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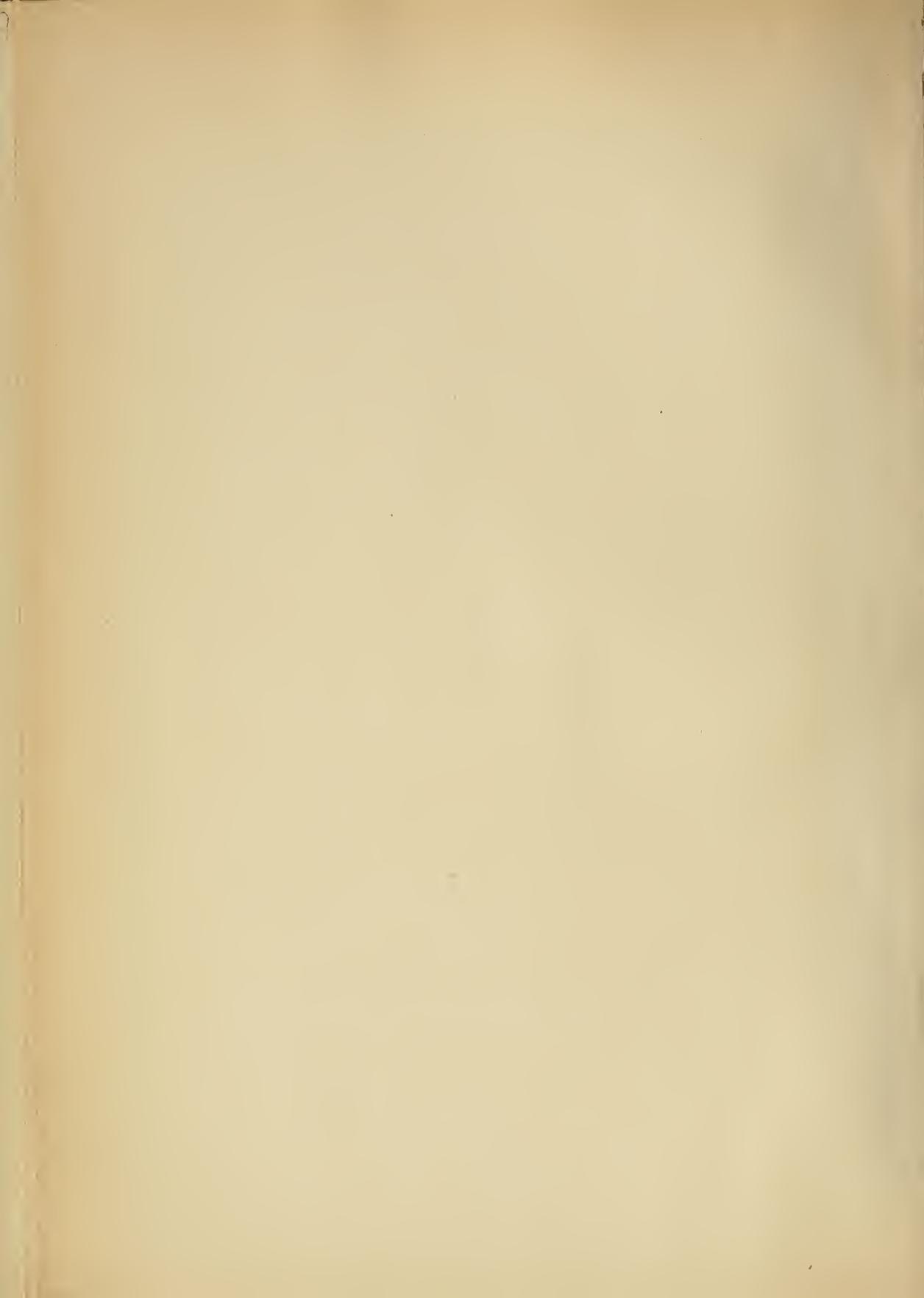
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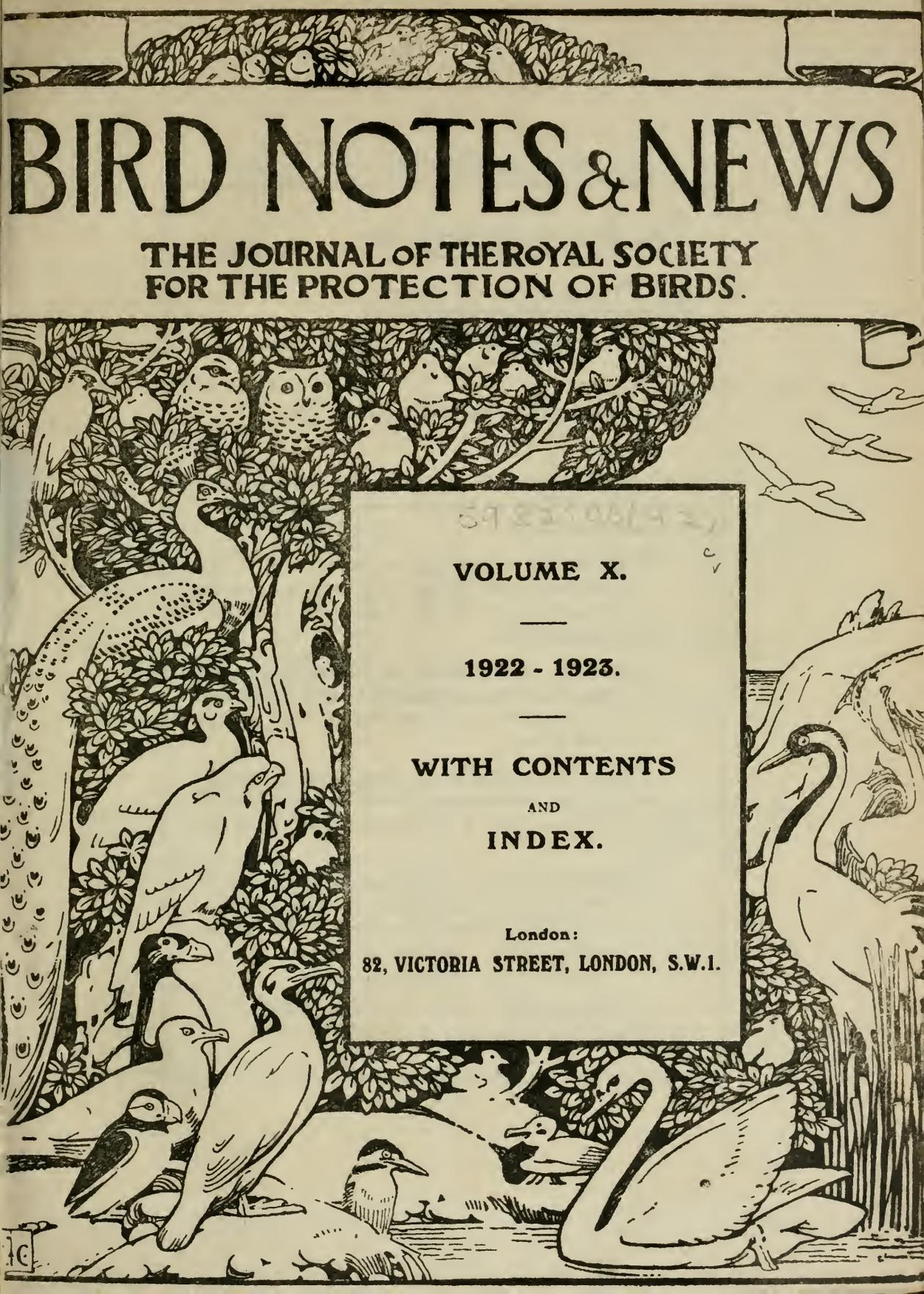
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# BIRD NOTES & NEWS

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

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WITH CONTENTS  
AND  
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The Royal Society for  
the Protection of Birds.

FOUNDED  
1889.

82, VICTORIA STREET, LONDON, S.W.1.

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*Incorporated under Royal Charter, 1904.*

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# Bird Notes & News

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## Bird Sanctuaries

IN a delightful paper read before the Society of Literature the other day, Lord Crewe gave a somewhat melancholy forecast of the future of rural England: an England, not of luxuriant hedgerows, starred with flowers and now white with a bridal veil of blackthorn or a snowy robe of may, now fragrant with wild roses and woodbine, and now a wild tangle of bramble with black and crimson fruit, or of grey "old man's beard" flung over hawthorn or privet; not of deep narrow lanes overhung with trees, or of woodlands where gnarled oaks and great spreading beeches reigning among birch and ash, afford abundant breeding-holes and insect provender for woodpeckers, wryneck, and tit; not stretches of green parkland, and broad roads with wide borders of grass and bracken and tall weeds. But an England where small holdings, intensive farming, scientific forestry, straight motor roads, and neat paths, will present something like a "gigantic garden suburb." In this coming time it may be, as Lord Crewe suggested, Bird Sanctuaries, and trust properties like Box Hill, will be the only alternatives to gravel paths and tar-mac roads.

The present outburst of interest in Sanctuaries for Birds is an indication that there are many people who at least do not wish the wild birds of England to perish in the general economic "tidying-up," partitioning of land, and harnessing

of Nature, which is the ideal of some Adam Smiths and Buckles of to-day. Few Departmental Committees have been welcomed with the enthusiasm accorded to that set up by H.M. Board of Works (through the instrumentality of Lord Crawford) to advise as to the formation of Bird Sanctuaries in the Royal Parks, and it is characteristic of the public delight in these smaller amenities that of all the important measures for the preservation of bird life alluded to at the annual meeting of the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, it was these London Sanctuaries, spoken of by Lord Buxton, that the London newspapers pitched on for their reports.

The movement can hardly be called new. Years ago Mr. W. H. Hudson directed attention to the lost opportunity in the Parks, to the abundant and charming bird life ready to inhabit them and to the unceasing cutting and sweeping and weeding and gravelling which make them impossible as habitations. Again and again the Society has appealed, in BIRD NOTES AND NEWS, in letters to the Press, in letters to officialdom, for a little of nature's self to be left in public parks, a wild corner for wild things to dwell in, the planting of berried shrubs that would afford food to birds, the policy of encouraging and protecting the wild birds instead of providing detestable little "aviaries" for confining them. The

present Committee is no doubt a result of the long-continued endeavour.

Ostensibly almost every park and pleasure-ground in Great Britain is a bird-sanctuary, in so far as interference with birds and their nests is prohibited in a volume of rules and regulations, duly printed, sometimes exhibited, seldom read. It may be hoped they will follow the example of the Board of Works and see that some reality is given to the present illusion. Some few, indeed, provide nesting-boxes (generally choosing the strong and safe "Treehole" pattern invented by Berlepsch for his great bird reserve and introduced into England by the R.S.P.B.); some, such as that at Dunfermline, select and plant fruiting shrubs; but with the majority the geranium and the rhododendron, the pruning knife and the broom carry the day. If the keeper has a gun, must he not shoot? If the gardener has a knife, must he not lop?

Bird Sanctuaries, however, in urban parks or suburbs, are and can be but nature in a small way. Lord Crewe's hint of the England of to-morrow suggests the need for greater efforts than these. Many private estates have notable sanctuaries for wild creatures, such as Lord Grey's reserve for wild fowl at Fallodon. The many glorious commons and fascinating reaches of country, such as Wicken Fen and Blakeney Point, which have been placed in the charge of the National Trust are, or might be, sanctuaries for wild life, if a resident keeper is employed to deal straitly with bird catchers and collectors. More distinctively on the lines of bird-protection and bird-preservation for a national and ornithological purpose, are the "protected areas" set apart by County Council Orders, and the work, sometimes

associated with these, sometimes wholly separate and independent, of the Watchers' Committee of the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds. The object here is not to attract and entertain the public. As Sir Montagu Sharpe pointed out at the Society's annual meeting, publicity is the last thing wanted for the haunts of rare birds guarded by its watchers. Nor is the object to tempt the birds to come by providing for them a miniature reproduction of nature in the midst of artificiality. The birds are there; have made their wild homes there years without count, and haunt their loved patch of coast, or moor, or wood, with a pertinacity which is near being their ruin when these sites become known to the specimen-hunter and the egg-clutcher. They ask only to be allowed to remain in the sanctuary of their own choosing, and this is what the Society's Watchers enable them to do, thus preserving, as far as may be, the naturalist's heritage of to-day for his children of to-morrow.

National Sanctuaries Great Britain has none. Nor does any part of the cost of preserving the nation's representative bird life flow from the national exchequer into that of the R.S.P.B. The beautiful principle of "voluntary subscriptions" prevails. What has been done by some other nations, nationally and by societies, must be left for consideration in the next number of BIRD NOTES AND NEWS.

Yet, valuable as are Sanctuaries, little and big, they are not the best thing. Lord Crewe alluded to the garden suburb. The garden suburb is admirable in its way. The sanctuary is admirable in its way. But no preservation of birds and other wild things in reserves and enclosures—necessary as it is in the case of certain beasts, and even certain birds, which would otherwise perish before a

thickening population—represents the ideal; the ideal country that is itself the sanctuary with its men and women for watchers and wardens, where the protection and preservation of harmless wild life is the law, on the Statutes and in

the heart of its people. It is better to have a hundred cuckoos wandering over the land than a hundred pinioned cuckoos shut in by the walls of the men of Gotham as the one place where they can live in safety.

## The B.O.U. and the Egg-Collector

IN the course of his address at the annual meeting of the R.S.P.B., Earl Buxton, G.C.M.G., said that in one part of the work for the better protection of birds, there had been, in recent years, he feared, instead of advance, a backward trend of a serious and even menacing character. He alluded to the protection of eggs. Not only was the law on this point greatly in need of extending and strengthening, but it was exceedingly difficult to enforce even the limited protection now given, owing to recent growth in the craze for egg-collecting, accentuated by emulation and competition. He had no quarrel with the moderate egg-collector, who was often really interested in birds and in nature, and who confined himself to taking one or two eggs leaving the remainder of the clutch to hatch out. But he did quarrel with those professional collectors who, either for gain or in the name of Science, or for any other reason, ruthlessly and in a wholesale manner filched the entire clutch. He especially deprecated such action in the case of rare birds. Some of these collectors did not appear to care by what means they obtained the eggs, nor did they pay any heed to the law.

