. A Nuthatch does a straightforward hop, while the actions of a Tree-creeper in ascending a tree are most suggestive of those of a Hedge-Sparrow on the ground.

(v.) *Swimming.*

All birds which swim constantly have more or less webbed or lobed feet. Except those which have all four toes directed forwards, there are few swimming birds which have fully-developed first toes. Most habitual swimmers, moreover, have their legs placed far back on their bodies, as they gain by this more power in swimming.

Such birds as Auks, Cormorants, and Penguins are compelled by this arrangement always to sit bolt upright, while the true Divers even have great difficulty in walking on land. Most swimming birds, as

exemplified by Gulls, Ducks, and Moorhens, paddle their feet alternately. The webs of the feet are expanded during the stroke, but quite contracted and bent up when the foot is brought back again. Ducks, having large feet, paddle fairly slowly, and do not bend the joints between the toes and legs much. But Moorhens, Coots, and to a smaller extent, Gulls, bend their joints more and paddle faster.

In order to steer, birds either paddle with one foot more strongly than with the other, or with one foot only. I have seen Gulls doing this; and one in particular which I watched seemed to be able to bend its joints at any angle required. It was idly swimming in the water, and gently moved one foot occasionally, to keep its position or change it slightly. Besides moving one foot more than the other, it also moved the feet further out from the body or nearer in to it, as required.

(vi.) *Diving.*

The actions of birds in diving can be admirably seen when the diving-birds are being fed at the Zoological Gardens. In Cormorants the action of the feet in diving is chiefly the same as in the surface-swimming of other birds. But they direct their feet more up or down, according to whether they wish to ascend or descend; the feet push upward when the birds wish to descend, and *vice versa*. Once I saw a Shag, when in a hurry, ply both feet simultaneously for some distance. Penguins, in diving, use the feet only for propelling themselves; and feet and wings combined, in steering. Though not strictly to be described as diving, the actions of a Sheldrake when feeding at the bottom of a pond are worth noting. The bird paddles its feet fairly slowly, moving them upwards, in order to maintain its balance. A Swan which I watched did the same thing, but moved its feet more slowly.

(vii.) *As an aid to flight.*

Their legs and feet are also a great assistance to birds in flight. They are used in balancing, steering, rising, and alighting. Birds which have long legs or webbed feet usually have small tails. Some birds are compelled to have long legs for wading purposes, and as these would

hamper the steering movements of the tail in flight, they take its place to some extent. But, the legs being inferior to the tail as a rudder, long-legged birds are rather clumsy steerers. Webbed feet are probably used a little by birds in steering, but not very much.

The mechanism of a bird's foot is all arranged to give good jumping power. The bird must get a good push-off from the ground, to give free play to the wings in starting. A Sparrow can be seen crouching right down to the ground in order to get a better push-off. The Heron gets up in a way somewhat different from this, since, owing to the greater expanse of his wings, and his greater weight, he has to rise much more slowly. Most heavy birds have rather long legs, to enable them to rise more easily; and such birds as Condors are said to be much handicapped by their comparatively short legs, while Swifts can barely rise at all from level ground. Coots, also, may be seen running along the surface of the water when they wish to rise, as they cannot easily do so otherwise.

In alighting, the legs are used in a somewhat similar way, but merely for gaining a footing, as the real stopping is done by the wings. Gannets, however, and sometimes Gulls, are said to paddle with their feet in alighting in order to correct their balance.

Next comes the second class of functions: prehension. The most important use consists, of course, in perching.

(viii.) *Perching.*

To give extra security when grasping a branch, there is an elaborate locking apparatus in a bird's leg. A tendon in the tarsus joins another, which passes on the outer side of the knee-joint. Then, since the knee-bending and toe bending tendons are one, when the leg is bent on the thigh, the toes are automatically locked by the bird's own weight. Therefore, the bird cannot fall off its perch when asleep. The feet of perching birds are admirably constructed for utility on the ground as well as in perching. When on a fairly slender branch, a Robin's toes form a complete circle, as it were, so that it seems as if the bird must fall off; yet I have seen the

bird sit singing for a quarter of an hour on one leg only.

(ix.) *Grasping food.*

Birds of prey grasp their food with their feet, that they may better rend it with their beaks; and Eagles are also said to seize and carry off their prey in their talons. In a similar way, Tits, both Blue and Great, may often be seen grasping a piece of food in one foot while standing on the other. Crows are said to do the same thing; while the Blue Tit often goes even further, and grasps the food with both feet, while sitting back on its tail.

(x.) *Hanging.*

A Swift, as was noticed before, has all four toes directed forwards, as practically the only purpose for which it uses its feet is for clinging to rough, perpendicular surfaces.

Then there are miscellaneous functions of birds' feet, on the majority of which the writer has made no personal observations.

(xi.) Domestic Fowls and Game-birds use their feet for scratching, but most birds use their beaks only for such purposes.

(xii.) Grebes have a saw-like edge to their feet, which they are said to use for

cutting water-weeds when swimming in water choked up with such growths.

(xiii.) Cocks, of course, and also Coots and some Game-birds, use their feet in fighting; and Coots are also said to employ them for splashing water into the face of an attacking bird of prey.

(xiv.) Falcons, such as the Peregrine, use their great hind claw—or heel, as it is technically termed—for striking down their prey, when they seize it in their talons before it reaches the ground.

(xv.) Finally, there is a comb on the feet of Nightjars, the use of which has occasioned much dispute. The most probable explanation seems to be that it is used for combing the legs of beetles and such things from the bristles on the bird's mouth. There is a similar comb on the Bittern's foot, the use of which is not evident.

In a comparatively short essay it is impossible to do more than touch upon the many uses and forms of birds' feet and legs, and to prove shortly how great is their interest. But quite a brief consideration of the subject will suffice to show that it is a study far more interesting than others which at first sight may appear less commonplace.

Bird-and-Tree (Arbor) Day.

BEFORE the next number of *Bird Notes and News* is issued, all Essays for the 1914 Competition should be in the hands of the Judging Committee; but, as last year, they may be written and forwarded, to suit the convenience of schools and the date of holidays, either before or after the summer vacation. It is much hoped that all Teams who have been at work will send in papers; forms to accompany them will be circulated during July, and any School accidentally omitted is asked to apply to the Secretary of the R.S.P.B.

* * * *

As an instance of the excellent work done by some of the Society's Cadets, a letter

may be quoted which has been received from a school in a not very promising urban district, where a large "Circle" has been formed of what may be termed Bird and Tree Scouts. One boy on his round in the early morning came upon two soldiers shooting birds. "He told them he belonged to the 'Bird Society,' and they stopped and walked away." Another boy learned during the Easter holidays that birds were being caught on the cliffs at a certain seaside resort. In both cases further steps were taken by the headmaster on the boys' reports, and the satisfactory results may save many hundreds of birds.

* * * *

The naturalist who writes under the well-known pseudonym of "East Sussex" has some pleasant remarks about Bird and Tree work in an article on Birds-nesting in the *Globe* (April 28th, 1914). "Boys," he says, "will always be bird-nesters, and legislative measures to stop them are not much of a success. But there is birds-nesting and birds-nesting—the old and destructive, the new and intelligent."

"Of late the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds and a few more enlightened school teachers have been trying to teach country children to study instead of persecute the birds, and one hopes that the bird-nesting boy is beginning to see that there are possibilities beyond egg-sucking in his springtide calling. This new method of dealing with the bird-nesting boy is a great deal more likely to achieve its object than all the legislation in the world.

"He is to be encouraged to go birds-nesting, instead of forbidden to touch the eggs, and to regard the joy of finding them as a fitting reward for his labours. It is an appeal to his better nature, and it is hoped that by helping him to learn about the rare and more useful birds he will in time regard them, and the commoner sorts as well, with their nests and eggs, as something more interesting than mere objects upon which to exercise his idle powers of destruction and wanton cruelty.

"And the writer can vouch for it that the schoolboy is not such a very bad subject to impress if you take him the right way. His ignorance of the things about him is at present extraordinary."

* * * *

All who have read Essays written by Bird and Tree Cadets will agree with "East Sussex" that many schoolboys and girls have in them the making of bright and sympathetic young naturalists, and all who are familiar with the country will support his statement as to the astounding and deplorable ignorance of country birds and

country flowers among country children—and not children only.

* * * *

In "An Introduction to Practical Geography," by Messrs. Hugh Richardson and A. T. Simmons (Macmillan & Co.), are some useful and practical remarks on the "Use of the Country," addressed more particularly to town children; the law of trespass and rights of way, the duties with regard to hay-fields, preserves, the closing of gates and non-damaging of fences, etc. The amenities cannot be taught too soon; and it is pretty certain that the boys and girls who learn respect for Birds and Trees will learn, with that respect, to have regard for the farmer's crops, the keeper's cover, the gorse and heather of the common. Thus there will be no longer need for the landowner to close his park against the destructive holiday-rambler, and for the *Spectator* to protest against beauty-spots being treated as places for the shooting of rubbish by trippers.

IN THE COURTS.

SHOOTING A RAVEN.—At *Lymington*, on May 9th, James Harvey, shepherd, of Lisle Court, South Baddesley, pleaded guilty to shooting a hen Raven. He said he thought it was a Crow, and afterwards sold it to a gentleman in *Lymington* for 5s. Ordered to pay the costs, 7s. (The Ravens of the south coast, from Devon to Kent, would have been exterminated before now but for the efforts of the R.S.P.B., who employ Watchers to guard the one nesting pair. The prosecution was instituted on their information. The name was not stated of the *Lymington* gentleman, whose action in buying the bird was as illegal as that of the shepherd in killing it, nor whether he, too, thought it was a Crow.)

ANOTHER BITTERN SHOT.—At *East Harling* (Norfolk), Edward Petch, gamekeeper, was

fined 20s. and costs for shooting a Bittern. The bird, which had been sent to Sir Edmund C. Nugent, was ordered to be forfeited. Defendant pleaded that he thought it was a duck.

THE POLE TRAP IN BUCKS.—At *Chesham*, on April 15th, Harry Whitty and Thomas Glenister, gamekeepers, were convicted of placing Pole-Traps at Chartridge, Chesham. On information supplied by the R.S.P.B., an Inspector of the R.S.P.C.A. visited the place and found four of these cruel and illegal traps, on platforms erected against trees, all baited, and fastened with chains so that a bird caught would probably hang by the leg until it died. The Act has been in force ten years, but such traps continue to be set

on private land, where discovery is difficult unless private information is given. Defendants were fined 15s. and costs.

TAKING PLOVERS' EGGS.—At *Cheadle*, on May 16th, Clement and Wilfred Forrester and Thomas Swinson were fined for taking four Plovers' eggs at Bradley. Two plain-clothes constables had been on the watch, and the Chairman remarked that the taking must be stopped, as the birds were most useful to the farmer, and the trespass in search did a good deal of damage.

SHOOTING A SWAN.—At *Southampton*, on April 24th, Herbert Pain was fined the full penalty and costs for shooting a wild Swan from a boat in Southampton Water.

Plumage Bill Literature.

THOSE who are following the progress of the Plumage question and wish to obtain publications on the subject may be glad of the following references, which indicate some sources of information:—

Report of the Select Committee of the House of Lords, 1908, with Minutes of Evidence. Government Blue Book, House of Lords, No. 137 of 1908. (Wyman & Sons.)

Report of the Debate on the Second Reading in the House of Commons, March 9th, 1914. Parliamentary Debates, Vol. 59, No. 20. (Wyman & Sons.)

Feathers and Facts: a reply to the Plume-Trade. 1911. (R.S.P.B.)

Pros and Cons of the Plumage Bill, by James Buckland. 1911. (The Author, Royal Colonial Institute.)

Protection of Wild Birds in India and Traffic in Plumage. By P. T. L. Dodsworth, F.Z.S. *Journal of the Bombay Natural History Society*, May 20th, 1911.

The Plumage Bill, by G. A. B. Dewar. *Standard*, March 29th and May 3rd, 1911.

The Trade in Feathers, by Christian Richardson. *The Westminster*, Toronto, December, 1911.

Victims of Woman's Vanity, by M. Morrison. *Lady's Realm*, April, 1910. (Reprinted by the R.S.P.C.A.)

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Brean Down : Beach and Cliff.



Brean Down : Farm and Old Wall.

Bird Notes & News

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:: :: FOR THE PROTECTION OF BIRDS :: ::

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AUTUMN, 1914.

[No. 3.

The Plumage Bill.

NEVER perhaps has a Parliamentary Bill been more eagerly looked for, more widely and heartily supported, and more near to success than the Importation of Plumage (Prohibition) Bill, which should by this time have been part of the law of the land. Introduced in the first place a year ago by Mr. Hobhouse, Mr. Buxton (now Lord Buxton), and Mr. E. S. Montagu, on behalf of the Government: re-introduced in February last: passed by the House of Commons, on Second Reading, by the overwhelming majority of 297 to 15: reported by Grand Committee after every possible method of resistance and obstruction had been tried by the handful of opponents, there remained only the Report Stage in the House, with the Third Reading. At the last moment came the storm-burst of War, overwhelming the civilization of a Continent.

To say that the arduous work and the heavy outlay of the Society for a twelvemonth, in supporting this Bill, has therefore been thrown away, would be wholly a mistaken view. The end of the year's work is, it is true, a bitter disappointment. Up to and even beyond the terrible and memorable Bank Holiday of August, 1914, it still seemed possible that the Bill might go through. Little more than a month before that day, it is worth noting, Professor Schillings, of Berlin, had been in London, urging, as a naturalist,

the importance of the British lead to Germany in this matter, and the need for the co-operation of the two nations. But in this connexion it must be said also that the Plumage Trade is very heavily weighed with German influence, and that the irreconcilability of a German receiving-port, with Paris as head-buyer, was one of the factors that emphasized the importance of retaining London as central mart.

The gains from the campaign have been great. In the first place it has served thoroughly to sound public opinion. For many years naturalists had been agreed as to the appalling character of the trade in birds' feathers; and there was good evidence of the trend of general feeling even while a section of womankind adorned themselves in the extreme of Red Indian fashion. The actual Introduction of a Government Bill of a genuine, thorough and practical description, brought this feeling to a head with remarkable and indisputable force. While action was "in the air," or promised to be partial and unsatisfactory, support was languid. With a decisive measure in view it became at once urgent and imperative. If the Press may be taken as the pulse of the country, it was made plain that almost every section of the public was with the Government in the proposals of their Bill. Not only the *Times*, the

Saturday Review, the *Spectator*, the *Nation*, the *Daily Chronicle*, *Daily News*, *Daily Mail*, *Daily Citizen*, *Globe*, *Westminster Gazette*, and *Pall Mall Gazette*, but papers as widely apart as the *Inquirer* and the *Sporting and Dramatic News*, the *Methodist Times*, *Nature*, and the *Referee*, the *Queen* and *Reynolds's Newspaper*, together with the great provincial dailies like the *Dundee Advertiser*, the *Liverpool Courier*, the *Western Daily Press*, the *East Anglian Daily Times*, the *Nottingham Guardian*—to name but a few—have been absolutely at one in commending the Bill and urging "no delay." Their editorials have been accompanied or followed by letters from readers in a way which indicated how extensive was the sympathy they evoked.

The long period covered by the Parliamentary discussion—practically the whole period of the session—has had also another result—it has demonstrated, for the benefit of Ministers, the House, and the world at large what are the arguments, the demands, the tactics, the sincerity, of the Trade party. The Government from the first promised, and gave, every possible consideration to the opponents of the measure, numerically negligible though they were. In spite of the proportion of 17 to 1 of Ayes and Noes for the Second Reading, they were equally represented in the Members placed on the Grand Committee for the consideration of the Bill. The egregious manner in which, pushing this advantage to the farthest limits, the Noes sought to delay discussion and to fritter away time in worthless trifling with the same object, was dealt with in the Summer Number of *Bird Notes and News*. When after twelve sittings the committee stage at

last closed, Mr. Hobhouse still made every attempt to meet the irreconcilables, by such concessions as would have made the Bill a useful measure still, but only the first step to that which is required. Those who knew the Trade from having been intimate with its tergiversations and evasions for the past twenty years, guessed pretty well what must be the end of such attempts. The Trade party, big with inflated schemes and bubble propositions, would accept no conditions that would in any real sense affect the traffic. They would propose regulations which obviously could not be carried out, and dictate terms that would leave them laughing in their sleeves over a dust-blinded public. They would offer to do without birds they could not procure or did not want, and to give the ægis of their precious protection to a species here and a species there, as though their native hunters were expert collectors of the highest ornithological knowledge and the surest honour; but the bulk of the world's birds must be left to their mercy and their greed.

Their manœuvres for delay, delay, and yet again delay, have been crowned by the German Emperor. It may be trusted that the appalling war upon man will at least shut down the plume-market and lead even the most frivolous of women to understand that the day for twenty-guinea aigrettes and flaunting paradise-plumes is not now. It is also to be trusted that the utter futility of discussing terms and offering concessions to a party which has no honest intention of abating one jot of its trade or one tittle of its profits, has been sufficiently proved to expedite the passing of a comprehensive measure next year.

Notes.

It is most earnestly hoped that subscribers to the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds will keep up their payments this year so far as possible, in order that the work of the Society may be maintained and no step backward be necessary. Owing to the slender yearly income, the invested capital is very small; and a decrease in funds at the present time would not only starve effort in many directions where immediate action is needed, but would necessarily destroy to a large extent the effect of past labours and expenditure. It may also be remembered that the provision of work, and payment, whether for Watchers or for printers, is direct service to the country in the present crisis.

* * *

Some of the R.S.P.B. Watchers are acting as Town and Special Guards in the districts where they are employed; and for this work they have been given permission to use the field-glasses with which the Society furnishes them for Watching purposes.

* * *

It is needless to say that the R.S.P.B. stock of Nesting-Boxes will not be replenished this autumn from Germany. Bird-lovers who had ordered, or were proposing to order, Boxes for next spring are asked to excuse possible delay in meeting requirements. The industry is one that should take good root on English soil, and it is hoped that arrangements may be made for the supply of British-made Boxes on the Berlepsch pattern.

* * *

A correspondent writes from Shetland (Aug. 4, 1914):

“A pair of Swallows this spring built a nest under a bridge at Sellafirth, a small

village two and a half miles from Gutcher, and have hatched their young. I am carefully watching the nest in case of it being disturbed. Never before has a Swallow been known to breed in this part of Shetland.”

The bird is an occasional visitor to the Shetlands, Orkneys, and Hebrides, and even to Iceland, but a nest so far north as Gutcher is very exceptional.

* * *

A different reception has been given to some of the Swallow family in the Test Valley, Hampshire, where considerable feeling was aroused this summer by the discovery that certain sand-pits, and also a cottage roof, had been wired over nests of Sand-Martins and Swallows during the actual breeding-season, shutting in and thus starving the birds. Explanations offered state that the netting was ordered in the early spring—but *not done*; also that dangerous pits may be netted to save the birds, and that thatched roofs must be protected. Unfortunately it has also been urged in local papers that birds such as Swallow, Swift, Heron, Kingfisher, and, in short, any species which includes flies or young trout in its dietary should be cleared from a trout stream. The spirit of the angler is better expressed by a writer on “The Fisherman’s Friends” in the *County Gentleman* (June 20th, 1914), who writes on the very birds the commercial syndicate would annihilate, and adds: “Whatever the angler’s tastes may be originally, sooner or later he will find the love of wild life growing within him, for his sport takes him to delightful spots where nature reigns supreme, and where the ruthless

hand of the keeper has not wiped out everything that is not game."

* * *

A few years ago the question was before the Salmon and Trout Association, when Mr. Willis Bund well argued that before the Swallow tribe were blacklisted for destroying aquatic flies, it should be proved that a decrease in flies corresponded with an increase of the birds. We know now, even better than in 1909, that the birds are seriously decreasing.

* * *

Mr. Cornelius Hanbury draws attention to the sins of the House-Sparrow in taking possession of Swallows' nests. He writes:

"For some time past I have observed that during the building of the Swallows' nests around my house the Sparrows habitually place themselves so as to watch the progress of the nest, and when it is sufficiently advanced for their purpose they take possession and begin to carry grass, etc., to form a nest in the structure, and fight off the Swallows. They even attack the Swallow when sitting, and have been known at my house actually to lay hold of the sitting Swallow and drag her out of her nest."

* * *

England has not much experience of parasitic birds, for here the great majority of species decently build their own nests and hatch their own eggs; but it is curious to note that in another part of the world one of the Swallow family is among the sinners. In his "Argentine Ornithology" Mr. Hudson gives an account of the manner in which the Tree Swallows take possession of the nests of the Oven-bird.

* * *

The successful working of the Bird Protection laws in Egypt, brought to the notice of Mr. Montagu Sharpe during his

visit to that country last year, is chronicled (in the *Report* of the Zoological Service in connexion with the Egyptian Ministry of Public Works) by Captain Stanley Flower, Director. Although it was only in May, 1912, that the laws as to shooting-licences and the protection of birds useful to agriculture were made, the results are already most encouraging. As was to be expected, there has been a certain amount of opposition from natives of Southern Europe living in Egypt, who had been accustomed to eat every kind of little bird they could manage to kill, but the public generally, says Captain Flower, have thoroughly supported the regulations; officials of Government departments, of the Khedivial Agricultural Society, and of Messrs. Thomas Cook and Sons, have given whole-hearted assistance; and private gentlemen have helped by making the laws known to their friends and employees and by reporting illegal shooting.

"The omdehs and sheikhs of villages and owners of agricultural land visited during the year are all quite enthusiastic on the subject of Bird Protection, both from the practical side of the birds checking the ravages of insects in their crops and from the æsthetic or sentimental side of preserving from persecution such birds as the Stone-Curlew, locally known as the 'Karawan.'"

* * *

A note to the *Report* explains the reverence in which this bird is held by the *fellahin*. The cry of the Stone-Curlew, or Norfolk Plover, is supposed to resemble the Arabic words "El Moulk Lak Lak ya Rab," meaning "The Universe is Thine, Thine, O God," and thus the bird is held to be continually praising the Almighty, and to bring good luck to anyone upon whose land it dwells.

Economic Ornithology.

FROM correspondents of the R.S.P.B.:—

“You may like to know that one of the parish grandfathers, who has all his life waged war upon the birds that ate his peas, has this year been obliged by increasing physical infirmity to resort to more peaceful methods. He put saucers of water between the rows, and the birds have left the peas alone.”

“A friend of mine says her gooseberry trees are being devoured by caterpillars. The bushes are under a cage; and though the door is open during the winter the birds do not enter freely enough to save them from the plague.”

From Mr. S. L. Mosley, Huddersfield:—

“A friend of mine who is a gardener told me that two summers ago a pair of Blue Tits nested in a wall adjoining his garden. One of these greenhouses was very badly infested with green-fly. One day when the Tits were about he shut down the ventilators, opened the door of the infested house, and with the assistance of one of his men and a little patient and gentle manœuvring, managed to get a Tit into the greenhouse. He then shut the door and left it for nearly an hour. At the end of that time he opened the ventilators. Presently the bird came out and flew away. But soon it returned with its partner, and they both entered the house and remained some time. This was the first of many visits, and in less than a week scarcely a green-fly could be found in the greenhouse.”

BIRDS AND FRUIT.

“In July the fruit-eating birds take their fullest toll from the crops that they have helped to defend from insect pests. Small birds of normally blameless character are

corrupted by the wealth of temptation at this season, and join the Blackbirds in attacks on the gardeners' beds. Robins and Willow-Wrens eat red currants, and the slender broods of young Willow-Wrens slip easily through netting of ordinary mesh.

“The total damage done by Robins and Willow-Wrens is small, and is made good many times over by their destruction of caterpillars. Even at the height of the fruit-season the tap, tap of the Thrushes can be heard about the garden as they break up snails on their chosen anvil-stones. Blackbirds are the largest consumers of fruit in most gardens, and do serious damage where there is ample cover for their nesting in neighbouring copses, hedges, and shrubberies. But they are home-keeping birds, and help to destroy pests in the same gardens where they take their pay. . . .

“Fruit farmers are apt to attack the Wild Birds Protection Acts as responsible for the undoubted increase of fruit-eating birds in many districts. In the case of the most mischievous species the influence of those Acts is probably almost immaterial. The multiplication of Starlings cannot be accounted for satisfactorily by any one cause, and certainly there is no reason to suppose that any protection afforded by the Acts is the secret of their increase. . . . The prime cause of the increase of Blackbirds, Bullfinches, and other birds which attack fruit or fruit-trees is the increase of the fruit and trees which they attack.

“It must be remembered that fruit is not the staple food of any British bird. Year in, year out, most of the fruit-robbers live on worms, slugs, caterpillars, and insects; fruit is an intermittent luxury during the summer months.”—*Times*, July 8th, 1914.

The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds.

COUNCIL MEETING.

THE Council of the Society held their Quarterly Meeting at the Middlesex Guildhall, on July 17th, when there were present: Mr. Ernest Bell (in the chair, in the unavoidable absence of the Chairman); Miss Clifton, Hon. Mrs. Drewitt, Dr. Drewitt, Miss Hall, Mr. W. H. Hudson, Mr. F. E. Lemon (Hon. Secretary), Mrs. F. E. Lemon, Miss Pollock, Captain Tailby, and Miss Gardiner (Secretary).

Hon. Secretary's Report.

The Hon. Secretary reported the issue of Bird Protection Orders for the Isle of Ely (renewal), Norfolk (amended Order), and Oldham (new Order). Four lectures had been given since May 1st, and eight Bird-and-Tree Festivals had been held. The action taken for the purpose of having Maidenhead Thicket declared a protected area for wild birds had unfortunately been unsuccessful. A thousand additional copies of *Bird Notes and News*, Summer Number, had been printed and circulated, and considerable attention had been devoted by the Press to the article on the Protection of Migrating Birds at Lighthouses, giving an account of the Society's bird-rests. The journal is now supplied for the tables of over two hundred Public Libraries.

Finance and General Purposes Committee.

The accounts for the quarter were passed. It was reported that Mr. Robert Williams had resigned the Hon. Secretaryship for Cornwall, on account of political engagements; and Miss H. Gotch had resigned for Kettering on leaving the county, Miss M. Berrill, Pytchley Manor,

being appointed her successor. The following new Fellows and Members were elected:—

FELLOWS: Maurice E. Denny (Dumbar-ton); Rev. Dr. James Drummond (Oxford); G. A. Macmillan (London, S.W.); Mrs. Byres Moir (London, W.); W. H. Patterson (London, S.W.); J. A. Pownall (Cheshire); Miss Sawbridge (Hungerford).

MEMBERS: Henry E. Addison (London, N.W.); Miss Anderson (Kilmarnock); W. P. Birch (Steyping); Miss C. Boys (Worthing); E. T. Brown (Berkhamsted); Dr. Edward Burd (Shrewsbury); Miss Alice Burnell (Tunbridge Wells); Arthur W. Crossley (London, N.W.); W. A. Dilley (Huntingdon); Lieut.-Colonel Duthie (London, W.); Miss A. M. Elton Fripp (Burnham); W. E. Glegg (London, N.); J. R. Gleghorn (London, N.W.); C. Gostling (Hove); Mrs. E. Greene (Berkhamsted); Mrs. Hughes (Gidea Park); Miss L. I. Lumsden, LL.D. (Murtle, N.B.); Mrs. A. Morton (Shettisham); Miss Evelyn Nickels (London, N.W.); Miss Pownall (Cheshire); Mrs. Herbert Scarfe (Totteridge); F. Smalley, F.Z.S. (Carnforth); Lady Thomas (Wooburn); Miss J. V. Vaudrey (Derby).

The Watchers Committee.

A general report of the work in the 1914 season was presented.

General Business.

The Duke of Abercorn and Admiral Morrell were elected Vice-Presidents of the Society. Mr. J. P. Thijsse and Mr. Alphonse Burdet (Holland), Dr. Albarracin (Buenos Ayres), and M. Severin Baudouy (Sainte-Cecile, France), were nominated as Hon. Fellows, in view of their eminent services for the protection of bird-life in their respective countries. Captain Tailby reported on his visit to the Exposition Internationale at Paris; his interviews with the

President of the Société d'Acclimatation de France and with the President and Secretary of the Ligue Française pour la Protection des Oiseaux; and the efforts to be made for the better enforcement of the bird-protection laws of France, especially as regards migrants. The proceedings in Grand Committee, position, and prospects of the Government Plumage Bill were reported. Arrangements were made for the judging of the Public School and Elementary School Essays.

Three members of the Council of the Society—Captain Tailby, Mr. Meade-Waldo, and Mr. Hastings Lees—have sons on active service in the War. Captain E. R. Meade-Waldo is one of the many young officers whose weddings have been expedited by the call to arms; his marriage with Miss Gurney, daughter of Mr. J. H. Gurney, taking place at St. Botolph's, Cambridge, immediately before his departure with the Expeditionary Force on September 6th.

Under the heading "Anti - Cruelty Work in other Lands," the *National Humane Review* (Albany, New York) for September, 1914, contains a sympathetic review of the work of the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, making special mention of its fight for the Plumage Bill, its work at the Lighthouses, the Watchers, the Bird-and-Tree Competitions, and the quarterly organ, *Bird Notes and News*. The *Review* is the organ of the American Humane Association, which aims at the protection of both children and animals. Its President, Dr. Stillman, was in England this summer, and a welcome visitor at the office of the R.S.P.B. shortly after the outbreak of the War.

BREAN DOWN.

THE breeding-season of 1914 has been a very successful one at Brean Down, the R.S.P.B. Bird Sanctuary on the Somerset coast, and also in the case of most of the rare birds whose nesting-areas are guarded by the Society's Watchers. The Brean Down Ravens got off two young ones safely in a new home, their old site having been appropriated by the Peregrine Falcons, who reared one strong and lusty young one, a tiercel. Both nests were in inaccessible places, hard to see and impossible to get at without ropes. On one occasion, during the spring, the Watcher came across three men with ropes and photographic apparatus, looking for rare birds' nests. "I asked them," he writes, "to show me their permission from the Society. They had none. I did not show them the nests, and I do not think they will try again, as they were obviously not climbers."

Shelducks have hatched out an unusual number of young; there have been more Wheatears about than have been observed before; Swallows and Swifts have done well; and altogether Mr. Ernest Hawkins' care has been rewarded. The new tenant of the Fort, Mr. Bayley, has also cordially cooperated in the Society's efforts. There is every promise that in time this singularly interesting peninsula, which was in a fair way of being depleted of its rare birds, will become one of the most important bird-haunts in the south of England. The Society, however, is able to preserve it only by renting the shooting-rights, and this is a considerable charge on the Watchers' Fund.

THE PARIS EXHIBITION.

THE Committee of the Exposition Internationale d'Insectes, de Poissons d'Ornement, et d'Oiseaux de Voliere, held in Paris in June last, under the presidency of Prince Pierre d'Arenberg, awarded the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds a Diplôme de Premier Prix, in the section "Protection of Birds." The Grand Prix in the class went to the Netherlands, and others to the Ligue Française pour la Protection des Oiseaux, the Société d'Agriculture de la Gironde, and the Société d'Agriculture du Lot et Garonne.

BIRD-RESTS AT LIGHTHOUSES.

THE third of the Lighthouses to be fitted with bird-rests by the R.S.P.B. is the South Bishop Lighthouse, off Pembrokeshire, South Wales; and the installation here was completed by the Trinity House engineers by the end of August, 1914. It was particularly desir-

able that the rests should be in place before the autumn migrations began, as large numbers of winter migrants to this country pass this light and many a Fieldfare, Redwing, Skylark, and Plover is in danger of death at the lantern on dark and stormy nights.

OBITUARY.