Lord Buxton proceeded to instance some recent cases cited by the British Ornithologists Club in their own "Bulletin," No. CCLXI. It was there stated that on March 23rd, 1921, after the Oological Club Dinner, a member of the club displayed—presumably to admiring and probably envious colleagues—a "remarkable exhibit," consisting of 40 clutches of the Red-backed Shrike, all taken in one season, being the *full layings* throughout one season of no fewer than forty pairs of birds. It appeared also that the same person had already collected 500 separate nests of the same species at various times. Another collector exhibited on the same occasion a series of 24 clutches of the Spotted Flycatcher's eggs, stated to be from Kent, Radnor, and elsewhere. A third

member of the Club showed a series of 14 clutches of the Pied Flycatcher, from Northumberland and Radnor. In his (Lord Buxton's) view the taking of clutches of eggs in this deliberate and wholesale way was altogether a wrong thing, and he found it difficult to believe that any additional or adequate scientific advantage was to be gained, or that any sufficient scientific justification could be made out for such action. The eggs of both the Pied and the Spotted Flycatcher were protected in Radnor and Kent, and the eggs of the Red-backed Shrike were protected in 24 counties. It would appear, therefore, that there must have been distinct infringement of the law by the collector or his agent. Moreover, the action of collectors who did these things under the name of "Oology" constituted a direct encouragement, nay, a temptation, to the trading collector and dealer to rob nests and to trouble little about the law.

He would therefore ask the members of the British Ornithologists Union (and he asked in all friendliness, for he had great admiration and respect for ornithologists as a body) how they could justify these depredations and the example they set. Public opinion must be expressed. Thanks to public opinion Egrets were being saved from extermination abroad, and public opinion would, he believed, insist on the law being observed and strengthened in order to prevent wild birds of the United Kingdom from being exploited or possibly exterminated, or our bird life impoverished, by collectors, whoever they might be.

(A letter on the subject, addressed to the Secretary, British Ornithologists Union, by Lord Buxton, was read at a meeting of the Committee of the Union held on March 8th, the day of the Annual Meeting; and this, with the ensuing correspondence, will appear in the Society's Annual Report.)

Commenting on Lord Buxton's speech in the *Illustrated London News*, Mr. W. P. Pycraft writes:—

"In the course of an effective survey of the Society's work, Lord Buxton had occasion to make several grave comments on some of the aims of the Oologists' Club, of the B.O.U., which, so far, has stood for all that is best in the study of ornithology in this country. And it is hoped that those concerned will give careful consideration to his complaints.

"Briefly, he deplored the application of methods which Timothy aptly described as 'science falsely so called,' but which have now apparently become the standards of 'oologists'—or rather, one should say, of a certain school of oologists, who seem not only to have lost perspective, but judgment.

"They profess, and doubtless believe themselves to be, on the way to discover the causes of variation in the coloration and size of birds' eggs, more especially in regard to particular species. This end, they contend, is only to be attained by the collection of huge numbers of eggs within given areas. To attain their evidence, every egg laid by a particular bird during one whole nesting season is taken and duly labelled. After the first clutch is taken she will lay another, and yet another—sometimes three, or more. If there are six birds laying within that area, each is in like manner robbed, so that not only for that year, but for

a succession of years, not a single one of these victims rears offspring.

"The cabinets of one such collector, he remarked, contain no less than 500 clutches of the Red-backed Shrike. How much has science gained by this orgy of collecting? It is doubtful whether a single fact has been added to our knowledge either of the factors of variability in this species or of the wider cause in the supposed interest of which this collection was made. But we can be quite sure that harm has been done by this exacting strain on the birds thus victimised, and this in turn re-acts upon the well-being of the species.

"Unfortunately, many such experiments on this grandiose scale are being made upon species which are far from numerous. If the whole science of oology is not to be brought into disrepute, these all-devouring schemes must be abandoned. They are intemperate and exasperating. They can only be carried on by flagrant breaches of the law, often possible only by the exercise of a low cunning disgusting to all reasonable men. That the collecting of birds' eggs is an essential part of the study of ornithology is beyond dispute. But the collector must exercise discrimination. All that the oologist has been able to tell us so far, after a hideous waste of life, is that the eggs of birds vary in their coloration, some of them to a very remarkable degree. But so far what they tell us as true isn't new, and what they tell us as new isn't true."

## The Keeper and the Kestrels

UNDER the heading of "The Unsentimental Keeper" the following account of Kestrels acting the part of foster-parents is contributed to the *Morning Post* (March 18th, 1922) by "M. W."

"A keeper has been telling me this strange story of a hawk adventure last June:—

"In a squirrel's old 'drey,' five or six years old, he discovered four very young kestrels. He went into ambush and shot the female parent, and the following night shot the male. To determine whether the young ones might prove a lure for other hawks,

which he might also destroy, he left them to their fate. On the third night, when again lying in wait, sure enough a male kestrel flashed into the nest with food for the orphans, and in turn fell to this keeper's merciless gun. And then he saw, to his amazement, what he describes as 'a reg'lar shoal of hawks;' that is to say, four or five were in the air above the nest-tree, but out of range. One or more of this 'shoal' must have taken compassion on the orphans. A week later the young were still flourishing. He found them perched on a branch running from the nest. As he watched yet another male kestrel came in with food.

The young were eagerly fluttering on the branch, squealing a greeting, like puppies, or small pigs, when he shot their latest foster-parent. That night the young kestrels shifted their quarters, and were not seen again for a fortnight, when they were discovered in a sparrow-hawk's ruined nest. For the fourth time the keeper shot a full-grown male kestrel as he came in to succour the orphans. He believes that at least one of the four young

ones survived all perils of infancy. His explanation of the mysterious affair is that the male birds who attended these much-bereaved youngsters had themselves been deprived of their mates by other keepers in other distant preserves, and were roaming the countryside to seek new brides. Finding the orphans, family instinct prompted them to take charge, an act of natural love required by the keeper's gun."

## The Trade in Birds' Plumage

### THE PLUMAGE ACT

THE Importation of Plumage (Prohibition) Act of 1921 (11 and 12 Geo. IV., c. 16) comes into force on April 1st, 1922. The provisions of the Act appear to be a good deal misunderstood, and it may be well, therefore, to give the complete text. The provisions are as follows:—

1.—(1) Subject to the provisions of this Act, a person shall not import into the United Kingdom the plumage of any bird.

(2) Goods prohibited to be imported by virtue of this Act shall be deemed to be included among the goods enumerated and described in the table of prohibitions and restrictions inwards contained in section forty-two of the Customs Consolidation Act, 1876, and the provisions of that Act and of any Act amending or extending that Act shall apply accordingly.

2.—(1) The plumage of the following birds, namely:

- (a) Birds for the time being included in the Schedule to this Act;
- (b) Birds imported alive;
- (c) Birds ordinarily used in United Kingdom as articles of diet;

is excepted from the prohibition on importation imposed by this Act.

(2) The prohibition on importation imposed by this Act shall not apply to any plumage imported as part of the wearing apparel of a passenger if, in the opinion of the Commissioners of Customs and Excise, that plumage is *bonâ fide* intended and is reasonably required for the personal use of the passenger.

(3) Where an application is made to the Board of Trade for the addition to or removal from the Schedule to this Act of the name of any bird, the Board may, after taking into consideration the recommendation made in the matter by the advisory committee to be appointed under this Act, by order add to the said Schedule or remove therefrom, as the case may be, the name of that bird.

An Order made under this provision shall specify the name of the species and of the order, if any, to which the bird mentioned in the Order belongs.

(4) The Board of Trade may grant to any person a licence subject to such conditions and regulations as they may think fit authorising the importation of

plumage for any natural history or other museum, or for the purpose of scientific research, or for any other special purpose.

(5) Any person importing plumage under a licence granted in pursuance of this section shall on importation deliver to an officer of Customs and Excise a written declaration as to the nature of the plumage and the purpose for which it is imported, and any person importing any plumage which is alleged to be excepted from the prohibition on importation imposed by this Act shall, if so required, deliver to an officer of Customs and Excise a written declaration as to the nature of the plumage and the ground on which it is alleged to be so excepted.

(6) Anything authorised or required under this Act to be done to or by the Board of Trade may be done to or by the President, a secretary or an assistant secretary, of the Board, or to or by any person authorised in that behalf by the President of the Board.

3. Within four months of the passing of this Act, the Board of Trade shall appoint an advisory committee consisting of:—

- (a) An independent chairman.
- (b) Two experts in ornithology.
- (c) Three experts in the feather trade.
- (d) Four other members.

All applications for addition to or removal from the Schedule to this Act shall be made to the Board of Trade, which shall refer such applications to the advisory committee, which shall, after due inquiry, submit a recommendation to the Board of Trade in regard thereto.

4.—(1) In this Act the expression "plumage" includes the skin or body of a bird with the plumage on it.

(2) This Act may be cited as the Importation of Plumage (Prohibition) Act, 1921.

(3) This Act shall come into operation on the expiration of nine months after the passing thereof.

The only birds named in the Schedule of the Act when passed were the African Ostrich and the Eider Duck.

It will be seen that no reference is made to the sale or wearing of the prohibited plumage.

As immense stocks accumulated during the war (for a portion of which time only was the import even supposed to be inhibited), and as nine months have been allowed the dealers to get in further supplies, it is not to be supposed that bird-lovers will cease for a long while to be affronted by the sight of "ospreys," Birds-of-paradise, and birds and feathers of every sort in milliners' windows and in women's headgear. The only cure for this would be the co-operation of women, by their resolution to regard the spirit as well as the letter of the law.

The Board of Trade Advisory Committee does not cease to exist with the passing of the Act, and applications may, and doubtless will, continue to be made for the addition of birds' names to the Schedule.

### SAVING THE BIRDS

#### WHAT THE NEW PLUMAGE ACT DOES

[The following article by a Special Correspondent is reprinted by permission from the *Observer* (March 26, 1922), which has throughout been a valuable supporter of the Bill.]

The Act for Prohibiting the Importation of Plumage into Great Britain comes into operation next Saturday (April 1st). It has peculiar features which mark it out from other legislation, or attempts at legislation, brought before the British Parliament. Acts have been passed for the prevention of cruelty to domestic animals—the oldest of them just a century ago—and for the protection of British birds, the earliest of these, dating far back in history, being purely Game Laws in the interests of landowners. The first Bird Protection Act that gave consideration to the existence of birds as birds, was the Sea-birds Act of 1869, and it is worth noting that this was largely in the nature of a Plumage Act. Cockney sportsmen, who found joy in winging sea-mews and kittiwakes on the Yorkshire coast, were the persons ostensibly aimed at, but a flourishing trade had been set up by feather-dealers, who, with their unflinching flair for obtaining goods in the cheapest market, filled the shops with the wings of those sea-birds, which were killed by the thousand while sitting on their nests or tending their young.

There have been Parliamentary efforts, also, to deal with trade annihilation of wild life—efforts to deal with the killing of elephants and of fur-seals, and with the slaughter of penguins for boiling down into oil.

The Plumage Act, however, does not seek to protect birds from "sport." It is not based, in the minds of scientific men at least, on the cruelty involved, vile though that unquestionably has been. And it does not stop at the birds of the United Kingdom, or even those of Greater Britain. Incidentally the question of cruelty comes in, and on that count alone the Act would be worth while. Incidentally it deals with the strictly economic interests of mankind. Even though full knowledge of the relations between insect and bird and mammal is yet to seek, it is safe to see, with Sir Harry Johnston, the gigantic danger involved in the wholesale killing of insectivorous birds in latitudes where insects threaten not only man's crops but the very life of man and beast. Normal experience would lead us to expect three of the Ten Plagues of Egypt to be of insect origin. No Moses was ever called upon to deal with a plague of birds.

#### EFFORTS OF THE DOMINIONS

For this reason again the Act would be worth while. And, further, as a matter of co-operation with our fellow-subjects, it was called for. Our Colonies and Dependencies have been for years past striving to preserve their wild birds by penalising the export of their skins. The Mother Country worked to undo their legislation by giving free import and an open market to smuggled wares.

In the next place, the Act is not drawn up for the purpose of extending the trade of Great Britain, but for cleaning and saving its honour and reputation. The story of trade ingenuity displayed in half-truths, misrepresentations, and equivocations, to be read in twenty years' publications of the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, is a curious record, but not one to be proud of.

But the further and inspiring characteristic of the Act, which sets it apart, is the wondrous spark which flashes across the murky Parliamentary phraseology of its clauses. The bird life of the world, it proclaims (to those having ears), is the heritage of the world, a part of the mystic web of life, an essential in the fabric of creation, the limitless study of men of science, the most exquisite book of the naturalist's library, the possession of past and present and future; not to be destroyed wantonly for the petty profits of a hundred, or a thousand, petty men of to-day. Beautiful, wonderful, harmless, useful, it shall not

be prostituted to greed, nor left at the mercy of trade.

#### STORY OF THE CRUSADE

From the first stages of the feather-trade, its operations were combated by men of science and humanity. Morris and Newton were among the first in England, W. E. D. Scott, Sennett, and Dutcher in the United States. Then came the formation of the Audubon Societies of America, the Society for the Protection of Birds in England, both with the same starting-point of opposition to the killing of birds for millinery. Governments, as is their wont, waited to see how big the evil would become, before dealing with it. The discontinuance of "osprey" plumes in the Army, at the instance of Lord Wolseley, came in 1889, the investigation and Ordinance in British India in 1902, the support of Queen Alexandra to the crusade in 1906. The first Plumage Bill in the English Parliament was that drafted by Mr. Montagu Sharpe (now Sir Montagu Sharpe, K.C.), Chairman of the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, and introduced by Lord Avebury in 1908, followed by the appointment of a Select Committee. It was passed by the Lords, too late for its consideration in the Commons, where it was introduced by Lord Robert Cecil. During the next five or six years Bills were brought in by Sir William Anson, Mr. Ramsay MacDonald, Mr. Percy Alden, and Colonel Page-Croft.

When the Government, through Mr. Hobhouse, brought in a measure in 1914 the ultimate end was in view, but the trade and the Germans together succeeded in delaying matters for yet another seven years; and it is thanks to private members and private societies that the Act is at last on the Statute-book, though it has had the support of the Board of Trade.