THE Rev. Edmund Thomas Daubeney, whose death occurred at Southacre Rectory, Norfolk, in August last, took a keen and active interest in the R.S.P.B. Bird-and-Tree Competitions, and until the present year was one of the local judges of the Norfolk Essays. He was well known to readers of *Bird Notes and News* through the useful papers on the economic value of the Gull, Heron, and Dipper, which he contributed to its pages in 1912-13. Mr. Daubeney was a constant student of bird-life and a keen observer. He was seventy years of age.

The Plume-Trade.

THE Netherlands Bird Protection Society sends out with its Year Book for 1913-14 a copy of the R.S.P.B. pictorial card "Some Victims of the Plume-Trade," with the titling "Enkele slachtoffers van den vereen-handel." There is also a forcible article on this traffic, with figures taken from the London Sales.

A correspondent writes to the R.S.P.B. :—

"Thirty years ago, when I first went to South Africa, the most beautiful birds gathered to be fed on the carriage-drive of the house where I was received to be married, near Cape Town. I think they were Weavers. They built hanging nests in the fir-trees at the foot of the mountain. Their plumage was most brilliant—bright

green with yellow breasts. When I again went to the Cape some years later these birds had almost vanished. When I visited South Africa in 1911-12 they had completely disappeared, as had many other birds I knew years ago. In the Army and Navy Stores' millinery department some months ago I noticed little birds from the Transvaal." The writer adds: "Women decorate themselves with these feathers and plumes to attract the attention of men. If men were to show their dislike of such so-called adornments, women would speedily cease to wear them."

CANADA PROHIBITS IMPORTATION.

CANADA has not been long in bringing her Customs Tariff into line with that of the United States as regard the importation of plumage. Schedule C

(Prohibited Goods) of the Customs Tariff, 1907, has been amended by the addition of the following clause (1212):—

“Aigrettes, egret plumes, or so-called osprey plumes, and the feathers, quills, heads, wings, tails, skins, or parts of skins of wild birds either raw or manufactured.”

The prohibition does not extend to (a) the feathers or plumes of Ostriches; (b) the plumage of the English Pheasant and the Indian Peacock; (c) the plumage of wild birds ordinarily used as articles of diet; (d) the plumage of birds imported alive; (e) specimens imported under regulations of the Minister of Customs for any natural history or other museum or for educational purposes.

The clause comes into operation on January 1st, 1915.

EGRETS IN VENEZUELA.

THE Consular Report for the year 1913 on the trade of Ciudad Bolívar (Venezuela), furnished by Mr. C. H. de Lemos, states that over-speculation in feathers, coupled with lowered prices for balata-gum, has caused a general feeling of depression in commercial circles in that country. The return shows that the total export of Heron and Egret feathers for the year was 2,426 kilos, value £126,596; other feathers and plumage, 2,001 kilos, value £6,661. The paragraph dealing with feathers is as follows:—

“Exports of this article in 1913 were more than twice as great as in the previous year, and the highest hitherto recorded. Prices ruled high on the whole, and there was a good deal of over-speculation, causing losses and considerable monetary stringency towards the end of the year. The closing of the American market by the pro-

hibition of the importation of Egret feathers, and the possibility of the loss of the British market by the passing of the Plumage Bill, have caused uncertainty with regard to the future of this article. It is therefore quite possible that the export in 1914 will be below that of 1913.”

The increased export was entirely in “osprey,” other feathers showing a marked decrease.

EGRETS IN EGYPT.

“THE success of protecting the Egrets, *Ardea bubulcus* or *Ardea ibis*, has so far exceeded the most sanguine expectations. Considerably over 1,000 birds were hatched and reared during 1913, and spread themselves about the country, and are to be seen systematically working through the bersim and cotton-fields, searching, plant by plant, for their insect food. Reports received from the provinces of Daqahlia, Sharqia, Qaliubia, and Menufia, mention Cattle Egrets appearing in the fields of villages where no birds of this species had been seen for ten, twelve, or more years, and their reappearance, it seems, is hailed with delight by the fellahin.

“Only one case of Egrets being illegally taken has been heard of, and that proved to have had the well-meant intention of founding a fresh colony in a province in which these birds had become extinct.

“I regret to say, however, that plumes of *Ardea bubulcus* and other species of Egrets are still only too frequently to be seen worn by European women, either in their hats by day or in their hair by night, at social functions in Cairo.”—(Report of the Zoological Service, Ministry of Public Works, Egypt, for 1913, by Captain Flower).

THE SOLOMON ISLANDS.

A King's Regulation (No. 6 of 1914) has been issued by the High Commissioner for the Western Pacific, amending the provisions in regard to the exportation of birds and plumage from the British Solomon Islands and the Gilbert and Ellice Islands Protectorates.

The new Regulation provides that any person shall be guilty of an offence, and liable to a penalty of £5, who exports or attempts to export the skin or plumage of any wild bird specified in the schedule, issued from time to time by the Resident Commissioner, that may be killed, wounded, or taken in the Protectorates. Any part of the bird, and also the nest and eggs, are included in the prohibition, and are to be forfeited on conviction.

BIRD PROTECTION IN SPAIN.

THE Society for the Protection of Animals and Plants of Catalunya, which has its central office in Barcelona, is doing good work for the wild birds; and a recent number of its interesting *Bulletin* contained an admirable article, "En favor de las Aves," by Señor Emilio Tarré, who is also a member of the R.S.P.B. In further allusion to the subject, Señor Tarré writes to the British Society:—

"At present I am seeking through this Society for the Protection of Animals and Plants to call the Government's attention to the capture of birds by means of nets on the Mountains of Asturias. The species usually taken are the Chaffinch, Brambling, Linnet, Goldfinch, Siskin, and the House-Martin and Swallow.

"The last two are protected by law; the other species may be taken from February 20th to September 1st.

"The people generally have a regard for the Swallows; but there are many bird-catchers who take them with nets for the sake of their plumage.

"Spanish opinion in favour of bird-protection cannot, as is the case in your country, and in France, Germany, and elsewhere, count on any deputies in the Cortes. Our efforts are directed to the improvement of the game-laws, with the idea that in this way we may succeed in getting the use of nets abolished: but we are not sanguine."

The need for Señor Tarré's efforts is emphasised by a letter received by the R.S.P.B. from an English lady, who writes (June 6th, 1914):—

"Riding just lately over the Picos di Europa in the Asturias, N.W. Spain, I found on the tops of the lower hills innumerable wattled hurdles, with poles for stretching nets between them. The peasants who were with me made me understand that these were for catching migrating birds. This was obviously true, as the scattered feathers showed only too sadly. To judge from the number of hurdles, they must catch thousands of birds. It would not be worth while clambering up those hills for less."

BIRDS AND POETS.

To the several anthologies dealing with birds—among which Dr. C. H. Poole's "Treasury of Bird Song" is probably the favourite—has now to be added THE WINGED ANTHOLOGY, compiled by Mrs. Irene Osgood and Horace Wyndham (London: J. Richmond, Ltd., 3s. 6d.). The inclusion of butterflies and moths extends the scope of the volume, but the greater part of it, needless to say, is given up to the feathered children of the air. The selection shows the taste and discrimination so essential in collections of this kind. The more hackneyed bird-poems have been, as far as possible, avoided, perhaps too rigorously—even Shelley's "Skylark" being abbreviated; while among those included are many charming poems and fragments that are by no means familiar, and well deserve to be enshrined in such a compilation. An unusual number of living and

recent writers are represented, and every reader will be glad to meet with, for example, Edmund Dowden's "Corncrake," Mrs. Marriott Watson's "Willow-Wren," and Lady Townshend's "Playnte of the Captive Lark." Printing and get-up commend the book as a present.

SONG AND WINGS (London: The De la More Press, 2s. 6d.) is another daintily presented volume, in this case of original poems, the author being a bird-lover of to-day, Miss Isa J. Postgate, already well known to many Members of the R.S.P.B. As Canon Rawnsley says in his brief fore-word, "Birds and their song have found in the authoress eyes that closely observe, ears that listen, a tender heart, and a voice to

plead for them." It is as a loving and pitiful friend and pleader for the tribe, and especially for the little birds about English homes, that she employs her sympathetic pen; and the following verses may be quoted as an example of graceful lines that touch a still higher note:

If all were dark in every place,
Except thy breast of red,
I could not with that gleam of grace
Think that all hope was dead.

If all on earth, sweet little bird,
Were discord save thy song,
I ne'er could fancy as I heard,
That everything was wrong.

If to me there were only left
A little bird to love,
I would, though of all else bereft,
Keep faith in God above.

Bird-and-Tree Competitions.

THE number of Essays sent in has suffered serious decline this year in consequence of the War. Not only have various Local Committees been too deeply engaged with Red Cross work to superintend the writing—which must be looked upon as a misfortune when teams had been eagerly preparing through spring and summer—but in certain cases the children's help has been required more than usual in the harvest fields. Special credit must, under the circumstances, be given to Felixstowe Ferry School; here, though the school buildings are in the hands of the War Office, and the lady to whose interest and encouragement the Bird-and-Tree work is due has had to give up her house for military purposes, papers have been sent in by two teams. In the case of a Lancashire school, where also Nature Study is a strong feature, it is noted that three members of the Team are "half-timers"

at a neighbouring factory; yet none is over twelve years of age. This is surely an example to some of the country schools, where the children can happily roam the fields, unshadowed by factory walls, and have abundant opportunity and incentive for Bird-and-Tree work for two years after the age at which these young half-timers begin life's toil.

The results of the Competition will be made known to all Secretaries of local Committees and Head-Teachers of competing schools as soon as possible after the awards are decided by the Judges.

A typed Lecture entitled "My Bird," with lantern slides, may be hired from the R.S.P.B. by representatives of Schools taking part in the Society's Bird and Tree Competitions or desirous of introducing the scheme. It consists almost entirely of extracts from essays written for the com-

petition by the children of Elementary Schools.

Songs and part-songs, with or without slides, and short plays and recitations are lent for Bird-and-Tree Festivals; schools with musical or dramatic ambition cannot do better than attempt one or other of the following musical plays: "Bird-and-Tree Day Pageant," by Mrs. Suckling (numerous characters and songs, some dressing requisite); "Midsummer Eve," by Mrs. Suckling (singing play for girls); "The Revolt of the Birds," by Rev. G. Edward Young, with music for songs and dance by Miss Clementine Ward (song-drama for children, in two acts); "Vogelwied the Minnesinger," set to music by George Rathbone (cantata for children's voices); "The Birdies' Concert," by A. L. Cowley (musical sketch, can be sung in unison).

BRITISH WOODLANDS.

THE shortage in Britain's timber supply, and the great extent to which the country is dependent upon other lands in this respect, is again pointed out in the Joint Report recently issued of the Office of Woods and the Board of Agriculture. The total area of woodlands in England and Wales is under two million acres, and the production of timber is only one twenty-fourth of the amount of that imported. Knowledge of the uses and value of different trees, their suitability for planting in various soils and districts, and their proper treatment is obviously desirable not only for schemes of afforestation but also in connection with the management of public parks, commons, and open spaces, and with tree-planting in streets, and is not seldom conspicuous by its absence.

The Postmaster-General regrets that contracts for 100,000 telephone poles

have this year had to be placed abroad; only a few hundred can be supplied by home-growers. The trees most suitable for providing this wood are the Larch and the Scotch Pine.

LIBERATING CAGED BIRDS.

MANY enquiries are addressed to the R.S.P.B. as to the safety of wild birds if set free from cages, numerous stories being afloat as to their inability to feed themselves, attacks on them by other birds, etc. An early number of *Bird Notes and News* will contain an article on the subject by Mr. W. H. Hudson, with an illustration in colour by Mr. H. Grönvold.

CHRISTMAS CARD.

"BIRD of Good Omen," the Greeting Card to be issued this year by the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, will be of a character peculiarly appropriate to the terrible events which are engrossing all thought at the present time. It has been expressly designed, in place of a different commission originally given to the artist, by Mr. O. Murray Dixon, whose painting will be reproduced in colour.

By the regretted death of Miss N. Taylor, which took place, from rapid consumption, on September 19th, the R.S.P.B. has lost an Assistant Secretary who had held that post for nine years. Miss Taylor was a keen and consistent lover of birds and a loyal worker, and her bright and cheerful manner made her generally liked.

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To Members of the Society subscribing 5s. and upwards per annum it is forwarded gratis and post free.

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Old Green Woodpecker's Nesting-hole. Favourite Nesting-site of Wryneck.

Cheltenham, June, 1914



Red-backed Shrike's Nest and Eggs.

Colesbourne, July, 1914.

From Photographs by E. Searight, Cheltenham College. (See page 60).

Bird Notes & News

ISSUED QUARTERLY BY THE ROYAL SOCIETY
:: FOR THE PROTECTION OF BIRDS ::

Vol. VI.]

WINTER, 1914.

[No. 4.]

The Preservation of Owls.

FOUR years ago a map of England and Wales, showing the amount of protection given by the law to Owls in England and Wales, was published in *Bird Notes and News*. Since that time the black places on that map have become considerably less, for few County Bird Protection Orders now omit to give all-the-year protection to the British Owls. The Pole-Trap, the Owl's most hideous enemy, has been illegal for ten years.

In spite of this, it is certain that gamekeepers and possibly some farmers continue systematically to kill Owls, and that the Pole-Trap is not extinct. A "preserve" is a sacred place, and, as in the case of the destruction of rare species and of the Accipiters in general, laws are of little practical value unless those inside as well as those outside the precincts desire to have them obeyed. The intelligence and knowledge of landowner, shooting tenant, and keeper alike must be brought into line with legal edicts.

It is with this object in view that a Member of the Council of the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds has instituted annual prizes in both the Public Schools and the Elementary Schools for Essays on the Owl family, examining especially the economic status of the birds—their habits, their food, and their prevalence or scarcity. It is comparatively little use educating the

master if the man is neglected; the future sportsman, the future landowner or tenant, the future keeper or husbandman must all be reached.

In the case of the Public Schools, the writers of Essays are asked not only to demonstrate the value of Owls, but also to consider and make suggestions concerning their better preservation. It is curious how much stress is laid by competitors from Eton and elsewhere, in the first year's Competition (particulars of which appear on another page), on the necessity for teaching in the Elementary Schools. Mr. C. P. Blacker, winner of the Silver Medal, bases the need on a double ground. As he rightly says, primitive superstition is at the root of a great deal of the existing hatred of Owls. In old times all night-flying and night-roaming creatures were objects of horror; the moon was baleful, night-air was deadly. The dread of the birds was increased tenfold by their weird shrieks and hoots and hisses, so readily associated with omens, banshees, and evil spirits. And these old legends and myths still haunt the mind of man.

"It is bound to be a difficult task to teach a keeper to reason and observe when he grows up. Any knowledge that he may acquire will have its roots sunk in the bed-rock of superstition. . . . Nature-study should be taught in the elementary schools, and at the same time the emptiness of prevailing superstitions should be pointed out and the mind should be trained to

reason at as early an age as possible. Those who intend in after-life to become keepers should be given a suitable training, in which Nature-study in a wide sense should hold a prominent place."

As another competitor (G. E. Caracó) puts it, the best educational method is to teach children at school to take a living interest in what they see and find around them :—

"If ornithology was a regular subject taught in elementary schools, a vast amount of good would be done. It is easier to train young minds how they should go than to eradicate firmly fixed ideas from the old."

The Essays sent in from Elementary Schools to the R.S.P.B. furnish good testimony to this. All are on the side of the Owls. One boy of eleven states what he found in an Owl-pellet; a girl of twelve writes :—

"Everyone knows what useful birds they are. Our keeper at one time used to shoot Owls because he thought they would destroy his young birds, but he does not do so now."

The game-preserver, however, requires educating also. Mr. Blacker asks for a law prohibiting all keepers from shooting any birds of prey without the special permission of their employers, "who might be expected to have a fairly intimate acquaintance with natural history and the habits of birds." Alas! the expectation is a vain one, and will continue vain until the boys of Public and Secondary Schools in general are imbued with a knowledge, not only of birds' eggs, ornithological terminology, taxidermy, and a "hobby," but of practical field ornithology, and

with "a living interest in what they see and find around them."

One point on which all the essayists agree is that the arch-enemy of the Bird-protector, and especially the Owl-protector, is Ignorance: the more sound knowledge can be spread abroad by books, leaflets, lectures, personal intercourse, and object-lessons, the better for the birds. Happily Owl-pellets supply one means of proof without resort to killing the birds first and proving their innocence afterwards, which has often to be followed in other cases. "I think," says the winner of the Second Prize (C. P. Staples) :—

"There is only one way to protect these useful birds of prey, and that is to make the farmers and gamekeepers understand the folly of their ignorance, to prove to them by the examination of pellets and castings what the Owls really feed on."

With regard to other birds of prey, the Falcons and Hawks and Buzzards, the Competition has not produced, as yet, much in the way of information or suggestion. It is singular that while game-preserver and keeper fall in for condemnation on every hand, but little reference is made to the depredations of the scientific collector, who sins not for want of knowledge but by the help of it. The employment of Watchers is the main proposition.

It would therefore appear that the R.S.P.B., with its Essay Competitions, its Bird-and-Tree scheme in the Schools, its publications and its Watchers Committee, has anticipated most of the methods advocated in these interesting papers.

Economic Ornithology.

THE FOOD OF THE HOUSE-SPARROW.

IN the October, 1914, issue of the *Journal* of the Board of Agriculture, Mr. Walter E. Collinge, M.Sc., has a paper entitled "Some Observations on the Food of Nestling Sparrows," in which he records work carried out in 1913 and 1914. In this period Mr. Collinge examined the stomach contents of over 280 nestlings, 200 of which were obtained from fruit-growing districts, and 87 from suburban districts. The results he considers "so interesting and so important from the standpoint of the fruit-grower" that he tabulates in detail the numbers examined, dates, and material found.

The summary of these results is given as follows:—

Article of Diet.	Fruit-growing Districts.		Suburban Districts.		Total.
	1913	1914	1913	1914	
Wings of Aphids ...	246	127	98	46	517
Remains of Beetles ...	35	125	18	7	185
Apple Blossom Weevil	—	78	—	—	78
Larvæ of Winter Moth	115	118	13	—	246
Larvæ of Apple Ermine Moth ...	—	—	—	46	46
Lepidopterous larvæ ...	167	207	120	73	567
Wings of Moths ...	—	7	5	—	12
Larvæ of Crane Fly ...	27	29	—	—	56
Dipterous larvæ ...	22	66	85	43	216
Dipterous Flies ...	197	130	—	—	327
Larvæ of Gooseberry ...	—	—	—	—	—
Sawfly ...	—	1	—	—	1
Wasp ...	—	1	—	—	1
Slugs ...	1	—	—	3	4
	810	889	339	218	2,256

It may reasonably be computed, Mr. Collinge considers, that these figures might be doubled, as the food found would probably not represent more than half that consumed by the birds in the whole of the day. Moreover, he adds: "It may be said that during the whole of the nesting period the parent birds are

feeding upon food similar to that fed to the young."

A careful examination of the Summary, Mr. Collinge continues, brings to light some interesting facts, which may be summarised as follows:—

1. In a single day one hundred nestling House-Sparrows require nearly 2,000 insects for food in fruit-growing districts, and about a third of that quantity in suburban districts.

2. Excepting for the few spiders and earthworms, the whole of the food consists of injurious insects.

"In spite of all that has been written with reference to the depredations of the House-Sparrow, we do not yet possess that completeness of knowledge that justifies us in condemning it as an 'avian rat,' or a bird that should be exterminated. That it is far too plentiful no one doubts, but seeing that practically all modern houses provide numerous and safe nesting places for it this is scarcely surprising.

"It is extremely difficult to arrive at any satisfactory and convincing conclusion as to the precise economic status of this species, but after carefully considering the results obtained from an examination of the stomach contents of 404 adult birds, and of 42 and 287 nestling birds, and also from an examination of the fæces, the writer is of opinion that if this species were considerably reduced in numbers, the good that it would do would probably more than compensate for the harm, especially in fruit-growing districts.

"In carrying out the investigation here recorded, it has been very forcibly suggested that before any reliable conclusions can be formed respecting the economic status of any species of wild bird, something more must be secured than the mere details of the stomach contents of adult birds, from various districts, during each month of the year, important and necessary as these undoubtedly are. Any investigation on the economic status of most species of wild

birds is incomplete, and to a large extent misleading, that does not deal with the question of the nature of the food fed to the young bird or nestlings, for during the nestling period the food of the parent birds

consists largely of insects, slugs, spiders, and worms, and that of the young almost entirely so, and the amount of food consumed is greater than at any other season of the year."

Notes.

THE Ligue Française pour la Protection des Oiseaux is, like its British sister-Society—but under far greater difficulties—striving to carry on "business as usual." Though the publication of the *Bulletin* has been suspended until happier times, members are promised in future numbers reports of meetings held and publication of articles received since the beginning of the War. Meantime the Secretary, M. Delacour, has issued a circular-letter recounting the various projects in hand when the bombs of German *kultur* were hurled upon civilization. Among these schemes work in the Schools has a prominent place, emphasised by the issue, with the approval of the Minister of Public Instruction, of a special booklet for the *Sociétés-Scolaires de protection*. Another publication on the way is a *Practical Guide to Bird Protection*, by the Ligue's President. The Society, it is further stated, were co-operating with an English officer, "grand ami des Oiseaux" (Captain Tailby), who had given 500 francs towards the better protection of Swallows on migration. After an inspiring recapitulation of efforts, including the circulation of the card "Some Victims of the Plume-Trade," M. Delacour concludes:—

"We look forward to the future with great hope. When the victory of our arms has brought back a glorious and beneficent peace, we shall recommence our useful labours, and the economic rôle of the Ligue will become considerable. Never will agriculture have more pressing need of all its helpers; in the agricultural revival of

that part of our country which has been so cruelly devastated nothing must be neglected. The aid of the Birds in combating those other perfidious enemies, the insect invaders and ravagers of the fields, is, as we know, one of the most precious and powerful. An important task is then reserved for the Ligue: she will not fail in it."

* * *

The members of the Ligue Française are specially asked to contribute, to the meetings to be held during the winter and spring, any observations bearing on the effect upon birds of either the present War or that of 1870. This is a matter which, so far as regards the existing struggle, has occupied a good many minds in Great Britain; and some people have expected to see a huge immigration of feathered fugitives, including species hitherto little seen in this country. So far there appears to be no evidence of such abnormal movements in the Bird world, although a northerly migration of species which usually go south is said to have been noted on the east coast in October. It is hardly probable that Birds, without the migratory instinct and unaccustomed to the migration routes to Britain, would cross the seas from Europe. Soldier-ornithologists have commented on the absence of birds in Belgian fields and forests; but in a thickly-populated and closely cultivated land such as Belgium was, Bird-life is not abundant as in England. Another correspondent of the Press marks the appearance of an Eagle in Kent, and

asks in horror, Is this an omen? In stormy migration seasons many strange birds occur in Kent: but it is safe to say that the Eagle was not a swollen-headed German vulture!

* * *

The difficulties encountered by the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds in providing Nesting-Boxes on the Berlepsch principle, but British-made, have now been happily overcome, and two enterprising firms have laid down special machinery by which boxes equal in every respect to those formerly imported in Germany are being turned out. The pattern devised by Baron von Berlepsch is undoubtedly most ingenious, strong, and attractive, and every effort will be made by the Society and by the collaborating firms to show that England can meet and beat the German manufacturer and to establish the business as a British industry. All that is needed is the co-operation of bird-lovers and of those who value the economic services of birds.

* * *

It is now some years since the outbreak of larch-disease at Thirlmere introduced Nesting-Boxes for small birds to that district. The acquisition of Thirlmere as a reservoir constitutes one of the greatest municipal undertakings of Manchester, and afforestation formed an important feature of the great scheme. Then came the disease and the prospect of destruction for the carefully-reared trees. Fortunately the adviser of the Corporation at that time was Dr. Gordon Hewitt, now Dominion Entomologist to the Government of Canada. To him came the thought of fighting the pest by encouraging the presence in the plantations of its natural enemies, the wild birds, especially the Tits, by means of Nesting-Boxes.

* * *

During the past summer the Manchester Corporation paid a visit of inspection to Thirlmere, the first for seven years, and, to quote the *Manchester City News*, "the afforestation scheme, started six years ago, was quite one of the most interesting things of the day."

"There were beds and beds of all sorts of seedlings of trees that have been found most suitable to the district. Many of them were no bigger than a finger, but on the slopes all around could be seen examples of what these mites will become even in a few short years."

The head forester exhibited samples of the Nesting-Boxes, "which are placed up and down the estate to encourage birds to multiply and become exceeding plentiful." "There were," he said, "four hundred boxes out last year, and seventy-six per cent. were inhabited. The birds are also fed in the winter, the feeding-place being situated in a delightful little wood which has grown up under the kindly care of the city fathers. The object of all this is the destruction of the larch-fly and other insect pests, and it is having an excellent effect."

* * *

Afforestation has been held out by many persons as one of the solutions of the unemployment problem. The Thirlmere forester stipulates that the "unemployed" directed into this channel of industry should at least have been brought up in the country. His experience is that men from towns have a tendency to plant young trees upside down. Some other people may wonder, too, if town men have ideas in "forestry" beyond lopping and topping, or knowledge of other species than Planes, Horse-Chestnuts, and pseudo-Acacias.

The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds.

COUNCIL MEETINGS.

MEETINGS of the Council of the Society were held at the Middlesex Guildhall, Westminster, S.W., on October 22nd and December 4th, 1914, the Chairman (Mr. Montagu Sharpe) presiding.

Hon. Secretary's Report.

The Hon. Secretary reported the issue of Bird Protection Orders for West Sussex, Great Yarmouth, Leeds, and Antrim. That for Leeds is a new Order on the lines of that for the West Riding; the others are renewals, with amendments. The Kent County Council had considered the request of the Society that the Isle of Grain should be added to the protected areas for eggs in that county, and had applied to the Home Office for an amendment of the Order to that effect. Lectures illustrated by the Society's slides had been given at Hoddesdon, by Mr. J. A. Tregelles; Forest Gate, by Miss Hamilton; Bethnal Green, by Miss Clifton; Hertford, by Mr. F. W. Headley; Burton-on-Trent, by Mr. C. Hanson; and Barrow-on-Soar by Mr. G. Frisby. The awards in the Bird-and-Tree County and Inter-County Competitions were reported, also the Festival held at Keswick on November 18th, when the Cumberland Shield and Book Prizes were handed to the St. John's Girls' Team by Mrs. F. E. Marshall. It was agreed not to circulate the regulations for 1915 until next spring. The awards in the Public School Essay Competition were also approved. The Greeting Card for 1914-15 had been published, and the difficulty as to the supply of Nesting-Boxes having been overcome, the depot for the sale of these was continuing its work.

Finance and General Purposes Committee.

The accounts for the third quarter of 1914, and for October and November, were presented and approved. The appointment of Miss Emily Spender as Hon. Local Secretary for Bath was confirmed. The following Fellows and Members were elected:—

LIFE FELLOW: Mrs. E. C. T. Miller, Cleveland, Ohio, U.S.A.

FELLOWS: The Duke of Abercorn, Frank S. Abbott (Didsbury), H. G. Alexander (Tunbridge Wells), Charles Oldham (Berkhamsted), F. Smalley (Carnforth).

MEMBERS: Miss A. M. Bonus (Croydon), Mrs. Bouch (Warwick), Herbert Francis (Stapenhill), Miss Fuller (Bath), Guille-Allès Library (the Librarian *ex officio*), G. W. Macnaughten, M.D. (London, S.W.), Miss Esther Nean (London, S.W.), Mrs. W. Herries Pollock (Alton), Rev. C. G. Roffe-Silvester (Hindhead), Mrs. Marke Wood (Deal), A. Wyatt (Brighton).

It was agreed that a letter should be sent to the relatives of the late Miss N. Taylor, assistant-secretary of the Society, expressing the Council's appreciation of her loyal work and their regret at her loss; the appointment of Miss Anderson in her place was confirmed.

The Watchers Committee

reported on the satisfactory work done during the season at the various watched areas. At Brean Down the chief Watcher, Mr. Ernest Hawkings, had enlisted in the New Army, and the duties would for the present be carried out by his brother. Mr. Meade-Waldo and Mr. Ogilvie-Grant had visited the Shetlands and Orkneys, and Dr. Drewitt, Cornwall; and it was decided that

their interesting reports should be printed in due course for private circulation among the subscribers to the Watchers Fund. Bird-rests had been installed at South Bishop and Spurn Lighthouses, as well as at St. Catherine's and the Caskets, and satisfactory letters from the keepers were read.

General Business.

The history of the campaign in support of the Government Bill Plumage Importation (Prohibition) Bill, and of the ultimate abandonment of the Bill (on the outbreak of the War in August) after five months' Parliamentary work and on the eve of the third reading, was considered, and the further action of the Society discussed. Arrangements for Annual and Council Meetings in 1915 were also considered.

BIRD-RESTS AT THE LIGHT- HOUSES.

Reports received from the Lighthouses continue to give evidence of the practical value of the bird-rests and perches erected by the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (by permission and with the co-operation of the Master and Brethren of Trinity House) for the preservation of Migrating Birds. This special work, it will be remembered, was undertaken by the Society in order to provide resting-places at certain Lighthouses for the many thousands of migrants who, attracted by the bright light of the lantern, flutter around it until, dropping down from exhaustion, they perish in the gallery or are lost in the sea. The experiment is the first of the kind made outside the Netherlands, where it has been successfully adopted at the great Terschelling Light.

Four British Lighthouses have now been fitted with the apparatus. The

spring reports from St. Catherine's, Isle of Wight, showed that the weather during the spring migration had been unusually fine and clear, and consequently the birds had as a rule flown high and not been deluded by the lantern. Nevertheless, the use of the perches had been great enough to intimate that there is never likely to be such another night's destruction as that in April, 1913, when representatives of the Society were shown the remains of five hundred small travellers from overseas who had fluttered out their small lives in the night and been picked up dead in the Lighthouse gallery.

The autumn reports are also encouraging. From St. Catherine's the chief officer writes, under date October 22nd :—

“ The perches were erected for the spring migration on the 12th March and taken down on the 20th June, during which time they were undoubtedly of value in the saving of bird-life, as the number killed was small compared with the quantity killed during migration before the perches were erected. It is during thick or hazy weather that the perches are of most value, and if there should happen to be a large movement of birds when the weather is hazy, it is noticed that large quantities of birds make use of the perches till the weather clears, or until daybreak.

“ The perches were erected for the autumn migration on the 29th August, and are still in position, and have been made use of considerably by the birds previous to their flight southwards.”

The Caskets report, dated November 2nd, states :—

“ Flocks of birds have been passing both day and night during the whole month, large numbers at times resting on the perches.

“ The following is a list of the birds seen : Ring Ouzel, Song Thrush, Redwing, Starling, Chaffinch, Skylark, Robin, Golden-crested Wren, Common Wren, Duck, Blackbird, Snipe, Water Rail, Linnet, Goldfinch, Wheat-ear, Redstart, Tomtit.”

The rests at the South Bishop Lighthouse were first put up in the autumn of

1914, and therefore the autumnal migration formed their first test. Reports dated October 16th and November 20th show that here also the apparatus has been of value to the migrants. On the nights of September 30th, and October 15th, 17th, 18th and 19th, in particular, between the hours of 10.30 and sunrise, it was noted that large numbers of birds rested on their way on the ranges of perches provided. The species observed included Flycatchers, Linnets, Skylarks, Wheatears, Blackbirds, Thrushes, and Starlings.

The fourth Lighthouse fitted with the rests is that at Spurn Point, but no reports thence have been received this autumn on account of the altered conditions on the East Coast necessitated by the War.

“BIRD OF GOOD OMEN.”