#### THE NEW ACT

The Act of 1921 is not so stringent and simple as the Bill of 1908, for it places no embargo on the sale of plumage, thereby laying a heavy task on the Customs officers. Moreover, it is hampered by a clause, known as the "agreed" clause, which gives permission to the trade (or other persons) to appeal to an Advisory Committee set up by the Board of Trade, for the addition of birds whose plumage may be imported. The committee includes three feather-

trade experts, two scientific experts, and four other persons, who may or may not, at the option of the Board, be bird protectors. There is no doubt that the trade, which, on its own statements, let the Bill through because of this clause and crowed very considerably over what it deemed its victory, expected to turn the Act upside down by its means. The Schedule to the Bill named only two birds as exceptions to the rule—the African ostrich and the eider-duck. In more or less private conclaves with scientific bodies and persons, representatives of the trade made various propositions for altering this. They proposed, for instance, to place all the birds they want on the schedule, make the Bill a permissive instead of a repressive one, and leave it to a Committee to remove those which it was necessary, or "agreed," to protect. They also presented a long list of birds "essential to the plumage trade," which they suggested might be placed on the schedule, with the naïve premiss that as these had been regularly imported in large quantities they could not be rare, and therefore need not be protected.

#### THE EGRET SAFE

It has yet to be seen what additions (if any) to the schedule will be made by the Board of Trade on the recommendation of the Advisory Committee when the Act comes into force. But the trade have already rushed into print to cry out that things are not going as they had anticipated; that they agreed on the supposition that only rare birds, which they do not want, and feathers obtained with cruelty (the existence of which they deny) were really and truly to be inhibited. "Moulted" and "farmed" feathers, they argue, should thus come in freely, together with birds of any abundant species. This would suit them nicely. And now, behold, the Committee and the legal advisers of the Board have construed the Act to mean what it says. It says nothing about "extermination" or "cruelty," or about "feathers" from this place or that. The word used is "bird," and it is birds, not selected plumages, which may be added to the schedule. The presumption is, therefore, that the egret is saved; that wild birds' plumage will now cease to come into the London market, save by smuggling; and that, when accumulated stores are exhausted, women will no longer be able to adorn themselves with "murderous millinery" otherwise than by saving up their out-of-date decorations or by personally importing the banned feathers on their hats.

# The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds

## ANNUAL MEETING

THE Annual Meeting of the Society was held at the Guildhall, Westminster, S.W., on February 21st, when Her Grace the Duchess of Portland, President, presided over a crowded attendance. Viscount Grey of Fallodon, K.G., who had intended to be present and speak, was, unfortunately, prevented by serious illness at the last moment. The President, having expressed her pleasure in meeting so many friends of the cause in which she herself was deeply interested, briefly reviewed the progress marked in the Annual Report; and the adoption of the Report and Statement of Accounts was moved by Sir Montagu Sharpe, K.C., Chairman of the Council, who, in the course of his speech, said that the aims of the Society were well summed up in one of the paragraphs of the Report:—

“The Society occupies a unique position, offering a meeting-place for all who are interested in wild birds. It is not simply a society for the prevention of cruelty to birds; nor is it a purely scientific body occupied with the advancement of ornithological erudition. It seeks to induce appreciation of the charm and fascination of wild birds as part of the heritage of life and beauty we enjoy; and also knowledge of their value as an essential factor in the welfare of human life. It is the one national Society in Great Britain working solely for the intelligent preservation of wild birds and their protection from the collector, the bird-catcher, the man with a gun, and the plume-hunter. Its scope may be said to cover the practical side of ornithology—the living free bird in its natural relations to man, and man in his relations to the bird.”

The resolution was seconded by Earl Buxton, G.C.M.G., who in his address referred especially to the work of the Home Office Advisory Committee, and the need for greater uniformity and simplicity in the Bird Protection laws; to the passing of the Plumage Act and the consideration given to the matter by the Board of Trade Committee, with whose decisions most reasonable persons would, he believed, agree; to the work of the Society's Watchers; and to the intention of the Board of Works to institute bird-sanctuaries in the London Parks. One portion of Lord Buxton's address, dealing with the egg-collector, is given more fully on another page.

The resolution was agreed to. The President was elected amid applause, on the motion of Sir John Cockburn, K.C.M.G., seconded by Mr. Meade-Waldo. The Council and Officers

for the year were elected, as proposed by Lord Lilford, seconded by Sir Harry Brittain, whose reference to his Bill for prohibiting the use by bird-catchers of decoys and bird-lime met with sympathetic applause; and supported by Mr. Gater, Director of Education for Lancashire. A vote of thanks to the Duchess for presiding, and to the speakers, was moved by Mr. J. R. B. Masefield, who spoke of the ignorance and prejudice which were responsible for the loss of so many birds killed by farmers and keepers. In seconding this, Mr. Lemon, Hon. Secretary, added the thanks of the meeting to the Middlesex County Council and Quarter Sessions. The Duchess of Portland, in responding, alluded to the evils of bird-caging, remarking that she had recently been invited to be patroness of a Cage-Bird Show and had sent a reply of a kind its promoters would not care to receive a second time.

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

## COUNCIL MEETING

The Council of the Society met at the Guildhall on February 3rd, the Chairman, Sir Montagu Sharpe, K.C., presiding.

The Hon. Secretary's Report, after congratulating the Chairman, on behalf of the Council, upon the honour of Knighthood which had been conferred on him, referred with great regret to the sudden death, on January 13th, of Miss E. S. Anderson, who had been associated with the work of the Society since 1909, and its Assistant Secretary since 1915. Thoroughly loyal, sincere, conscientious, and dependable, her sterling value was appreciated best by those who worked with her and knew her most intimately. Miss Anderson was a daughter of the late Sir George Anderson, formerly Chief Justice of the Bahamas. It was agreed that a letter expressive of the Council's sympathy should be addressed to her sister, Mrs. Shearburn White. Proceeding, the report stated that twelve lectures had been given and six Bird and Tree Festivals held. Complaints recently received indicated a revival in the use of the illegal pole-trap on moors and in forests, and special action might be necessary in order to deal with it.

The Report of the Finance and General Purposes Committee dealt with the accounts

for the year 1921. The resignation of Miss Gladys Norman as Hon. Secretary for Camberley, on her leaving the neighbourhood, was accepted with regret; Mrs. Edward Clodd was appointed Hon. Secretary for Aldeburgh and district. The following Fellows and Members were elected:—

FELLOWS.—Mrs. Borradaile, Miss R. Crawshay, Mrs. Flugel, Henry C. Haldane, Mrs. Alice Hall, A. Bethune Morgan, Mrs. H. H. Phelps, Mrs. Lionel Fox Pitt, Miss Annie A. Robinson.

LIFE FELLOW: Charles E. Alford.

MEMBERS: The Marquess and Marchioness of Aberdeen and Temair, J. S. H. Borough, Miss E. H. Borough, James Bell, Miss Bray, Arthur Carrall, Mrs. Arthur Carrall, Alfred Clarke, Miss Florence Coombe, Lieut. H. B. Cott, J. H. Crow, Miss Currie, Robert Deakin, Miss Jessie Donald, W. Fox, G. G. T. Giles, Mrs. A. Gordon, Roy Hobkirk, Mrs. Jackson, B. B. Knight, Mrs. John Law, Miss A. Linsell, Mrs. MacAlister, Mrs. McDouall, W. C. L. Matthews, Miss M. E. Oliver, Miss Mary N. Paley, Mrs. Payton, A. V. Prior, Miss Y. G. Raymond, C. Robertson, Mrs. Rowlands, Mrs. F. H. Sampson, Miss Mary Sampson, Miss Marjorie Sampson, Mrs. J. A. Shaw, John R. Stevens, Mrs. Hedley Thomson, D. W. Turner, Miss W. W. Twining, William Wainwright, jun., Miss Doris Westwood, C. A. White, Lady Ethel Wickham.

LIFE MEMBER: Leonard C. E. Currie.

With regard to the Plumage Act, three meetings of the Board of Trade Advisory Committee had been held, the Marquess of Crewe presiding, and results were generally understood to be satisfactory to Bird-Protectors. Numerous letters on the subject had been received, including one from Mr. J. C. Moulton, of the Raffles Museum, Singapore; and Heer F. E. Blaauw, C.M.Z.S., had written as follows from Graveland, Holland:—

“For ever and again, as is stated in your Winter Number (1921) of BIRD NOTES AND NEWS, the story is put forward of shed plumage of Egrets being sold. I have in my Park a large colony of Herons, several hundreds of nests, and it would be impossible for me to collect enough moulted feathers of those birds during a whole season to adorn (?) two or three ladies' hats.

“I don't believe a word of the story that the Egret feathers that come from Venezuela have come from *moulting* birds. Moulded feathers of wild birds are shed here and there, and are not to be found in any numbers in one particular place. I do not doubt for one moment that the Venezuela feathers come from *slaughtered* birds.”

Among other subjects discussed were the arrangements for Competitions in 1922, Bird Protection in the Scilly Islands, and the destruction of sea-birds through the discharge of waste petrol into the sea.

A Special Meeting of the Council was held on March 3rd, mainly to consider the financial needs of the Society, and means to be adopted to obtain increased funds for the development of the work in many directions where it is greatly needed and where it could be undertaken if sufficient support was assured.

#### BEQUEST TO THE WATCHERS' FUND

The late Dr. Reginald W. S. Bishop, of West Canfield, near Ripon, who died on December 31st, 1921, has left a legacy of £1,000 for the Watchers' Fund of the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, to take effect after the death of his wife, to whom he leaves all his property for life. Dr. Bishop took the keenest interest in the Society's work, and was elected a Life Fellow in 1920. He has left material for a book on his experiences as a moorland doctor.

#### THE ARGYLLSHIRE VERMIN CLUB

The following letter, signed by the Chairman and Hon. Secretary of the R.S.P.B., appears in the *Times* of March 4th, 1922:—

“The attention of the Council of the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds has repeatedly been drawn to an account in the *Field* of December 10th of last year's activities of the Argyllshire Vermin Club. Whilst appreciating the necessity of keeping down the numbers of predatory beasts and birds in the interest of creatures necessary for the support of man, we fear that such wholesale destruction as that described may have disastrous effect on the avi-fauna of the British Isles.

“It is the killing of 160 buzzards and 475 hawks which arouses our anxiety; also among the ‘unnamed’ we cannot help suspecting that there are species which it has been the persistent endeavour during the past half-century of naturalists and ornithologists to protect. We also fear that in order to accomplish so much the killing may to some extent have been done by pole-traps and poison, the use of both being illegal. In addition to their illegality, the use of such instruments is to be deplored, both on account of the cruel sufferings which they inflict on their victims and because of their indiscriminate action.

“We earnestly hope that the executive officers of the vermin clubs of Scotland will see their way to draw up and enforce strict rules which will effectually prevent indiscriminate slaughter, and which will forbid the killing of interesting and rare birds, such as

white-tailed and golden eagles (the former well-nigh extinct in Great Britain), harriers, kestrels, and merlins, as well as buzzards, which are admittedly useful and innocuous, and whose soaring flight is a most picturesque addition to scenery and one which gives immense pleasure to nature-lovers.

"If we may be allowed to say so, the sight of native avi-fauna on its own ground is of greater value than is the rigid preservation of grouse, because, whilst grouse shooters are few, nature-lovers are many, and their numbers are increasing the wide world over."

### THE DESTRUCTION OF LARKS

"A Bird Lover" writes in the *Times* (February 25th, 1922):—

"No one can pass a poulterer's shop at present without seeing piles of Larks for sale. They are sometimes in boxes, sometimes strung on a string with their throats twisted. In all the stores one meets the same heaps of pathetic little corpses. The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds has never ceased to protest against the slaughter of the loveliest of all our song birds, but the shopmen always return the same answer, that they must sell them because their customers ask for them. The catching of these birds is attended with great cruelty, and there is not even the excuse of killing them for sport, which the gunmen of Monte Carlo advance. The Bird Society has suggested that if people refused to deal at the shops or the departments of stores where the Larks are sold the slaughter would stop. But I fear that not one customer in a thousand will take the trouble to make a protest. I therefore venture to write to you to suggest that a Bill should be introduced into Parliament forbidding the destruction of Larks.

"It is indeed time that this were done, for in a walk over Epsom Downs last week I did not hear a single Lark sing, although on a bright day in February I have often heard Larks sing. They have been growing scarcer for many years. I may add that in Germany the destruction of Larks for the table is altogether forbidden."

To this "A Farmer" made the customary response that Larks are destructive birds and need to be destroyed for that reason. In reply, Dr. W. E. Collinge writes from the Yorkshire Museum (*Times*, March 7th):—

"That 'Larks take a heavy toll of our wheat, seeds, and other growing crops,' is entirely contrary to fact. A long investigation on the food and feeding habits of this bird, made by me some few years ago, and published in the *Journal of the Board of Agriculture*, shows that the bulk of the food consists of weed seeds and

injurious insects. Of the total food consumed in a year, animal food forms 46 per cent., and vegetable food 54 per cent. Of the former, 35·5 per cent. consists of injurious insects. Of the vegetable food, 43·5 per cent. consists of weed seeds, and only 9·5 per cent. of grain and 1 per cent. of leaves of crops. In other words, 50·5 per cent. of the total food is of a neutral nature, 36·5 per cent. beneficial, and only 13 per cent. injurious. The injuries are far outweighed by the benefits conferred.

"Respecting the migratory birds arriving in the autumn, no difficulty should be experienced in holding these in check, if they are found to be doing harm. If I thought the Skylark was injurious I should be the first to recommend repressive measures, but it is one of the most beneficial wild birds we have, and should be protected from the bird-catcher and others who are evidently ignorant of its food habits."

Miss H. E. Lock, Hon. Local Secretary for the R.S.P.B., also writes (March 10th) from Niton, I.W. :—

"Larks take only a small percentage of grain. They feed chiefly on insects. A young one, which was picked up in May, 1918, with an injured wing, lived entirely on small flies, gnats, and the aphides that go by the name of 'cuckoo-spit' blight. We exhausted the supply of this blight in our own garden, and had to raid our friends for the bird's benefit."

### PLUMAGE ACT SCHEDULE

In the House of Commons on April 3rd Mr. Trevelyan Thomson asked the President of the Board of Trade how many orders he had made under the Importation of Plumage (Prohibition) Act; and, consequently, what were the only feathers that might now be imported into this country.