The artistic beauty and special appropriateness of the Society's Greeting Card for 1914-15 have given it a large sale. The artist, Mr. O. Murray Dixon, well known as a rising bird-painter, generously gave the Society the right of reproduction, and the original picture has been on exhibition at 140, New Bond Street, through the kindness of Messrs. W. E. Hill and Son. Enquiries as to its purchase should be addressed to the R.S.P.B., 23, Queen Anne's Gate, S.W.

PUBLIC SCHOOL ESSAY COMPETITION.

Two subjects were given for Essays from the Public Schools this year. The first, for which the Society's Silver and Bronze Medals are awarded, was :—

Our Summer Migrants: including observations on the Food and Song of twelve selected species, and a comparison with members of the same or allied families which

remain in Great Britain throughout the year; suggesting if possible some reason for the existence of this difference of habit.

The second, for which a Prize or Prizes will be offered annually by a member of the Council of the Society, was :—

The British Owls: the Necessity for their better Protection, and the means to be adopted for the Preservation of useful and rare Birds of Prey.

The successful competitors are as follows :—

MEDAL COMPETITION.—SENIOR DIVISION.

Silver Medal: C. C. Baring (Haileybury).

Second Prize: Tie, G. V. Webster (Eton), C. P. Staples (Christ's Hospital).

Certificate and Book Prize: C. W. Somerville (Manchester Grammar School).

JUNIOR DIVISION.

Bronze Medal: E. Searight (Cheltenham).

Second Prize: Berkeley Secker (King's School, Worcester).

Certificates and Book Prizes: J. R. Hassell (Denstone), L. S. Pitman (Bristol Cathedral School).

“THE OWL” PRIZES.

(1) C. P. Blacker (Eton), (2) C. P. Staples (Christ's Hospital).

Highly Commended: S. F. Davenport (King's School, Worcester), G. E. Caracó (Strand School, London).

The Essay by C. C. Baring, which gains the Silver Medal, has given much pleasure to the Judges and gains their high commendation. The species with which he deals form a long and comprehensive list, including Stone-Curlew, Wryneck, Nightjar, Nightingale, Redstart, ten of the Warblers, and Red-backed Shrike. His notes on these, entirely

from personal observation, are marked by accurate knowledge and considerable descriptive power. The calendar of bird-arrivals is an admirable one, and the general comments are apt. The two papers next in merit are both excellent and contain much original work. G. V. Webster's account of the Stone-Curlew is particularly notable; his chronicles of Red-backed Shrike and Yellow Wagtail are also very thorough, and a remarkably full record is supplied of the larder of the Shrike. The inclusion of the Kentish Plover, peculiar to one locality, and Lesser Tern, show that the writer has not limited his area of observation. There are thoughtful and interesting remarks on the migration problem in the Essay by C. P. Staples, which also has a good calendar of arrivals and is written in clear, simple English. C. W. Somerville describes his birds very pleasantly, the Hirundines especially being well dealt with. It is welcome news that the Corncrake, whose rapid decrease is deplored in England generally, is still abundant in parts of Ireland.

In the Junior Division, E. Searight, who tied with C. C. Baring for the Medal last year, again proves himself a capital outdoor ornithologist, and adds some charming sketches. He covers a large ground, for he has managed to see a great deal, and has records of many small migrants not only in spring but also in autumn, when it is more difficult to see them. B. Secker's Essay lacks exact notes of arrivals, but is an excellent record of work. He is evidently a keen student of nests and eggs, and makes a gallant attempt to describe the songs of birds. His style is vigorous and direct. L. S. Pitman sends a nice Essay, making a point of comparisons between

migrants and resident species; and J. R. Hassell, dealing mainly with the line of migration across the Midlands, gives interesting notes of the migrants seen at different spots in that region, mentioning that Wood-Warbler, Brambling, and Grey Plover have been picked up in the streets of Birmingham.

In the Owl Essays, C. P. Blacker is unquestionably first, both for the thoroughness of his work and for the originality and value of his observations. He is evidently a field naturalist who has studied carefully and to good purpose, and his knowledge of bird-anatomy is a strong point. This is in every respect an excellent paper. C. P. Staples, in an Essay again to be commended for its straightforward unpretending style, points out forcibly some of the reasons why the Owls are not more common; does not disguise his opinions of land-owners and keepers who destroy either Owls or rare Raptors, and brings forward the evidence of pellets to prove his case. G. E. Caracó devotes himself principally to the food and consequent utility of the birds discussed, and gives more space than do other competitors to the Hawks and Falcons. The variety of remedies he suggests indicate a sincere anxiety for the preservation of the birds. S. F. Davenport also shows genuine interest in his subject, and the true naturalist's keen desire for the protection of fine species of birds; and he has given careful attention to the economic question.

The Judges were: Mr. F. W. Headley, M.A., Mr. J. R. B. Masefield, M.A., Mr. E. G. B. Meade-Waldo, M.B.O.U., and the Rev. Julian Tuck, M.A. Mr. Headley did not act in the class in which there were competitors from Haileybury.

Books Received.

THE BIRDS OF THE DISTRICT OF GEELONG, AUSTRALIA. By Charles F. Belcher (Geelong : W. J. Griffiths).

As Mr. Belcher remarks in his preface, every county in England, or almost every county, has its local bird-books, written by local men ; but such a local bird-guide has, oddly enough, not hitherto been attempted for any Australian district of corresponding size. This certainly forms one good reason why someone should lead the way, and no one can be better qualified to do so than the author of this interesting volume, whose knowledge of the birds round about Geelong extends over some five-and-twenty years. It is a field-naturalist's knowledge, moreover, due not to an examination of specimens "obtained," but to a true enthusiasm for bird-life and a genuine delight in observing the motions, habits, and songs of birds. Geelong is well placed for the study, having within the 35 miles radius over which Mr. Belcher extends his outlook, plains, rivers, open waters, with reedy swamps and mud-flats, and forest and bush. Consequently, out of the 400 odd species recorded for Victoria as a whole, 244 are here included as resident or visiting. Some addition to the preface, or introduction, commenting on the most plentiful, and also on those believed to be either decreasing or increasing, would have been welcome. The list of contents indicates the large numbers of water and shore birds, a fair number of Accipiters ; representatives of families like the Shrikes, Cuckoos, Flycatchers, Warblers, and Swallows familiar in Britain, and of others like the Honeyeaters and the Parrakeets of which this country has no representatives, with very few of the Finch or Crow tribes. Of the 244 Mr. Belcher gives a pleasant and animated account, often bringing the bird before the reader by some graphic touch or by picturesque description of its movements. Possibly the studious ornithologist will ask for scientific and, as it were, official details of the plumage, together with size in inches ; the outdoor watcher, if he had to choose, would infinitely prefer Mr. Belcher's life-like portraits, but at the same time might like to have both.

It is curious to note that the birds regarded as sacrosanct in Australia—birds in the category which in England would include Robin and Swallow, and perhaps Wren—include, besides the Welcome Swallow and the representative "Laughing Jackass," the Australian Magpie, whose note is "something dearer to the Australian born than almost any other bird-music he might hear." Properly speaking, it is not a song-bird at all, and of song-birds proper Australia has, as is known, but few ; some, however, there are, such as the Reed-Warbler and one or two of the Honeyeaters. It has also a mimic, the Bush- or Crop-Lark, of which Mr. Belcher writes :—

"Rising abruptly from the growing crop, it soars, with a little original song of its own, to a height of from 100 to 150 feet from the ground, or even higher, with a very quick fluttering movement of the wings. At the top of its flight, still on agitated wings, it begins its series of imitations. The bird's own natural song, which sounds a little like the Skylark's but is not nearly so strong and full, forms the base or undercurrent, and is interposed between all the imitations. Suddenly one hears the cheery double 'sweet-tweet' of the Swallow, followed shortly by the merry little rippling song of the Tomtit. Then one may get the chatter of the Sparrow in the hedge, the 'too-oo-weep' of the Quail, or the hurried alarm-notes of the cock Blue-Wren.

"Other birds I have heard it imitate are the Greenfinch, Goldfinch, Silver-eye, and Skylark. The last was a good effort ; but from the oat-field below shot up suddenly into the blue sky the English singer himself, pouring his heart out until 'all the earth and air with his voice was loud,' and in that flood of melody the Crop-Lark's little strain faded altogether."

It would be easy to quote many passages, but students of Australian birds, particularly those who wish to seek them on shore or river or among the gum-trees, acacias, and messmate-bushes of the Geelong district, will secure Mr. Belcher's handbook for themselves. It is illustrated by some fifty photographs.

Bird-and-Tree (Arbor) Day.

CHALLENGE SHIELD COMPETITIONS, 1914.

THE Competition suffered somewhat in 1914 owing to the pre-occupation of local committees and judges, especially in the case of those Schools where the Essays are not written until after the summer holidays. In quality, however, there has been no falling off, and in this respect the work has developed wonderfully since the scheme was first put into operation twelve years ago. The selection of subjects widens and improves, observation becomes more original, and more thought and sympathy are discernible. Handwriting and spelling, it may be remarked incidentally, are often better than in higher-class schools.

The Bedfordshire Shield, as intimated last year, has to be withdrawn for lack of competitors. It was instituted in 1904. The only entries are from the Woburn Boys, who are eligible only for the Inter-County Shield, which they held in 1913-14, and Mogerhanger. Woburn sends in extremely good papers on Great Crested Grebe, Goldeneye, and Nuthatch, Alder, Weeping Willow, and Beech, fully maintaining their reputation. Both Schools receive honorary awards.

The Special Prizes offered by a Member of the Council for the best Essays on Owls are won by Kathleen Hopkins (Middleton, Warwickshire) and Horace Jasper (Princes Risboro, Bucks).

The judges were: Mr. Montagu Sharpe (Chairman of Council), Miss Clifton, Mrs. Fuller Maitland, Mr. G. A. Freeman, B.Sc., Mr. W. H. Hudson, F.Z.S., Mr. Hastings Lees, F.Z.S., Mr. J. R. B. Masefield, Miss Rowe, B.Sc., Rev. J. G. Tuck, and Miss Gardiner (Secretary).

INTER-COUNTY SHIELD.

FOR this Competition are entered the Champion and Shield-winning Teams of all the competing counties and also the leading prize-winners in the Open Class; and the task of adjudicating among so many excellent sets of papers is not an easy one. One school—it may almost be said one county—exhibits special merit in one direction, others are perhaps superior in different ways. This year the coveted trophy is awarded to the Wolverton St. Mary Girls' School, Bucks, which took second place last year; their work is admirable both in matter and manner. The second place is assigned to Exford (Somerset); these essays are simpler than some of the others, but the freshness and pleasant feeling manifest in them has given them precedence over even the wonderfully capable work that comes from Woburn Boys' Council School (holders of the Shield, 1913-14) and the Victoria Council School, Wellingborough.

COUNTY CHALLENGE SHIELDS.

BUCKINGHAMSHIRE.

CHALLENGE SHIELD.—WOLVERTON ST. MARY GIRLS' SCHOOL.

Bucks, though very poor in the quantity of its competing Schools, is so markedly good as regards quality that the Society again postpone the question of withdrawing the Shield; and it may be hoped that the conspicuous success of its leading Team will encourage other Schools to support the distinction earned by the County. The essays written by the Wolverton Girls are wonderfully good as regards

both subject and treatment. The Birds selected are Kingfisher, Green Woodpecker, and Sedge Warbler; the Trees are True Service, Whitebeam, and Larch. The ardour with which these girls have thrown themselves into the task, and the zeal with which they have accomplished it, are delightful to meet with, while the unusual artistic appreciation shown gives an added grace to their essays. Two other Bucks Teams also send in first-class papers. Princes Risborough furnishes the one Owl paper from the County, but generally speaking the Tree-papers are a good deal fuller and better than those on Birds; Walnut, Larch, and Apple are all very well and nicely described, and there are good pencil drawings. The Coleshill papers again are full of personal records presented in clear and straightforward fashion, and they include capital observations of Blue-Tit and Moorhen; admirable memory sketches accompany the descriptions of Trees. Another Team deserving of special commendation is Tyringham-cum-Filgrave, for though the essays are short they are original in matter and full of intelligence.

CUMBERLAND.

CHALLENGE SHIELD.—ST. JOHN'S GIRLS' SCHOOL, KESWICK.

In this County again the girls come to the top—a somewhat singular fact, seeing how much more boys are as a rule given to interest in wild creatures and out-of-door explorations, and how greatly men outnumber women as naturalists. The work of boys is apt to be fresher and more direct than that of girls, but seemingly they let themselves be beaten off the field. The Keswick Girls win the Shield for the second time. In the study of Trees they are

distinctly at the head, Blackthorn, Dogwood, and a rare Silver Fir (*Picea nobilis*) being admirably described and prettily pictured. As regards Birds the Team have a strong competitor in that of Netherwasdale, for while they send interesting accounts of Tit, Treecreeper, and Chaffinch, none of these comes up to the paper on the Curlew by one of the Netherwasdale Boys. Writing in an easy, natural way, and very largely from his own observations, on an uncommon and interesting bird, this young student gives promise which the Judges hope to see further developed next year. The other papers by the Team are well up to the average, but too short. Kirkoswald, always to be depended on for evidence of excellent Nature-Study teaching, is not at its best this year, good as the papers are. Cargo shows a considerable amount of thought and originality, and two Cadets only nine years of age will, if they go on as they have begun, soon do their part in bringing the Shield to their School. Promising work is contributed by a junior Team of the Keswick Girls, and by Nenthead.

HANTS AND ISLE OF WIGHT.

CHAMPION SCHOOL.—RIDGE.

CHALLENGE SHIELD.—PRIVETT.

Admirable as is the work sent in from many Schools in Hampshire, Ridge seems to have made up its mind still to be first and again succeeds in the intention, though closely followed by half a dozen other Teams. Ridge's Birds are Nightingale, Mistle-Thrush, and Great Crested Grebe; the Trees, Hazel, Douglas Fir and Lime. The work is thoroughly original, close, and sympathetic. As Ridge has already won the Shield in two successive years, it now, by the regulations, passes to Privett as

proxime accessit. The Privett essays are full of personal observations, frank and genuine, and though somewhat carelessly or hurriedly written, carry the interest of the reader by sheer force of their keenness and sincerity. The writers are all boys, and are all on the road to be good naturalists. The Second Prize goes to a girls' team, that of St. Peter's, Bournemouth, who as in former years demonstrate real powers of observation and a graceful and lively style of composition. Also in the first rank come Botley, notable especially for a pleasing fancy and sense of beauty; Sholing Girls (Champion in 1912), whose ample records reveal much admirable and enthusiastic work; Romsey C. E. Girls, with very prettily-written and pleasant essays; and the Holme School, Headley, where real feeling for nature inspires well-written papers. Next come Hayling, where the subjects chosen are unusually good and the Team only need fuller and closer study to attain to the first rank; Barton Stacey, with delightfully fresh and spontaneous work; Hinton Ampner, Awbridge, Brighstone (with exceptionally clever drawings), and Wickham. There is much that is good in all these papers.

NORFOLK.

CHALLENGE SHIELD.—STOKE FERRY.

Forty-six Teams from Norfolk take part this year, and it may be said of this County, more perhaps than of any other, that the papers, even the most simple, bear the unmistakable mark of personal effort and direct observation. The main defect is the continued inclination to devote the whole, or almost the whole, of the Bird-papers to descriptions of eggs and young, to the exclusion of notes on habits, food, and song. The Stoke Ferry children show a wonder-

fully good grasp of their subjects and excellent observation, and the essays, written without notes, are particularly neat and well illustrated. Tittleshall, as last year, takes second place; the Tree-papers here are especially good, being full of painstaking detail and intelligent and appreciative comment, expressed with felicity of phrase. East Tuddenham and Honingham send also a capital set of papers, including a charming one on the Long-tailed Tit. Wickmere's essays are notably fresh and original, those on Birds in particular; Feltwell Fen's excellence of composition seems to denote a higher general level of education than is common at country schools; the Attleborough Boys have written without notes, in a bright, natural, boy-like style. Hindelvestone, also without note, does work indicative of genuine interest and well-directed powers of observation, with specially good notes on the food of nestlings; while Sporle, with much brightness and unconventionality of manner, sends two sets of good papers. Several other Schools are represented by two Teams, including Yaxham, whose young students have kept note-books zealously and patiently. Melton Constable's essays, if less obviously original, are marked by good summarising and deft illustrations. Wolverton takes the lead in the County for choice of uncommon Birds (Tern, Kestrel, Bullfinch), and judging by its rapid improvement, this School should go far. All these Schools are in the "Excellent" division. It is possible to comment on others only in the full report furnished to the County.

NORTHAMPTONSHIRE.

CHALLENGE SHIELD.—VICTORIA COUNCIL SCHOOL, WELLINGBORO'.

The work in Northants shows a distinct

advance on that of last year, not only in personal observation and accuracy, but also in intelligent interest and sympathy. The range of species of Birds observed is rather narrow, as though the children did not go very far from their own doors for examples. The Victoria Council School, Wellingborough, however, has a capital list, and the work here manifests extremely close, zealous, and accurate watching; alertness of mind as well as quickness of eye, distinguishes the papers on Flycatcher, Moorhen, and Willow-Wren. The Tree-papers are equally admirable, and are delightfully illustrated. Cold Higham School deservedly takes the Second Prize with original work worthy of the highest commendation for the thoroughness, accuracy, and reasoning power displayed by the Team, no member of which is yet in the 'teens. The Third place is taken by Badby's first-hand observations and hard work, though too much use of note-books mars the form of the papers. Pytchley (Endowed) sends exceptionally good Tree-papers, but books instead of observation have prompted those on Birds. The Weedon Girls and Braunston gain a first-class by the excellence of individual Essays added to a general high level. In both cases the Wren, a favourite bird in Northants, inspires the best Bird-papers; Alder and Beech those on Trees. The Wren again appears in the pleasant papers from Mears Ashby. The Long Buckby Boys write in a good straightforward style, and have used their keen eyes; and Irthlingborough's observation is genuine, though it does not yet go very far. Desborough and Wootton likewise gain the "Excellent" standard. Following these schools come Rothwell, Great Creaton, Great Addington, Welton,

Middleton Cheney, Croughton, Culworth, Rockingham (the youngest Team competing), Byfield, and Chacombe, with special but varying points of excellence; and after these over a dozen other promising Teams.

SOMERSET.

CHALLENGE SHIELD.—EXFORD.

For several years Exford School has been steadily doing competent work, and this year it passes some exceptionally strong competitors and deservedly wins the highest place. The final determining factor was the choice of subjects needing some enthusiasm to find and watch; an extremely good essay on the Heron, with others almost equally good on Redstart and Goldfinch, all displaying first-hand knowledge intelligently acquired and used. The Trees are most painstaking in their detail, and the drawings good. It is not easy to relegate Frome Boys C.E. School to a second place, so excellent is their work, and so close their observation, while their drawings are as usual really clever and artistic. The Frome Council Girls are also strong in artistic illustrations, and freshness and originality, with genuine appreciation of nature, make their papers pleasant reading. Genuine and sympathetic in friendly study of Birds and Trees, the Chillington essays have a charm of their own. North Perrott confirms the good impression made last year, sending among others a capital essay on the Cole-Tit. The Wembdon Team are specially strong on Birds; their writing is bright and interesting. Birds again seem to have appealed most to Winsham, whose essays include a long and animated account of the Chaffinch by a boy who surely has in him the making of an excellent field-naturalist. The Tree essays from Fivehead and Swell School

reveal remarkably practical knowledge of woodcraft, that on the Hazel being notably good all-round; and the young Team of Westonzoyland give much promise. Promising, too, is the work from Chedington. Strictly speaking, Chedington is in Dorset, but close to the Somerset border; the Team makes a first appearance, and shows well that the principle of the Competition has been grasped, for the work is very genuine and pleasing.

WARWICKSHIRE.

CHAMPION SCHOOL.—MANCETTER.

CHALLENGE SHIELD.—DOSTHILL.

For the third year in succession Mancetter takes highest honours in its County, and is accordingly precluded from holding the Shield. The papers on Trees, in particular, are exceedingly graphic and faithful. Dosthill, with a set of admirable papers, showing zeal, industry, and true feeling for the work, thoroughly earns the Shield. The Bird subjects are Peewit, Yellowhammer, and Whitethroat; the Trees, Sycamore, Willow, and Holly. All are really interesting reading, full of observation. Yet all these children (and Dosthill furnishes two Teams) come, with one exception, from colliers' homes. Middleton School is an old Shield-winner, and ranks again very near the top. The young people here have evidently a real enthusiasm for the study, and they write accurately and prettily on Tree-Pipit, Willow-Warbler, and Barn-Owl, the Tree papers also being very well done. Haselor must be commended on the selection of two Birds out of the common way, Kestrel and Green Woodpecker, and on the knowledge gained of them. This School is always remarkable for good drawings, and this year excellent sketches illustrate

all the essays. The Stratford-on-Avon Girls have made noteworthy advance; they have watched keenly, record brightly what they have seen, and draw very well indeed. Last year the Judges thought this Team showed want of enthusiasm; no such thought would occur to readers of these pleasant papers. The Minworth Team likewise show observation and intelligence and considerable observation, and use their pencils prettily. The defect in these two Schools is that they take too many day-to-day notes from their note-books instead of weaving them into an essay. Solihull Girls' Schools makes a most promising first appearance, their work consisting largely of original matter, and being nicely set forth; the Birds include the Magpie, an attractive species to study. These papers also are illustrated.

OPEN CLASS.

FIRST PRIZES.

NEWBURGH C.E. SCHOOL (LANCASHIRE).

FELIXSTOWE FERRY COUNCIL SCHOOL
(SUFFOLK).

There are a very large number of entries in the Open Class this year; and so many good papers come from Lancashire, that a County Challenge Shield may probably be offered next year. The best set of essays it sends, those from Newburgh, show close and genuine first-hand observation and a pleasant feeling for wild life; the Tree papers, thorough and sound, are accompanied by admirable water-colour sketches. The Felixstowe Ferry (Suffolk) papers were written under exciting circumstances, the school buildings being requisitioned by the War Office; but the work has not suffered; it is evenly good and interesting, and prettily illustrated. Cartmell Fell's (Lancs.)

papers benefit by a pleasant, simple style, and the fact that they were written without recourse to note-books; an essay on the Snipe is specially commended. Few Schools have made so good a start as Bradway (Derby), where accurate observation goes hand-in-hand with excellent composition and handwriting, and with neat sketches. Totley (Derby) is as usual a leading Team, the children having watched keenly and recorded intelligently. The Slindon Team (Sussex) write in a particularly bright and graphic style, and express themselves prettily and naturally. Hinton Waldrist (Berks.) had to work under difficulties owing to illness, but maintain the high place gained in former years; the work is all first-hand, the Trees particularly good in choice and treatment and with clever coloured sketches. Diptford (Devon) shows great improvement on last year, observation, often naively set forth, fortifying the pleasant feeling then noted. The Mawdesley R.C. Team (Lancs.) also make a notable advance on their first effort, and their work does them credit the more strikingly that three of the nine are half-timers at a factory. Withnell is another promising Team in its second year; a careful description of the flowers of Trees is one of the good features of the papers. Freedom and freshness of treatment prove that the young students at Sheldon (Derby) take their impressions straight from nature; and Greenhill, in the same County, also does well. Among the new entrants are Holt C.E. School (Wilts), whose work is distinctly above the average of first attempts; Horton (Gloucestershire), with good evidence of note-taking; Pemberton's School, Heskin (Lancashire), and the Bouverie-Pusey School, Cheney (Berks.), both giving more than ordinary promise; Scarisbrick School

(Lancs.), sending bright and pleasing little papers; and the Leopold-road School, Willesden, whose efforts show that genuine pleasure has been aroused in the study.

Festivals have already been held in celebration of Arbor Day at a large number of Schools. At St. John's, Keswick, on November 18, the Shield and prizes were presented by Mrs. F. E. Marshall and Mrs. Morley Headlam, the Rev. Morley Headlam presiding, and a Weeping-Elm was planted in Lower Fitz Park. At Ridge, on December 15, the Director of Education for Hants was among the speakers; trees were planted, Mrs. Chichester presented the awards, and Mrs. Suckling gave additional prizes. Exford, Dosthill, and the Frome Boys' School held celebrations on December 11, Mancetter, Newburgh, and Privett (among others) on December 23.

The regulations and entry-forms for 1915 will be issued early in the year, and the time for entries will be extended.

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THE CROSSBILL.

From the original Painting by H. Gronvold.

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On Liberating Caged Birds.

BY W. H. HUDSON.

SOME time ago the Secretary of this Society sent me a letter received from an English lady in Switzerland, with the request that I should reply to it. The lady stated that she had seen a Crossbill in a cage in some Italian town where she was staying, and as the bird appeared to be in a sadly neglected condition she bought it with the intention of giving it its freedom. As she was just leaving that spot for Switzerland, she took the bird with her to liberate it in a country where little birds were less persecuted than in Italy. But at the hotel where she stayed in Switzerland she was told that her Crossbill would be persecuted to death by the wild birds: for that was their way—they invariably set upon any bird that had been in a cage. Fearing to release it, yet hating to keep it in prison, she wrote to the Society. I told her in my reply that it was a delusion that her bird would be in any danger if freed, and advised her to take it out in the morning, so that it could have a whole day in which to recover from the effects of the long confinement and neglect, and liberate it in any place where there were trees. Shortly afterwards I had a letter from her to say that she had done as I had advised, and that the bird on being released flew away to a wood at some

distance, and was not pursued or noticed by the other birds.

As it is quite a common notion that the caged bird when liberated will meet with ill-treatment from the wild birds, it occurred to me that a paper on this subject would be of use to the Society: it would, at all events, save the task of writing many letters in reply to many received asking for information on the subject.

I know a good deal about birds, having been observing them all my life, and have also a good deal of experience in liberating them, as I hate to see a bird, taken from its wild life, in a cage, and whenever the occasion offers I am glad to set one of these unhappy captives free. But this paper will perhaps be more useful, more readable, if I relate here one of my experiences in setting a bird free.

I was staying at Seaford for a few days in August, and the place being chock-full of visitors, I had to put up in a very small and poor place in a little back street. My sitting-room, not big enough to swing a cat in, was next to the kitchen on the ground floor, and as the wall, or partition, was thin, I was much disturbed with the noise. It was the noise, or rather the sound, of a perpetual fight raging between my landlady, a poor weak silly creature,

and her three small children, who had all been hopelessly spoilt and were like three little demons, who despised their poor young mother and flouted her authority. They screamed, and she screamed in turn and was for ever threatening to beat them, to drown them in the water-butt, to put them on the fire, to cut their heads off; and at last one day, finding it impossible to work or read, I went to the kitchen to remonstrate with her. It was a small place, dreadfully hot, with a big kitchener in full blast, and the first thing I noticed was a Bullfinch in a cage hanging by a nail against the wall. The bird sat on its perch, motionless and silent, and on taking the cage down I saw that it had not been cleaned for many days. I told her that it was a most cruel thing to keep the bird in a dirty cage in that close hot air, and her excuse was that her husband was absent and she had no time to attend to the bird.

I took the cage out and cleaned it and hung it up in a shady place, then found a little groundsel and other green-stuff for the bird. This I did every day, always telling her that I would not allow the Bullfinch to remain in such conditions when I went away. And her reply always was that I could have the bird when her husband came back. Without his permission she could not let it go. But he had not returned when my time at Seaford was up, and I had to go elsewhere. After packing my bag I went into the kitchen and settled my bill, then, taking the cage down, I transferred the Bullfinch to a small perforated cardboard box I had provided myself with; and while I was occupied doing this she stood looking on saying, "You must not take the bird, my husband will be angry with

me for letting it go; you mustn't, you mustn't." The bird safe in my box, I took out a half-crown piece and put it on the table: "That's for the bird," I said, and she replied, "No, you mustn't," but at the same time picked up the half-crown and put it in her purse.

At Lewes I got out of the train just to give the bird its freedom: I had thought of the Abbey garden as an ideal spot for the purpose; it was private, shaded by trees, full of wild birds, and the keeper I knew as a bird lover. Once inside the grounds I opened the box, and the Bullfinch fluttered out on to the grass. He appeared wild with astonishment, craning his neck and looking all round, then fluttering a yard or two further away, but unable to fly. Presently he recovered a little from his excitement and began to examine the grass and herbage about him, and then to taste the green buds and leaves. This tasting occupied him some time, and at intervals he looked up and piped his little plaintive note, now becoming louder each time it was uttered. Then all at once the impulse to fly came to him, and first fluttering over the grass he succeeded in rising and flew straight away to a distance of forty or fifty yards, where a stone wall, a remnant of the ancient Abbey, stood in his way. He failed to rise high enough to get over and so came fluttering to the ground. There he again began looking about him, and finding something to his liking, spent two or three minutes in biting at it. Then once more he was seized with the desire to fly, and on this occasion rose higher and flew further and finally settled on a low branch of an elm tree. There the wind caught him and almost upset him, but it appeared to have an

exhilarating effect: his piping note became louder and fuller, and he began flying from branch to branch, rising higher each time until he was at the very top of the tall old tree, swayed on his perch by a high wind and uttering his note with, I imagined, a ring of happiness in it.

The point that chiefly concerns us here is, that during the whole time I spent in watching the Bullfinch and his rapid recovery from the debilitating

effects of his long months of confinement, no wild bird came near or appeared to take any notice of him. Yet it was a birdy place, as I have said; there were Sparrows in scores, Starlings, Thrushes, Chaffinches cruising about in all directions, and Tits and Warblers of two or three kinds moving about in the foliage. And, as in this instance, so it has been in every case when I have set a caged bird free in a spot abounding with wild birds,

The Birds of Shetland and Orkney.

It is now some ten or a dozen years since the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds undertook the appointment of regular Watchers, throughout the breeding-season, at certain stations in the Shetland Isles, for the preservation of the rare birds. For more than twenty years, however, it has been at work on behalf of two or three species which were threatened with speedy extermination. The detailed account of the birds of Shetland and Orkney, written by Mr. Ogilvie-Grant for the Watchers Committee of the Society, shows how necessary and, generally speaking, how successful the work has been.

Perhaps the two most notable of Shetland birds are the White-tailed Eagle and the Great Skua. The latter—a large dark Gull in appearance, with the dash of a Falcon and the reputation of a pirate—has no other breeding-ground in Great Britain and very few elsewhere. As large as a Herring-Gull, it obtains its food mainly by the bold pursuit of Gulls and by forcing them to yield up their fish-prey; and its specific name, *catarrhactes*, is said to be an allusion to its violent cataract-like descent upon them. The

species had been steadily decreasing for half a century; even seventy years ago it was a target for collectors. Twenty years ago only a very few pairs remained; and so hopeless seemed their case that Mr. Hudson wrote in 1897: "Every effort has been made to protect the birds in their two small colonies on Unst and Foula, but it is scarcely to be hoped that this insignificant remnant will continue to exist many years." Their state was doubly bad in that another of their breeding-grounds, on the Faeröes, was also constantly raided, a German collector sweeping off no fewer than 240 eggs in 1905. It was about this time that the Society definitely established its Watchers on the Shetlands. To-day the Unst colony numbers over seventy pairs, and fresh colonies are prospering on other islands. They still, however, need watching, the eggs on two outlying stations having been taken in 1914.

The Great Skua's more abundant cousin, Richardson's Skua, is also increasing. An interesting touch in the Report, showing how even the wildest of birds may be tamed, tells of these fierce raiders of the ocean coming into

the hut of one of the Society's Watchers to pick up eleemosynary fragments of bread!

Pirates and robbers as they are, with a reputation also for devouring eggs and young birds, Skuas and Gulls yet nest not far apart, and Mr. Ogilvie-Grant mentions that several Eider-Ducks nested close to a pair of Bonxies without suffering any interference. Similarly, "though nests of the Lesser Black-backed and Common Gulls were found in close proximity to the nesting colonies of Arctic Terns, not a single egg of the latter seemed to have been destroyed, and the most perfect harmony reigned among these and other species which are usually believed to prey on one another."

The story of the White-tailed Eagle, or Erne, is unfortunately of another kind. Man's hand has been too long against him. The Watchers of the R.S.P.B. have come too late. Down to 1835 it was the custom of the "Commissioners of Supply" in their economic zeal for sheep-breeding, to give 3s. 6d. for every Eagle killed, Golden or White-tailed. Yet when Queen Victoria came to the throne, the Erne was apparently not rare in Shetland, and the Golden Eagle bred in Orkney. A collector who visited the Islands in 1837, and whose chronicle has been quoted in an earlier number of *Bird Notes and News* (September, 1907), obtained eight specimens, seemingly without much trouble, and mentions nests at Northmaven and Fitful Head. But for years past its hold on existence as a British Bird has been precarious. Its wandering habits make it the easier prey of the "fool with a gun," who invariably acclaims his feat with gusto in a local newspaper and describes his victim—generally an immature bird—as a Golden Eagle. Such birds are usually rovers from

the Continent; but our British birds have gone, one by one, in the same way.

In 1911, the Society's Watcher reported from the last of the Erne's nesting-places that the female bird had returned to the nest, and sat there watching; but no mate appeared. Doubtless he had been shot. For the last two springs the bird has again come, and again watched and waited; but she has not made up the nest, and probably she is now too old to breed even if a male bird were to come. Another of the species was seen with her early in 1914, but is thought to have been a second female, and did not stay. This old remaining bird is believed to be the last of her ancient family, sole survivor of her kind in the Shetlands. She is entirely white, except for the duskiess of her primary-quills. She haunts the place of the nest, but when last seen was flying out to sea, mobbed by Carrion-crows—the last of the monarchs, alone and old, pursued by *canaille*!

Other notable birds of these Islands include the Black-backed Gulls, Greater and Lesser, the colony of the former on Noss being the largest in Great Britain; Arctic, Common, and Sandwich Terns; Raven; Peregrine Falcon; Merlin; Short-eared Owl, which exists on Orkney where voles are plentiful; Sheld-duck, Pintail, Teal, Shoveler, Pochard, Golden-eye, and Merganser, chiefly on Orkney; Eider-duck, common on Shetland, also Grebes; a few Whimbrels; Golden, Green, and Ringed Plovers; Snipe, Guillemot, Fulmar, and Puffin. The Corncrake, a disappearing species in many parts of England, is still common in Orkney and believed to have breeding-places on Shetland. The Water-rail also breeds. Quail possibly nest, since one was heard calling. Among species that are being

most anxiously watched are the Red-throated Divers; the Black-tailed Godwits, which it is greatly hoped may re-establish themselves as a breeding-species in the British Isles; and the Hen-Harriers, which so far have been robbed of their eggs almost every year and are in a parlous state. The Godwit was driven out of Britain years ago through the persistent taking of its eggs; the Harrier, handsomest of the three species of the genus, has been nearly extirpated in England by the gamekeeper.

Taken altogether, the Report is most encouraging and should stimulate all interested in the preservation of British birds to assist in the task undertaken by the Society. "The marked increase in all the rare and more important species was," writes Mr. Ogilvie-Grant, "commented on most favourably by an independent witness, who had not visited the Shetland Islands since 1908. He was much struck by the increase he observed and the apparent absence of egg-stealers in the group." The Society has been peculiarly fortunate in having the loyal services of alert and experienced Watchers, who, in their work, take the genuine and keen interest which alone could inspire them to carry out duties far from light in so eminently satisfactory a manner.

Heartly thanks are also due to Mr. Meade-Waldo and Mr. Ogilvie-Grant, who for several years past have at their own expense visited Watchers and birds, to see results, on behalf of the Watchers Committee. The climate of the Isles is not always enjoyable, even in June and July. To walk and drive long miles in blinding mist and drenching rain; to be soaked to the skin, with no near prospect of a change of clothes; to have to travel

a hundred miles across country because no boat can face six miles of angry surf, are things not entirely pleasurable, even though the reward be the sight of the last of the Ernes on her crag—of Raven and Peregrine, Bonxie and Black-backed Gull in homes fit beyond all others for their wild natures; of Phalaropes swimming among the rushes, Terns nesting on the shore among white sand and blue flowers, and Divers calling above the loch where their young are hidden; of the only known British breeding-place of the Slavonian Grebe. But to have a part in preserving this wild life for generations yet to come, is the highest guerdon of the naturalist.

The Report of the Watchers Committee also includes Dr. Drewitt's account of his visit to North Cornwall. The Choughs and Buzzards there are doing well, and Dr. Drewitt points out that the comparatively small increase in the number of nests of the Chough is no doubt due to the fact that it is young birds which have always most dangers to face; "and so when any species, once plentiful, has its numbers greatly reduced, and its area restricted, there is difficulty in resuscitating it, for there are not young ones enough to survive the heavy toll taken by enemies, including man." The decrease has however been checked, and in 1914 there was at least one new nest, in a new place, of the old British "Red-legged Crow."

There are, further, reports of the Watching at Beachy Head and neighbouring cliffs, Brean Down, Dungeness, Ennerdale, the Isle of Wight, Llandwyn (Anglesey), Newbrough (Aberdeenshire), and Inchmickery. In all these districts the Watchers have done their work well.

Notes on some Summer Migrants.

[These notes are extracts from the Essay by C. C. Baring, of Haileybury College, who won the Silver Medal in the R.S.P.B. Public School Competition, 1914, the subject being "Our Summer Migrants." Altogether the Essayist observed twenty-nine species, and he gives a list of these, with dates when first seen in spring and notes as to their frequency in the districts of Haileybury and Sudbury, where his observations were made. Sudbury, he remarks, is not a good place for observing migrants: they arrive late, and not many different kinds come, and no casual migrants; but it has the Yellow Wagtail, Wryneck, and Common Sandpiper. Haileybury is an excellent district for observing the Warblers, and the River Lea for noting Warblers in passage. One noticeable gap in the avifauna of both districts in 1914 was caused by the absence of Corncrakes.]

NIGHTINGALE.

The first Nightingale's nest I ever found was in some woods near Brundall, in Norfolk. I was delighted at the discovery, for if I had not seen the bird fly off I should never have seen the nest and eggs, so wonderfully did they harmonise with their surroundings. In 1913 I found a nest of young Nightingales. I saw the parent birds hovering about, with food in their beaks, in a very agitated state at my intrusion. I withdrew behind a tree, and presently the cock bird flew down to a clump of nettles by the side of the lane. The hen bird had dropped her catch in her extreme anxiety, and was still too frightened to fly away and get more. I went to the nettles and found a nest of five nearly fully-fledged young birds, which a few days later safely left the nest. On May 6th of this year (1914) I found a Nightingale's nest; two days later it had one egg in, but the next day it was robbed. The same day I and my brother found another nest with five eggs in; it

also was robbed. A few days later a friend of mine found one with six eggs; it too was robbed. I was much upset at such insensate cruelty. It was heartrending to hear the Nightingales singing after this; I do not consider the Nightingale's song as a rule a sad one, but it was then.

Afterwards I examined one of the robbed nests. It was wonderfully made; about 350 leaves were used in its composition, besides dry grass and fibres. There were ten hornbeam leaves, two elm, and one service-tree leaf, the rest being oak. I think the Nightingale is on the increase in both the Sudbury and the Haileybury districts, and I sincerely hope this may continue to be so.

THE WOOD-WREN.

I heard the Wood-Warbler, or Wood-Wren, for the first time this year on May 17th, not far from Haileybury. One came quite near to me and settled on a branch and I got a lovely view of it. It is whiter underneath than the Chiffchaff and Willow-Wren, and is also larger than they are. Very often it started its song in the air and finished the louder part on the nearest branch. Besides two or three pairs at this particular haunt I heard some at Epping Forest, though not many even there. At Sudbury I have never seen or heard it. I wish this delightful bird was commoner; there is no reason why it should not be, but it does not seem to like extending its range, and remains in its own favoured haunts.

THE REED-WARBLER.

I did not see any Reed-Warblers until May 7th, when I went to a swampy place by the River Lea. Three or four pairs were singing vigorously, preening themselves, and clinging to the reeds, head downwards, in the most charming manner. A week or two later I found two nests in the same place, one with four eggs, the other with five. They were the most beautiful nests imaginable, suspended between two or three reed stems. I had never found a Reed-Warbler's nest since I lived in the Broad district of Norfolk, where there were numbers.

SEDGE-WARBLER AND CUCKOO.

I heard the Sedge-Warbler for the first time in 1914 on April 23rd. I found a nest with one egg on May 16th; on May 30th there were five eggs, all nearly ready to hatch. On the same day I found a Sedge-Warbler's nest with one chick in it which turned out to be a Cuckoo. At first it looked so very like a young Sedge-Warbler that I did not look for the hollow in its back, nor for its foster-brothers and sisters below the nest; but the next time I visited the place there was no doubt at all about the identity of the occupant. . . . The nest seemed too small to hold it, in fact it seemed to overflow the nest. When we approached, the young Cuckoo opened its terrifying bright orange beak, and disclosed its scarlet throat. When I put my finger near it made a dart at it, whether thinking it was food or out of pure viciousness I do not know. The next day I returned in the hope of securing a series of photographs. First I took it in the nest, then I thought I could take a good photograph of it perched on a branch. I was quite afraid of it, so put my handkerchief over and grasped it from behind. I then put it on a branch, but the silly thing kept falling off; at last it kept still and I took my picture. When I put it back in the nest, it would not stay there, so much did it appear to like its new freedom, although wet all over as the result of its falls. At last I managed to make it stay. None of my photographs were successful; I had taken them too hurriedly. . . .

Sedge-Warblers may sometimes be heard singing quite late at night. The song is not very musical, but the birds sing away with such a will that this deficiency is not noticed.

THE NIGHTJAR.

Several evenings in May I went out to a place where the Nightjars may be heard, in the hope of hearing one. On May 23rd I waited for about twenty minutes and was on the point of going when over my head glided a bird which uttered short guttural notes which I knew could proceed from no bird but the Nightjar. I followed the direction in which the bird was flying with that rapid silent flight peculiar to Owls and Nightjars, when presently I was delighted

to hear the more usual note, the long vibrating churr. Three times afterwards I heard the Nightjar, once from my study window at Haileybury, once while out treaceling for moths, and once while at camp on Salisbury Plain.

I have never found a Nightjar's eggs, although I have looked carefully in likely situations. Last year a small friend of mine stumbled upon two beautiful eggs placed only in a scraping in the ground. Several times I must have passed within inches of the eggs, but had not the luck to find them.

WRYNECK.

On April 12th I first heard the "qui qui qui pay pay" of the Wryneck, but I had some difficulty to get near enough to watch it. The species is, I think, decreasing in the neighbourhood of Haileybury but keeping up its numbers in the Sudbury district. I have heard only one near Haileybury, and that was on Mr. Buxton's estate at Epping. Formerly a pair used to nest in the grounds of the College. The Wryneck very often feeds on the ground as well as searching for insects in the bark of trees. It is very fond of ants and their pupæ, and its tongue is specially fitted for catching them.

C. P. Staples (Christ's Hospital), winner (tie) of the Second Prize, gives the following dates when he first saw the Migrants mentioned in 1914:—

Chiffchaff	...	...	March 15th
Willow-Warbler	...	...	March 20th
Wheatear	...	...	April 2nd
Whitethroat	...	...	April 5th
Cuckoo	...	...	April 12th
Swallow	...	...	April 13th
Blackcap	...	...	April 14th
Lesser Whitethroat	...	...	April 14th
Wryneck	...	...	April 14th
House-Martin	...	...	April 18th
Garden-Warbler	...	...	April 21st
Turtledove	...	...	April 28th
Nightingale	...	...	May 10th

These are, in most cases, the earliest dates given by any Competitor.

The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds.

ANNUAL MEETING.

THE 24th Annual Meeting of the Society was held on March 11th, 1915, in the Council Chamber, Middlesex Guildhall, Westminster, S.W., by kind permission of the Chairman of the Middlesex County Council. The Ranee of Sarawak presided, supported by Mr. Montagu Sharpe (Chairman), Mr. Meade-Waldo, Mr. Ogilvie-Grant, Mr. W. H. Hudson, Dr. Drewitt, Captain Tailby, Mr. J. R. B. Masefield, Mr. F. E. Lemon (Hon. Secretary), Mrs. Lemon, Miss Hall, Miss Clifton, Miss Pollock and Miss E. L. Turner, members of the Council of the R.S.P.B.; and among those also present were Lady Glenconner, Lady Colebrooke, the Countess della Rochetta, Mrs. Close, Mrs. Desborough Walford, Mrs. Tailby, Miss D. R. George, the Misses Good, Miss Byas, Miss E. H. Melvill, Mrs. Court Treatt, Miss Winifred Austen, Miss I. M. French, Mrs. Wynnard Hooper, Miss Thruston, Mrs. Burdon, Miss Mace, Mr. and Mrs. A. H. H. Matthews, the Hon. T. Mackenzie, Mr. G. E. Lodge, Mr. Cosmo Blore, Mr. A. Craig, Mr. J. Allen Tregelles, Mr. Leeds Smith, Mr. F. C. H. Borrett, Mr. Raymond de Jersey, Mr. F. A. Walker, Mr. Frank Wood, Mr. H. V. Masefield, and many others.

Letters regretting inability to attend were received from the President, the Duchess of Portland, who was unable to be in town; Sir Henry Newbolt, Sir John Cockburn, the Hon. Mrs. Drewitt, Mr. H. E. Dresser, Mr. W. H. St. Quintin, Mr. Hastings Lees, Mr. Staveley Hill, M.P., Mr. John Galsworthy, Mr. Ernest Thompson Seton, Lady Heneage, Lady Hoare, Lady Jenkyns, Lady Malcolm of Poltalloch, Canon Vaughan, the Hon.

F. S. O'Grady, Mr. Beville Stanier, M.P., Colonel Wardlaw Ramsay, President of the B.O.U., and others.

The Ranee, in opening the proceedings, remarked that they met under the shadow of a heavy disappointment, in the failure of the Government to pass the Plumage Bill; and spoke strongly and earnestly of the need for continued protest against the feather-trade and the folly of vain and silly women who carried the trophies of callousness and cruelty on their heads. Later, Her Highness moved the re-election of the Duchess of Portland as President; and Lady Glenconner, in seconding, dealt with the "feathered woman" in a witty speech; while the Hon. Thomas Mackenzie, in moving the election of the Council, deeply regretted the action of the Parliamentary Committee on the Bill in allowing time to be squandered and opportunity lost in the futile discussion of innumerable motions and amendments.

The adoption of the Report and Accounts was moved by Mr. Sharpe, who gave a brief *résumé* of the work and of the finances of the Society, pointing out that, like the British nation and its Allies, it too was engaged in a war for life and liberty—the life and liberty of wild birds. So far as regarded the Plume-trade, its enemies were to a great extent Germans, who both in this country and in the United States, were at the back of the traffic in wild birds' plumage.

The work of the Watchers Committee was dealt with in an interesting manner by Mr. Ogilvie-Grant, Mr. Meade-Waldo, and Dr. Drewitt; and Mr. Masefield gave some results of the experiments in

ringing birds which it is hoped may assist in determining the protection required by migrants. Among other instances he mentioned that of a Robin ringed in Staffordshire in June and identified at Gers, in France, in the following October, and of a Swallow which covered the distance of 7,800 miles between England and Natal; "thus," comments the *Pall Mall Gazette*, "are all flying men reduced to nothing by this brave little bird with its amazing flight of close upon eight thousand miles."

The medals and prizes won in the Public Schools Competition were presented by the Ranee to those of the winners who were able to attend, Captain Tailby explaining the scope and objects of the annual prize instituted for essays on the British Owls and their protection.

The several motions were carried unanimously, and at the close of the meeting tea and coffee promoted informal discussion of the Bird Protection cause.

A full report of the proceedings will be published, as usual, in the Society's Annual Report.

COUNCIL MEETING.

THE Council of the Society held their quarterly meeting at the Middlesex Guildhall on January 22nd. In the unavoidable absence of the Chairman, Mr. Montagu Sharpe, Mr. Ernest Bell presided, and there were also present: Miss Clifton, Hon. Mrs. Henniker, Mr. F. E. Lemon (Hon. Sec.), Mr. Meade-Waldo, Mr. Ogilvie-Grant, Miss Pollock, Captain Tailby, and the Secretary (Miss Gardiner).

The Hon. Secretary's Report stated that since the meeting of the Council in December, lectures had been given by Major Marriott at Lewes;

Mr. Masefield at Forsebrook, Hanley and Cheadle; Miss C. Spender at Bath (three lectures); Mr. J. H. Vickers at Farnborough; Miss A. Anderson at Perth; and Mr. Chas. Oldham at Berkhamsted. A Bird Protection Order, dated January 14th, 1915, had been issued for the County of Down, extending the close-time for certain birds to December 1st. Twenty-four Bird-and-Tree Festivals had been held.

Finance and General Purposes Committee.

The statement of accounts for the year 1914 was presented and approved, subject to audit. The Hon. Local Secretaryship for Derbyshire, vacant by the marriage and removal from the county of Miss B. M. Gray, was filled by the appointment of Miss Vaudrey, who kindly takes the work for the county in addition to that for the town of Derby. Mr. Leolin Brigg (Keighley), Miss Alice Blyth (Skelmorlie), and Mr. G. E. Lodge (London, S.W.) were elected Fellows. The following were elected Members: Mrs. E. S. Clark (Bath); R. Cox (Niton); Miss Clara Gardner (Luton); Major R. R. Gubbins, D.S.O. (Rockcliffe), Miss Monica Hollond (London, S.W.); Miss Lambart (Bath); S. W. Morgan (Little Haywood); Mrs. Norman (Bath); C. W. Somerville (Chorlton-cum-Hardy).

General Business.

No nominations had been received for Members of Council; it was accordingly agreed that the existing Council stand for election at the Annual Meeting; two of its members, Mr. Staveley Hill, M.P., and Mr. Masefield, have been elected since the Annual Meeting of 1914. The arrangements for the Annual Meeting were considered, and the draft Annual

Report presented, and several subjects of importance were discussed.

Meetings of the General Purposes and Watchers Committees were held on February 19th.

Next meeting of Council, April 23rd.

OBITUARY.

The Society has to regret the loss of two old and valued workers who have been associated with it almost from the first. Mrs. Maynard Proud, of East Layton Hall, had been Hon. Sec. for East Yorkshire since 1892, was a Fellow of the Society, and took the keenest and kindest interest in all its doings, and indeed in every effort to preserve the beauty of the English countryside. Her husband, the late Mr. John Proud, was also a warm supporter of the cause.

Mrs. Fielden Taylor became Hon. Sec. for Worthing in 1891, and though ill-health prevented her from taking an active

part there or in her later home at Torquay. her sympathies were always with the work, and a very short time ago she was in correspondence with the Society respecting the protection of Devonshire's sea-birds.

BELGIANS AND BIRD-PROTECTION.

Although the Belgian Bird Protection laws are in many respects more stringent than those of Great Britain, and among the best in Europe, it has been thought desirable to acquaint refugees with the Close-time regulations in force in this country, in order to avert possibly taking of small birds for the pot. The Society has accordingly issued a handbill for this purpose, printed in English, French, and Flemish. Some thousands have been circulated, by the help of the police and through other agencies, and further copies will be gladly supplied.

Notes.

A VARIETY of Bird notes of an interesting kind have found their way into the newspapers in connexion with the War. Not the least so are various letters recording the agitation displayed by Pheasants at the time of the North Sea battle, and the alarm shown by Parrots and other birds on the approach of an aeroplane. The excitement among the Pheasants on the morning of January 24th, in districts of Cumberland, Yorkshire, and Cheshire, is vouched for by Canon Rawnsley. The Rev. G. Egerton-Warburton, in his book "In a Cheshire Garden," written a couple of years ago, mentions the like commotion in a pheasantry on the occasion of a slight

earthquake shock in 1896, and cites a similar instance from Japan.

* * *

As to Parrots, they, it is said, work themselves into an intense state of excitement and screech loudly before human eyes discern an aeroplane in the sky. Accordingly, reports the *Standard's* Paris correspondent, a number of these birds have been posted on the Eiffel Tower and other stations, in order to ascertain how far they may be useful in signalling the approach of aircraft. The trouble is that no training can make Parrots discriminate between a French aeroplane and a German one! Long before the War it had been observed by keepers of poultry

that the vicinity of a balloon or an aeroplane threw the birds into great alarm and sent the chicks running to their mothers. The presumption in this case is that the instinctive fear of Hawks and other raptorial birds survives even among barn-door fowls, and that the air-machine is to them a gigantic Hawk.

* * *

Following on these stories came an anecdote narrated by a bluejacket, who tells how a flock of Gulls following his warship in the North Sea for the usual supply of food, gave the alarm of a submarine's presence by circling round about its periscope when no one on the ship had detected it. "I assure you," says the A.B., "had it not been for the Sea-Gulls, we should have been in Davy Jones's locker." "One may indulge the fancy," comments the *Spectator*, "that the seamen accepted the warning as a reward for having fed the Gulls. Apart from the scraps which continually go overboard and cause the Gulls to follow any vessel, no doubt the seamen followed the ordinary British practice of sharing their food with any living creature that happened to come their way. Here was the reverse order of things from the curse which fell on the Ancient Mariner's ship after the killing of the Albatross."

* * *

Another instance of this "ordinary British practice" gives singular charm to a scene from the battlefield vividly depicted in the *Times* by an Englishman with the French Legion on Christmas Day. For five days he had been surrounded by crashing bullets and bursting shells; he was exhausted for want of sleep, and smothered in dirt. And he writes:—

"Shall I ever forget this Christmas Day? My two hours ended at midnight, a bell rang in the ruined village, and instantly a great

volley, preconcerted, from all our line—our way of heralding Christmas with a message of 'Peace on earth, goodwill towards men.'

"Slowly dawn rose, and there was I, with rifle between two loopholes, the ground white with frost . . . feeding a tame Robin at my feet, the only Christmassy thing on this Christmas morn. On my left what remained of a once beautiful old church; I could see a lovely old oak-carved screen and pulpit, all shattered; every house ruined. A little flock of Chaffinches, two Bullfinches, and some Sparrows joined my Robin just at dawn. Suddenly I heard deep singing on my right, louder and louder—the stirring strains of the 'Marseillaise,' wild and beautiful in the semi-darkness."

It may be doubted whether any other nation could have furnished that picture of the soldier in the trenches, feeding the "Christmassy" Robin.

* * *

To return to the Gulls. It is worth recalling that less than a year ago, at a great Aviation Congress at Dresden, a cultured Hamburg professor of aeronautics gave a demonstration with living Sea-gulls and Doves, to show that although a great part of the brain of these birds had been removed, they could still maintain their balance. This experiment was supposed to demonstrate that aeroplanes could be invented which would keep stable in the air without attention from the airman. But the portentous German brain has not yet invented the equal of a Sea-gull, even though one of his huge Zeppelins succeeded, in the raid on King's Lynn, in killing a Canary in its cage.

* * *

It is satisfactory to know that the British-made Nesting-boxes, manufactured for the Society, have proved equal in every respect to those formerly imported from Germany. "The Bird-box came on Saturday and was put up at once, and on Monday morning the

Tits were busy with it, going in and out, and we find it most interesting," is a sample of many comments of purchasers. Difficulties have, however, strewn the way of the firms undertaking the work. Chief among them has been the dire shortage of wood, on account of the requirements of the War Office. The exact diameters required for the "Tree-hole" Boxes appeared to be precisely those needed for military purposes; and as these Boxes are bored in the actual trunk or branch in exact imitation of the bird's holes, it is impossible to construct them of odds and ends. Then the special machinery was hard to get, and tools equally so, because of the dearth of workmen and the holding up of goods on the railway; and, finally, transit was made irregular, expensive, and complicated by the dislocation of all goods-train service and the temporary cessation of collection of goods by the usual carriers. But all these troubles are merely side-products of the War. When the War is over another industry will have been added to British production, and Nesting-boxes will be among the thousand and one things for which German makers will never again pocket British money.

* * *

The necessity for more home-growing of timber emphasizes the importance of entomology and ornithology as handmaids to forestry. The value of Tits in fighting larch disease (larch sawfly) is now well known. Mr. Osmaston, Adviser in Forestry, Oxford, writing in the *Board of Agriculture Journal* for March, 1915, expresses his belief that the Green Woodpecker "will prove our strongest and most effective ally in the suppression and extermination of the longicorn beetle" which attacks feeble larches. "As so much of our larch

crop is sickly and diseased, it is of importance that this insect should not be allowed to spread its ravages unchecked"; and the attack may usually be first recognised by the excavations of the Woodpecker in its systematic search for the larvæ.

* * *

The Justices of the County of Meath decided on February 10th, on the motion of Judge Drummond, K.C., seconded by Lord Langford, to petition the Lord Lieutenant for further protection for certain of the birds of the county, laying special stress on the decrease of the Skylark and Goldfinch. Judge Drummond observed that the idea of such birds being exterminated was intolerable. It was stated that large quantities of Goldfinches were caught by birdcatchers from Dublin and shipped to England in small cages, half the number perishing on the way. The *Irish Times* well comments (February 11th):—

"We should like to see this trade in song birds stopped altogether. It involves a considerable amount of cruelty, and benefits nobody, except in so far as it puts a little money into the pockets of dealers and fanciers. The taste for listening to the singing of wild birds in captivity and teaching them artificial notes is not, in our opinion, one that should be encouraged. Even dwellers in the city can hear much more beautiful and joyous songs from those birds which still retain their liberty in parks and squares. As for the country, we do not care to think of the difference which would be felt were the Goldfinch and, still more, the Skylark to be exterminated. The thing would be an outrage."

Worcestershire still remains a happy hunting-ground of the Goldfinch-catcher, in spite of protest after protest from this Society. And caged Larks and Linnets in English shops and English slums continue to rouse the indignant pity of the thoughtful observer

Books Received.

IN A CHESHIRE GARDEN. By the Rev. G. Egerton-Warburton. (London: Sherratt & Hughes, 3s. 6d.)

THE garden is that of Warburton Rectory, and Warburton is on the border of Lancashire, a village still and country still, but threatened not only by the tentacles of big towns but by local "works." Already the bed of the Mersey which ran through the village has come, through stages of marsh and mud, to dry ground, thanks to the Ship Canal; and, in a few years, says Mr. Egerton-Warburton, "perhaps the whole place may be reduced to the desolation of another Widnes. Then, when it has become a rare thing to find even a blade of grass on the dreary black waste or to see any bird but a grimy sparrow, a record of what was once here may be strange reading." *Absit omen!* In any case it was a happy idea to set down these Nature notes from garden and parish, and no such melancholy prospect is needed to give them charm and value. Birds have the largest share in the records; mammals and plants are not neglected; and scarcely a page but gives pleasant matter for thought and speculation. During the gradual disappearance of the river, for example, the conversion of the Water-hens into waders was noted. They took to perching in the trees; one built at a height of 4 feet 6 inches from the ground, 200 yards from water. Presumably they have departed now; in their place the Canal has brought the Gulls. Kingfishers, too, haunted the river until the river ceased to be; and it would be interesting to know what the effect has been on the Sedge-Warblers, which the writer mentions as singing incessantly from 7 a.m. to 12 p.m., even in July, after the midsummer silence. Mr. Warburton's descriptions of his many inventions for food-stands that should baffle house-sparrows will entertain those who have tried similar experiments. Some capital dog and cat stories are included in the volume, and botanists will find a curious list of strange plants which have appeared in the Cheshire garden in the same mysterious

way of those which formed the "wild garden" of the Strand. The Rector of Warburton explains that his book is compiled mainly from a nature-diary; and though it has been published some time, little effort seems to have been made to introduce it to readers outside Cheshire. The loss has been that of many a nature-lover who would gladly have it on the bookshelf that holds his Gilbert White; but, fortunately, it is a loss that can be repaired.

ALASKAN BIRD-LIFE. Edited by Ernest Ingersoll. (New York: National Association of Audubon Societies.)

IN his preface, Mr. T. Gilbert Pearson, Secretary of the Association, explains that this volume has been prepared for free distribution among the people of Alaska in order to spread abroad a knowledge of bird-life and to teach the public, especially the growing generation, the very important place which the birds of this, or of any country, occupy in the list of national assets. Alaska has a noteworthy bird-population, large and varied; its coasts abound in sea-fowl, its warm and moist summers and extensive forests favour the rearing of nestlings, and it is on an important pathway of migration. The south coast, the Arctic coast, the wooded interior, and the Aleutian chain of islands have each their characteristic species, and of all of these interesting summarised accounts are furnished by various writers. The coloured plates are accompanied by duplicates in outline, to be coloured by children, a favourite mode of instruction with the Audubon Societies. The frontispiece, it may be noted, represents the Crossbill, the same species which forms the frontispiece to the present number of *Bird Notes and News*. Eleven Federal bird-reservations, in which all birds and eggs are protected, have been established in Alaska since 1909. The whole expense of the book, which is admirably got up, is defrayed by one member of the Association.

Bird-and-Tree (Arbor) Day.

THE number of Bird-and-Tree Festivals or "Arbor Days" is now so large that it is not possible to record many of them in *Bird Notes and News*, but effort will always be made to mention any special or novel forms of festivity of which reports are sent. The Festivals practically range over the whole year, some of them taking place immediately the results are made known, while others are postponed to Valentine's Day or Easter, or St. George's Day or Whitsuntide, or even until Midsummer.

Something must, however, be said of the celebration at Wolverton St. Mary's School, Bucks, where the Inter-County and County Shields were presented by Mrs. J. M. Knapp, of Linford Hall. A concert, ably arranged by Miss Fryer (Head Teacher) was combined with the prize distribution, and the interest in the proceedings was so great that many were unable to crowd into the room. The Education Secretary for the County, Mr. C. G. Watkins, who has always given encouragement and support to the scheme, presided, and in his speech referred to the great value of Nature Study in the education of children—its importance in cultivating the power of observation, in developing a love for the beauties of nature, and in raising the mind to what is highest and noblest. He thought that children who received such training would not in future derive their sole recreation and amusement from the picture-palace, but would be seen in wood and field, enjoying the songs of the birds and the loveliness of trees and flowers. Some people had the idea that children came to school merely to learn to read and write and earn their living; but he main-

tained that the ideal was to teach them how to live happy and beautiful lives.

At Exford, the Festival which celebrated the winning of the Somerset Shield took place under some disadvantages, including a wet day. Nevertheless, the prize-giving, tea and entertainment were very successful. Mrs. Bellew presented the Shield and prizes and also gave four special prizes to leading cadets, while the Head Master, Mr. Brambley, gave a useful volume to each member of the Team. Among the children present were three Belgian refugees, who cheered as heartily as their English comrades; and among the messages received by the School were heartiest congratulations from the Rev. W. New (who recently left the parish), and from "Old Birds and Trees," some of whom are now among the forty men from this little village who are serving their King and country. The Rev. A. C. Carne, Rector, presided, and said that, though almost a stranger to them, he was proud of the Team's success. On later dates, an oak sapling, given by one of the cadets, was planted in the rectory garden, and two trees in the master's garden, to the singing of the Planting Hymn.