Mr. Stanley Baldwin replied that one Order had been made by the Board of Trade and published in the *Gazette* on March 28th, adding the Rhea Rothschildi to the schedule. At the time of the passing of the Act the schedule included only the African Ostrich and Eider Duck. In addition to these, the only Plumage which can now be imported, except under licence of the Board of Trade, is that of birds ordinarily used in the United Kingdom as articles of diet.

[The Rhea Rothschildi is usually regarded as a subspecies of the Rhea Americana of South America, but is by some ornithologists held to be a distinct species.]

## Economic Ornithology

### BIRDS, INSECTS, AND CROPS

Two interesting addresses, the one dealing with the value of wild birds as insect destroyers, and the other with the ravages of insect enemies, were given on March 3rd, 1922.

Lecturing at the Royal Institution, London, Professor Maxwell Lefroy gave a lurid account of the "exploitation" of mankind by insect pests. The flea he accused (according to the newspapers) of carrying bubonic plague, and the Argentine ant of eating a baby as well as virtually killing off bird life in the Island of Madeira. On economic grounds, he illustrated the ravages of insect pests among the crops—the boll weevil in the cotton crops of America, the Colorado beetle among the potatoes, and the corn borer and green weevil in the world's wheat crop. Between 1914 and 1921, he said, the American cotton crop diminished from 14,000,000 bales to 7,000,000 bales, almost entirely through the ravages of the weevil. The grain weevil, again, had very seriously affected our food supplies during the war. It attacked the grain stored in Australia for shipment to this country, and over £450,000 had to be spent on machinery to save the wheat.

At York Museum, Dr. W. E. Collinge lectured on the insect-food of wild birds in relation to food production. The majority of our wild birds, he observed, were beneficial, and only a very few species injurious, and these latter might be controlled and their injuries materially lessened by proper repressive measures. It was difficult to estimate the enormous bulk of food that a bird consumed, but a bird about the size of a Skylark consumed about six pounds of food per year, so that 10,000 birds would require about 27 tons, of which fully half or more consisted of insects and caterpillars. Taking ten Skylarks and examining their stomach contents, it was found that the average number of insects, etc., consumed in an ounce was 162, so that 10,000 birds would consume nearly 80,000,000 insects in a year. From careful investigation at different periods of the day it was found that each Song-Thrush consumed approximately on an average something like 336 insects and caterpillars per day, or 10,000 per month. In the nesting season many more would be consumed, so it would not be over

estimating the figure to say that during April, May, and June each bird accounted for the destruction of upwards of 30,000 insects, most of which were injurious to the farmer and fruit grower. Assuming there were 100,000 Song-Thrushes in the British Isles, these birds would in the three months mentioned account for the destruction of 3,024,000,000 insects. The whole of this material would weigh over 500 tons, and would be capable of destroying in 14 days 10,000 tons of produce, or £50,000 worth of home-grown food. "This is but a single instance," said Dr. Collinge; "what the cumulative effect must be of 50 or 60 species feeding upon insects and caterpillars for the greater part of the year, we are unable to estimate, but this at least we can state, that they must exercise a control such as few realise, and without which it would be almost impossible to cultivate the land to any profitable purpose. Once the people of this country realise what a potent factor wild birds are in the protection of our food crops and our forests, then more enlightened views will prevail, the tardy machinery of the State will be forced to move more quickly and more effectively, in order to preserve and protect a natural force of inestimable value to mankind."

### THE HOUSE-SPARROW AND THE PEAS

Canon Theodore Wood, writing in the *Morning Post* (February 4th, 1922), points out that the Sparrow, with all its sins, "accused of almost every crime a bird can commit," is not wholly bad. It has at least one counterbalancing virtue to redeem its thousand crimes; for in the nesting season it is insectivorous. "I do not merely mean that it feeds its young with grubs. I mean that it lives itself partly on highly injurious insects. At one time I made rather a speciality of growing peas. I found, one spring, that the leaves of the young plants, just at the most critical stage of their growth, were badly chipped, and in some cases destroyed altogether. The gardener attributed the mischief to the Sparrows, which were constantly at work among the rows. So I caught half a dozen, and examined the contents of their crops. In one case there was nothing at all. The bird had evidently just arrived when I caught it, and had not begun its meal. In the other five I found no vestige of pea-leaves at all. What I did find, in each, was a mass of the

dreaded *Sitones* weevils. And when I visited the pea-rows with a lantern at night I found these destructive little creatures at work on almost every plant, nibbling away at the leaves just as they were beginning to sprout. It was they that were doing the mischief, not the Sparrows. So I left the birds to their own devices. The result was that they cleared off the weevils, and I had an excellent show of peas, while most of my neighbours, who waged war against the Sparrows, had next to none.

"Sparrows are very fond, too, of 'chovies,' or 'cockerbundies'—those small chafers which abound so greatly in certain seasons and whose grubs do so vast an amount of mischief. And I have the record of a case in which they did good service in clearing away blight.

"With regard to the food of the young, there is no question at all. It consists entirely of insects. Experiment has shown that on an average forty grubs are brought to a sparrow's nest during each hour of the working day. For four weeks the little ones are diligently fed by their parents. And there are two broods—often three broods—in every year. These facts speak for themselves. I hold no brief for the sparrow. I do not deny his amazing capacity for mischief. And, on the whole, I am afraid that he does much more harm than good. But there is something to be said in his favour; and it should not be forgotten that, while his bad deeds are visible to everybody, his good ones, for the most part, remain unseen."

## Notes

ALL members of the R.S.P.B. will send out their congratulations to their brethren of the Audubon Association of the U.S.A., which has just received a cash donation of \$200,000.00 from one donor, who remains anonymous. It is to be added to the Association's permanent endowment fund for the activities along specified lines, which are as follows:—

1. For the education of the general public in the knowledge and value of useful, beautiful and interesting forms of wild life, especially birds.
2. For the actual protection and perpetuation of such forms of wild life or suitable breeding and other reservations.
3. For protecting and maintaining adequate protection for such forms of wild life in all parts of the Western Hemisphere.
4. Or for any one of these purposes.

All these objects are objects also of the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, with the necessary geographical modification. When will the British millionaire come forward (and there are still a few left whose death duties will considerably swell the revenue), and offer any comparable sum for the permanent maintenance of Bird Protection in Great Britain?

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The recently appointed Committee charged with the consideration of bird sanctuaries in the London parks, have already mapped out

two such areas. One is opposite the Powder Magazine in Hyde Park, an enclosure containing greenhouses and sheds; the other runs along the eastern side of the Long Water in Kensington Gardens. There is no public access to either, so that the populace will lose nothing of their space, and as hardly any expenditure will be involved where the main thing is to let Nature alone, taxpayers need have no fears. Some suitable trees and bushes will be planted, and no doubt some nesting-boxes will in due time be provided. Sir Lionel Earle, Chairman of the Committee, has asked for contributions of trees and bushes required. These are specified as follows:—

Blackthorn (*prunus spinosa*), dog rose (*Rosa canina*), Cotoneaster in variety, dog-wood (*Cornus sanguinea*), wild red cherry (*Prunus pennsylvanica*), common hazel (*Corylus avellana*), hawthorn (*Crataegus oxyacantha* and *Crataegus pyracantha*), wild currant (*Ribes sanguinea*, *Rosa rugosa*), snowberry (*Symphoricarpos racemosus*), wild cherry (*Prunus cerasus*), low blackberry (*Rubus canadensis*), high blackberry (*Rubus villosus*), sweet briar (*Rosa rubiginosa*), wild raspberry (*Rubus idaeus*), briers (*Penzance* in variety), gooseberry (*Ribes grossularia*), gorse (*Ulex europaeus*), yew, osiers, willow.

The list might easily be extended, but many persons may be glad to preserve it as a suggestion for their own grounds. The other members of the Committee are Lord Buxton, Mr. Pretyman, M.P., Mr. Harold Russell, and Mr. J. Rudge Harding, the last-named representing the R.S.P.B.

Scientific ornithologists have been making an effort to attribute the outbreak of foot-and-mouth disease to birds bringing the virus across the North Sea, apparently on the theory that as birds have been known to carry seeds why not virus? Evidence there is none, and a strong protest against this accusation was made recently at a sectional meeting of the Yorkshire Naturalists' Union. Nothing can be less scientific than the popular rushing forward of doctrines which have not a tittle of evidence for their support.

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Every member of the R.S.P.B. will agree with the comments made on birdcatching by Dr. James Ritchie, of the Royal Scottish Museum, in the *Scottish Naturalist* (Jan.-Feb., 1922), and rejoice the more especially that they should be made by a distinguished naturalist in a scientific journal. Many people, he says, find interest and pleasure in keeping and tending cage-birds, but birdcatching is a very different matter, and birdcatching has much increased of late.

In the British Isles the law lags behind public opinion. The greater part of our birdcatching is carried on during the autumn migration and throughout the winter months, after the cessation of the legal close-time and at a period when only such birds are protected as are mentioned in Special Orders. Unless, therefore, the birdcatcher is capturing specially protected birds, or is contravening (where it has been adopted) Sunday protection, he may catch how and when he pleases, so far as the Wild Birds Protection Acts are concerned. This state of affairs is far from satisfactory, for it is incontestable that birdcatching often involves a considerable amount of cruelty.

As remedies, Dr. Ritchie looks to the inclusion of persecuted birds in the lists of species protected all the year by County Orders, "but such inclusion must be followed by rigorous application of the law"; to prosecution for cruelty under the Protection of Animals Act, and to the adoption in future legislation of the recommendations of the Departmental Committee. Part of these recommendations are embodied in Sir Harry Brittain's Bill, which ought to be carried through this year. Lord Tavistock, the Rev. J. G. Tuck, Mr. A. H. Patterson, and Mr. C. B. Horsburgh contribute to the first number of Dr. Graham Renshaw's quarterly, *Natureland*, which is on popular lines, and appeals to a wide circle of readers. (Manchester: Sherratt & Hughes.)

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The terrible boll-weevil of the United States, to whose ravages Professor Maxwell-Lefroy referred in a recent lecture, has, like every insect pest, its bird enemies. Prominent among them is the Egret, and it is largely due to the destruction of this bird for its plumage that the insect has multiplied at such an enormous rate as to have eaten, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, one-third of the cotton crop of 1921. First heard of in Texas in 1893, this weevil has since spread to other cotton-growing States, advancing a hundred miles in three months and, declining to eat anything but cotton, skipping over belts of non-cotton growing region fifty miles broad. Nearly every kind of crop in Great Britain also has its special weevil enemy, and each weevil its bird enemies. The common custom of the farmer who sees the birds among the crop is to shoot the birds.

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Sir John Cockburn's suggestion, at the Society's annual meeting, that groves of trees would be a far finer memorial to the gallant dead than monstrosities of stone which are neither beautiful nor useful, found probably few opponents among his hearers. The late Mr. Till, in his Gold Medal on introducing Bird and Tree Day into England, showed how trees have been made to serve as individual memorials in Eynsford by spelling names in acrostic fashion. In the United States a memorial to John Burroughs, the American naturalist, is to consist of a forest near the place where he was born in the Catskills. Some ten thousand trees are being planted by schoolboys in co-operation with the New York Conservation Commission.

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One of the lots at a sale of birds' eggs, etc., held in January by Mr. J. C. Stevens, at his Covent Garden Rooms, included a clutch of Kite's eggs taken in South Wales, and a clutch of Peregrine Falcon's eggs, taken at Loch Buie. As the eggs of both species were protected by law at the time and place where they were taken, a letter of protest was addressed by the R.S.P.B. to Mr. Stevens, and, as on previous occasions, he supported the law by withdrawing these illegally-taken clutches from sale.

## From Correspondents

## EARLY SWALLOWS

"It may interest you to know that three Swallows were seen at Euston, the next parish to this, yesterday morning (March 6th). They were flying in and out of buildings where they nested last year. This is the earliest date I have in 35 years' observation."—Rev. R. B. Caton, Great Fakenham Rectory, Norfolk.

## THE "PICK-CHEESE"

"I have to-day heard from one of the Local Examiners of the essays for the Bird and Tree Scheme. He remarks upon one report in which it was stated that the nick-name 'Pick-cheese' for the Blue-Tit was new to the Examiners. He furnishes an explanation, and I am forwarding it to you as a morsel of interesting information. He says the soubriquet was probably earned by the bird getting through the window (lattice to escape window tax) of the cheese room and pecking at the drying cheeses."—J. S. Davis, Secretary, Norfolk Education Committee.

## BIRD PROTECTION POSTERS

"If all your subscribers would write to Councils, Boards, etc., I feel sure something would be done to make Bird Protection notices clearer in type and posted where they can be seen and read. They are often too high up to be legible. 'Wordy' wording might be left out in order that the names of protected birds and important points should be larger. Private owners of the land often have to do with the placing of the posters."—H. C. Ford, Yealand Conyers.

## THE WAR ON THE HEDGEROWS

"Last year I came across a man cutting down a high hawthorn hedge in the height of the birds' breeding season. The hedge was overgrown, but was not as a matter of fact causing any danger to the motoring public. 'You must be destroying a good many birds' nests.' He replied that he was sorry to say he *was* doing so, nests of mavis, etc., with young birds in them, and that he ought not to

have been put on to cut down the hedge at that time of the year (June); but that it wasn't his fault as he was ordered to do so by the farmer, who in his turn was ordered by the Road Board or County Council. The man tried to save some of the young birds by putting the nests back in the fallen stuff.

"I then wrote or spoke to two or three gentlemen who had seats upon, or influence with, the County Council. I got no satisfaction from them. They admitted that it was illegal to destroy the birds, but excused it on the plea that it was an 'agricultural necessity' to cut down the hedge, and that the farmers would say they had no other time for doing it.

"Is not this positively monstrous and ridiculous? They have all the year to choose from, and they leave the hedge-cutting (in some cases) till the very height of the breeding season. I really think the present law ought to be made to cover such cases. What happened where I saw it may happen anywhere."—Rev. H. Northcote.