St. Peter's Girls' School, Bournemouth, winners of the Second Prize for Hampshire, held Festival on January 18th, when the Vicar, Rev. Canon Daldy, presided and read the report, and Mrs. Daldy presented the prizes and medals. The girls gave an attractive concert, a feature of which was a cantata, "Robin's Remedy," made additionally appropriate by some clever interpolations bearing on Bird Protection. Extra prizes were given by the School

Managers and by the Head Mistress, Miss Firbank.

“Arbor Day” at Newburgh C.E. School, First Prize Winner in the Open Class, was duly signalled by the planting of a Horse-Chestnut tree in the playground by the senior essayist, and the singing of the Planting Hymn. Afterwards the prizes were presented by the Vicar (Rev. C. Harris), who hoped that next time more Lancashire Schools would enter, so that they might have a County Challenge Shield. The Headmaster, Mr. Halton, in a review of the work done, remarked that, though healthy competition was good, to win prizes was not all. The study of nature should not only quicken the mental faculties but should bring the child nearer to the Creator of all things.

[Judging by the interest shown in the Competition by the Director of Education (Dr. Lloyd Snape) and a good number of Schools, there seems every probability of a Lancashire Shield being instituted this year.]

The Warwickshire Shield was presented to Dosthill School by Mr. T. F. Cheatle, J.P., and the Rev. A. H. Bell made an appeal to ladies present on the plumage question. A lantern entertainment followed.

At Princes Risboro', the Rector gave an interesting account of birds and trees of other lands and of the Canadian Arbor Day.

Mogerhanger had a capital concert, Mr. Leeds Smith spoke most helpfully and encouragingly to the children.

From a large number of interesting and encouraging letters received from competing Schools must be quoted three typical extracts. The Headmaster of a northern School writes:—

“I find that the joy of watching ‘My Bird’ at nesting-time gives far more real pleasure to the boys and girls than any wanton destruction of eggs, etc., could

ever do. Many of the bigger children become real champions for the birds, and I have had to turn out only one of our cadets for destroying a nest. The rest of them were disgusted at a lad who could not stick to his word.”

The Headmistress of a village school sends the following Bird anecdote:—

“We have had a little Greenfinch staying with us—an invalid. A boy brought it one morning, having picked it up under the telegraph wires. It was bleeding and seemed dying. However, after being revived with water it was coaxed to peck, and hardly left off pecking the fortnight it stayed! If my children studied birds with half as much interest as that Greenfinch studied us we should be the champion school every year! It was particularly interested in the harmonium, and when I played used to watch my fingers with breathless attention. I had only a miserable little cage to offer it, but it used the boys’ cloak-room for flying practice whenever possible, and was very good about going back to the cage when told to do so. It is wonderful how soon a perfectly wild animal or bird learns to be trustful. It got stronger each day, and at last we let it go.”

The third letter is written by a member of a south-country team who have been winners of the Shield:—

“I think the Shield is a splendid trophy for the Society to send to the Schools. We are proud to have our name on it. I wrote my essay for the competition on the Nightingale. I got fond of the pair I watched, and was sorry when they went away. I used to know a bird-fancier who kept many birds. One day he caught a young Nightingale and tried to keep it through the winter, but the poor little bird died. He used to keep Goldfinches and Linnets, and many other pretty wild birds, and also a few Canaries, and when I saw him he told me about them. I felt sorry for the poor prisoners, and told him he ought not to keep them caged, it was cruel. He promised me he would let them go, and as he lived in Manchester I could not go to his house to see if he kept his promise,

but some time afterwards he again visited my uncle, and he told me he had let the little birds free."

To this it may be added that many hundreds of schoolchildren have signed the Society's Freedom Leaflets, pledging themselves not to keep wild birds in cages.

IN THE COURTS.

SHOOTING A HERON.—At *New Mills* (Derbyshire), on March 24th, Harry Brocklehurst, farmer, was ordered to pay the costs, £1 17s., for shooting a Heron, a bird scheduled by the County Order. From a statement made by Mr. Sydney Livesley in the local paper, it appeared that he and defendant saw a big bird on the river bank and tossed up as to who should have a shot at it. Defendant won the toss, and potted what the two men imagined to be "a very rare specimen of fish-heron." The attention of the police was called to the case by the R.S.P.B., with the result stated.

TAKING GOLDFINCHES.—At *Talgarth* (Breconshire), on January 8th, William Richards and Richard Morris, two Merthyr colliers, were convicted of catching Goldfinches with birdlime. They had five call-birds and had caught four birds. They said they were only taking a few to breed from. The inspector stated that there was great difficulty in detecting these cases, and the wild birds of the county were growing scarce through bird-catchers coming into the district. The Chairman (Mr. E. Butler) said they were bound to suppress this business. Not only was it great cruelty to wild birds to put them in cages, but the county was being deprived of some of its most beautiful species. Morris, who gave a wrong name, was fined 30s., and Richards 20s., nets to be forfeited.

SOLDIERS AND WILD BIRDS.—At *Witham*, two professional bird-catchers were fined 14s. each for cruelty to decoy Linnets. The case was proved by Captain Burlingham and Privates Kew and Cottis, of the 8th Worcester Regiment, stationed at Maldon. Defendants were seen catching birds in a net, the decoys being tied to a peg, frightened and fluttering. Captain Burlingham told them to stop it and go, as the men of his company were indignant

at the cruelty practised. Private Collis let some of the tied birds free, but others were exhausted and when produced dead in court were mere skeletons. One of the defendants said he had been a catcher for 30 years and never had a charge brought against him before; the linnets were caught to protect the seed industry. The Chairman said the treatment of the decoys was utterly cruel and could not be allowed; if defendants came before him again the penalty would not be a matter of a few shillings fine only. He thanked the soldiers for bringing forward the case.

ON LIBERATING CAGED BIRDS.

BY W. H. HUDSON, F.Z.S.

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H.H. THE RANEE OF SARAWAK,
Vice-President of the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds,
Chairman of the Annual Meeting, 1915.

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The Keeper's Opportunity.

LAST autumn, when the call to arms summoned the manhood of the nation from country house, moor, and preserve, to camp and trench and the stern firing-line of War, it was said in half-earnest, half-jest, that the "feathered game" would enjoy respite and safety. Those sportsmen who were not themselves going out with the Expeditionary Force would be engaged in duties pertaining to the terrible struggle for Britain's life and liberty; and the Grouse, the Partridge, and the Long-tail would know neither beaters nor drive nor battue, nor murder nor sudden death.

To a great extent the expectation was realised. Country-house shooting was on a small scale only, usually for the thinning of the birds and on behalf of hospital dietary.

The person aggrieved by this state of things has no doubt been the gamekeeper; and in articles which have appeared this spring in certain papers, the keeper has been urged to revenge himself for dull times with the pheasants by an extravirulent attack on the non-game birds of the preserve. The restraining hand of the master has been removed: the landowner, who had perhaps seen to it that some care was exercised for the preservation of rare and harmless birds, and who recognized that some degree of humanity might be practised even in the case of "feathered vermin," has been absent or burdened with an intolerable

weight of anxiety. The time was favourable for an orgy of trapping.

"We have heard," writes a contributor to one journal, "from several authentic sources that the vermin-trap trade has been exceptionally good this season, which goes to show that gamekeepers are taking advantage of their unusual opportunity to clear off these pests. Trapping is not likely to be confined to the first half of the year, which it generally has to be under stress of work, but will go on continuously."

The "pests" openly regarded as such include of course the Jay, Magpie, Rook, Crow, Jackdaw, and every species of Hawk and Falcon; no one imagines that the Owls and Nightjar escape, and the water-keeper includes the Kingfisher and any other bird that takes fish. The trap, moreover, is no respecter of species. The cruel pole-trap not infrequently caught Cuckoo and Thrush and Starling, and the thousand and one gins hidden away among the pleasant greenery of many a woodland do not fail to snap their steel teeth on any bird that comes in contact with them.

There is no intention in the present paper of discussing the sense or the righteousness or the desirability of destroying in game-preserves any or all birds which the gamekeeper, in his wisdom and his ignorance, considers inimical to the breeding of pheasants, though there is very much to be said on that subject. But no protest can be too strong against the employment for this

purpose of the vile and abominable steel trap. Every keeper has his gun; few keepers are slow to use it. That it should be supposed necessary—that it should even be permissible—to employ in addition against the bird-life of the woods the most treacherous and most cruel of all methods of destroying wild birds, and of using it throughout the nesting-season and by the aid of the nesting-instincts, is one of the crying evils attendant on game-preservation which entail odium on the gamekeeper and the Game Laws, and which bring the preserve before the public eye as a veritable shambles of wild life.

The pole-trap was made illegal eleven years ago after the exposure in the Press of its barbarity. That it is therefore unknown at the present day no one would venture to state. The nest or platform trap—little, if any, inferior in cruelty—lies, or is supposed to lie, outside the technical phraseology of the Act of 1904, though it is certain that its use in bush and tree is a case of sailing very near the wind.

To quote a well-known writer and authority on sport—

“The platform-trap, whose use is clearly meant to be barred as much as the pole-trap, is just as cruel as the latter instrument of torture. It consists of a steel trap or gin, set on a platform of sticks or moss, or on the edge of an artificial nest. Birds caught are liable to the same miseries as those taken in a trap on the top of a pole, for in their endeavours to free themselves they often knock the trap off the platform, and are thus held suspended by the leg in mid-air, the chain of the trap being of course fixed to the tree or bush in which the platform or artificial nest is fashioned. . . . But there is a difference in the kind of victim which the platform-trap and the pole-trap severally ensnare. It is mostly the hawks and owls which fall a prey to the latter horrible device, while in the case of the platform-trap, jays and magpies are the chief victims,

and by this means thousands of jays, magpies, rooks, and crows are cruelly done to death every year.”

It may be enough to quote one recent recommendation of the practice, dealing in this particular instance with Magpies, birds with a very strong attachment to their nests.

“Should one of the pair be trapped . . . it is an excellent plan to set a ring of several traps round that placed at the bait, as the mate of the magpie trapped dashes about in a frantic way on seeing what has occurred, and very often gets into one of the traps set at a short distance.”

It is again recommended that pheasants' eggs, being to-day “extraordinarily cheap,” may be bought by the hundred and placed in artificial nests in which traps are concealed. The nest-trap is a form greatly favoured, for an unprotected nest is undoubtedly a strong temptation not only to all birds that take other birds' eggs on occasion, but to those with whom curiosity is a marked trait.

The Magpie and Jay are bitterly hated by the keeper, and he will show no mercy in trying to exterminate these two handsome and intelligent denizens of the woods. It may therefore be taken as indicative of the times and of the growing trend of opinion on the sacred subject of game, that when a protest against the trapping frenzy was made last month by the R.S.P.B. in the columns of the *Shooting Times* (a paper not unfriendly to the cause of Bird Protection), the defence raised was based, not on the necessity for preserving the pheasants, but on the deplorable cruelty of the Magpie to small wild birds and the consequent virtue of destroying it! The character of Jay and Magpie and Rook has been blackened to the utmost; they are alluded to as “Huns” and spoken of as though their beaks were habitually

red with the blood of nestlings. But for the keeper, it is argued, Magpies would devour eggs and young of the charming song-birds and would become so numerous as to "wipe out our most useful and interesting birds."

The picture of the keeper as a St. George in velveteens, going about the preserve with gun and gin in order to rescue the innocents from Rook- and Magpie-dragons, is novel and touching; but as a blind to cover the barbarities of the trap, it is not convincing. It is but an evasive appeal to false sentiment—the species of false sentiment which defends the caging of birds on the ground that the bird-catcher saves them from

dangers and deaths threatened by nature, and which is ready, as Mr. John Colam was fond of saying, to "set the Almighty right" in very many of His arrangements.

The "humanitarian" keeper who is eager to suppress the Magpie by the aid of the toothed gin, must feel equal need for reform in the way of the Owl with the rat, the Kestrel with the mouse, the Kingfisher with the minnow, the Thrush with the snail, the Tit with the caterpillar. Indeed, it is hard to see where his trapping enthusiasm would stop, until, in his zeal to punish inhumanity in nature, he himself stands forth as the arch-priest of inhumane slaughterers.

Bird-Notes from the Trenches.

IN the midst of the overwhelming horrors of the War, the number of notes on bird-life sent home by soldiers can hardly fail to have been noted by, and to have touched, even the casual reader. If events have not affected migration to this country in the manner anticipated by many ornithologists, still less expected were the many records of birds heard and seen in the war-area and even from the trenches.

Some of these incidents may well be recorded in *Bird Notes and News*.

BLACKBIRD'S NEST IN A FIELD-GUN.

The following is an extract from a letter of Private R. H. Pickering, of the H.A.C. of Bedford: "During the last few days there have been signs of renewed activity. The other night the Huns exploded a mine under a trench to our immediate left and we thought we were going into the air as well, but nothing happened. A strange thing we saw to-day was a blackbird's nest built in the body of a field-gun. There are five eggs in the nest and the bird should start sitting soon, but I don't know how it

can. An artilleryman told us that they did not fire for about four days, during which time the nest was built and three eggs laid. They have fired each of the three days since then and two more eggs have been laid. He said that last night when the bird came back to her nest they were standing-to and getting the gun ready for action. The bird sat on a bough above and waited till they had finished. It hardly seems credible but the nest is there right enough."—*Bucks Advertiser*.

ROBIN'S NEST IN A DUG-OUT.

A resident in Clifton has received a letter from one of his sons, telling a striking story of a pair of robins in the trenches. This venturesome couple have elected to build their this year's nest in a dug-out, and have hatched five eggs. They further show their sympathy with the Allies by fearlessly accepting food from the hand, and in other ways proving themselves very much at home—"obus" or "no obus."—*Keene's Bath Journal*.

A SKYLARK AT NEUVE CHAPELLE.

A private in the Cameron Highlanders, who was formerly on the commercial staff

of *The Times*, writing from hospital of his experiences at Neuve Chapelle, says :—

“On Wednesday, March 10, we were told to ‘stand to’ earlier than usual. Our aeroplanes were up very early, and punctually at 7.30 a.m. a terrific bombardment of our artillery commenced. It is impossible to explain what the noise was really like; the sensation was awful. The Germans immediately set up a violent rifle and maxim-gun fire, so that we couldn’t see the effect of our shelling very well. The bombardment lasted well on to mid-day; it wasn’t quite so violent during the final stages. I have always relished the singing of a lark high in the air on a fine summer day, but it seemed a perfect heaven when during a slight pause in the shelling a lark could be heard singing merrily away, about 50 yards high.”—*Times*.

BIRDS IN THE WOOD.

Pte. C. T. Burgess, Honourable Artillery Company, writing to his father, Alderman C. Burgess, senior member of the Godalming Town Council, says :—

“Just by the trenches we are occupying there is a wood, and although it is fairly riddled with shot and shell both day and night, you would be surprised how full of life it is. There are two or three nightingales, which sing most rippingly, at least one pheasant, one green woodpecker, one stoat, and also a tree-creeper, and, of course, the usual thrushes and blackbirds. Don’t you think it rather strange that they should choose a place like that, as the noise from the shells that burst there is terrific, but it is very comforting to hear some of the old familiar woodland noises again.”—*Daily Chronicle*.

Mr. J. McKnight, of Worksop, attached to the Canadian Highlanders, writes, in a vivid description of an engagement :—

“As morning was dawning, the Colonel thinking our position not a secure one, led us back to the trench we had captured. We commenced to make ourselves more secure by digging deeper and building the parapet in front. It was now almost dawn. As the morning broke through the darkness of the night, the birds in the wood beyond broke forth into song. Everything was

quiet, the men seemed to stop their digging and listened to the song of the Almighty’s songsters. I stood up in the trench and looked across the battlefield of the night before. What a sight! Highlanders and Germans were lying all around, having paid the price of war. As I listened to that glorious song; looked at the tranquil scene in front; thought of the awful carnage of the night before; and as I looked around for familiar faces that I could not find, I thought, what an antithesis—on the one side peace and tranquillity, on the other war, bloodshed, and death.”—*Worksop Guardian*.

THE INDIFFERENCE OF BIRDS.

Writing on “Birds in the War-area,” in the *Outlook* (April 24th), Canon Vaughan quotes two or three stories which seem to indicate that the constant sound of heavy firing is no more to birds than the rumbling of trains is to the pigeons and sparrows that nest among the girders of railway stations :—

“An officer, who for three months was in the trenches on the outskirts of the Forest of Sablon, tells us that there the game seemed entirely unaffected by the constant and heavy artillery fire. Indeed, one exposed spot seemed to be the favourite promenade for cock pheasants. It was, he says, “A good-sized orchard directly between our lines and the enemy, and frequently swept by both rifle and artillery fire, yet I think never a day passed but that I saw at least one or two fine birds strolling about quite unconcernedly, and on many occasions I have seen several. Hares and partridges were also very abundant, and apparently war had no terrors for them.” Another observer of birds writes home from the Front : “We have a favourite blackbird, who sits up in the tree above us, and answers when the men whistle to him, no matter how heavy the firing may be. I was amused,” he adds, “to watch two old magpies the other day. They wanted to cross over from this side to the German lines, but every time they started to leave a row of poplars just below my shelter, there would be a crack from some rifle and back they would

turn and perch again to chatter about it, until they had picked up courage to make another try, and then the same thing would happen all over again."

SOLDIER AND BIRD-STUDENT.

The *Spectator* (May 29) publishes a letter from a young soldier "somewhere in France," to his mother in England:— ;

"I saw a flycatcher here this afternoon, pretty little chap. . . . I have only seen one bullfinch but heard several. This place is full of nightingales. I have got one nest within four or five yards, but it is in a blackthorn thicket. My searches have so far disclosed a magpie's nest with nine eggs. One I tried to blow, but it was too far advanced and smashed, so I have hopes of a tame one in about ten days' time. I have found heaps of blackbirds' and thrushes' nests. One lovely little nest roofed in blue feathers but not yet working; I think a tit's of some kind. I saw swallows here last Monday. Thursday afternoon I saw two cuckoos for the first time this year: also a pair of ravens. I think they are not nesting here but farther afield. Would you look up 'Morris' for any likely spots for yellowhammers' nests? I have tramped through lots of gorse and crawled in banks and can't find one at all. I was so surprised the other day sitting in my room reading to hear a noise like a cat having its tail trodden on. I got my glasses (guessing it was a bird) and hunted the tree-tops outside the window carefully, and finally spotted a big bird nearly the size of a jackdaw, certainly as big as a jay, almost completely yellow, with long beak and some black on the wings and tail. I have heard it since but not seen it, and must put it down as a golden oriole. The bird was right on top of a tall beech tree, and remained about three minutes and flew off. I revisited the small closed-in nest made of moss I found ten days ago in a furze patch, and it is now feather-lined and contains eight eggs, white, with, at the large end, rust-red spots fairly sprinkled and but a few towards the other end. It may be a tit of some kind; not a long-tailed tit as there is no lichen on the nest."

BIRDS AND MAN.

M. Louis Ternier writes in the *Bulletin* of the Société Nationale d'Acclimatation de France (May, 1915), on the remarkable tameness last winter of the migratory game-birds. Winter immigrants, he observes, have usually a tendency to familiarity with man, especially birds of the water and marsh who are born far from the haunts of man, and therefore are not experienced, like the resident birds, in the need of avoiding such familiarity. The absence of shooting during the past winter rendered them extraordinarily tame.

"The Curlews, so wild in ordinary times, allowed one to approach within several feet and even stood before me. They would pick about on the sand, almost close to the feet of the sentinel of a military post on the coast. The Sandpipers, Plovers, and other little Waders flew away only when forced, so to speak, and settled not far away. As for the Wild Ducks and the Teal, on the alluvial borders of the Basse-Seine, they raised themselves from the pools, where they alighted in broad day, so near to any visitors that they could have been killed by throwing a stick at them. On a marsh of which I have the shooting, and which has not been shot since the war, the Wild Ducks seem no more wild than the domestic ones. They strolled away tranquilly, without hurrying themselves, before those who pretended to wish to approach to take them."

On the other hand, the non-migratory birds have appeared as wild as ever.

"The great familiarity of the birds of passage, at the end of the year 1914, is indisputable and seems to me to confirm the assertion of Toussenel, who maintained that the bird desires only to ally himself with man.

"Unhappily man has decided otherwise. Sad to say, it is only when we are at war with our own race that we consent to make peace with the birds."

The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds.

COUNCIL MEETING.

THE quarterly meeting of the Council was held at the Middlesex Guildhall, Westminster, S.W., on April 23rd, when there were present: Mr. Montagu Sharpe (Chairman) in the chair; Mr. Bell, Miss Clifton, Hon. Mrs. Drewitt, Miss Hall, Mr. F. E. Lemon (Hon. Secretary), Mrs. Lemon, Mr. Meade-Waldo, Mr. Ogilvie-Grant, Miss Pollock, and Captain Tailby, and Miss L. Gardiner (Secretary).

The Hon. Secretary's Report.

The Hon. Secretary reported on the Annual Meeting, held on March 11th, and the preparation of the Annual Report; eighteen lectures had been given since January 22nd, as follows:—

Jan. 26, Miss Constance Spender, Bath; Feb. 2, Mr. A. Badland, Bradford; Miss E. Williams, Bishopstoke; Miss Buckell, Romsey; Feb. 4, Mrs. Lemon, Streatham; Feb. 9, Mr. Masefield, Somers Town; Mr. Percy Clark, Leigh; Feb. 15, Mr. Cragghill, Cartmel Fell; Feb. 22, Rev. A. Linzee Giles, Malvern; March 11, Mrs. Turnbull, Derby; March 9, Mr. Masefield, Berkhamsted; March 21, Mrs. Turnbull, Derby; March 13, Mr. Vicars Webb, Bristol; Mr. Masefield, Ealing; March 17, Mr. Vicars Webb, Bristol; March 17, Mr. Percy Clark, Atherton; March 22, Mr. Edwin Cooper, Bedworth; March 26, Mr. Harford, Horton.

Five Bird Protection Orders had been issued: *Kent*, February 11th, renewing the previous Order, with the addition of the Isle of Grain to the list of protected breeding areas; *Lancashire*, March 12th, adding the Lark to the list of birds protected throughout the year; *Radnor*, March 30th, the first Order for this County, leaving Merioneth the only county in England and Wales which is entirely without one; *Roscommon*, February 4th,

renewing the Order of 1905; *Meath*, March 25th, giving protection to Goldfinch, Linnet, Siskin, Redpoll, and Skylark all the year.—Seventeen Bird-and-Tree Festivals had been held, and the Regulations and entry-forms for the 1915 Competition had been issued, through the Education Authorities of the several counties, to Elementary Schools in Bucks, Cumberland, Dorset, Hampshire, Isle of Wight, Lancashire, Somerset, and Warwickshire, the arrangements in Norfolk and Northants being wholly undertaken, as usual, by the Local Authority.

Some discussion took place with regard to the number of County Boroughs still without Orders, and it was decided to make further efforts to induce these to come into line with the County administrative areas.

Finance and General Purposes Committee.

The statement of accounts for the first quarter of 1915 was presented, the receipts showing a decrease on last year's, mainly in the special funds. Mr. R. H. T. Drummond, of Watford, was elected Hon. Local Secretary for South-west Herts, and Mr. Douglas J. B. Wilson for Dumbarton. The following Fellows and Members were elected:—

FELLOWS: Lady Colebrooke (London, S.W.); K. J. Acton Davis (London, W.); Geo. W. Hayes (Worplesdon); Dr. Henry R. Hutton (Haslemere); G. E. Lodge (London, S.W.); Colonel Rippon (London, S.W.).

MEMBERS: Dr. M. Ashley (Cirencester); Miss Jane Barker (St. Albans); Miss J. M. Bourne (Atherstone); T. L. Bradley (Nottingham); G. M. Burd (Purley); F. N.

Creswick (Hathersage); Miss Cochrane (Barton Stacey); R. H. T. Drummond (Watford); Hahnemann Epps, Mrs. Epps (London, S.W.); John Elphinstone (London, N.); E. W. Hendy (Manchester); Mrs. T. E. Hodgkin (Stocksfield); J. E. Hurlley (Harrogate); Mrs. Jobbins (Guildford); Miss C. A. Maltby (Matlock); Mrs. McDonald (Waterlooville); W. Mayer (Erdington); W. Mudge (Paignton); Mrs. Rennie (Hungerford); Miss Florence Somerville (Edinburgh); J. Strangman (London, W.).

Watchers Committee.

The appointment of Watchers and a summary of the work undertaken for the season of 1915 were reported.

General Business.

The Standing Committees for the year were appointed as follows:—

FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES: Mr. Bell, Miss Clifton, Hon. Mrs. Drewitt, Mr. Hastings Lees, Mrs. Lemon, Mr. Masefield, Mr. Meade-Waldo, Miss Pollock.

PUBLICATIONS: Mr. Bell, Miss Clifton, Mr. Dresser, Mr. Hudson, Mrs. Lemon, Mrs. Fuller Maitland, Mr. Ogilvie-Grant, Miss Pollock.

WATCHERS: Mr. Meade-Waldo (Chairman), Dr. Drewitt, Mr. Keith Henderson, Mr. Hudson, Mrs. Lemon (Hon. Sec.), Mr. Masefield, Mr. Ogilvie-Grant, Mr. St. Quintin, Captain Tailby, Mr. Trevor-Battye, Miss Turner.

Correspondence dealing with Bird Protection Orders, bird-catching, the taking of nests and eggs, prosecutions, the importation of Bitterns from Holland, and other matters, was considered, and the subject for the Public School Essay Competition for 1915 was discussed and agreed upon.

H.H. the Rane of Sarawak, a photograph of whom is given by permission in the present number of *Bird Notes and News*, has been a Fellow and Vice-President of the Society since 1906, and is keenly interested in its work.

PUBLIC SCHOOL ESSAY COMPETITION.

THE Council of the R.S.P.B. invite Essays on the under-mentioned subjects from boys at Public Schools in Great Britain.

Silver and Bronze Medal Essays.

The Flight of Birds: How to distinguish birds by their flight—different styles of flight in various species—soaring, hovering, gliding, swooping; straight, dipping, and zigzag flight—formation of flocks of birds in flight—birds that take prey on the wing—shape of wings in connexion with powers of flight.

“*The Owl*” Prizes.—A Special Prize or Prizes of the value of One Guinea is offered annually by a Member of the Council of the Society for the best Essay or Essays on:—

The British Owls: The Necessity for their better Protection, and the means to be adopted for the Preservation of useful and rare Birds of Prey. Special reference should be made to the economic value of the Owls, and notes on Kestrel, Kite, Buzzards, and other Raptors may be added at the option, and according to the opportunities, of Competitors. Personal observation and information are desired. The Essay may be accompanied by Photographs.

The Silver Medal is awarded in the Senior Division (Competitors over sixteen on August 1st, 1915), and the Bronze Medal in the Junior Division, with the addition of a work on Natural History in each case. Certificates and books are also awarded for the best Essays from each school represented in the Competition. The Essays should not exceed 3,000 words in length and should be handed in to the representative of the Society at the School, or forwarded direct to the R.S.P.B., not later than September 30th, 1915.

Full particulars and entry-forms can be had from the Secretary, R.S.P.B., 23, Queen Anne's Gate, S.W.

BIRDS IN WAR TIME.

THE following letter from the Secretary of the R.S.P.B. has appeared in a number of London and provincial newspapers :—

A good deal has been written with regard to the birds of the war area and the anticipated migration of bird-fugitives to this country—an anticipation not fulfilled. But something remains to be said as to the birds of our own country in war time.

The *Times* has recently pointed out that thousands of acres of common and other open land, where larks and linnets and many other and rarer species have been wont to nest, have been turned into camps and marching ground, and trodden down by man and horse. Ground-nesting birds can no longer nest there; cover has been destroyed; the old-time solitude is peopled; there is no secret place for the brooding bird.

This is inevitable, but to some extent the loss can be counteracted if landowners and others will give additional security to nesting-birds elsewhere.

Is it too much to ask, for instance, that golfers will strictly prohibit their caddies from the destruction of nests and eggs with which caddies too often amuse themselves; that farmers will, where possible, spare nests on their fields; that teachers will make a special point of restraining their scholars from Hun-like smashing and despoiling of bird-homes; that those responsible for the care of commons will tighten up their by-laws for the protection of birds and see that such by-laws are so exhibited that he who runs may read, instead of being an unheeded portion of a more or less illegible inscription on a defaced board?

ANTI-FLY CAMPAIGN.

Attention has been called, and more insistently, to the dreaded danger caused by flies of various kinds carrying germs of infection. The efforts of man to combat this danger are, however, puny compared with the work of the many birds which destroy these creatures by the million, at this season of the year in particular to feed themselves and their nestlings. He who has a swallow's nest in his barn, or house-martin's under his eaves, is serving

the cause of sanitary science better than he who adorns every room in his house with poisonous fly-cemeteries.

Birds, again, are the natural enemies of the host of flies, caterpillars, and weevils, which live upon vegetation. Here, too, science with its insecticides and fumigations, expensive and troublesome as these may be, cannot compete with the hungry beak of the sharp-eyed bird. The present shortage of field-labour and the trebled importance of crops, emphasises the farmer's need of all his allies. A French ornithologist has remarked that France, when the Germans have ceased to harry the land, will have pressing need of all her bird-life to fight the insect invaders and ravagers of her fields. The need is the same in our own case, though less tragically imperative.

THE FEATHERED WOMAN.

May I add one word more? The feather trade is at present making a desperate effort to reinstate the discredited "osprey" and other wild bird plumes on women's heads. At such a time as the present, women may well reflect (1) that this trade has its roots, not only in German commercial profits, but in German barbarity; (2) that ostentatiously expensive ornaments are an offence and a disgrace when military needs and civilian misery call on all sides for help; (3) that no excuse can be made on the score of providing employment, since feathers give less of this than does any other form of trimming; (4) that the flaunting of these badges of cruelty and death in a world anguished with slaughter and suffering speaks little for the refinement or the taste of the wearer.

NOTES FROM ABROAD.

The Society has received the Annual Reports of the Danish Society "Svalen," with interesting bird-notes; of the Sophia-Vereeniging tot Bescherming van Dieren, of Amsterdam, and of the Vereeniging tot behoud van Natuurmonumenten in Nederland, with fine photographs of nature-reserves and of Spoonbill, Avocet, and Short-eared Owl. In Spain, Senor Wynn is actively carrying on the work, and has recently organized exhibitions, with lectures, at Vido and, in connexion with an agricultural congress, at Balaguer.

Bird-and-Tree (Arbor) Day.

ALL Schools entered for the Competition may be reminded that the Essays should be written either before the School breaks up for the summer holidays or as soon as it re-opens. It is a great convenience to the Society, and facilitates the issue of the Report, if the Local Judges will examine the papers and pick out the six best (three on Birds, three on Trees) as soon as possible after the writing of them, so that these may be forwarded to the Society without delay. Some hints for the Essay-writing are given in the "Spring Letter to Cadets," which is supplied gratis to Schools. Note-books need not be sent in unless specially asked for. Any drawings forwarded separately should in every case bear the name of the Cadet and of the competing School.

There was not a very large Competition last year for the special Owl Prize; and no doubt this is a difficult bird for children to observe. The Prize is again offered this year.

The Competitions will probably suffer to some extent this year through the loss from School Teams of older scholars who are wanted to help in the fields. This occupation should, however, but give them increased opportunity for observing wild life; and in order that no difficulty may be placed in their way, it will not on this occasion be necessary that a Cadet should attend school the whole year in order to be eligible to compete. Attendance during any part of the school year will be sufficient.

The drafting away of boys and girls at an earlier age than usual gives, however, a special opportunity to the younger Teams,

and none of these need be afraid to enter the lists or be without hope of taking a good place in the Competition.