## GAME AND "VERMIN"

A well-known officer and landowner writes to a member of the R.S.P.B. Council:—

"I wish something could be done to protect some of those birds that the more ignorant class of gamekeeper, and alas! their masters, call 'Vermin' birds, which are not only harmless but actually do good to the game by reducing their mutual enemies, such as rats, etc., that eat any quantity of pheasant food. My own opinion is that the damage done by many species of so-called vermin is really very small. Anyone who has been in India must have seen the extraordinary amount of game, not only migratory, such as Snipe, but actually breeding in the Plains, and yet the place swarms with what the average keeper would call vermin, and if their arguments have any logic in them, all game would have been annihilated long ago.

"A Sparrowhawk in the vicinity of a pheasant-rearing establishment is, I fear, indefensible. But Kestrels, Owls, Buzzards, Merlins, etc., do practically no harm and are a delight to the bird-lover."

## Bird and Tree Challenge Shield Competition

THE last three months have been a busy time in connection with the Competition, with the holding of Bird and Tree Day celebrations, and also the sending in of entry forms and lists of Cadets for this year's Competition. There are still, however, many schools which have not sent in (as requested by the circular letter addressed to all Competitors) the dates of their Festivals, and others who are slack in forwarding their entries. A little extension of time is always allowed for lists, especially in the case of new schools, and further time is accordingly being granted to Surrey Schools, which for the first time are now being offered a Challenge Shield if entries are sufficiently numerous. Delay is, however, to be regretted, as the period for study is shortened and the children do not obtain the cards and hints from the Society which so materially help them at the start.

### OPEN-AIR NATURE STUDY

In a circular letter addressed to the senior schools of Norfolk, Mr. J. S. Davis, the Education Secretary for the county, writes:—

“There is perhaps no subject of the Elementary School curriculum which is so capable of fostering the spirit of thinking and inquiring as Nature Study—a study of *Nature* and Nature really and properly *studied*. The study of Birds and Trees as required by the Bird and Tree Scheme stimulates curiosity and perception, helps to form the habit of observation, and quickens the reasoning powers.

“As soon as Nature is taught from the book and the blackboard it ceases to be real Nature study. Nature is out-of-doors, and to study Nature one must go into Nature's great laboratory—out of doors. Without carrying correlation to any absurd extent, the fact that Nature Study is so closely associated with other school work should not be lost sight of. It is correlated with and helps in the study of drawing, painting, and composition (both oral and written), literature, music, and mathematics.

“The feelings of comradeship and good fellowship are also fostered. The teacher assumes his true function, namely, that of director or superintendent. He learns with

his pupils, he judiciously guides their observations, he no longer *tells* them this and *shows* them that.

“For the sake of your children in whom you wish to foster this spirit of thinking and inquiry, will you not consider whether the Bird and Tree scheme can be adopted in your school? Do not regard it as merely a Competition. Do not compare your school with others and think you are handicapped. All you want is enthusiasm, and you may be astonished at the extent to which the study may develop in your school, even if it be a small school.”

There are, needless to say, other reasons for the study than those touched on by Mr. Davis in addressing teachers. If work on the land is to be pursued with intelligence, the present abysmal ignorance of the economic place of birds must be grappled with in country schools. If callous brutality and stupid destruction are to be checked for humanity's sake, boys and girls must personally learn to know and observe the ways and lives and songs of birds. Observation means interest, interest sympathy, sympathy protection.

### BIRD AND TREE SCHEME IN LANCASHIRE

Mr. G. H. Gater, Director of Education for Lancashire, was among the speakers at the annual meeting of the R.S.P.B. on February 21st, when considerable reference was made by the Duchess of Portland and Sir Montagu Sharpe to the value of the scheme. Mr. Gater emphasised the importance of securing the co-operation of local Education Authorities in the promotion of the Competition. The Lancashire Education Committee appreciated it to the full; they were whole-heartedly behind the scheme, and were doing their utmost to encourage it. They were proud of the fact that one of their schools had won the Inter-County Shield for 1921-22. They would like the competition to be introduced into every one of their schools, because they were convinced that, not only from the point of view of the Society, but also from the point of view of education, this was the proper way to conduct Nature Study. This year the Lancashire Authority had circularised the managers of their 700 schools, urging them to take up this work; at the same

time they thought it would not be wise to press into the scheme schools where the teachers did not see their way to carry it out. It was much better to go slowly. He hoped in two or three years to be able to show a much larger number of competing schools in Lancashire.

#### IN THE COURTS

"A VERY CRUEL OCCUPATION."—At *Walsall*, on March 3rd, John Cutler was fined 40s. for cruelty to a decoy Linnnet. Defendant was seen with two large bird-nets set in a field, and a Linnnet attached to a string. He threw the bird several times into the air and it fell exhausted, when P.C. Lavender came up and liberated it. Defendant said he had been a bird-catcher for thirty years, and it was not illegal to catch birds, to which the magistrates' clerk responded, "Unfortunately it is not, I wish it was." The Chairman added that it was a very cruel occupation.

SUNDAY SHOOTING.—At *Mistley*, on January 30th, two men were fined 5s. each for shooting two Widgeon and a Black-backed Gull on a Sunday. There had been numerous complaints of such offences.

KILLING A KINGFISHER.—At *Cheadle* (Staffordshire), on January 27th, at the Children's Court, a boy of 15 was fined 17s. 6d. for killing a Kingfisher. He said he threw a piece of coal at the bird and knocked it into the water, but did not mean to kill it. He had seen the Bird Protection notices but did not read them. The Chairman said the Bench wished it to be well known that it was against the law to kill these wild birds or take their eggs, and if any further cases occurred the punishment would be more severe. The bird (which had been stuffed) would be forfeited and sent to the Natural History Museum at *Hanley*, and the police would see that it got there.

THE MAN WITH A GUN.—At *Loddon* (Norfolk), on January 11th, James H. Money was fined 21s. for shooting a Bittern at *Geldeston*. The Superintendent of Police, in mentioning that the species was nearly extinct and was specially protected, said he was instructed by the Chief Constable to take these proceedings and to ask, if there was a conviction, for the forfeiture of the bird. This the Bench accordingly ordered. Defendant said he thought it was a Heron and expressed his regret. (But why shoot a Heron?)

THE BIRDCATCHER'S DECOY.—At *Tottenham*, on February 16th, Reginald Amos was charged with torturing a decoy-bird and taking protected birds, and also with taking birds on Sunday. The decoy Greenfinch was braced and jerked up and down by a string; it was in an exhausted state and the policeman had to kill it. Defendant pleaded "out of work." Fined £4 on the first charge, £1 on the other, and nets, etc., forfeited.

THE "SPORTSMAN."—At *Epsom*, on January 27th, Alfred Dodge, of *Leatherhead*, was fined 5s. for shooting two Moorhens on a Sunday. He was seen carrying a gun and had the birds in a kit-bag.

## "A TIRED TRAVELLER"

(The Redwing).

By W. H. HUDSON.

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# Bird Notes & News

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## Oil on the Water

SOME two years ago the attention of the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds was directed to the destruction of sea-birds by the discharge into sea and rivers of refuse oil from petrol-driven vessels. For months and even years this had been observed on various parts of the coast, but being at first entirely attributed to submarines and wrecks associated with the war, the evil, it was supposed, would gradually disappear. Instead of disappearing it has developed with alarming rapidity, until now the cry is heard from all round our shores that scores, hundreds, thousands of birds are being washed ashore dead and dying, with plumage black and clogged so as to render flying and diving impossible, and a slow death by starvation inevitable. With this cry comes also an alarm of danger to our fisheries through destruction of fishes and fish-ova, some of the stuff choking the surface of the water, while heavier portions sink and poison life beneath; of peril to harbours blockaded with thick floating scum; of injury (spelling ruin in course of time) to watering-places through the deposit of filth on the shore and on the sea, staining and spoiling clothes, clinging to the bodies of bathers.

The matter causing the trouble is a heavy black oil, of the appearance of tar, consisting of the wastage and refuse of oil from ships' tanks, much of which has to be disposed of somehow and is got rid of by the simple process of emptying it into the sea. It has always been a popular thing to pitch waste of all kinds—old kettles, dead cats, sewage—into any water handy. Legislation has

to some extent stopped the pollution of rivers. The business now to be taken in hand is to prevent the defilement of the sea.

After a brief investigation of the subject in the opening months of 1921, the Society communicated with the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries. The Ministry, already awakened to the probable losses to the fishing business, seemed doubtful whether that probability was sufficiently instant to warrant action. A little later, however, a Board of Trade Committee, representing harbour authorities, ship-owners, and oil companies, was appointed to consider what, if any, steps should be taken by the Legislature.

The Society at once set about gathering evidence in regard to birds. It came in from north, south, east and west, presenting a startling consensus of testimony as to the extent and character of the peril. It was furnished by residents and visitors on the coast, naturalists, fishermen, officers of the coastguard, and others. The letters received afford matter enough to fill several numbers of this journal. A selection from them was sent to the Board of Trade.

Newspapers, especially the *Times*, have also taken up the subject and published further statements and protests. Questions in the House followed; and after the official Committee had concluded its inquiry a Bill framed by the Board of Trade, was introduced by Lord Somerleyton into the House of Lords on May 17th.

There is no question as to (1) the serious nature of the evil, and (2) the need for a remedy.

Oil-fuel has come to stay. There can be little or no doubt about that. It is constantly and increasingly in use by vessels of every class, from the ships of the Navy and the giant liners down to the fishing-boat. One of the first essentials of the Fleet, said Commander Eyres Monsell in the House of Commons, is that of oil-tanks all over the world where our ships can replenish. The coal-strike gave an impetus to a revolution already in the making. There is, then, nothing to hope from a change back to other fuel.

What remedies are suggested?

In reply to a question asked (on behalf of the R.S.P.B.) by Captain Wedgwood Benn on May 8th, Mr. Amery, representing the Admiralty, referred to the Naval Regulations (17th February, 1922), which give various orders as to dealing with leakage and overflow of oil in H.M. ships, and direct that oily ballast shall be discharged only whilst oilers are *en route* between ports, and that special care shall be taken to ensure that oil and oily water is not discharged in areas where it might do damage to fisheries.

The Board of Trade Oil in Navigable Waters Bill provides penalties for the discharge of oil within the three-miles territorial limit, and lays down various rules as to transfer of oil, etc., the word "oil" to mean any liquid contained in spaces used for the carriage of oil, and to include spirit produced from oil and oil mixed with water.

Both these sets of regulations, however excellent in themselves, are (unavoidably) impotent to dispose of the characteristic feature of the whole trouble.

Oil, even heavy oil waste, floats upon water; it accumulates; and it drifts, even for hundreds of miles, with wind and tide. Discharged even at the outside limit of territorial waters, there is no safeguard against its subsequent appearance in harbour or dock, on sands and shingle. And if this safeguard were possible, there would still remain steadily growing accumulations of patches and masses of the oily filth on ocean highways and trade routes. To shuffle the nuisance

off our own doorstep is but a partial settlement of the problem. This point was brought out by Lord Bearsted in his letter to the *Times* (June 1st, 1922). "There is," he writes, "nothing to prevent oil discharged into the sea off Calais being taken by the tide to Folkestone and Dover, and as in tidal harbours ships go out at the top of the tide, their discharge will be caught on the ebb and inevitably travel to the British coast." Lord Somerleyton has since explained that the object of the Bill is not to drive ships to discharge their oil outside the three-miles limit, but to penalise them if they discharge it within the limit, and that the intention is to provide barges or other receptacles into which to pump it. But evidently he regards the Bill as only a first step quickly taken to mitigate the anxiety of our ports and watering-places.

Moreover, the trouble is not confined to British coasts. The *Nederlandsche Vereeniging tot Bescherming van Vogels* has approached the Dutch Government begging for measures to stop the pollution of the sea, and has asked what regulations are in force in England. Italy and other seaboard countries of Europe find themselves face to face with the problem. On the western side of the Atlantic the situation is regarded as serious, and the Zoological Society of New York states on its protest that the oil is setting up a fatal skin disease among birds.

The obvious conclusion is that not only is national action necessary to prevent discharge into territorial waters, but that international agreement must be come to for preventing the formation of floating accretions of oil on the high seas. The nations cannot, so to speak, sweep the oil into the middle of the ocean and leave it there. They cannot destroy it by fire, internally or afloat, to the peril of the ship itself or of shipping. Lord Bearsted thinks that treatment in ports and harbours presents no difficulty. Clearly, science must come to the aid of legislation. Science found a method of dealing with sewage and making it useful in place of allowing it

to poison streams and breed disease. Science never fails when destruction of life is aimed at. Science is not likely to prove incompetent to deal with a new need and a simpler destruction; though a world-wide campaign to save our sea-birds may lie before us.

A few extracts are appended from the Society's correspondence and from newspapers.

#### SEA BIRDS AND OIL

##### FROM KENT :

"I have lately been walking along the shores from Rye and Dungeness, and it is pitiful to see the scores of birds which, with feathers clogged and matted by this abominable refuse, are quite unable to use their wings, and perish in miserable fashion. These wretched creatures struggle to land and sit on the beach vainly attempting to clean their plumage, and for miles you may see Guillemots, Puffins, Razor-bills, Gulls, and Scoters in this hopeless plight, while their dead and blackened bodies are only too clear evidence of their fate.

"Is it not possible to make it compulsory for steamers which are cleaned and overhauled in port to discharge this refuse also before leaving, not, of course, into the harbour waters, but into tanks from which it can be removed and burnt? Unless some regulation is made which shall stop this discharge of oil-waste along the coast, it is certain that such of these sea-going birds as survive will desert the Channel for less deadly waters. It is impossible until one has seen the horrible mortality among them owing to this cause, to form any idea of how extensive it is.

"We are supposed to be a humane people who hate limed twigs and torturing traps, and it is a disgrace that we should suffer our birds to perish by this lingering death."—Mr. E. F. Benson, in the *Times* (May 23rd, 1922).

Mr. Benson's evidence is fully substantiated by the Watchers and the members of the Watchers Committee of the R.S.P.B.

"Here at Deal, Guillemots and Razorbills have died by the hundred. They come on to the beach perhaps to try and clean the black grease off their feathers. I have found them so weak that they could not move away, and literally covered with the stuff."—"T. G. W.," Deal (January 1st, 1922).