The number of Festivals held in the spring and summer of 1915 has certainly not been less than usual. Even Felixstowe Ferry, without a schoolhouse, and with the majority of children attending another school, has had its celebration, thanks to the kindness of Mrs. Maxwell Balfour in giving a Bird-and-Tree garden-party in the grounds of Thurloe House. More noteworthy still, a little Team has been recruited from the twenty children whose homes are within the defences and who attend a temporary school; their roaming is restricted on three sides by sea, river, and firing range, but they have access to the marshes, and no doubt, in true British spirit, will keep up the reputation of the Team.

The largest number of Cadets entered from any one school stands to the credit of the Western Schools, Southampton, which enrolled no fewer than sixty boys last year, but did not after all compete. This year it is to be hoped they will prove their mettle. For 1915 Newburgh in Lancashire leads the way with fifty-one Cadets out of a total number on the school-register of eighty-seven. In contradistinction to large schools with four or five hundred scholars, is one in Cumberland with a total of only sixteen, which yet provides a Team. It is impossible, from results in the past, to say whether large or small schools do best. The chances seem about equal.

Some of the old Bird-and-Tree Cadets now with the Colours were alluded to in the Spring Number of *Bird Notes and News*. Three members of the Middleton (Tamworth) Team which won the Warwickshire Shield in 1909 are now serving King and country, one of them being, very appropriately, in the Flying Corps. It would be interesting to have records from other schools.

The effect of Bird-and-Tree work in the schools of the United States and of Australia is the same as in this country. The attitude of children towards animals and birds, and also the general intelligence of the young students, are influenced as by no other experiment in "Nature Study." As a

teacher in one of the Portland Schools (Oregon) writes :—

"The interest of my pupils in their wild bird-friends is shown remarkably in their schoolroom work. They are more wide-awake and sympathetic. The experiences with the birds which they relate form the most interesting lessons of the day. Three of the boys who were the most difficult to manage are now the easiest to handle, since they have begun to build and rent bird-houses."

The making of nesting-boxes is a great feature of the work in Portland, the children of the schools having made the huge number of 8,000 for the parks and private gardens of the city, under the auspices of the Board of Education. Bird-tables, and the feeding of birds in winter, are no less important a part of the work.

Notes.

TENTSMUIR, in Fifeshire, where an enterprising egg-collector recently bagged some 670 eggs before being caught by the keepers, is a fine seaside moor, extending from the Tay to the Eden, which is finely situated for the purpose of a bird-sanctuary; and the portion on which the raid took place has been keenly protected for five and twenty years by Mr. William Berry. Hence the prosecution. When he first rented it, scarcely an egg was allowed to hatch, hordes of men and boys raiding the place by boat and road and train, and taking everything they could find; and as at that time there was no law to protect eggs it was a hard matter to cope with the state of things. A few years later the Act of 1894 was passed, and Mr. Berry made speedy use of it to obtain an "area" order which has since been merged in the general egg-protection clause of the Fifeshire Order. The number of both species and

of birds has since that time immensely increased. Under Mr. Berry's keepers the moor has become a great nesting-place of the Black-headed Gull (previously unknown there), and also for Terns, Eider-ducks, Plovers, Curlews, and other species. It has to be remembered, however, that this result, so welcome to naturalists, depends wholly on Mr. Berry's personal efforts. The rest of the moor is entirely unreserved, and though certain eggs are "protected" on paper, there is no one to enforce the law. Bird-Protectors know too well what that means.

* * *

Some of the Tentsmuir Gulls gave evidence on behalf of their kind to the Suffolk and Essex Fishery Board in 1913. Twenty-two of them, from a gullery not far from high-water mark and little over a mile from several artificial trout-lochs, were killed and their crop-contents sent to the Board for

examination. They were found to contain remains of two small fish, 33 useful beetles, and six earthworms, as against 51 harmful beetles and insects and 31 wire-worms, showing a balance distinctly in favour of the agriculturist and practically innocuous to fisheries.

* * *

The provision of water for birds in summer in being more and more regarded both in kindness to the birds themselves and also as a measure of insurance for fruit. Every observer knows that the neighbourhood of streams and pools is the place to look for many birds, and that a rill or fountain or pan of water is a *sine qua non* for a garden that aspires to bird residents and visitors. In the United States, where heat and drought are so much greater than in showery Britain, the bird-bath and fountain are more general than with us, and the April number of the *American Museum Journal* devotes an article to the best form and material for the purpose.

“Bird-baths may be as simple or as elaborate as one likes. A rough earthenware saucer from six inches to twelve inches in diameter and with half an inch of fresh water in it, is a great deal better than nothing. . . . But the supplying of water is so very important, that most of us will wish to do rather more than put out a saucer. Even from a selfish standpoint it is well to give birds all the water they want. If we do, they will be much less likely to destroy our small fruits which they sometimes eat chiefly for the fluid contained.”

* * *

A little pond, two or three feet (or less if necessary) in diameter, with concrete at the bottom, is not difficult to fashion on the ground; if open to assault from cats, it is better to have a bath of stone raised from the ground, such as is made at the Compton Art Potteries, or may be contrived by ingenuity at home. The concrete must

be covered by gravel, sand, or pebbles, or a sod of grass, as a smooth surface is particularly objectionable to birds; and the depth should not be more than five inches at most, two-and-a-half being as far as most birds will venture in. It is well to graduate the slope from half an inch at the rim to four or five at the centre. The writer of the article describes one made in a series of five steps, each half an inch lower than the last, and each seven inches wide, and he describes how the various bird-visitors respectively made use of the shallow or deeper water. Similarly, beside a little English streamlet it may be noticed that the sparrows stand at the very edge and splash the water over themselves, while the chaffinch walks boldly in to a least an inch of water.

* * *

In a large garden, there are all manner of possibilities of providing miniature ponds with water-plants and grasses planted around them, for the birds' drink and bath, and with little food-trays invitingly half-hidden among the foliage. A tub for water-lilies, for instance, may be sunk in the ground, and surrounded by a sloping trough for water, and that again by tall grasses; this is the method adopted by the president of the Meriden Bird Club. It is perhaps necessary to say that where the water is not running water, it must be cleared out with mop or brush fairly often and clean water supplied. The too-familiar little slippery crockery dish, with the water all dried up, provided “because Bird people say it will save our fruit, but it doesn't,” may well be relegated to the scrap-heap, and a bath sensibly constructed to serve its purpose and form a picturesque addition to the garden, be substituted.

A late addition to the exhibits in the hall of public health at the American Museum of Natural History, in New York, is connected with the anti-fly campaign. It does not consist of fly-papers and traps, but shows the most important enemies of the fly, in a setting of stable and stable-yard. A hen is engaged picking up fly larvæ; a toad is waiting under burdock leaves to catch its prey; Swallows are skimming over the yard, catching flies on the wing; wasps are abroad on a similar quest, and in corners of the stable are waiting spiders and centipedes, while bats hang suspended from the beams. The Swallow is, of course, only a representative of the many species of birds, including even the House-Sparrow, which wage war on flies. Possibly to all these remedies might be added a broom and pail as typical of the cleanliness which is a main factor in the prevention of fly-plagues.

IN THE COURTS.

TAKING EIDER DUCKS' EGGS.—At *Cupar*, on May 11th, David Butchart, pier porter, Broughty Ferry, and David Smith Mollison, private in the Royal Engineers, were convicted of taking seven Eider-Ducks' eggs on Tentsmuir. They visited the place on a Sunday, with a portmanteau and various bags to hold their booty, and took no fewer than 654 eggs before they were caught by the keepers. The great majority were those of Black-headed Gulls which are not protected. Butchart, who organised the raid and owned the boat employed, was fined 10s., and Mollison, as he wore His Majesty's uniform, was let off with an admonition.—At *Aberdeen*, J. Coull, motor-lorry attendant, and two farm servants, were convicted of taking three eggs of the Eider-Duck on the links of Forvie on May 16th, and were fined 5s. each. A similar charge was brought against J. Youngson and A. Will, farm servants, of taking twenty-eight Eider-Ducks' eggs; fined 15s. each.

BIRDCATCHING.—At *Caxton* (Cambridge), on April 30th, Charles Emery, professional birdcatcher of Gamlingay, was summoned for setting nets for Linnets on April 12th. He had five or six yards of nets, two decoy birds pegged down, and two Linnets in cages. In spite of the fact that Gamlingay is one of the most notorious places in England for birdcatching, and Emery's name is well known in connexion with it, he was let off with a caution.—At *Dorking*, on May 15th, Matthew Duffield, Henry Schofield, and Henry Duncombe, of Bethnal Green, were charged with possession of newly-caught wild birds. At Mickleham, on April 20th, two of the men had stuffed birds concealed in their hats, and they carried a basket containing eleven wild birds, most of which were smeared with bird-lime. They said they were out for a day's sport and were going to Epsom races. Fined £1 each; birds and outfit confiscated.

NEW PUBLICATIONS.

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ANNUAL REPORT OF THE R.S.P.B. FOR 1914.

With Report of Proceedings at the
Annual Meeting, 1915.

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BIRD-AND-TREE DAY:
Wolverton St. Mary (Buckinghamshire) Team.
(Winners of Inter-County Challenge Shield, 1914-15.)

Bird Notes & News

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AUTUMN, 1915.

[No. 7.]

The R.S.P.B. in War-time.—I.

A YEAR and more ago, when the horrors of War descended upon Europe, it was supposed by some persons that the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds was one of those institutions which, however excellent in time of peace, would not weather the storm. The Society is an institution of humanity and civilization, and humanity and civilization were ceasing to count. It is an outcome of the refined and æsthetic emotions of mankind, like poetry and pictures, and life had no longer a place for the æsthetic. Birds must, as one correspondent puts it, "take a back seat." They must get along as best they could while man was at death-grips with man.

The Council of the Society decided otherwise. Throughout the most terrible twelve months of history, the work of the Society has been pursued steadily, quietly, unfalteringly. Preservation of rare species, safeguarding of migrants at the lighthouses, efforts to secure and extend legal protection against the bird-collector and the bird catcher, the educational campaign in the schools and out of the schools, protests against the skin-and-feather traffic, have one and all been continued. To those responsible for the work it has not seemed desirable to turn a blind eye to the barbarous pole-trap because men were receiving barbarous treatment at German hands; to tolerate the "osprey" badge of callousness on

a woman's head because she might be patronising a concert for the Belgians. It should encourage the teaching of children about the birds of their country when old Bird-and-Tree Cadets and other bird-students in the fighting-line write of the poignant joy of memory that has come to them with the song of a Skylark or a Blackbird.

If the protection of bird-life were indeed an æsthetic matter and nothing more, a Society for the purpose might falter and stand aside at a time of great national stress. Yet even on this score it might be urged that the æsthetic has not been wholly neglected in the country generally. The flower-garden has not entirely disappeared, though its place might provide addition to the food-stuffs of the people; the mower still keeps the grass of public and private grounds close and trim, although some might think that left to grow it would have yielded a crop of hay; the gardener continues to potter about the borders with his shears and the gravel path with his broom. It is surely as well worth while to preserve the birds of the countryside, with their grace of form and flight and their incomparable gift of song, as to beautify our lawns and plant out geraniums. The garden, it may be said, might become a waste or wilderness, and future labour be thereby doubled. Still more is this an argument for the Protection of Birds, especially

of the rarer species. A breeding-haunt swept bare by the trader in specimens or in feathers, and what becomes of past years of effort? Does anyone imagine—to look for a moment outside the British Isles—that if the Audubon Wardens were withdrawn for a season from the Egret rookeries of a southern State, the plume-hunters would leave alive a bird they could slay? Or if the close-time protection were removed from the Kittiwakes of English cliffs, or the Terns on the shingled beaches, is it to be doubted that gunner and dealer would revert to the practices of forty years ago and that wings torn from the dying birds would be proclaimed “the fashion” for the coming winter? Withdraw the Watcher from the rare bird’s haunt, and the collector will not wait for the conclusion of the War before he raids it; cease to enforce the Protection law, and it will be a strong power that will re-establish it in the minds of men.

But there is another and even more powerful reason why the work of the Society for the Protection of Birds should be pursued and supported at the present time, and that is the incalculable economic value and importance of bird-life. This subject is one that is strangely neglected, and dealt with, when touched upon, with superficiality and short-sightedness. As a serious study it is in its infancy; the careful investigations made by the few are limited in character and are clouded by the dogmatism of the many who have only partial records or pious opinions to guide them.

The main facts are in outline these: Of the millions of wild birds in this country, infinitely the greater number of species live upon insects, wild seeds, and wild berries. Some of the larger kinds prey on the lesser and on small quadrupeds and reptiles. The numbers of these

latter have been reduced, mainly by man’s agency and efforts, the balance of nature being thus upset. It has also to be remembered that the enmity of generations of mankind has decimated with powder and shot, and trap and net and poison, and by the destruction of nests and eggs, the small birds of field and garden. There are thousands of acres where at certain seasons (not excluding the breeding-time) the gun is never silent. Nests and eggs are liable to a hundred dangers. Some species, like the Lark and Wheatear, have been trapped and netted wholesale for the epicure’s table; others, like the Goldfinch, have been brought in many districts to the verge of extermination by the bird-catcher. No mathematical ratio of increase can be based on the number of a bird’s broods or of its eggs.

Of the millions of small birds that feed on insects and seeds, all, with scarcely an exception, rear their young in spring and early summer upon insect-life—the grubs and caterpillars and maggots and flies which constitute the greatest plague with which farmer and gardener have to deal and the most serious menace to the food of man. A moment’s consideration of the numbers of nests and young, and of the number of times in an hour in which food is brought to the ever-hungry nestlings by the parent-birds, may suggest the millions upon millions of injurious insects thus destroyed; but no computation can make man effectually realize the gigantic total. More or less, the bird is at the same task of destruction throughout the year. Not one species but destroys some pest, animal or vegetable; certainly not, on the other hand, one single bird that lives, wholly or chiefly, on cultivated grain or fruit.

The matter of weeds and their seeds may be left on one side, though the

Agricultural Department state in one of their pamphlets that 16½ millions sterling are lost by farmers of Great Britain in growing and getting rid of weeds; and the wide-scattering of thistle, dandelion, and other flying seeds promises a fine crop in this year of labour-scarcity. Men are not to be had; Goldfinches, Linnets, Chaffinches, Buntings, and their kin will be badly needed on the farm.

The plague of insects, however, is absolutely beyond the control of man himself. He cannot find the grub hidden in the earth or in the bud; the caterpillar devours and the blight smothers his crop; wireworm and leatherjacket reduce his corn and grass to withered refuse; the maggot brings his fruit or legumes to nothing. So incompetent is he even to detect the ravagers that he will ignorantly shoot the Rook or Starling that is probing into the ground, or the Tit that is searching out the grub, under the delusion that yellowing plant and blighted blossom are the work of the very birds which are his only allies. The sharp eye, the deft beak, the swift wing needed to deal with the insect host are given to the bird, and to the bird alone. An agricultural paper recently remarked that insects had increased since the passing of the Bird Protection Acts, and therefore birds could be of no use, and in the same breath alleged that man, with the chemicals at his command, was master of the insect plague and therefore needed birds no longer. That is to say, he has not been able, with the aid of countless bird-labourers, to deal with the insect; but he thinks he could do so if left single-handed. Such logic needs no comment.

The cases in which birds have been known directly and dramatically to stay an insect or vermin invasion are numerous and striking. Some of them are effectively

told by Mr. James Buckland in his paper "The Value of Birds to Man," printed in the Report of the Smithsonian Institution (Washington, U.S.A.) and in the Journal of the Royal Society of Arts (June 18th, 1915). But the constant day-by-day services of birds, the beaks that are always at work, year in, year out, on every patch of land, cultivated or incult, in the land, and in the world, seeking out fly and grub and weevil and worm; all this is too commonly passed by as though it did not exist. Only when at some season the bird encroaches so far as to eat of grain and fruit is he regarded; and then it is with outcry and malediction and the shout of "Kill, kill, kill." The farmer does not turn a blind eye to his men until pay-day comes. He may object that the pay asked is too much; that he will reduce his staff; but he will at least have regard to the labour done and the need for it. He does not begrudge outlay upon chemical washes and applications for insect-destruction. The grain or fruit taken by the bird represents the pay of the labourer, the cost of the chemical. There is no occasion to deny the damage, often exasperating damage, done at times (though probably a proportion of it might be prevented by some trouble and outlay on scaring): but to ignore the unceasing work, the obvious and proved importance of the bird is surely folly. The tiller of the land has at present power to destroy the species he complains of (except where local authorities decide otherwise) at all times of the year. The Legislature is not likely to interfere with this extensive right; the majority of Bird Protectors would not wish to do so, even though the power be often and dangerously misused. But it is high time that ignorance and prejudice were superseded

by fair and patient observation and common-sense logic.

To see the mischief done by certain species during a brief period of the year is easy; to misconceive and imagine an enormous amount which is not the bird's doing or which has not the ruinous effect anticipated, is still easier; to write newspaper contributions founded on ancient theories unchecked by personal knowledge, and to calculate that men's food is coming to an end because a gull eats so many herring-fry in a day or a finch has been shot with so many grains of corn in his crop, is unfortunately easiest of all.

One of the many objects of the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, and one peculiarly necessary at this time, is, then, to educate the public to an intelligent interest in this essential question: not to call for the unthinking protection of all species any more than the heedless

persecution of all, but, in the best interest of the land-cultivator himself, to urge careful consideration of the unique position of birds in the economy of the nation and its food-supply.

"The majority of insects and ticks," writes Sir H. H. Johnston in the *Nineteenth Century and After*, "stand out in contrast to the other members of the animal kingdom by the direct conflict of their interests with those of mankind.

"Man himself—especially and before all, man of the highest developed, Nordic type,—has wantonly destroyed his beautiful and faithful allies the birds, has stupidly put out of existence many and many a harmless and useful reptile that only lived to devour insects and ticks. He is now paying the penalty in the present alarming spread of germ-diseases, in the diminution of his animal and vegetable food supply, which are due to the activities of the insect world."

The Plume-Trade.

WHATEVER may or may not be luxury or extravagance, and what legitimate expenditure at the present crisis of the nation, there is at least one form of outlay that is wholly and absolutely wasteful and illegitimate,—the purchase and wearing of hats and head-dresses decorated with the bodies and wings and breeding-plumage of wild birds. As each autumn comes round, the trade and the milliners make the same effort to push the "osprey," the Paradise-plume, the Tern wing, etc., and tell the old story of the "made up" bird and the "chicken" wing, and of the "osprey" that is alternately "artificial" and made of feathers moulted in South Africa or from birds domesticated in India. Women

have accepted as many falsehoods on this subject as even the Germans could supply; but the feathered headgear remains the Hun-headgear, typifying slaughter of the helpless and harmless; the "osprey" still stands for the Baby-killer among the shot-out homes of Heron and Egret.

The United States Biological Survey has been investigating the depredations of the boll-weevil, which has frequently wrought such havoc in the cotton-fields of the southern States that many planters have had to give up raising cotton crops. The Survey reports that twenty-eight species of birds feed on the pest to a greater or less extent, the principal

destroyers in summer being the Orioles. "But," adds the Bulletin of the Bureau, "Orioles, because of their bright plumage, have until recently been extensively used for millinery purposes and shot by the thousand. In view of their great value every effort should be made to prevent their destruction for any purpose whatever." In the London feather-market these useful and beautiful birds fetched 1½d. each for the decoration of hats.

Further and more stringent measures have been taken for the protection of birds in Dutch New Guinea, which has been the main source of supply for Birds-of-Paradise and Crowned Pigeons. Mr. Burdet furnishes the R.S.P.B. with particulars of the new regulations enacted by the Resident, as follows:—

1. For this year (and most probably for the future also) shooting is limited to three species, namely: *Paradisea minor*, *Seleucidés nigricans*, and *Ptilornia magnificus*.

The exportation of *all* other bird skins is prohibited.

2. Shooting is entirely forbidden on the islands of the Radja-Ampat Group (Misole, Batante, Waigiu, etc.), on the islands of the Geelvink Bay (Jappen, Schouten Island, etc.), and on two parts of New Guinea constituting large triangles situate on both sides of Geelvink Bay.

The island of Waigiu is the only home of the Red Bird-of-Paradise, threatened with extermination by the plume-hunters; and the shores of Geelvink Bay have of late been one of the principal hunting-grounds of the trade.

This notable step is a first result of the commission formed by the Royal Zoological Society of Amsterdam.

The killing of Paradise Birds and Crowned Pigeons, and exportation of their plumage, has been prohibited in British New Guinea since 1908, but smuggling has gone on to some extent.

Notes.

BELGIAN officer in the trenches writes to an English friend a touching account of the return last spring of the Swallows to devastated Belgium. It is published in the *Spectator*. He describes the emotion of the birds, arriving in the village where they thought to find

"The nest beneath the sheltering eaves
Of yon grey cottage framed in leaves
Await them as of yore"

and how they flew distractedly round the heap of ruins that represented the old home. Clinging to the crumbling walls, they surveyed the horizon, as if trying to make out where they were; then, uncertain, departed to search and reconnoitre about the orchard,

the trees, hedges, ponds, and a hundred other familiar details of the landscape. Then, sure that they were not deceived, they returned again to the ruins and presently discovered the small hut constructed for military use against one wall. This they studied for several days, passing and re-passing a hundred times before the opening, and at last entered and inspected it. A second and third visit reassured them as to the locality, and they set to work to build their nest, which in a fortnight was completed and the bird installed. Needless, says the writer, to speak of the soldiers' satisfaction, for Belgium retains the old belief that Swallows bring happiness to the

house which gives them shelter; and since May not one German missile has fallen on the hut. Nor is that an isolated case, a great number of soldiers' huts having Swallows' nests beneath their low ceilings. He adds:

“Les reverrons nous dans les abris l'année prochaine, Dieu seul le sait? Quoiqu'il en soit, nous formons le voeu que ces abris soient conservés jusqu'à la reconstruction, jusqu'à la résurrection de nos foyers détruits. Les hirondelles, et nos paysans aussi, pourront y loger quand nous serons à la poursuite des Barbares.”

* * *

Captain R. Crawshay writes to the Society, from the Headquarters of his Brigade in France, enclosing the letter quoted above, and adding:—

“I have often reflected on this very matter of the Swallows in the field of war.

“Barn Owls, also, cannot but be greatly affected in districts where towns are destroyed and even cathedrals and churches reduced to ruins.

“Harriers are apt to come in for a hot time when gun positions are located in low bottoms which form favourite hawking grounds for these birds, as I have remarked in the section where I now am.

“Partridges I sometimes see scared by bursting shells.”

* * *

From the fighting line in France comes one of those stories so numerous during the present War, which throw into vivid relief, amid the horrors of battle, the tenderness of heart of British heroes. Tales of horses rescued at the peril of men's lives, of dogs and cats dug out in ruined villages and befriended, have been told elsewhere. This story is of a baby Owl, found by a young artilleryman in a tiny cage in the house where he was billeted; it occurs in a letter from a soldier-son. The owlet had fallen

from its nest in the belfry tower, and been condemned to slow death by its ignorant owner. The Englishman pleaded for the bird to be given him, and nailed the cage up on the church wall. Next morning he found the remains of three mice and two sparrows in the cage and the owlet in recovered health and spirits. Each night the parent birds visited and fed the youngster; and before the battery received marching orders the bird could fly and the young soldier had the satisfaction of releasing it from its cage.

* * *

To the services of Gulls in sighting the periscopes of submarines, and of Parrots and other species in giving warning of Zeppelins, has now to be added the statement, quoted by the *Manchester Guardian*, that soldiers have been warned, by the behaviour of birds in the night, of a coming attack by poisonous gas. Before the smell of the fumes can be perceived in the trenches, it is reported, the soldiers are awakened to their danger by the noise of birds who have detected the first fumes of the vile infection. This is highly probable. It is well known that canaries are used in mines and in mining disasters to test atmospheric conditions and save miners or explorers from gas-poisoning, and the Government Mines Committee recommended the keeping of two or three birds at Rescue Stations for the purpose of testing for carbon monoxide.

* * *

Notes regarding the behaviour of birds on the approach of aircraft appear in some of the Bird-and-Tree Essays from Norfolk this year. A boy of only nine, writing on the Moorhen, says:—

“When a Zeppelin came over Beechamwell

all the Waterhens called out 'Crr-ook! Crr-ook!' and my mother looked out and saw them all flying."

Another competitor, a girl of ten, writes in a paper on the House-Martin :—

"Early Sunday morning, June 6th, a great shock was felt in this district. I woke up and felt the house shake. I thought it was a Zeppelin. It disturbed my birds, for the noise they made kept me awake, and they seemed unable to settle down, flying around about the rest of the morning. I could see their shadows on my blind."

It says something for Norfolk children that they thus calmly observe the effect of Zeppelins on their birds without a word as to any alarm of their own.

* * *

A more learned observer in Norfolk, Miss E. L. Turner, alludes to the behaviour of birds on the approach of an aeroplane, in the course of a paper on the Long-eared Owl in *British Birds* :—

"One evening after dark, while the male Owl was still at his post in the fir-tree, an aeroplane circled over the wood. It was curious to note the behaviour of the birds during this disturbance. The Wood-Pigeons, which had come in to roost, rose in a mass and fluttered noisily round and round; Pheasants crowed and flew to and fro; all the small birds twittered and called. A Whitethroat and a Willow-Wren began short snatches of song and broke off abruptly. But the Owl, which I could but dimly see, sat tight and showed no fear."

* * *

Among curious nesting-sites noted during the past summer, one selected by a pair of Whitethroats at Mapledurham, on the Thames above Reading, deserves the attention called to it by the *Observer*. The Whitethroat usually builds near the ground in a tangle of herbage, and is extremely jealous of all approach to its well-hidden sanctuary. This pair chose Mapledurham Lock for their

home. It is a place where people are continually passing, and where even at night the brooding bird must have been occasionally disturbed by the working of the lock. Close to the lock is kept a lifebelt, with line attached, hanging in one of the small wooden erections used by the Thames Conservancy for the purpose, and the birds built on the inner circumference of the belt. The little pair resented intrusion in their well-known way by vehemently scolding their numerous visitors, but made an exception in favour of the lock-keeper, who was reasonably regarded as having a right to watch the domestic proceedings. Happily no emergency called for the use of the belt, and the brood flew safely on July 9th. Under the same roof, against the coils of the rope, a Wren built a "cock-nest."

* * *

Another species which even more invariably builds on or close to the ground is the Willow-Warbler, whose domed nest is commonly in a bank or in long grass, but now and then low down in a bush or wall. Mr. Kearton tells of one at Dingwall in an ivied wall, six feet from the ground, but this was an extraordinary case, three feet being about the recognized limit. The Dingwall bird has this season been outdone by a pair at Uttoxeter which, as recorded by the *Uttoxeter Advertiser* of July 7th, made their nest in some ivy in a garden in that town quite eight feet from the ground.

* * *

Some people have curious ways of viewing other matters besides Bird-Protection. The campaign against flies is familiar to everyone; no one can say that it is unnecessary, though it might be argued that prevention, little discussed, is better than cure. And that, in

the cures, the important services of bird and wasp might be considered, even though not providing so visible a cemetery as the fly paper. Flies, it is proclaimed, frequent garbage and convey germs thence to man and his food. An emphatic paragraph on the subject appeared the other day in a Bristol paper. In the same journal was the information that the local Health

Committee had deferred for a twelvemonth, on the ground of expense, the provision of sanitary dustbins; the contents of the boxes in use, said the Medical Officer, were littered about the streets. It is no unknown sight in London to see clouds of dust and a litter of filthy paper blowing off uncovered dust-carts about the streets and into meat and fruit shops. And the germs?

The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds.

COUNCIL MEETING.

MR. MONTAGU SHARPE (Chairman) presided at the quarterly meeting of the Council, held at the Middlesex Guildhall, S.W., on July 23rd, 1915, and there were also present: Mr. Bell, Miss Clifton, Hon. Mrs. Drewitt, Dr. Drewitt, Miss Hall, Mr. F. E. Lemon (Hon. Sec.), Mrs. Lemon, Mr. Masefield, Mr. Meade-Waldo, Mr. Ogilvie-Grant, and Captain Tailby, and the Secretary (Miss Gardiner).

Hon. Secretary's Report.

The Hon. Secretary reported the issue of Bird Protection Orders for *Galway*, May 6th, extending close-time for certain species to Dec. 1st; and for *Wicklow*, June 21st, withdrawing protection from the Cormorant and the "Hooded or Carrion" Crow. Fourteen further Bird-and-Tree Festivals had been held. The three leaflets, Nos. 65a, 73 and 74 had been issued. With regard to Nesting-Boxes, the statement showed that the demand had continued, and that the British-made Boxes on the Berlepsch principle had proved beyond a doubt that bird-lovers had gained rather than lost by the cessation of trade with Germany; and it was agreed to continue to provide the patterns most enquired for.

The popularity of last season's Greeting Card suggested that a really appropriate card would be welcomed for next Christmas, and it was agreed to ask Mr. Murray Dixon if he could again furnish a design.

Finance and General Purposes Committee.

The Committee presented the statement of accounts for the second quarter of 1915. The death was reported of the Society's valued Hon. Secretary for Hythe, Mr. G. W. Chitty, and the regret expressed at his loss was fully endorsed by the Council. The resignations were received of Miss Patrickson for Marlow, Mr. Hadden for Malvern, and Mrs. Burdon for Royston; and the appointments confirmed of Mrs. Hector McLean as Hon. Sec. for Blundellsands, and Miss C. M. Hudson for Keswick. The following Fellows and Members were elected:

FELLOWS: Lady Bingham (Sheffield); Miss Wright Anderson (London, W.); P. R. England (Liverpool); Miss A. M. Keep (Houghton); Lieut. E. F. Lawder, R.N.; Mrs. Parson (Haslemere); the Rev. C. G. Roffe-Silvester (Hindhead); Mrs. Summers (Winchester); Miss Florence Wilson (Newtonbreda).

MEMBERS: N. Abbott (Didsbury); Fred. Ballard (Malvern); Mrs. Berrington (Wolverhampton); Mrs. Cunynghame (Winchester); Miss Everard-Hutton (Bath); Chas. Gibb

(Cuckfield); Miss Jacob (London, W.); H. W. Jessop (Rawdon); Mrs. Craven Jones (London, N.W.); J. W. Lombard (Dublin); Mrs. McLean (Blundellsands); Mrs. Norman (Bath); Mrs. Roscoe (Evesham); Ernest Sutton (Saskatchewan); Miss Ysolde Walters (Chesham Bois); Mrs. E. Wansey (Worthing); W. Webb (Central Telegraph Office, E.C.).

Watchers Committee.

Reports were received from the Society's Watchers at various stations, from Trinity House with reference to protection of birds at Lighthouses, and also with regard to the illegal taking of eggs in certain districts; and business relating to a threatened action against the Society for libel, was dealt with.

General Business.

It was agreed that the arrangements for judging the Public School Essays and the Bird-and-Tree Essays from Elementary Schools should be similar to those of previous years. A suggestion for offering extra prizes for two special subjects was deferred until next year. Among other correspondence considered were letters arising out of an illustration in a daily paper representing "fishing for Gannets" from the Bass Rock; it was explained that the birds were merely caught for "ringing," no fishing in the ordinary sense of the term, nor any injury to the birds, being entailed. The sale of game-birds in the close season, and other subjects, were considered.

OBITUARY.

The Society has sustained a loss that will be greatly felt in the sudden death, at Dover on June 18th, of Mr. G. W. Chitty, of Belmont, Ightham, who had been a Fellow of the R.S.P.B. since 1899 and Hon. Secretary for Hythe since 1905.

Keenly interested in every agency for social advancement and genuine philanthropy, Mr. Chitty made his Secretaryship no nominal post, but threw into the work a whole-hearted and practical sympathy which, combined with his kindly and unassuming manner and personal generosity, drew in many other influential supporters. Though senior partner in a large commercial concern which owed its extension mainly to his acumen, his main delight was in the things of the country and in art and music, and he had always time and thought to spare for the Birds. Mr. Chitty was a man of delicate health, but his death was wholly unexpected. He was 72 years of age.

PUBLIC SCHOOL ESSAY COMPETITION.

Intending competitors are reminded that all Essays, whether on "Flight" or on "The British Owls," should be handed in to the representative of the Society at a Public School by Sept. 30th, or be forwarded direct to the Head Office of the R.S.P.B., 23, Queen Anne's Gate, S.W. In either case they should reach the Society by October 18th.

CHRISTMAS CARD.

The Society's Greeting-Card for 1915-6 will be again from a painting by Mr. O. Murray-Dixon, whose "Bird of Good Omen" was so much admired last year. It will illustrate verses taken, by permission of Lord Desborough and of the *Times*, from the poem "Into Battle," written by the late Captain the Hon. Julian Grenfell, D.S.O. (Royal Dragoons) while serving his country in France. Mr. Murray-Dixon himself is a member of the United Arts Rifles, 1st City of London Battalion.

Economic Ornithology.

TITS AND FRUIT-TREES.

A USEFUL record of observation with regard to the ways of Tits is contributed to the *West Sussex Gazette* (July 8) by Mr. Guermonprez, the writer of its nature-column. When a certain cherry-tree in Bognor was in full bloom Mr. Guermonprez noticed the visits to it of Great and Blue Tits, and the fact that they picked off many hundreds of blossoms, cutting across the corolla at the base as though in search of insects in the corolla, and in some cases pecking or nipping the nascent fruit. A great many hundreds of flowers were however left untouched, and these should have sufficed to produce a good crop. But these fell off, for no apparent reason, and scarcely half a dozen cherries ripened. Examination indicated that here insects had been at work and that the tree itself was unhealthy, containing a quantity of dead wood.

“It is likely that a sequence of disease, insect attack, and bird aid are thus shown. The several Morello cherry trees in my garden adjoining were left quite unattacked, not a flower being touched by the birds. The flowers of the Morellos on examination proved to be quite free from insects. . . . Thus the damage done by the birds, which was but slight in proportion to the bloom, was an attempt at aid, and not wanton mischief.”

THE DIAMOND-BACKED MOTH.

In the June number of the *Journal* of the Board of Agriculture, Mr. Harper Gray deals with the diamond-back moth, the caterpillars of which do enormous damage to the turnip crop of Great Britain. Experiments are recorded with paraffin and sand, lime-sulphur, and ground lime to prevent the

eggs being laid, with leaf-brushing or “scuffling” to destroy the caterpillars, and by coke-fires to attract and kill the moths. Incidentally it is mentioned that “in one case Starlings and Plovers cleared the caterpillars from a badly attacked field of turnips in four days, after which the turnips grew vigorously, while in another case a turnip-field, black with these birds eating the caterpillars, showed no sign of the moth afterwards.” The “practical conclusions” added by the author therefore, it may be supposed, recommend that farmers should encourage these valuable and cheap allies on their land? By no means. The scuffer and the ground-lime, entailing labour and expense, are recommended. The bird as a labourer is not recognized by the Board of Agriculture, and the farmer tells the County Council that he wants to have protection taken off the Starling.

Yet the services of birds of various species in regard to saving crops from the diamond-back moth have been pointed out again and again. After the great incursion of this pest on the East Coast in 1891, when they descended on turnip and swede fields like locusts, Chaffinches, Greenfinches, and Linnets were mentioned as helping greatly to destroy the grubs (Report on Injurious Insects, 1891).

THE STARLING.

The following letter from the Secretary of the R.S.P.B. appeared in the leading newspapers of Worcestershire in July:—

“The attention of this society has been called to the efforts that are being made by certain members of the Worcester County

Council to have all protection removed from the Starling, on the ground that it is injurious to crops.

“Without entering on the question of the economic value of the species (the greatest existing check on the Tipula or daddy-longlegs grub), may I point out that at present the farmer, and every other occupier of land, is at liberty to kill Starlings at all times of the year and to destroy their eggs. The one and only point to be gained by an infringement of the general Close-time Act would be to place young birds at the mercy of the trespassing hooligan at the nesting-time and thus afford him opportunity and excuse for destroying also other birds at this season.

“In the cause not only of common humanity, but also of the farmer himself, such an attempt is most strongly to be deprecated.

“Worcestershire has already made itself remarkable among English counties by refusing to protect the charming thistle-eating Goldfinch from the bird-catcher. It will hardly improve its reputation by seeking to break down the Act of 1880 in the interests of the marauding invader of field and preserve.”

CLOSE-TIME PROTECTION.

Repeated efforts are made by various County Councils to have the Act of 1880 tampered with and Close-time protection removed altogether from this bird or that; or, in other words, to have certain birds placed wholly outside the pale of protection at all times of the year. It is safe to say that the request is usually rooted in ignorance; to say that it is made with knowledge would in most cases be a reflection on the intelligence of the Councils. The Act of 1880 provides that birds shall not be killed or caught in the season when the helpless young are in the nest; but to this is added the proviso that any person who owns or occupies land may kill even at this season any bird that is not in the schedule of that Act. Now, the schedule includes no bird which can be

regarded as inimical to man, and if any such species has been added to the list, the addition has been made by the County Council itself. Moreover, no eggs are protected, except by a County Council: nor is any bird protected from August to March except by a County Council. The margin would seem great enough for dealing with the most destructive and worthless of birds, and no bird is wholly destructive. The simple enactment that catching and killing are not, for these few months, permitted to the irresponsible vagabond in lane or field, wood or common, without permission, is the keystone of the British Bird-Protection law—the one general principle which applies to the whole country and which can be readily grasped by the policeman and the ordinary man. It is most sincerely to be hoped that the Home Office will allow no further tampering with this provision in respect of any species whatsoever. Such tampering can have but one result: the downfall of the whole structure.

Said Professor Newton nearly fifty years ago: “A close-time must be established in this country. I entirely deprecate showing favour to one species rather than another: all should be put on the same footing. It should be as penal to shoot a Hawk or a Sea-Gull out of season as a Pheasant or a Grouse. Each has its proper and useful function.” And in the House of Commons in 1880 Sir John Lubbock emphasized the necessity for protecting all birds without exception, if the close-time was to be worth anything. Half-heartedly, Professor Newton’s dictum has been accepted, and the close-time established must be maintained. There must be no going-back to the state of things that existed before 1880.

THE FARMER AND THE BIRDS.

The want of knowledge which so generally exists as to the nature of the Bird-Protection laws is displayed most by those who attack them. A recent article in a leading agricultural journal illustrates this. The writer cries out that the Acts were "passed by townspeople," and instigated by persons who considered only their own pleasure in seeing and hearing birds "during their occasional visits to the country"; that they have led to such an increase of mischievous birds that farmers and the country are being ruined, and that it is time the farmer was given freedom "to deal with the pest in any way he sees fit."

Now, the facts are (1) that the Acts were passed by the same Parliament which is responsible for every other law; (2) that the Act of 1880 was "instigated" by Sir John Lubbock, Sir James Howard, Mr. Dillwyn, and Sir H. Selwin Ibbotson; (3) that the Acts of 1894 and 1896 depend for their working and for the birds protected under them entirely on elected local administrative bodies. Further (4) that so far as Acts of Parliament are concerned, the farmer is absolutely free to deal with the birds of which complaint is made.

The article proceeds to make the curious

admission that the damage to crops of which he complains is not due to an increase of Sparrows; they are, he says, "practically the only unprotected birds"; but to an increase of Linnets, Chaffinches, Starlings, and Greenfinches—which he imagines are protected. Yet the protection given to the Sparrow is precisely the same, neither more nor less, than that given to the species named. It would seem that even agricultural writers sometimes see what they are on the look-out for, in order to square facts with theories. The increase of certain birds is clearly taken for granted because it is supposed that they are protected.

The *Estates Gazette* recently put the case of farmers and birds more judicially:—

"There is no more important national question than the protection of agriculture, and that involves the understanding of nature's laws. The stoutest champion of bird-life does injustice to his own common-sense and injury to his cause by clamouring for protection of all species under all circumstances. Farmers are entitled to their protection, and their protection in some cases involves the destruction of the birds. But is there always reason for much of the destruction that goes forward under the sanction of protection for seeds and crops? If we only made proper use of them, birds are one of the most valuable national assets it is possible to have."

Bird-and-Tree (Arbor) Day.

UNPRECEDENTED conditions have delayed the sending in of Bird-and-Tree Essays from a considerable number of Schools this year. The customary abridged report on the work done will appear in the Winter Number of *Bird Notes and News*, and extended County Reports will be forwarded as early

as possible to the Teachers and Bird-and-Tree Committees of competing Schools.

The Norfolk Education Committee propose to hold a Festival meeting at Norwich early in October. The Essays were consequently sent in earlier than usual, and the Shield has been awarded to Great Dunham School.

A Challenge Shield will be this year, for the first time, presented to Lancashire.

The Schools in general may be congratulated on having met and overcome the many

obstacles presented, in this time of national anxiety, to the prosecution of Bird-and-Tree work. It is a work that will bear good fruit for the nation.

Bird-Life on the Lake of Neuchatel.

By M^{LE}. RACHEL DE LA RIVE.

FOR those who enjoy watching the varied forms of bird-life which people a bit of wild nature, the lake of Neuchatel affords a fascinating hunting-ground. The surroundings are beautiful and add to the pleasure of the observer. Without possessing the grandeur of mountain scenery the lake has the colour and charm of a mountain tarn. On one side, the steep pine-covered slopes of the Jura are reflected in the green water; on the other, runs a line of wooded cliffs fringed with alders and reeds, and unbroken by any sign of human habitation save the walls of a little grey old town. The reeds continue to hold their own at the north-eastern end of the lake, and here a bird sanctuary has been established and no shooting is allowed at any time of the year. The result has already proved most satisfactory.

The lake of Neuchatel, besides possessing many kinds of birds that spend the summer on its shores, and some that live there all the year round, lies on one of the routes of the migrants, and a visit to the reservation of La Sauge in the spring, when many winged visitors stop for a rest on their way homewards, is extremely interesting.

A stream, widened into a canal and joining the lake of Morat to its bigger neighbour, here winds slowly between flat meadows and fields, drained and brought but lately under

cultivation; and as the small steamboat, avoiding the shallows, makes its way towards the mouth of the Borye, the beautiful Black Tern with its delicate pointed wings glides by, and the Common Tern is also seen in the company of Gulls; some are making their way northwards, and some will spend the summer fishing on the lake, the touch of white they add to the landscape in calm or stormy weather giving the beauty of the far-away seashore to this inland water.

Leaving the steam-boat at the quiet landing-place, a few steps across a low-lying meadow brings us to one of the only places in Switzerland where the Lapwing nests, and here, sure enough, are the cups in the soil in which the eggs have lain. The young birds have left the nests and the parents are crying and swooping round us to draw our attention away from their hiding places in the grass and rushes. We sit down on a great heap of sand that affords an excellent post of observation and a wonderful sight greets the eye. Ruffs, Greenshanks and Redshanks, as well as Green Sandpipers, are feeding along the shore, their delicate greys and browns, just visible against the sandy ooze, are so much the colour of their surroundings that it takes several minutes for the uninitiated to discover them. Suddenly they rise together and wheel about before alighting again, but our presence does not

appear to disturb them, and a pretty little Sandpiper pokes about quite near us most unconcernedly. Perhaps they are used to being watched by their devoted friend M. Alfred Richard, who visits this spot continually and is able to tell us how many birds of each species halt at La Sauge during their long journey twice a year. His notes are published in the magazine of the Société Romande pour la Protection des Oiseaux, of which he is the Secretary, and give a very complete account of the bird-life of the lake.

Unwillingly we leave behind the pretty waders and the cry of the Lapwings, but a further pleasure awaits us on our way back to Neuchatel: a pair of Goosanders are standing at the end of a long stone breakwater built to keep the lake from silting up, and the handsome black and white plumage of the male and the brown of his mate are a perfect picture as we approach. There are a fair number of these birds on the lake, and they are unmolested, their flesh not being considered worth eating.

If we follow the south-eastern shore of the lake from La Sauge to Yverdon we shall find that the alders growing on the flat ground at the foot of the cliffs are the haunt of a great number of small birds. Here the little migrants, Willow-Wren, Chiffchaff, Warblers and Nightingales, find a quiet paradise in which to breed; and their notes are the only sounds to be heard along mile after mile of the straight track that runs between the bushes. Their only enemies are the cats that have taken up their quarters in some hole in the cliff, and the hawks that circle slowly against the blue. So the little Willow-Wren repeats his gentle, delicate

song by the quiet water from dawn to eve through the long May days, and the Great Reed-Warbler croaks a good deal more noisily and less musically among the tall reeds near the few landing stages along the shore, choosing these spots in preference to more retired nooks and corners. He is a lively fellow, swinging gaily on the tallest reeds, a good-sized bird, and with a good-sized voice, more like a frog's than any other bird I have heard. The smaller Reed-Warbler is also heard, and one can spend hours wandering among the alders in pursuit of an elusive bird-voice that leads you on and on over marshy ground and through the bramble and wild roses.

Tired and hot you sit down on one of the boulders that lie scattered along the shore, and an unknown call makes you look up and see, showing white against the sky, a group of wild Geese flying northwards, or surely those are the long outstretched legs of Storks. Poor Storks! their homes in Alsace are no quiet ones this year, and perhaps it was owing to fire and sword beyond the Jura that a pair settled down near Yverdon last spring in marshy land not far from the lake and there reared their young, a thing they had not done in Switzerland for the last 50 years.

The good work done on the lake of Neuchatel is bearing fruit in other cantons, and the lake of Geneva, thanks to the efforts of the "Société Romande," now possesses two bird-reservations where swimmers and waders may find a haven in which to multiply in peace. A great step has thus been made in bird-protection and towards saving some very beautiful forms of life that were fast disappearing in Switzerland.

Correspondence.

From the Rev. J. G. Tuck :—

“The other day I met a man (not a naturalist) who had been out with a local Field Club for a bird-walk. He said they had seen among other things, several Linnets and a birdcatcher. I said, ‘You ought to have killed him.’ ‘Why,’ said my friend, ‘what harm does he do?’ I began to expound on the destruction of birdlife, the devastation of the countryside, and so on. ‘Oh,’ he interjected, ‘Yes, yes. That is not what I meant. I am not much of a bird man. I didn’t mean a birdcatcher; I meant a flycatcher!’”

From the Rev. G. Egerton Warburton :—

“In the early part of May last year (1914) a single Gold-crest made his appearance in the garden. For some time I only knew he was there by his gossiping note, as he spent most of his time in the thick yews and hollies and it was difficult to catch sight of him. After a while, however, he took to hunting in the tops of the oaks and Spanish chestnuts, and I used often to watch him, so quick and so busy and singing so joyously all the time his little simple song. He was seldom still for more than a few seconds; but one day he came to a bough close to where I was standing and for a considerable time sat there preening his feathers and uttering short snatches of song, almost within reach of my hand.

“He was always alone, and though his favourite haunt was among the yews in the churchyard, yet on whatever side of the garden one might happen to be, there he was certain to come before long.

“It was a great pleasure to have him here. I used to listen for him every morning and he never failed me, until one day in the end of June, when on the following morning he was found on the churchyard path and was brought to me. He was alive and warm and apparently uninjured and his black eyes were still bright. I held the little mite for

some time between my hands, but I could see that his race was almost run and it was not long before he quietly passed away. I was glad if he was to die that he should have so peaceful and painless an end and that I should know it, but I cannot say how much I missed him, it was almost absurd to think what a friend he had become to me!

“Under the trees in whose tops he had spent so many joyous hours of his short life here, I dug a grave for the tiny bunch of feathers, all that was left now, the cast-off garment of the glad spirit that had gone.”

From Mr. W. B. Lasham :—

“Amongst the feathered folk who have successfully reared their families in my garden were some Robins, who built their nest on a pergola covered with clematis; and in due course one morning their babies left home, causing considerable anxiety to their friends. Later in the morning I was occupied for a short time in our shed at bottom of garden, when my attention was called to the extraordinary behaviour of one of the parents, who came close to the open door, making piteous signs of distress and alarm. I left what I was doing and went to the door. The little creature then retreated, by stages, still making signs of distress, in the direction of a small galvanized iron bath, which we keep for gardening purposes and which was about half full of water. In the midst of this I found one of the baby robins floundering in a stage of exhaustion. I took the little mite out, when all signs of alarm ceased from the parent bird, who was close by, watching operations from a branch of a cherry tree. After drying the youngster I put it in the sun on the lawn, where soon after it was visited and fed by its parents and fully recovered, soon fluttering away.

“I have known and read of animals appealing for human aid, but never of birds, who I think in this case unmistakably said, ‘Please come and save my child.’”

SINGING CONTESTS.

Letters from Mr. F. A. Cox and Mr. Jerome K. Jerome have appeared in many London and provincial papers protesting against the conditions under which wild birds are caught and kept for public-house singing contests.

The *Westminster Gazette* comments: "Mr. Jerome K. Jerome's vigorous appeal on behalf of the birds who are torn from our hedges, carried captive into the slums, and there kept in darkness in tiny cages, allowing them not even room to expand their wings, for the purpose of developing their powers as competitors at beer-house 'singing contests,' will have many supporters.

"It is a brutal business, and Mr. Jerome will have the sympathy of all right-minded people in the plea which he makes for its suppression."

IN THE COURTS.

CAGED LARKS AS A "NUISANCE."—At *Brentford*, on July 22nd, James R. Holder, Waldeck Road, Ealing, was summoned for keeping two Larks so as to be a nuisance. The complainants were neighbours who, as provided by the bye-laws, signed and sent a notice of complaint to defendant, but with no result. They stated in court that the song was not natural or like that of birds in the air, but was sharp, continuous, and irritating, like a cry of distress. They did not object to wild birds, nor to children, nor to the seven dogs kept in the neighbourhood; but the incessant noise of the Larks was so annoying they could not sit in their gardens. One complainant said he had called at defendant's house, but owing to the reception he met with did not go again; and the nuisance was objected to last year, but defendant took no notice of the objection. Defendant said he had kept caged Skylarks since he was a boy, and his birds were in cages three times as high as the ordinary ones and were a perfect picture. He had one bird for 17 years, and then it was killed by mice.—The Chairman regretted that the complaint had not been made at first in a neighbourly way, but the nuisance existed and the fine would be 5s.; if it was not abated the penalty might be £5. No lover of birds would keep a Skylark or other wild bird in a cage.

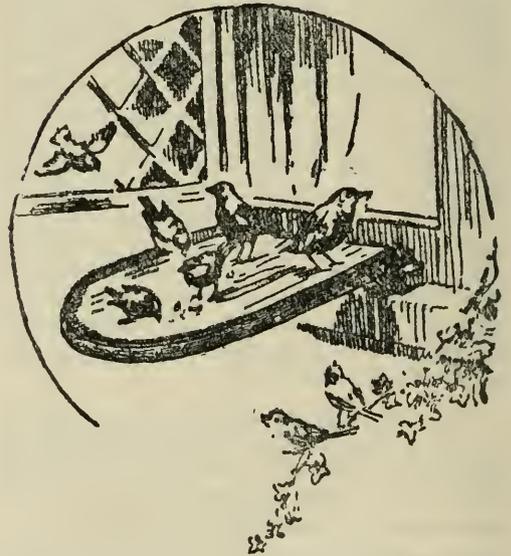
POISONED GRAIN.—At *Talgarth*, the R.S.P.C.A. secured a conviction against a farmer and his son, of the parish of Llandefalle, for placing poisoned grain on his land. A number of dead Rooks and small birds were picked up on the land, and were found to have eaten grain impregnated with strychnine. A fine of £2 was imposed in each case.

TAKING EIDER DUCKS' EGGS.—At *North Berwick*, on June 19th, three youths were fined, one 10s. and two 5s. each, for taking Eider-duck eggs on Tynninghame Bents.

NESTING BOXES.

Revised Catalogue of NESTING-BOXES AND FOOD-TABLES for Wild Birds will be ready shortly.

ALL BRITISH MADE.



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The R.S.P.B. in War-time.—II.

THE allotment of so many pages of the present number of *Bird Notes & News* to the Society's Bird-and-Tree Competitions in elementary schools would not be justified if this were one of the many plans on foot simply for the edification and amusement of children, and for providing them with prizes. It would not be justified if it were simply a good suggestion for employing their leisure and holiday hours, and for promoting school and village amenities; or a method of adding untold interest to country life; or a means of inculcating Bird Protection and general humanity in the rising generation.

The Bird-and-Tree scheme is, it is true, all this; and all are worthy objects. But it is something more. It takes its place as one of the foremost activities of the Society in war-time, because the definite study to which the Competition forms an introduction is one of national importance, the need for which is not lessened but strongly emphasized by the present national crisis. The Council themselves, in starting the scheme a dozen years ago, hardly realised the place it could be made to fill in national economics, and could not foresee the way in which the questions involved would be forced on the public mind.

In the Autumn Number of *Bird Notes and News* reference was made to the economic position of bird-life in connexion

with every form of agriculture. It was pointed out that the constant daily work of birds, year in, year out, in keeping down the insect hordes of the world, is not realised, and will not be realised until an effort is made to compute with accuracy of observation and scientific examination of facts, the quantity of grubs, caterpillars, flies, weevils, and larger vermin, consumed by birds, especially in the nesting-season when this destruction is most imperative.

Who, for instance, would have supposed in grumbling that a Woodpecker had bored into his tree, that—as Mr. Collinge has just shown—the Woodpecker might have dined off fifty, or a hundred or three hundred, wood-destroying beetles? Who would consider—to select a bird as much contemned as any, and to quote, not a scientific expert, but a country child—that a Bullfinch would come to its nest eleven times in five minutes, and keep this up more or less all day, bringing each time small caterpillars or greenfly to its brood? The child is not fitted for laboratory examination; but the no less essential outdoor observation is peculiarly fitted for his quick eyes, when once he is loosed from old country prejudices which look on every bird as a “varmint” and a pest. The amazing extent of this prejudice is fully illustrated by many of the children's essays written before first-hand watching has set in. In these there

is perhaps a grudging admission that the Swallow "is of some use by eating grubs," or that the Flycatcher "does not do much harm," mingled with assertions that the Peewit eats the farmer's corn, that the Goldfinch is destructive in the garden, and that Hedge-Sparrows, Linnets, Thrushes, and numerous other species "live" on corn and fruit! From this elementary stage the competitor begins to use his own eyes, until the essay of the trained boy or girl will recount systematic watching of birds feeding their young; will tell how the "gardening boys" welcome the Wag-tail because it devours the turnip grub; will picture with brush the thistle, groundsel and plantain in which the Goldfinch delights; and will describe the hunt of Warbler or Tit for aphid on the fruit-tree, of Flycatcher for the cabbage-butterfly on the wing, of Gull or Rook for wireworm behind the plough, and so on.

No one would wish the natural delight of children in bird-life to be restricted to cold economic logic, nor is it contended that a child's investigations are necessarily of value. The point is that thousands of children are learning half-unconsciously to think and notice for themselves, and are having eyes and minds trained to observe accurately, to discriminate intelligently, and, in time, to judge. With this new interest and new knowledge they can as adults never go back to the hap-hazard persecution, the ignorant destruction, or the purely sentimental protection of former days. Among all the "food-saving" and "food-producing" devices of the day, Bird-and-Tree work is one of permanent value, since it comes forward with no temporary empiric remedy, but is educating the farmer and gardener of the future.

Second to the food supply comes the national shortage of timber to which the war has compelled attention. The con-

nexion of the Bird with the life and vigour of the Tree is obvious to every entomologist. Bird-and-Tree work leads also to knowledge of the uses of woods; comparative value of trees; soils and species; economic value of fallen leaves, acorns, honeyed flowers. The practical knowledge shown by some of the children is remarkable, and curiosity soon sets any essayist asking questions of wheelwright, carpenter, forester, "father," or that cyclopædia of all knowledge, "teacher." The requirements of war-trenching need not have paralysed all trades for which wood is required, had the nation learned to consider its timber-supply; while—to turn to another aspect of the matter—the *Field* has lately alluded to the fortunes that might have been made if 70 or 80 years ago men had planted walnut-trees on their land. The whole trend to-day is towards afforestation, such as was not dreamed of when the Bird-and-Tree scheme was organised. The annual tree-planting was an object-lesson in many a school before the national awakening came; and it continues to keep before thousands of children the national importance of forestry.

There is not space here to do more than suggest a further service rendered by the R.S.P.B. in war-time, and at all times, by its Bird-and-Tree work. The suggestion may be put in words spoken by an educational expert, Mr. J. C. Medd, when the scheme was just starting:

"Nature Study perhaps more than any subject trains and strengthens common-sense. It develops the habit of orderly thinking, for the knowledge required must be exact. It stimulates the reflective faculties, from which spring intelligence and judgment . . . upon which depends efficiency in every department of life."

Common sense, orderly thinking, sound judgment, are qualities not negligible in the winning of wars.

Economic Ornithology.

WOODPECKERS AND FORESTRY.

BIRD STUDENTS have long contended, in the face of a good deal of opposition and prejudice on the part of the less intelligent of the woodman class, that Woodpeckers are valuable economic allies of the forester. In the *Journal* of the Board of Agriculture for November, 1915, Mr. Walter Collinge demonstrates this fairly conclusively. It has, he observes, often been said that these birds damage sound timber by pecking holes in or girdling them, and that they also wound saplings and damage telegraph posts. In view of the re-forestation of large tracts of land, the subject is being investigated, and so far Mr. Collinge writes a first report.

With regard to reported injury to sound trees, Mr. Collinge states that he has not met with a single case where sound timber has been attacked, and he has been unable to hear of a single authenticated case from the many foresters consulted or written to during the investigations. In the case of nests, trees in which nesting holes were found were in every instance already injured or decaying. In the case of food, "a careful investigation, extending over two years, shows that of upwards of a hundred trees attacked by these birds not a single one was previously sound."

Concerning the actual food of the three British Woodpeckers, Mr. Collinge reports that the stomach contents of 91 specimens had been examined. Fully 75 per cent. of the food was found to consist of injurious insects, the list including the Osier and Pine Weevils; Pine Beetles, various species of Bark-Beetles, and Longicorns; Rhinoceros and Shot-borer Beetles; and larvæ of Pine-

shoot Tortrix, Birch Clear-wing Moth, and Wood-leopard Moth. Of the larvæ of the largest timber-destroying beetles the remains of 57 examples of *Rhagium* (Longicorn) were found in one bird; but the total number of insect remains showed that a single bird had consumed upwards of 1,300 beetles, another 1,100, while from 300 to 800 were common. Of the remaining 25 per cent. of food, 20 per cent. consisted of ants, the rest of other insects.

Mr. Collinge concludes:—

"From observations made in the laboratory and field, extending over two years, there is no doubt that Woodpeckers are distinctly beneficial to forestry, and merit all the protection that can be afforded them. From an examination of the stomach contents alone, it would be impossible to come to any other conclusion. If, in addition, it is borne in mind that the birds destroy large numbers of timber-destroying insects during the nesting season, their value will be better realised."

BIRDS AND WIREWORMS.

In a long report on wire-worms issued by the United States Department of Agriculture a list is given of 90 species of birds, all of which have been proved by the Entomological Bureau to be large devourers of these crop-destroying pests. No fewer than fifteen varieties of sparrows are included in the list, headed by our own English House-Sparrow, for which hitherto scarcely anyone has had a good word. After allusions to various methods of combating wire-worms, the report declares that when all is said and done about such remedies and preventives, birds are probably the most important factor in keeping wire-worms in check. Certain small lizards and toads come second.—*Estate Magazine*.

BUDS AND BULLFINCHES.

A correspondent writes to the R.S.P.B. :

"I have not yet seen any protest raised against the killing of Bullfinches, who are popularly supposed to destroy fruit-buds. Perhaps the following account of my experiences may interest you. I saw one spring a pair of Bullfinches very busy at my gooseberry bushes, morning after morning. I did not molest them, I thought I would leave the pretty creatures alone, and chance the berries !

"That summer my neighbours were all complaining of the poor crop of gooseberries : I had an abundant crop.

"Again, the next year, I saw the Bullfinches at the snowberry-bushes, and I had the best crop of snowberries I had ever had.

"I saw a pretty sight for several mornings two or three autumns ago. A flock of Goldfinches visited my garden ; there were only a few leaves left on the apple-trees, but at dusk each bird chose a perch under a leaf, which acted as an umbrella."

Notes.

AMONG the larger Public Parks and Gardens of Great Britain where the presence of wild birds is encouraged by provision of Nesting-Boxes, are several which also consider the supply of food for the birds. This may be done by the provision of ornamental bird-tables and hanging food-boxes, such as are supplied by the R.S.P.B., and also by the planting of suitable berried trees and shrubs. It is common enough to hear complaints of birds stripping bushes of bright-hued berries—presumably intended by Nature for the special purpose of feeding birds in winter, but grudged by the gardener ; still more common for the vagabond and the hawker to strip country hedges of the birds' winter sustenance, and thus starve the feathered people, in order to provide a Christmas market of "decorations" for church and home. The other side of the picture is pleasanter to look upon—the actual planting of berried trees for the wild birds.

* * *

One of these parks is Pittencrieff Park, Dunfermline, the splendid pleasure-ground of the Carnegie-Dunfermline Trust, and the Secretary of the Trust, Mr. Robert Burns,

LL.B., kindly forwards a list of the berry-bearing shrubs planted there, as follows :—

Thorns and hollies ; various species of Berberis, Cotoneaster, Daphne, Hypericum, Pernettya, Pyracantha, Ribes, Yews ; Colutea arborea, Cydonia Maullii, Elder, Gaultheria procumbens, Leycesteria formosa, Ligustrum, Mahonia aquifolia, Skimmia japonica, and Snowberry.

No doubt many readers of *Bird Notes and News* could supply other names, and thus a useful list be compiled. The Briar-rose, the Rowan, Ivy, Privet, Juniper, the wild Euonymus (Spindle-tree), and Bird-cherry, for instance, would be included. Bird-and-Tree Teams might well take this point into consideration in choosing trees and shrubs to plant on Arbor Day.

* * *

The annual report of the Otago Acclimatisation Society records an expenditure of £287 for Hawks' feet. It seems that the Society, finding these birds too numerous to suit the breeding of game and waterfowl, offered 3d. per pair for their feet, and though at first the result was not great, they were, in the picturesque words of the Chairman, when about to abandon the campaign "faced

with thousands of feet," and called on to pay for the destruction of nearly 23,000 Hawks. Perhaps it is as well, in the interests of wild life in New Zealand, that the finances of this worthy society cannot stand such an outlay in money and of time in counting claws, every year.

* * *

It has often been suggested that a census of Rooks or Rookeries should be taken in England. Of Heronries a list has been privately compiled by a well-known naturalist. In the United States a Bird Census was taken in 1915 and in 1914 under the auspices of the Department of Agriculture. Its results show the Robin to be the commonest bird of the States (this, be it remembered, is a species of Thrush, resembling the British song-thrush with a red breast); the English Sparrow is a close second; and next in order come Catbirds, House Wrens, Brown Thrashers, Kingbirds, and Bluebirds. The bird population is regarded as much less than it ought to be, in view of insect depredations; and it indicates that centres of human population are more thickly inhabited than the forest primeval. The record for density was furnished, says *The Sportsman* (Seattle, Washington) by a district in Maryland, where 161 pairs, representing 34 species, nested on 23 acres of land.