##### FROM SUSSEX :

"Can nothing be done to stop the reckless emptying of the refuse of steamers' oil tanks into the sea round our coast? At the present time it is destroying thousands of our sea-birds, especially diving birds and sea-ducks. My wife and I have just had the enjoyment of pleasant weather at the seaside spoilt by the sight of wretched Guillemots coming ashore at St. Leonards. One of them, almost imploring man's help, had made its way into a crowd of sightseers, and was trying in vain, by combing its feathers with its beak and flapping its wings, to rid itself of the sticky horror. But nothing seems to save these birds. Their down, which keeps the body dry, is matted with the greasy stuff. Water finds its way to the skin and they slowly die of cold, unless boys stone them or dogs kill them and so put them out of their misery."—"F. D. D.," in the *Spectator* (May 20th, 1922).

"Almost daily, Guillemots, Razorbills, and occasionally Scoter Ducks, are to be seen on the beach with their breast feathers matted together with thick, dirty, oily matter. These birds are brought to a state of starvation, as they are unable to feed."—"A. N. S.," Eastbourne (April 3rd, 1922).

##### FROM HAMPSHIRE :

"Where the coast is tamer and shipping comes close to land many hundreds of sea-birds are being slaughtered, and yet more will be. They are being killed, as the fish are being killed, from oil and oil waste. A powerful bird will die of a little oil on his feathers; and the modern ship, without regard to any decency, spews out in volume the filthiest oil till it covers the harbour. One of the worst places is Southampton Water; but the nuisance is slowly becoming general wherever steamships assemble. The oil both poisons and clogs. It fouls the sea and the beach by the edge of the sea, to the disgust of seaside dwellers and the death of seaside birds. Some regulation has become necessary."—"B. T.," in the *Observer* (June 5th, 1921).

##### FROM CORNWALL :

"I have constantly during the past winter found birds on this North Cornish coast saturated with oil, and it has been pitiable to see them on the beach in their helpless state."—"A. W.," Bude (March 17th, 1922).

"I have caught many birds in summer with feathers a mass of oil. Recent issues of the

*Western Morning News* drew attention to the destruction of oyster sprat caused by oil; and at Cape Cornwall I saw, some months ago, the shingle so covered with oil that it was dangerous to walk on. The oil is heavy fuel oil, probably the scouring of the tanks before taking in fresh fuel."—(St. Keverne, March 18th, 1922).

#### FROM LANCASHIRE :

"In one week recently the coast at Grange-over-Sands was strewn with dead and dying birds, and feathers on breast and abdomen were coated with a viscous substance more like creosote or tar than oil. Over a stretch of about 100 yards I counted nine Scoters and one Guillemot. A local fisherman says he has counted at least 30 Scoters."—(Grange-over-Sands, April, 1921.)

"The oil nuisance is becoming a feature of the Lancashire coast. I take a typical case sent by an Ansdell (Lytham) correspondent, who, walking along the shore at high tide of March 12th, came across quite twenty Wild Duck covered with oil. They were able to swim, but could not fly, and later a number were found dead on the sands."—*Liverpool Daily Dispatch* (March 15th, 1921).

#### FROM NORFOLK :

"The nuisance would seem to be on the increase as oil-driven vessels multiply. Oil is dropped, and waste is poured out, until patches of it float about in the ocean routes. Its effects are cumulative. It looks as if our sea-birds must decrease, and if the evil increases, species may be wiped out."—A. H. Patterson, Great Yarmouth (January 28th, 1921).

#### FROM YORKSHIRE :

"The trouble dates locally from the conclusion of the war, when fishing boats were very generally fitted with petrol motors. Large quantities of the oil are allowed to escape into the sea, and at times the inshore waters are covered with it. This is worst in the autumn, when the herring boats are congregated here in large numbers. The birds I have seen here are Herring Gulls, Black-headed Gulls, Razor-bills, and Guillemots, the two latter species naturally suffering more than the Gulls. But many Black-headed Gulls have been found so saturated with oil as to be incapable of flight. . . . At Whitby I am told the same thing is taking place, the birds noticed there in difficulties being Common Gull, many Guillemots and Razorbills, and odd specimens of Gannet,

Golden-eye Duck, and Redthroated Diver. I also hear similar accounts of oiled birds dead and dying at Bridlington, and at various places on the Norfolk coast—Cley, Friskney and Yarmouth."—W. J. Clarke, F.Z.S., Scarborough (March 13th, 1921).

#### FROM DORSET :

"I have just returned from spending a few days in Dorsetshire, during which I have visited most of the little bays and accessible parts of the foreshore from Studland and Swanage to Lyme Regis. At frequent intervals the golden sands are littered with round, black spots from the size of a penny to that of a small saucer. These are drops of heavy black oil left behind by the tide. I heard several complaints from ladies whose white shoes and dresses had been ruined by this filth. Later on, when the bathing season sets in, and when children begin to play on the beach, these complaints will multiply, as many of the pleasantest nooks have acquired some of the characteristics of the floor of a motor garage.

"I never went down to a stretch of beach without finding dead sea-birds, their feathers soaked in the thick oil. On a single afternoon, along a few hundred yards of sand, I saw no fewer than five birds struggling in from the sea. There were two Puffins, one Gull, and two Guillemots. They came in, partly rolled over by the waves, in the shallow water, sometimes rising and trying to flap their wings, making little ineffective dashes and then collapsing again. When they reached the sand, they made desperate efforts to clean themselves, but the tail feathers and the flight feathers were so clogged that their sure fate was death by starvation or by drowning. **Nothing could have been more pitiful, and I do not doubt but that similar tragedies are taking place daily and nightly in very large numbers.** . . .

Apart from actual destruction of the birds by the oil, and from their deserting localities which they find unpleasant, it may be surmised that their inshore fishing is less productive.

"It is admitted that pelagic fish would desert waters where there was contamination. It is probable, moreover, that the oil-film dissolved out of the heavier oil would form a scum poisonous to the minute crustacea which abound in surface water and form the chief food of young fishes. The effect of the pollution will be heavy, not only on sea-birds, but on the inshore fisheries generally."—*Times* (May 17th, 1922).

## THE BOARD OF TRADE BILL

The Second Reading of the Bill on June 14th was supported by a consensus of opinion as to the necessity for action. The Marquess of Londonderry said that the present state of affairs caused much damage to harbours, docks and shipping, and seaside resorts, to say nothing of fish life and bird life. The Bill embodied an agreement come to by the Board of Trade, the Ministry of Transport, the Oil Companies, the Chamber of Shipping, and the Dock and Harbour Association. Lord Montagu of Beaulieu said the heavy oil had spoilt the fishing ground of the Solent, done harm to the yachting interest, and he had seen forty swans killed by it. Lord Southborough and Lord Mayo alluded to the plight of holiday-makers and bathers on the coast, as well as to the destruction of birds and fishes. Lord Joicey said this was a first

attempt to deal with a pressing matter; international arrangement would be needed to get rid of the evil.

Lord Somerleyton said this oil nuisance at seaside resorts was greater than was known, because they were the last people to mention it to the public. If the Bill were passed it would be a good measure for the seaside resorts on the South and West of England, from which he had had many letters asking that the measure should be passed. With regard to birds, they had had a letter from the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, which confirmed what had been said in the earlier stages of the Bill as to hundreds of birds covered with oil coming ashore on the South of England. Great Britain was in a position to show an example to other countries, which he believed would follow that example, and the Government hoped eventually to reach some final international settlement.

## Economic Ornithology

### THE BARN OWL

IN recent numbers of the *Journal* of the Ministry of Agriculture, Dr. W. E. Collinge has summarised his investigations in regard to the food of the Barn Owl and the Little Owl. Comparatively few persons remain to be convinced of the great utility of the former, although it is still "potted" by the unenlightened farmer and its corpse still appears on the gibbet of the unenlightened keeper. Dr. Collinge's facts should carry conviction (either in their own minds or in a Court of law) to these few.

"An analysis of the stomach contents shows that the food consists entirely of animal matter. Of the total bulk consumed 68.5 per cent. is composed of mice and voles, 9.5 per cent. of small birds (House-Sparrows, Blackbirds, and Starlings), 7.5 per cent. of injurious insects, 9 per cent. of shrew mice, 4.5 of miscellaneous small birds, and 1 per cent. of neutral insects. The enormous percentage of mice and voles destroyed at once draws attention to the benefit that this bird confers on the farmer, and even if there is any truth in the charges which have been brought against it in recent years of occasionally taking young game birds, the percentage of any such food is infinitesimal when compared with the remainder. It has frequently been pointed out that when the Barn Owl is abroad seeking

its food, all young game-birds are safe beneath their mothers' wings.

"In some districts farm vermin have increased almost to the dimensions of a plague. The pecuniary loss to the farmer and to the nation generally can only be reckoned in millions of pounds sterling. Surely it is not too much to ask that the numerous agricultural societies and farmers' clubs should interest themselves in a matter so intimately related to their calling. Much also might be done in our rural schools to educate the rising generation on such matters."

[Included in the Bird and Tree Scheme of the R.S.P.B., which teaches children to observe for themselves the habits of wild birds, are annual prizes for essays on any species of Owl, instituted in memory of the late Captain Tailby.]

"In the interests of farmers and the community in general it is certainly high time that a species of wild bird of such great utility as the Barn Owl should be most strictly preserved. In spite of statements to the contrary both the birds and their eggs are destroyed and this will continue until much more severe penalties are exacted."

### THE LITTLE OWL

In dealing with the Little Owl, Dr. Collinge is on more debated ground, the species being an alien, introduced into England some thirty

years ago, and now fast extending and increasing all over the country.

Dr. Collinge has examined the contents of 194 birds and 16 nestlings, as well as 267 pellets or "castings." His investigations have extended over three years, and his birds came from nineteen counties, taken during every month of the year except September. He concludes that the amount of game taken is inconsiderable and has been greatly exaggerated and that the main food consists of insects, injurious and neutral, voles and mice. The month of June only gave traces of game birds, while the most wild birds (including Starlings, Blackbirds, Missel Thrushes, young Wood Pigeons, and House-Sparrows) were seemingly taken in March and January. Of the mammals killed the commonest was the long-tailed field mouse. Respecting the value of the Little Owl to farmers, Dr. Collinge is not in any doubt. He states that after sixteen years' experience he knows of no other bird except the Lapwing or Peewit, which destroys so large a percentage of click beetles and wireworms.

Upon this report "Cheviot" comments in the *Field* (May 15th, 1922) :—

This is all very well, and if I were a working farmer with no other interest in the countryside except the welfare of my crops, no doubt I should accept Dr. Collinge's report as it stands and encourage the presence of Little Owls in the trees about my farm. But there are other people besides farmers who have their views as regards the Little Owl, and mine, at all events, have not been changed by Dr. Collinge's report. I have no real grievance against him as regards young pheasants and partridges, though most people who have watched pheasants know that he can be a sinner on the rearing field, and I had an instance myself last year of young chickens carried off one by one from the coop until the farmer lay in wait with a gun and shot the pair of Little Owls which were taking them. My grievance against the Little Owl is not that of a game preserver, but of a naturalist. In the first place he is not a native, but a foreigner, and I object to our English fauna being, so to speak, adulterated by foreign species. It would give me no pleasure to see an American Robin in Sussex, and I dislike the American grey squirrels, which have spread from the London parks into our English woods, for the same reason as I dislike the Little Owl. But, in the second place, too, I dislike the Little Owl for the reason that he kills English singing birds. A Dutchman who kills Blackbirds and Missel Thrushes is a detestable presence in the countryside, and Blackbirds and Thrushes are not the only singing birds on his list. So that, so far as I am concerned, the situation is "as you were." So long as I hear him yelping and mewling from the ivy, and find the remains of Blackbirds and Hedge-Sparrows along the hedges where he hawks, so long will he remain a fit subject for discussion in columns devoted to shooting.

On the other hand, "G. B." writes to the Editor of BIRD NOTES AND NEWS from Hampshire:—

"Now that Dr. W. E. Collinge has definitely come to the conclusion that the Little Owl is not the danger to game that some people tried to make him out to be, perhaps a few lines from one who has studied this bird both in the Near East and at home may be of interest to your readers. The writer has had continual opportunities of observing this bird both in the wild state and in confinement.

"This first point is as regards his destruction of young Pheasants and Partridges. The Little Owl does undoubtedly, but in isolated cases, take young birds of these species, as against that so do other birds (even Owls) against whom this same hue and cry is not raised. Some birds start to hunt game in the same way that some—and only some—tigers become man-eaters.

"An unfair warfare has been brought against the Little Owl, presumably by landowners who are influenced by the reports of their gamekeepers. In my opinion all keepers should be made to render their masters a detailed account of their 'larder,' and then, presuming the owner has any interest in natural history and the protection of birds, he can check destruction of harmless birds, which in most cases also benefit the farmers. The point is this, a great many keepers are not naturalists, and in addition are only too glad to make an excuse, however frail, as to the loss of birds and cloak their own laziness or incompetence. The suggestion that the Little Owl will kill fully-grown Pheasants and Partridges is absurd, both from their diminutive size and the great disparity in pace of flight. And now as regards their food; from my observation, 1, in the wild state; 2, in captivity.

"1. In the wild state their staple diet is beetles, cockroaches, grubs, frogs and small birds such as Greenfinches and, the largest, say, Blackbirds.

"2. In captivity the Little Owl is easily tamed and makes a charming pet. The writer obtained a pair of them only a few weeks old on Salisbury Plain in 1921. They were placed in a store tenant for the first night and the old birds quickly located their offspring and were hanging about all night trying to get them away. They became tame almost at once, and spent their time sitting on the back of a wooden chair. When they learned to fly they used to wander about, but never made any attempt to go far

away. When surprised or about to be fed they made a strange hissing noise not unlike that of a cat. Their food consisted mainly of bread and milk, and hard boiled eggs, young Greenfinches and Sparrows taken from the nest, and young rabbits, which they consumed *in toto*. The rabbits' fur seemed beneficial to them to help to form their pelts. When rabbit fur was unobtainable meat wrapped in cotton wool made a perfectly good substitute and helped them to form pelts, but undoubtedly they preferred their diet of eggs and bread and milk. They became so tame that they could be carried about on the finger—Hawk fashion—anywhere, both in and out of doors.

"It is hardly likely that so fine a naturalist as the late Lord Lilford (who introduced the Little Owl into Kent in 1872) would have done so had he any anxiety as to its damage to game to a large extent."