* * *

An article in the *Daily News* on the thriving, and extravagant, Christmas trade of Islington, has the following paragraph:—

"Another sign of the times to make the reflective pause was the crowd thronging round a busy merchant who had a big bath full of larks for sale. They were live larks, very weebegone and dreadfully frightened. The bath was netted over the top to prevent their escape, and from time to time the

presiding naturalist would plunge his hand in through a hole in the netting, grab a fluttering bird by the wing or the leg, haul it out and cry: "Buy, buy! buy! Here y'are! finest songsters, and only a tanner apiece. Buy! buy, buy!" He found a ready sale. The purchasers wrapped them up in knotted handkerchiefs and carried them joyfully home."

In face of this continuous torture of wild birds in the Saturday and Sunday markets—birds netted, prisoned, suffocated, terrified, and with a fate perhaps happiest if they die in the knotted handkerchief, we are pleased to call ourselves a humane nation.

* * *

A contrasting picture happily indicates the feeling that is growing quickly in classes above the customers of the East-end market. In a certain town famous for its beauty, a central and fashionable emporium recently started tentatively a department for caged birds, including a few British wild birds of species popular for caging. Protest was quickly raised by influential customers, who saw to what this beginning might lead; and one member of the R.S.P.B. pleaded so well and in so gracious a manner, that the management not only undertook to stock no more birds taken from the wild life of English woodlands, but handed over those in their possession to be released. They were accordingly set free by their friend in private grounds, where food was near to hand, and their strength of wing indicated that their captive life had been short. The little story is one on which all concerned may well be congratulated and thanked.

* * *

In his interesting and practical presidential address at the annual meeting of the Yorkshire Naturalists' Union, on December 4th, Mr. Riley Fortune spoke vigorously on the necessity of protecting the wild life of

the county, and of the unnecessary destruction of birds for which gardeners, farmers, and foresters are responsible. He continued :—

“ One of the greatest dangers we have to contend with is the Sparrow Club, so-called. If these clubs confined themselves to the legitimate object of keeping the number of sparrows and rats within reasonable bounds no objection would be raised against them ; but as at present constituted they ought to be stamped out as unclean things. They do not confine their activities to sparrows and rats, but accept the heads of all small birds ; consequently there is probably a larger proportion of useful insect-eating finches and warblers destroyed than sparrows. If these clubs cannot be ended, they should at least be under efficient control, so that the senseless slaughter of useful birds may be stopped.”

Where is the “ efficient control ” to come from ?

* * *

Among recent records of interesting bird-

visitors is that of an Osprey found dead, with a broken wing, in Pagham harbour in October. Chichester is one of the regions in Sussex and Hants most favoured by Ospreys, generally young birds, and Knox’s “ Ornithological Rambles ” pictures one flying over the Arun near Arundel. Late in November a Buzzard in good condition was shot near Arklow by a person named Simpson, who in a newspaper letter recording his shame, adds that he thinks “ the recent very violent storm must have driven it inland.” A young female example of the Greater Spotted Eagle was found in Herefordshire with a broken wing, and had evidently been shot. This is the twelfth time the species has been recorded in Britain. A Golden Eagle has been shot in County Mayo, believed to be the last of the Irish Eagles. In Cumberland a Hoopoe has been shot “ in mistake for a Jay.”

Bird Protection in the West Indies.

A NEW and comprehensive ordinance has been made for the better protection of wild birds and animals in Trinidad and Tobago. The native birds are set out in two schedules, giving the generic, scientific, and local names of each, and thus providing a valuable authorised list of the indigenous species of the islands. Those in the first schedule are protected all the year, together with nest and eggs ; and taking or possession are equally punishable with killing or wounding. The proof that the bird or egg was killed or taken before the commencement of the ordinance, or out of the Colony, rests with the possessor. This schedule contains the names of 212 species : thrushes, wrens, warblers, honey creepers, vireos, swallows, tanagers,

orioles, cassiques, blackbirds, flycatchers, manakins, cotingas, wood creepers, oven birds, ant-birds, humming birds, swifts, goat-suckers, woodpeckers, king of the woods, kingfishers and jacamans, trogons, cuckoos and tick birds, toucan, parrots, owls, corbeaux, doves, herons, egrets and ibises, together with hawks and kites.

The second schedule gives the names of 27 species, protected between March 21st and October 1st. Power is given to the Governor to vary the close season for any bird, to prohibit the exportation of birds, nests, or eggs, and the importation of dead birds or parts thereof, nests and eggs, and to authorise the taking of specimens for scientific purposes.

Public School Essay Competition.

THE special subject set for the Public School essays this year was the difficult one of "Flight," made peculiarly interesting at the present time in the comparison inevitably suggested with the flights of aeroplanes and hydroplanes. Even Bird papers from Elementary Schools are full of allusions to volplaning and biplanes, and flying machines in general, when the flight of birds is spoken of. The anatomical and mathematical knowledge desirable, in addition to trained and keen observation, for anything like a competent discussion of a theme so complex in character, and involving so much study of the lives and habits of birds, made it something of a test question. The winner of the Silver Medal, G. V. Webster, Eton, writes an admirable paper; the information is thoroughly well digested, the amount of personal observation gives it great interest, and the writer expresses himself with unusual ability. Some extracts from the essay will, it is hoped, appear in the next number of *Bird Notes and News*. The Second Prize Essay is a competent and careful piece of work by A. F. Bell, Berkhamsted. This prize would have gone to B. Secker, Worcester, whose paper is in many respects first-rate, but that it depends too much and too closely on a standard work on the structure of birds. C. C. Baring, Haileybury, who has made his mark in former years as a capital field naturalist, is not at his best on this subject, but writes an interesting essay.

Having regard to the character of the subject, it is not surprising that few boys under the age of sixteen had the courage to

take it in hand. The Junior Division is always weaker than the Senior, genuine field ornithology being a comparatively rare study with the lower Forms. This year the competition is confined to a batch of papers from the Bristol Cathedral School. These lads may be congratulated on their effort, and it is to be hoped that another year, with a subject better within their reach, they will be able to get in a better show of their own original field-work. Their papers are very creditable, but mainly derivative. A Certificate of Merit is awarded to J. C. T. Jackson and Honourable Mention is accorded F. G. Jennings.

The "Owl" Prize, given annually by a member of the R.S.P.B. Council, goes to Louis Conisbee, Bedford Grammar School, for a well thought-out paper, not containing very much that is fresh but dwelling usefully on the economic value of the four British Owls.

SENIOR DIVISION.

Silver Medal: G. V. Webster (Eton).

Second Prize: A. F. Bell (Berkhamsted School).

Certificates and Book Prizes: C. C. Baring (Haileybury); Berkeley Secker (Worcester, King's School).

JUNIOR DIVISION.

Certificate of Merit: J. C. T. Jackson (Bristol Cathedral School).

THE "OWL" PRIZE: Louis Conisbee (Bedford Modern School).

The Judges were: Mr. F. W. Headley, M.A., Mr. W. R. Ogilvie-Grant, F.Z.S., M.B.O.U., and the Rev. Julian G. Tuck, M.A.

The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds.

COUNCIL MEETINGS.

MEETINGS of the Council of the Society were held at the Middlesex Guildhall, S.W., on October 22nd and December 3rd, 1915, the Chairman, Mr. Montagu Sharpe, presiding.

Hon. Secretary's Report.

The Hon. Secretary reported the opening of the Lecture season with lectures by the Rev. J. E. Kelsall and Miss M. Hamilton; also that thirteen new slides had been added to the Society's collection as the gift of Mr. McLellan, seven of them being taken by permission from photographs by Mr. Percy L. Clark; and the thanks of the Council were voted to both donors. Bird Protection Orders had been issued for Dorset, Gloucestershire, Wakefield (County Borough), King's County, and Westmeath. The awards in the Public School Competition and the Bird-and-Tree Challenge Shield Competitions were reported and confirmed. Festivals had been held at Keswick (Shield presentation); Foundry Lane Boys' School, Southampton; and Hinton Waldrist. The Christmas Greeting Card had been issued and copies sent to Fellows and Members.

Finance and General Purposes Committee.

The accounts for the third quarter of 1915, and for October and November were presented and approved. It was reported that a legacy of £500 had been bequeathed to the Society by the late Rev. A. L. Hussey; and one of £50 by the late Mrs. Welbury Mitton; also one of £300 by the late Mrs. Edith Scott, the payment of which was,

however, uncertain. The following Fellows and Members were elected:

Fellows: Graham Renshaw, M.D. (Sale), John Galsworthy, Mrs. John Galsworthy (Wingstone, Devon).

Members: Adam Cairns (Glasgow); Mrs. Drabble (Walton-on-Thames); Mrs. Fisher (Hurlingham); Mrs. Cyril A. Jones (Kingston Manor, Taunton); Mrs. Lethbridge (Minehead); Mrs. Astley Rushton (Cosham); Major C. O. L. Taylor (London, W.); E. H. Waller (Taunton); Mrs. Wells (Dereham, Norfolk).

Life Member: Mrs. T. W. Rundell (Lostwithiel).

General Business.

Letters were read from Trinity House and officers in charge of lighthouses reporting the satisfactory use of the bird-rests during the autumn migrations, together with a statement as to damage done by a heavy gale to those at the South Bishop Lighthouse. Correspondence was reported with regard to the existence of a suspected pole-trap, or a trap to all intents and purposes a pole-trap, in Westmoreland, and the trapping by its means of a Peregrine Falcon. The police stated that the keeper was known to use traps somewhat indiscriminately on the Fells and had admitted catching Kestrels (a bird protected throughout the year in that county), and that he had been cautioned. Reports respecting the Plumage Trade were received and considered; and various other matters were discussed.

OBITUARY.

Mr. Henry Eeles Dresser, F.L.S., F.G.S., M.B.O.U., whose name as one of the most distinguished ornithologists of his day will

be perpetuated by his monumental works on "The Birds of Europe" and "Eggs of the Birds of Europe," had been a member of the Council of the R.S.P.B. since 1899, and was formerly a constant attendant at its meetings and a valuable adviser in its work. For some years failing health had unhappily prevented him from taking an active part, and his death occurred, suddenly from heart failure, at Cannes, on Nov. 28th. Mr. Dresser edited the Educational leaflets published by the Society, and he took special interest in the anti-plumage campaign, his extensive travels and indisputable knowledge enabling him constantly to expose the lies of the trade. A portrait of Mr. Dresser appeared in *Bird Notes and News*, Summer Number, 1910.

In the death of the Rev. Arthur L. Hussey, which occurred at Fern Bank, Uckfield, on September 12th, the Society has lost one of its oldest and most sympathetic and generous friends and supporters. He was among its first adherents, the second donation to its funds coming from him (the first being from Professor Newton) in 1891, and since that time he has never failed to encourage and help forward its efforts. He was one of the earliest elected Fellows, and was a member of the first Council elected on the Incorporation of the Society by Royal Charter in 1904. Being, however, unable to attend the meetings, he resigned, and was then elected a Vice-President. Mr. Hussey was 83 years of age.

BIRD PROTECTION AT THE LIGHTHOUSES.

The Reports from Trinity House with regard to the bird-rests and perches erected by the Society at certain of the Lighthouses continue to be entirely satisfactory and leave

little room for doubt as to the success of the scheme in saving migrating birds from destruction.

The Keeper-in-Charge of St. Catherine's Lighthouse, I W., writes, November 30, 1915 :

"The bird perches were fixed in position for the Spring Migration on March 22nd, and taken down on the 3rd June. They were again fixed for the Autumn Migration on the 28th August, and dismantled on the 15th inst. From close observation made during the time the perches were in position there is not the slightest doubt that they are of great value in saving the lives of birds during migration, as it is now a very rare occurrence to pick up any dead birds."

The Principal Keeper of the Caskets Lighthouse writes, November 2nd :

"A great number of birds have used the perches during the month of October, especially on the night of the 16th, when they were absolutely covered throughout the night."

To this the Keeper-in-Charge adds, November 30th :

"The perches have been made good use of by the smaller birds, and saved numbers from killing themselves by flying around the light and striking the glazing; now they settle on the perches. On the nights from 4th to 12th of this month large flocks of birds have been migrating; all made good use of the perches."

From the Spurn Lighthouse come records of the perches having been used this autumn by, among other species, Larks, Wheatears, Blackbirds, Starlings, Chaffinches, Norwegian Crows, and a Merlin.

From the South Bishop Lighthouse the Keeper reports :

"During the month of October there were many birds seen on the perches of various types, Mistle-Thrushes, Blackbirds, and Fieldfares being the largest birds noted, except a few Landrails which had struck the lantern glass. There were also many smaller birds, such as the Flycatchers. The birds appeared to frequent the perches during the nights when the wind was from the east or south-east with haze."

Bird-and-Tree (Arbor) Day.

CHALLENGE SHIELD COMPETITIONS.

IN spite of numerous difficulties this year, the Schools have risen gallantly to the occasion and there is little falling off in the number of Competitors, and but an occasional lowering of the standard of work. In very many cases, the older children, boys especially, have left school to take up work for the country; in some instances, 50 or even 70 per cent. of Standards V, VI and VII have left. Younger Cadets have taken their places in the Team; and boys and girls eager to continue the study, but unable to fall-in for the Essay-writing, have passed on discoveries made in the field to their friends still at school. In some cases, too, the Teacher has enlisted and with him the moving spirit has gone; but in others, again, the influence has remained and proved stronger than ever. Schools, Teachers, and Cadets may all be heartily congratulated.

The species of Birds and Trees studied continues to show admirable increase. This year the list includes some 55 British birds.

The judges were: Mr. Montagu Sharpe (Chairman of Council), Mr. G. A. Freeman, B.Sc., Mr. W. H. Hudson, Mr. Hastings Lees, Mrs. Fuller Maitland, Mr. J. R. B. Masefield, the Rev. J. G. Tuck, and Miss Gardiner.

INTER-COUNTY SHIELD.

Ten sets of Essays, from the eight Shield-winners and two Champion Schools, were competitors for the Inter-County Shield; and the Competition was a close and interesting one, the ages, methods, and characteristics of Teams varying widely and showing in how many different ways excellence may be reached. The Shield is awarded to Hamp-

shire's representative, the Team of ST. PETER'S GIRLS' SCHOOL, BOURNEMOUTH; a Boys' Team, that of the VICTORIA COUNCIL SCHOOL, WELLINGBOROUGH (Northants) is second. Something is said of these papers under the respective counties. It remains to be noted that the third place is taken by Woburn Boys' Council School, who write exceedingly good papers on Treecreeper, Green Woodpecker, and Great Crested Grebe, White Poplar, Horse Chestnut and Hawthorn, with full, close, and accurate observation; and that Warwickshire's Champion School, Mancetter, sends papers crammed with such bright and intelligent notes that the enthusiastic interest of the children in the work is most happily proved.

The special prize for the best Essay on one of the British Owls is won by Dorothy Jones, Haselor School (Warwickshire) with a nice paper on the Brown Owl, Stanley Pearce, Chillington (Somerset) being second, and Alan Blood, Withnell (Lancashire), third.

BUCKINGHAMSHIRE.

CHAMPION SCHOOL.—WOLVERTON
ST. MARY GIRLS'.

CHALLENGE SHIELD.—COLESHILL
C.E. SCHOOL.

Bucks is a county which has first-rate leaders but is not quite awake yet. Whether because birds are too abundant in this favoured county to be properly appreciated and studied, or because three or four schools which are old competitors are looked upon as too strong for opposition, the fact remains that the work is feeble in quantity though vigorous in quality, and there are not enough newcomers to give the variety that could be wished to the contest. Wolverton St. Mary,

winner of the Inter-County Shield last year, is debarred; one or two have fallen out. The leading place is undoubtedly taken by Coleshill, an old Shield-winner, whose earnest and original work is evidently inspired by an ardour and enthusiasm that sit very prettily on the young writers. It is a mixed team, but the papers sent are by girls, who are much on a level in point of age and knowledge. The Birds are Whitethroat, Yellowhammer, and Moorhen, the Trees Horse-Chestnut, Walnut, and Whitebeam, all marked by careful study and a pleasant style. It is obvious from several passages that wild birds have none too happy a time in the district, and that Bird-and-Tree work is sorely needed. Other teachers in the neighbourhood, please note. Ellesborough, which always takes a high place, is as usual noteworthy for keen observation, and the Trees are admirably illustrated, but the Bird papers suffer badly from the limited period to which observation has been confined. Princes Risborough, another competitor of first rank, exhibits good and industrious note-taking and its essays reach a high standard. The Bird papers, if less learned, are lighter and more attractive this year than those on Trees. Tyringham-cum-Filgrave makes a remarkable step forward, coming almost suddenly right into the first class, the conspicuous feature of the work being its originality. The children have been taught how to observe, and then given freedom for their own means and methods, with happy results. From Pitstone, a new competitor, come essays which, though shorter and less advanced in study than those already named, are pleasant and promising because the children seem to have a genuine love for birds and trees, and their writing is wholly unaffected.

CUMBERLAND.

CHALLENGE SHIELD.—ST JOHN'S GIRLS' SCHOOL, KESWICK.

Although the majority of the essays from Cumberland are shorter and less detailed than those from some other counties, they deal with a larger proportion of the less familiar birds—an admirable feature. The holders of the Shield for 1914 and 1915, St. John's Girls', Keswick, write on Tree-creeper, Whitethroat, and Cormorant, all watched carefully in their haunts; and the subjects of other essays from the county include Dipper, Grey Wagtail, Curlew, Redstart, Magpie, and Chiffchaff. Greystoke is, as usual, to be congratulated on this score, the Team having sought out several uncommon species and studied them with zeal; unluckily they suffered from the robbing of nests, which put a stop to extended observation. Cargo has a capital paper on the Magpie, and Kirkoswald has a particularly good description of the Dipper. The winning School furnishes three Teams, who have among them watched twenty species of birds. Their work is thoroughly good and enthusiastic, and is illustrated in the text with admirable pen-and-ink drawings. Kirkoswald stands second, and two capital essays on Pied Wagtail and Alder are perhaps better than individual essays from Keswick. Cargo's papers, from two Teams, are notable for freshness and individuality. Buttermere, a newcomer, should likewise soon become a Team to be reckoned with, for here again the cadets' pleasure in their work is indicated by first-hand matter and a bright and sympathetic style; and the essays from Nether Denton are also distinctly above the average of first-year performances, being genuine, simple, and straightforward, though as yet too brief.

HAMPSHIRE.

CHALLENGE SHIELD.—ST. PETER'S GIRLS'
SCHOOL, BOURNEMOUTH.

It is always a pleasure to read the essays from St. Peter's Girls, Bournemouth, who have for several years come only just short of the winning-post. This year they unquestionably and deservedly win the Shield. Intimate and whole-hearted study, accuracy in facts, graceful composition, and kindliness of feeling are characteristic of all the papers, while the drawings give proof of no little artistic skill. The subjects, too, are happily selected—Goldcrest, Crossbill, and Skylark, Elder, White Poplar, and Bird-Cherry; one paper, not sent, was written on the rare and shy Dartford Warbler. There is an exceedingly close contest for second place; after much consideration it is allotted to Botley, whose pleasing essays are written as if the children loved their birds and trees, and took delight in finding out all they could about them. Ridge, after enjoying the dignity of Championship, comes again into the arena, and gives every proof that the School has not become slack through success; it stands third, with essays excellent in material and animated in style. Kingfisher and Meadow Pipit present an interesting variety from the ordinary species to set against the Green Woodpecker and Long-tailed Tit which have inspired two excellent papers at Botley. A bird new to the competition, the Mute Swan, appears in the essays from both Christchurch (R.C.) and Filgrave. In both cases this bird evidently appealed strongly to the competitor, and its habits are described with considerable vivacity. References to local scenes—the marshes, the river estuary, and the flat coast—give picturesqueness to the interesting papers from Christchurch; and a similar feature

lends distinction to those from the Foundry Lane Boys' School, Southampton, which has a first-rate selection of birds and sends admirable and original impressions of Kingfisher, Lapwing, and Moorhen. Two Teams represent the Western Boys' School, Southampton, the seniors writing thoroughly capable and painstaking papers, a little too elaborate in composition, but long and very full of matter; the juniors sincere and accurate, and both sets with very good drawings. Privett has a young Team, having lost seven original members; their work is bright and personal, and a capital account of the Araucaria or "monkey-puzzle" tree introduces a new species to the Competition. Interested in the work and animated in the setting forth of their experiences and discoveries, the Barton Stacey Team is steadily advancing to the front. Brighstone, I.W., with water-colour drawings of unusual merit, and personal observation; Headley (the Holme School), whose essays charm by their freshness and admirable spirit; Hinton Ampner, intelligent and appreciative, with welcome allusions to bird-notes; Hayling, boyish and straightforward, but thin in point of observation; Binsted, and Wickham all gain commendation.

LANCASHIRE.

CHALLENGE SHIELD—NEWBURGH C.E.
SCHOOL.PROXIME ACCESSIT—LANE END SCHOOL,
ATHERTON.

This is the first year of the Lancashire Shield, and very excellent and encouraging is the work sent in, from districts far apart and of widely different character; while the award of the trophy was made exceedingly difficult by the exceptional character of two sets of essays. The papers from Atherton and Newburgh are alike full of

sound original observation, and alike in being admirably illustrated. The final decision is in favour of Newburgh, on the strength of the great amount of thorough and accurate first-hand study to which the Bird essays bear witness. The Tree papers, wonderfully painstaking, are overloaded with detail and measurements, and to that extent inferior to those from Atherton. Atherton also scores by writing without use of notes. The Newburgh subjects are Wren, Swallow, and Pheasant, Rowan, Oak, and Hazel; while in Reed-Bunting and Willow-Warbler the Atherton boys touch a newer note. The teachers at both schools must have inspired their boys with real enthusiasm to produce papers so far above the average in the amount and exactness of their information. The "excellent" award is well earned by St Paul's School, Adlington, whose Team have done a capital amount of outdoor work and display only too much effort in their careful and well-written compositions; and by Withnell (United Methodist), especially successful in admirable and well-illustrated Tree papers, which reveal practical acquaintance with forestry and uses of woods. Immediately following come Cartmel Fell, whose essays, if slight, are distinguished by a lively and delightful open-airiness, Pemberton's School, Heskin, marking distinct improvement on work previously entered in the Open Class, both in the matter and the manner of their neatly and nicely-written papers; St. Stephen's, Preston, one of the most promising of the recruits, with intelligent and careful work that will speedily bring the Team further. Hearty commendation must also be given to Brow Edge, Mawdesley R.C., Parbold Douglas and Scarisbrick (Township School). Lanca-

shire bids fair to be one of the leading counties in the Competition.

NORFOLK.

CHALLENGE SHIELD.—GREAT DUNHAM GIRLS' SCHOOL.

SECOND PRIZE.—BEECHAMWELL.

THIRD PRIZE.—MELTON CONSTABLE AND BRISTON.

Norfolk took time by the forelock this year. Essays were all written before the holidays and were promptly examined locally and forwarded to the Society, and a central meeting for the presentation of the Shield and other awards was held at Norwich on September 25th. The Essays of the winning Team gain their place by their charming freshness, originality, and close observation, which makes them very pleasant reading. Those from Beechamwell are lively and intelligent, but in zeal and sympathy they are behind the winners; one boy, now only nine, has the "grit" and enthusiasm that should spell success in more ways than one. Melton Constable, remarkable for thoroughness and neatness; Little Dunham, a young Team doing really delightful work for such young hands; and Tittleshall, with pleasant observation and an unusual gift of imagination and appreciation, are almost equal in merit. Hindolvestone has admirable notes on the feeding of nestlings, the Bullfinch heading the list with eleven visits to the nest in five minutes. Sprowston and St. Faith's are also in the "Excellent" class. Following these come Bergh Apton, where one young writer chronicles that cats run to shelter from rain under yew-trees; East Ruston, boyish and practical; Ketteringham; Long Stratton; Mundford; Swanton Morley, and Wickmere; while nine other Teams are commended. The number of Teams has fallen off somewhat this year, for fairly obvious reasons, but the

competition is keen and close, and personal observation is, as usual, marked in nearly all the papers.

NORTHAMPTONSHIRE.

CHALLENGE SHIELD.—VICTORIA COUNCIL SCHOOL, WELLINGBORO'.

SECOND PRIZE.—COLD HIGHAM.

THIRD PRIZE.—HARLESTONE.

There is no falling off in quantity in the work from Northants, where 34 Teams compete, and the average merit is highly creditable to all concerned. The children seem to be younger than usual, younger indeed than the Teams of other counties; and a "War" feature is the inclusion of two Belgian boys among the members of Teams; the Bird paper of one of these young refugees sent in, is an account of the Chaffinch, and is wonderfully well done. The list is headed by the two Schools which took the same places last year. The Wellingborough (Victoria) Boys write extremely good papers, full of sound observation, and very cleverly illustrated. Their Birds are Great Crested Grebe, Coot, and Yellowhammer, the Trees Ash, Beech, and Horse Chestnut. The young Team of Cold Higham have a bright observant style, and here another nine-year-old is distinguished by capital work. The diligent observation of Harlestone suffers from the diary form of narration; Mears Ashby comes close up to the prize-winners with original and painstaking papers, pleasant to read. Badby, Culworth (D'Anvers Endowed School), Croughton, Middleton Cheney, and Welton all show careful personal work that places them in the first division. In the second division are Barby, Braunston, Byfield, Clopton, Flore, Sudborough, and Wootton. Many of the Essays are illustrated with remarkably good drawings, two or three Teams even essaying to sketch their

Birds from life; and a great deal of painstaking nature-study gives genuine value to nearly all the papers. Radstone distinguishes itself as the smallest school competing, the average attendance being only ten.

SOMERSET.

CHALLENGE SHIELD.—FROME C.E. BOYS' SCHOOL.

Three schools stand pre-eminent in this county, all sending clever papers, with merits and failings so different in character that it is not easy to compare them; but none quite equal to last year's work from Exford. The first place is taken once again by the Frome Boys' School, with painstaking and well-written essays, exceedingly well illustrated. Those on Trees are full of admirable description. The Birds, zealously watched, are Yellowhammer, Peewit, and Bullfinch. The Frome Girls' Council School thoroughly deserve the second prize, their papers consisting almost entirely of observation direct from nature, intelligently and thoughtfully put together, and again with artistic drawings. The Chillington papers are, as in previous years, particularly pleasant to read because of the natural, sympathetic, and spontaneous manner in which they are written. The matter itself is also very good. Two papers, on Wagtail and Bird-tree, are especially charming. North Perrott has a first-rate list of Birds and Trees watched, and the papers are well and nicely done, botanical lessons have given useful help without overloading the descriptions with technical terms. Another notable list of Birds is furnished by Wambrook, who in their first year select such species as Owl, Cuckoo, Nightjar, Goldfinch, and Whinchat. This promises well, and so too does the delightful *naiveté* and originality displayed. Another

Team to be welcomed and congratulated on a successful first appearance is East Coker; they have mingled matter personally acquired with that gained from lessons with much intelligence. Other newcomers are Lamyatt (Bath), whose short papers contain nice touches and interesting bits of local information; and Norton Fitzwarren, whose cadets having once made a good beginning, will find themselves with much more to say another year. Winsham's papers are all based on open-air work and simply and agreeably written; the Chedington writers do genuine work and show a real love for their subjects, and Wembdon (with full and conscientious note-taking) and Weston Zoyland mark satisfactory advance on last year.

WARWICKSHIRE.

CHAMPION SCHOOL.—MANCETTER.

CHALLENGE SHIELD.—MIDDLETON C.E.
SCHOOL.

Warwickshire has given the Judges perhaps more trouble than any other county in weighing the respective merits of three or four capital sets of papers. Mancetter, standing apart as Champion School, Middleton, Dosthill, and Bedworth (Leicester Road) run very close indeed. Middleton, as usual, sends extremely pleasing and interesting essays, and deserves the more credit that its list of Birds studied includes several uncommon species, two of the essays sent in dealing most intelligently with Snipe and Kingfisher. The papers on Trees give specially good attention to the characteristic features which distinguish the species. Dosthill, holder of the Shield in 1914, provides two Teams. The papers from both are extremely painstaking and thorough, the Bird studies admirable (delightful ones on Flycatcher and Swallow), and an amazing

amount of accurate detail of Trees. The Bedworth essays are exactly the sort the Society wish to receive, originality, quick intelligence and sympathy shining through all; but they are a trifle thin compared with those already referred to. Bedworth is conspicuous for artistic illustrations; so too is Minworth, which sends the best Bird picture from the county. The papers here show good watching and good knowledge. Stratford-on-Avon, advancing quickly to the front, now comes very near it by reason of the bright and well-considered note-taking which forms the backbone of their pleasant papers. Haselor, though weakened by the loss of many of its original Team, does very well indeed, and adds admirable water-colour sketches; and Temple Grafton, competing for the first time, is yet another school that distinguishes itself with the brush and also by a very creditable amount of watching; while the Solihull Girls' pleasant and thoughtful little essays are marked by care and nice feeling.

OPEN CLASS.

FIRST PRIZE.—HINTON WALDRIST (BERKS).

The Open Class is reduced in numbers by the removal of the Lancashire schools, and Hinton Waldrist, which last year shared the honours with Newburgh, is now the undoubted winner of the first prize. The Team have notably novel and excellent subjects—Nightingale and Whitethroat among the Birds, and Judas-tree, Bird-Cherry and Oriental Hawthorn among the Trees. The observation is painstaking and faithful, and the Judas-tree is a really capital paper. The Totley (Derbyshire) Team, by keeping their eyes open, have enlivened their papers by a variety of interesting little incidents; and Bradway, in the same county,

is a particularly nimble-witted and promising young Team with an average age of little over ten. Mogerhanger sends the genuine and admirable work now looked for from this school, former holder of the Bedfordshire Shield; one writer watched a young Cuckoo turn out his foster-brothers from the nest—an experience shared, oddly enough, by two competitors in other counties. Honourable mention must be given to excellent work from Portland Easton (Dorset), whose first attempt is a noteworthy one; and also to Holt (Wilts) and Slindon (Sussex), with pleasant and first-hand but not sufficiently exact observation; to Diptford (Devon), who have rapidly improved and developed; to Bouverie Pusey School, Charney (Berks), whose Team write nicely on Trees; and to Felixstowe Ferry (Suffolk), a plucky little remnant of a Team which more than any other has been affected by the war, and whose remaining members write with unaffected freshness and genuineness.

IN THE COURTS.

THE BRIGHTON BIRDCATCHER.—At *Brighton*, on October 28th, Shelah Harvey was fined 37/- for having 34 Linnets and three Goldfinches in his possession. He smuggled them into the borough after they had been caught by men in the county (where unfortunately Linnets are not protected).

"AN HONEST LIVING."—John Gray, an old professional hand, was summoned at *Frome* on September 22nd for having Goldfinches in his possession, and for cruelty to two Goldfinches used as decoys. He was out birdcatching, and the police testified to the exhausted state of the decoys, one of which had since died. Defendant had been before the Bench in June for cruelty to decoy Linnets; their breasts were quite raw, blood-stained feathers were under the net, and they must, said Supt. Gillbanks, have been in agony. Gray said he always got "an honest living" birdcatching, and never before knew it was against the law to brace

birds. On that occasion the Chairman (Major Tucker) said he could not find words to express his feelings with regard to this cruelty, and only defendant's age saved him from being sent to prison instead of getting off with a fine of 30/-; if he ever came up again he would go to prison whatever his age. Accordingly on his re-appearance in September, he was sent to gaol for 21 days, and all his birdcatching apparatus was confiscated.

MORE CRUELTY TO DECOYS.—At *Bristol* on October 6th, Frederick Hopes was fined 25/- and costs for catching Linnets and for cruelty to decoy birds, his nets to be confiscated.

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