#### PROTECTION OF THE PLOVER

In the House of Commons, on May 8th, Colonel Sir Charles Yate asked the Minister of Agriculture whether his attention had been called to the question of the great diminution in the numbers of plovers in the country owing to the sale of the birds and their eggs during the breeding season; and whether, considering the usefulness of these birds, he would introduce legislation limiting the time when the birds and their eggs might be exposed for sale.

Mr. Shortt (Home Secretary) said his attention had not been drawn to the alleged decrease, but the Government was fully alive to the usefulness of the Lapwing to agriculture, and it was proposed to insert provisions for the protection of the bird and its eggs in the draft Wild Birds Protection Bill now under consideration.

In answer to a further question from Sir Charles Yate (May 18th) as to when the Bill would be introduced, Mr. Shortt said he hoped it might be possible to introduce it soon after Whitsuntide, but he could at present make no promise.

In the *Times* (May 10th), Mr. H. D. Astley writes:—

The green plover—the lapwing—one of the most beautiful and intensely useful birds, is becoming dangerously less in numbers. I have received testimony of this fact from many parts of England. The birds themselves are killed in the winter, and their eggs (often both clutches) are stolen in the spring. How can any species withstand so continuous an onslaught for ever?

Letters have also appeared in the *Field* from Mr. J. R. B. Masefield, "Cheviot," Dr. Hammond Smith, and other correspondents. The last-named says (May 8th):—

We have an annual crusade carried on against the plover merely for the sake of providing a luxury for those who are probably entirely ignorant of the value of the bird that they are helping to exterminate. Further, the plover is probably the only bird that is attacked both by being killed in the breeding season and at the same time by the wholesale destruction of its eggs. It is to be hoped that all who take any interest in the preservation of this, one of our most useful and beautiful wild birds, will do all they can to promote measures for its protection. If this is not done, there is every probability that the peewit will soon become as scarce as the bitter or others of our once common birds. On May 2nd in a large store I saw both birds and eggs being offered for sale.

"Cheviot" comments (May 15th):—

But the worst of the business is that so many people seem never to have heard of the bird as being either beautiful or useful, but think of it solely from the point of view of the stomach. There was an article in the *Times* of Saturday last in which the writer, a lady, expressed vague longings for the time, which she appeared to think was unfortunately never likely to arrive, when plovers' eggs should "flood the market." She would seem never to have considered what would be the result of this desirable inundation, in the destruction of so many potential destroyers of grubs and slugs. . . . Has not the time come when these Acts, which were designed originally to preserve the lives of beautiful and useful birds, should be strengthened and made effective by the logical process of forbidding the destruction of the egg which holds the potential bird? If, in addition, it were made illegal to kill the bird outside the limits of the ordinary game shooting season, I am sure that shooting men who are also naturalists would welcome the prohibition.

#### BIRD PROTECTION IN S. AFRICA

The new Wild Birds Protection Society of South Africa, which will have the best wishes of every reader of BIRD NOTES AND NEWS, is offering a number of prizes for essays by school children in the Union of South Africa, the subject being "Why I should not kill Wild Birds or destroy their Eggs." Last year a School Teachers' Competition was promoted, and the first prize essay was published in the *Natal Witness* (December 1921). It dealt with both the economic and the æsthetic value of birds, and urged that teachers should take the lead in training children to observe and love birds, that farmers should encourage them by planting trees and shrubs for their nesting and food, and that ladies should boycott the trade in wild birds' plumage.

# The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds

## COUNCIL MEETING

THE quarterly meeting of the Council was held at the Guildhall, Westminster, S.W., on May 5th, 1922, Sir Montagu Sharpe, K.C., presiding.

The Report of the Hon. Secretary referred with very great regret to the death, on April 21st, of Captain Suckling, R.N., of Highwood, Romsey, an old friend and Vice-President of the Society, who co-operated most sympathetically in the work, known to all humanitarians, carried on by Mrs. Suckling, Hon. Secretary for the Society in the New Forest. Captain Suckling held the affection and esteem of all who knew him. It was unanimously agreed that a letter expressing the deep sympathy of the Council be sent to Mrs. Suckling.

The Report proceeded, after reference to the Annual Meeting and Annual Report of the Society, to give particulars of the new Bird Protection Orders issued for Devonshire, East Suffolk, Norwich (C.B.), Argyll, Dumfries, Lanark, Nairn, Orkney, Renfrew and Stirling. A large proportion of these are concerned with the better protection of the Lapwing. Nairn protects Redpoll and Siskin and Renfrew the Linnet and Robin, all the year. In Devon numerous alterations and additions have been made to the several schedules, and Sunday protection is given. A long "black list" is an unfortunate feature of the Order. In East Suffolk the principal feature consists in the area Orders, by which all taking or killing of birds and all taking of eggs is prohibited on the coast between the sea and the River Ore, from Aldeburgh to Orford Haven. In this district notice-boards for the purpose of safeguarding the birds were put up by the Society last year, by permission of the Air Ministry, and the new Order is the result of an application from the Society and its Local Hon. Sec., Mrs. Edward Clodd.

Thirty lectures, illustrated by the Society's slides, had been given.

A well-known supporter of the Society had written expressing his desire for the extension of the Bird and Tree Scheme in Elementary Schools, and offering very generous assistance. He expressed a strong opinion that the best way to counteract the destruction of bird life, likely to be increased by the cutting up of large estates, is to inculcate in the children of the people, while young and impressionable, a

love for and admiration of wild bird life; he believes the Bird and Tree Competition can be so developed as to accomplish this to a great extent, thereby powerfully contributing to the preservation of the birds of Great Britain. It was resolved that the best thanks of the Council be expressed to the writer, who does not wish his name to appear, and that everything possible be done to extend the work on the lines he would most approve.

The Finance and General Purposes Committee presented the Financial Statement for the quarter, and the Accounts for payment. A legacy of £20 had been received under the will of the late Miss J. A. O'Connor. The Society had to regret the death of Miss Emily Spender, Hon. Local Secretary for Bath, an enthusiastic lover of birds and keen supporter of the work. Miss Spender joined the Society in 1908 and had been a Fellow since 1914. Miss Ida Norman had consented to carry on the work.

Mrs. F. E. Baines had been compelled, through leaving London, to relinquish the Secretaryship for Hampstead, which she had held since 1913. Miss A. M. Christian would, it was hoped, undertake it.

Mr. Everard Gilbert-Cooper, who has already done much to advance the aims of the Society by lectures and in other ways, was elected Hon. Secretary for the Hampton district of Middlesex.

Mr. W. Wailes Strang revives the Hon. Secretaryship for Keswick, which has been in abeyance for some time.

The following Fellows and Members were elected:—

**FELLOWS:** Miss Ethel Allport, Mrs. Brighen Anderson, E. F. Benson, Major Godfrey Burrell, Miss Clare J. Capron, Henry Coates, F.S.A., Scot., George A. Cove, Arthur E. Gill, J. R. Grocott, Sir Arthur H. J. Lees, Bart., Miss Viola Meeking, Col. R. Meinertzhagen, R. T. Morris, Sir Herbert Nield, K.C., M.P., Rev. A. P. Pott, Mrs. Pullar, Lt.-Col. Roberts, Lady Rolleston, David M. Shorrocks, Mrs. Stirling Stent, Major M. Teichman-Derville, O.B.E., F.R.G.S., Sir Hamo Thornycroft, R.A., Lady Walker, Frederick J. Waydelin, Henry H. Whitehead, J.P.

**LIFE FELLOW:** W. J. F. Williamson, C.M.G.

**MEMBERS:** Mrs. Morland Agnew, Edgar Allwright, H. Barber, Mrs. Owen Barnard, Mrs. Bedale, W. P. Bellamy, Miss Beveridge, Mrs. Blanford, Mrs. J. A. Bolton, John Buchan, Miss E. J. Bullock, Mrs. Burton, Allan Gordon Cameron, Keith Cameron, Miss Carter, Miss L. Cattley, Miss Beatrice Chase, Major W. B. Coney, W. Corlett, Miss Mabel Cotterell, O.B.E., Mrs. Courtney, F. O. Craine, Miss M. E. Darby, Miss

Gladys Darvell, Mrs. Deakin, Edwin H. Dowler, Miss Dunlop, S. Ellis, Charles Elwell, Ralph W. Flower, Mrs. R. Flower, Miss Dorothea Flower, Reginald H. Fox, Dr. Francis Gayner, Leonard Gill, Mrs. G. W. Hilyard, C. E. Hodgkin, James F. Hosking, G. H. Iggo, Mrs. Jebb, Mrs. Jenkinson, Miss E. Jones, Samuel Gilbert Jones, Mrs. T. P. H. Jose, Major Kane, Mrs. L. M. Lamont, Mrs. C. M. Lloyd, Miss N. F. Loch, Miss Lynn, Miss M. C. Mappin, Miss M. M. M'Creagh, Michael Palaret, Mrs. M. Palaret, Miss Philipson-Stow, Miss D. E. Pithie, F. G. Pound, F. H. Pyman, H. Quayle, William Raw, Mrs. B. Reynolds, Miss F. M. Richardson, Harry Roberts, Mrs. H. M. Rogers, Dr. J. H. Salter, Miss Searight, Mrs. Soames, Miss Ethel Story, P. Leighton Stowell, W. Stowell, Mrs. W. Stowell, P. M. Stratton, Mrs. P. M. Stratton, Miss J. Strickland, Miss I. M. Teeke, Mrs. Thornycroft, A. W. Turner, Miss N. Wadling, William N. Walker, W. Weed, Rev. Parry J. Woodcock, F. Workman, Mrs. F. Workman, A. Wright, Hugh Wyatt, Lt.-Col. C. H. Young.

LIFE MEMBERS: Capt. Edwin Cohen, Mrs. John H. Hague, Mrs. W. H. Myers, Miss P. Pirie, Mrs. Jessie G. Sewell, Miss Edith L. Willis.

FOR AFFILIATION: The Lambeth Field Club.

The Report of three meetings of the Publicity Committee was presented.

Lady Glenconner was elected a Vice-President of the Society. Mr. Leonard Hawksley was elected an Hon. Fellow.

The coming visit to England of Mr. T. Gilbert Pearson, President of the National Association of Audubon Societies of the U.S.A., was announced, and arrangements for welcoming him considered.

The question of the destruction of birds by fuel oil, the working of the Plumage Act, and other matters, were discussed at length.

### WILD BIRDS' EGGS

Following upon the correspondence published in the *Times* (and reprinted in the Annual Report of the R.S.P.), between Lord Buxton and the B.O.U., and Lord Buxton and the Oological Dinner Committee respectively, and the letter from the B.O.U. to the same journal, the following leading article appeared in the *Times* (April 13th, 1922):—

“Is the taking of wild birds' eggs in Great Britain really necessary to science? Lord Buxton, at the annual meeting of the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, commented adversely on an exhibition of clutches of eggs at a recent ‘oological’ dinner, as being a menace to the due enforcement of the laws protecting wild birds. The President and Honorary Secretary of the British Ornithologists' Union, in a letter disclaimed any official connexion with the oologists, protested their

own support of bird protection, and, in particular, stated their ambition to limit the collecting of eggs to ‘the taking of such as are required in the interests of science.’ Science is a big word with which to defend the robbing of nests in Great Britain. Many ornithologists incline to the view that collections of eggs minister more to the ambitions of dilettanti than to the advancement of zoology. In any event, there are already complete collections in many museums of this country easily available to the zealous student. Nor, with the exception of two or three sub-species of dubious validity, are there any rare birds peculiar to this country not common in other parts of Europe. Territorial ornithology, in the sense of lists and collections of birds or of eggs indigenous to Great Britain or to the separate counties of this country, is responsible for much senseless destruction of life, and adds little to real knowledge. Biological and political regions are seldom equivalent. We prefer the songs of the birds, and trust that Lord Buxton will not be too readily satisfied with the reply to his protest.”

Letters have also appeared from Professor Kennedy Orton, Mrs. Edward Clodd, Mr. F. J. Waydelin, and others. The first-named writes:—

“For the past three days I have been watching a stony waste on the Downs of Sussex, where a pair or so of stone curlews still attempt to breed. Every day this area has been most systematically searched by ‘collectors’ or their agents for eggs of this bird. In a neighbouring town one may see a case with a pair of the parent birds and their two young stuffed—all obtained in recent years on this small breeding site. How can the public be made to realise that such action means extinction?”

Mrs. Clodd tells of similar persecution of the Stone Curlew in Suffolk, and comments:—

“The legal prohibition against ‘taking’ or ‘destroying,’ or ‘inciting any other person to take or destroy,’ is not enough. Detection of the actual taking is too difficult, for this part of the mischief is often wrought by labourers or fishermen in the course of their calling, who, as one of them on the River Alde said to me, ‘know what to do with a rare bird.’ Only in making possession illegal can there be effective protection.”

Mr. Waydelin, referring to the official disclaimer of the B.O.U. and their avowed principles, says:—

"At a recent meeting of the British Ornithologists Club there were exhibited no fewer than 250 clutches of Tree Pipit's eggs. In addition to these, a member also exhibited a series of 48 clutches of Tree Pipit's eggs from his collection of about 500 self-taken sets. At the same meeting there was exhibited a clutch of six eggs of the Grey-headed Wagtail, taken in Kent—the first record of this bird breeding in the British Isles. Not only were the eggs taken, but both the parent birds were killed. So far, the study of the variation of eggs has not led to any noticeable advancement of knowledge, nor does the investigation call for the wholesale taking of complete clutches of eggs."

On this the *Dundee Advertiser* comments:—

"The truth, long known to ornithologists, is that the most poisonous enemies of bird life belong to professing members of their own class

—the collectors. Whether the object of collection be skins or eggs, the effect is equally malign, for the interest of the collector concentrates with the true collector's mania on the rarer birds. If a new bird is showing a disposition to join the British avi-fauna, he is instantly after it and its nest, making sure that the settlement shall not take place. If an old inhabitant is becoming scarce, he concentrates upon it, and would joyfully carry away its eggs if he knew that in doing so he was ensuring its extermination. Most baneful of this baneful breed are the collectors who collect an unlimited number of sets of the eggs of particular birds, with the profession that they are students studying the variations of markings. . . . The damage done by the pretentious and often pretended scientific collector is such that proposals for legislation forbidding the holding of all private collections of British birds and their eggs are well entitled to consideration."

## Visit of Mr. Gilbert Pearson

MR. T. GILBERT PEARSON, President of the National Association of Audubon Societies of America, paid his first visit to England in May and June of the present year, and on June 9th was the guest of the Council of the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds at a reception held (by kind permission) at the Zoological Gardens, Regent's Park. The previous days he had spent in Holland, visiting the Island of Texel, and in the early part of his stay in England had paid flying visits to the Norfolk Broads, Selborne, and other centres of bird life, seeing and hearing Robin and Cuckoo for the first time at Richmond Park, hearing Bittern and Snipe in East Anglia, coming across the stronghold of the Stone Curlew in Norfolk, and making acquaintance with many typical species of the avi-fauna of woodland, broad, river and heath. Needless to say, his attention was drawn especially to the Nightingale, and he was particularly attracted by the Tree Pipit. Many of our birds he had, however, already seen in France.

A large number of Fellows and Members of the R.S.P.B. were invited to meet Mr. Pearson at the Gardens, though unavoidable short notice and the numerous engagements of the season prevented many from being present. The guest of the afternoon was received by Earl Buxton (Hon. Treasurer), Sir Montagu Sharpe, K.C. (Chairman of Council), and Mr.

F. E. Lemon (Hon. Secretary); other members of the Council to welcome Mr. Pearson being the Hon. Mrs. Henniker, Hon. Mrs. Drewitt and Dr. Drewitt, Mrs. F. E. Lemon, Miss Clifton, Miss Pollock, Mr. Meade-Waldo, Mr. Ernest Bell, Dr. Philip Gosse, Mr. J. Rudge Harding, Mr. J. R. B. Masefield, Mr. W. P. Pycraft, and Mr. Hugh F. Spender. Among those also present were the Duchess of Somerset, the Countess Buxton, Lady Sharpe, Lady Lockyer, Lady Rolleston, General Sir Charles Ryan, Colonel Meinertzhagen, Mrs. Creighton, Miss Leigh Browne, Mrs. Stafford Charles, Mrs. Edward Clodd, Mrs. Walter Greg, Mrs. Murray-Smith, Mrs. Reginald McKenna, Rev. A. Linzee Giles, Rev. H. N. Hutchinson, Mr. E. F. Benson, Dr. Chalmers Mitchell, Mr. H. M. Richards, Miss Canziani, Miss M. Best, Mr. D. Seth-Smith, Mr. F. W. Frohawk, Mr. Roland Green, and many others.

After tea in the new pavilion a meeting was held in the Lecture Hall, when a delightful address, as stimulating as it was informing, and as sympathetic as vigorous, was given by Mr. Pearson on "The Conservation of Bird Life in America." Connected from its early days with the work of the great American Society—the largest Bird Protection Society in the world—first as Secretary for Carolina and Representative on the Advisory Council, then as Secretary of the Association, as Acting

President during the long illness of President Dutcher, and as President since 1920, Mr. Pearson has devoted his life to the work and is one of the first of American ornithologists as well as of Bird Protectors. Prefacing his address by expressing his pleasure in coming, as it were, back to his own people, and in speaking for the first time in public in England at a meeting of the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, Mr. Pearson said it was tremendously nice to meet face to face those who had kept the fires so brightly burning in this country. His story of Audubon work and progress, especially in regard to the fight with the feather-trade (who claimed to employ 12,000 people), and to the attacks upon this bird and that as destructive to fisheries or crops, must have kept his hearers in mind of closely similar battles of the R.S.P.B., and was listened to with deep attention; his description of the progressive plumage victories and of the educational work among children, in particular, being enthusiastically applauded. The Audubon Association has a direct membership of about 5,000, besides some 150 affiliated branches with an average membership of about 500. The bird-study clubs of the States and Canada have enrolled 1,800,000 children. There

are in the States 72 National Reserves for wild life, and the Association maintains 80 others, which are guarded by Wardens. Most of the States also employ game wardens, the preservation of game being of course on a wholly different footing from that of the private preserves of England. Mr. Pearson alluded to the contrast in questions of animal protection between the southern and northern races, the United States having examples of both in its two neighbours, Mexico and Canada. In Mexico, when they heard he was interested in animals, they took him to a bull-fight. Little progress had been made as yet in South and Central America. England had also much to do in certain regions of South Africa. The wild bird's most dangerous enemy in the States was the vagrant cat, and eight States had legislation dealing with this animal.

The speaker was introduced by Lord Buxton, who alluded to the two pressing problems of egg-collecting and of the discharge of oil waste on the sea, as needing attention and help from American Bird Protectors; and at the close of his address Mr. Pearson was cordially thanked by Sir Montagu Sharpe, on behalf of the Society.

An exhibition of bird films followed.

## Notes

THE main object which brought Dr. Gilbert Pearson to Europe was to meet and consult his fellow-workers in different countries with a view to promoting international understanding and action in the cause of Bird Protection. A meeting to discuss the subject was held, on the eve of his departure from England, June 20th, at No. 36, Smith Square, Westminster, by invitation of Mrs. Reginald McKenna, when there were present: Earl Buxton (Hon. Treas., Royal Society for the Protection of Birds), Viscount Grey, Mrs. McKenna, Dr. Percy Lowe (Natural History Museum), Mr. W. Sclater (B.O.U.), Mr. F. E. Lemon (Hon. Sec., R.S.P.B.), Mr. H. J. Massingham, M. Delacour (France), and Heer A. Burdet and Heer Van Tierhoven (Holland). It was agreed that the formation of an International Committee or League was desirable, and Mr. Pearson was elected President, with those present as provisional Committee and Dr. Lowe as British correspondent. Mr. Pearson's visit, brief as it has been, has done much to promote the success of such a League, as few things can encourage national effort and lead to mutual comprehension of

national difficulties better than personal interchange of opinions and sympathies.

\* \* \*

Mr. Leonard Hawksley, who has been elected an Hon. Fellow of the R.S.P.B. (with which he has been associated for many years) is one of the best-known of workers for animals, since, as Hon. Director of the Rome Society for the Protection of Animals, he has for long stood their champion in a country not commonly regarded as—to speak mildly—the paradise of beasts or birds. With regard to birds, Mr. Hawksley writes: "The last Government introduced a Bill for the better protection of birds in Italy, under the form of a national Game Law, but this shared the fate of its twenty-four predecessors in not being passed before the Government was turned out of office. . . . We have put an entire stop to the blinding of birds and the sale of blinded birds in the city of Rome, but it is carried on very largely in Umbria and Lombardy." Some years ago it was hoped to make a special effort for the protection of birds round the birthplace of St. Francis of Assisi, but the diversion of a legacy

unfortunately prevented the carrying out of this purpose. Like most efforts not for the immediate advantage of man himself, the Rome Society suffers through lack of funds.

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While press of other matter compels postponement of a second article in BIRD NOTES AND NEWS on "Bird Sanctuaries," it is interesting to hear that similar sanctuaries to those for the London parks are under consideration by the Manchester and Liverpool authorities. In Liverpool an equally desirable step has been taken of a kind to which the L.O.C. strenuously objects—the posting of conspicuous bills to stop bird-nesting and general interference with the wild birds throughout the public pleasure-grounds. The L.O.C. desires to preserve birds by mean of an admirable regulation contained with nearly 50 others in a small-type notice on a notice-board. Liverpool boldly makes known this.

NOTICE.  
Under Bye-Law No. 29  
BIRDNESTING

is  
STRICTLY  
PROHIBITED.

All Animals, Fishes, Water-Fowl, Birds' Nests and Eggs are Completely Protected. No person may interfere or attempt to interfere with them in any way whatever.  
PENALTY £5.

Other Councils and Public Authorities, please copy.

\* \* \*

Another attractive project is the proposal to constitute a Bird Sanctuary at Coate Reservoir. This place, belonging to the Corporation, is a pleasure resort of Swindon folk, and being one of very few large pieces of water in North Wilts is likewise a favoured resort of waterfowl and other wild birds, some of which at least would, there is little doubt, remain as permanent residents and add greatly to the interest of the locality if the birds and their nests were protected. As Coate is the birth-place of Richard Jefferies and familiar to all his readers, it will be strange indeed if the Wiltshire people do not feel inspired by pride in his fame if by no other reason, to raise the small amount required for fencing, etc., for which they are asked by the Wilts Archæological Society, the N. Wilts Field Club, and the Mayor of Swindon.

\* \* \*

Two popular writers on nature have almost simultaneously been moved to tell of their joy in the beauty of that most charming bird, the

Grey Wagtail. In the *Times* Mr. G. A. B. Dewar acclaims it the most beautiful of English small birds, "seven inches of sparkling perfection," rivalled only by the Redstart. "W. W. W.," in the *Western Morning News*, giving first place to the Kingfisher, and second to the Redstart, places the Grey Wagtail third, even while admiring its melodious song as well as its form and colouring. The Kingfisher has only colour, gorgeous though that is. Where does that beechwood sprite, the Wood Wren, come in?

\* \* \*

It does not seem probable that the matter of the B.O.U. and egg-collecting will rest at the half-way house which it has reached. The Union may have, or may not have, up and down the country, a majority opposed to the extensive clutch-collecting brought to light; and may or may not, as a body, wish to see Rule 7 (as reiterated in the official letter to the *Times*) observed without reference to the undefined requirements of "the interests of science." The members themselves may also have their own reading of the connection between the B.O.U., the B.O.C., and the Oological Dinner Committee. The outer public, ignorant of all these *differentia* and relationships, will possibly experience qualms of uneasiness in regard to the decision of the B.O.C. not in future to publish in their *Bulletin* accounts of Oological section dinners. They would rather hear that offenders, well known to be members of the B.O.U., had been asked to retire. The great egg-collecting fraternity centred at Santa Barbara, it will be remembered, replied to criticism of their methods by deciding to "conduct a certain amount of their business behind closed doors."

\* \* \*

The feeling at the bottom of the whole collecting business is illustrated at the moment by the case of the Fulmar in Yorkshire this summer. The Fulmar Petrel has never before laid an egg in England, so far as is known, but during the last year or two birds have been seen on the Yorkshire coast, and in the spring of 1922 several pairs took up their residence on Bempton Oliffs—probably one of the worst places they could have chosen, as these cliffs are ransacked by the professional climbers for Gull and Guillemot eggs. Three eggs of the Fulmar (each pair produces but one) were found, taken, and quickly "snapped up" by collectors. Instead of wishing to increase the number of Yorkshire-breeding or English-

breeding species, the one anxiety was to boast possession of the solitary eggs which would have led to that result. The aim of naturalists must now be to secure legal protection for the eggs, in case the birds should return next year.

\* \* \*

Although wild birds are not, in the nature of things, sufferers to any extent through the exhibitions of Performing Animals against which so energetic a campaign has been carried on, bird-lovers will be relieved to see that the Report of the Select Committee (issued on May 31st, 1922) condemns "certain mechanical appliances" used in conjuring tricks with birds as demonstrably cruel. It may be hoped, therefore, that the Committee of Supervision, if appointed, will straightway prohibit their use. Canaries are the main victims. The proposed setting up of yet a third "advisory" committee is noteworthy. In this case, how-

ever, "two members of animal protection societies" are always to be upon it. There is no such provision as regards the Plumage Act Committee.

\* \* \*

Any excuse appears to serve with magistrates in cases where rare birds, protected by the law, are killed. The man with a gun has always "made a mistake," of course; he did not know what the bird was until he had killed it; it was too dark for him to see what he was shooting; he thought the Bittern was a Goose, and the Hoopoe a Jay, the Spoonbill a Heron; while a gallant sportsman nominally after Wood pigeons in the Isle of Wight\* had no time to distinguish what he fired at until he had killed—whatever it was! In this case it was a Peregrine Falcon. The Bench apparently admitted the validity of the mistake; they discharged the offender.

\* See "In the Courts."

## The Plumage Trade

*Bird-Lore* for March—April, 1922, contains this letter from an American lady to the President of the Audubon Association:—

"Several years ago I bought a hat and let my milliner trim it according to her own taste. She used a small Heron aigrette with other trimming. I knew nothing about them at the time, but since I learned the sad story of the aigrette the thought of that hat has been a painful one, and the word aigrette always brings to mind my own offence. I paid \$5 for that aigrette. Enclosed find the same amount. I hope it may save a Heron, and at the same time ease a conscience that has long been troubled."

The Secretary of the R.S.P.B. has received the following letter from an English lady:—

"I should like to join your Society, as I am very fond of birds, but I have a very fine osprey, which was given to me years ago and must be worth quite £10. I cannot give up wearing it, so will not send my subscription until I know this would not be objected to."

When even humane English ladies view the question with so little comprehension, it is not surprising that condemnation by the law is cynically met by the millinery trade with an ostentatious display of ospreys and paradise plumes, and by some of their customers with a continued parade of these ill-gotten adornments.

### IMPORTATION OF PLUMAGE

The names of the birds set out below have been added to the Schedule to the Importation of Plumage (Prohibition) Act, 1921, and their plumage can therefore be imported into the United Kingdom without special licence:—

The Common Jay, the Common Magpie, the Common Starling, the Java Sparrow, the West African Ring-Necked Parrakeet, the Chinese Bustard, the Green (or Japanese) Pheasant, the Copper Pheasant, and the Golden Pheasant.

The Advisory Committee appointed under the Act, in recommending the addition of the names of the three last-mentioned birds to the schedule, further recommended that the matter should be referred to them again for review after the expiration of twelve months. This will be done.

### A COMMERCIAL ROMANCE

(The following interesting sketch of an industrial pioneer is communicated to the Society by a correspondent in Los Angeles.)

Away back in 1887 there appeared upon the streets of Los Angeles, California, an English ex-collegian driving before him about four dozen ostriches. He was the son of wealthy parents and had conceived the idea that the sun-dried wastes of California and Arizona would be suitable for the African ostrich, and

that profit could be made by sale of their feathers. His name was Edwin Cawston; for two years he exhibited his ostriches in a so-called "Ostrich Farm" to the residents and sun-scorched rurals in the vicinity and to the grand army of tourists ever percolating through Southern California. But he observed his birds dying; he had purchased them from the Boers in Natal, driven them into the hold of a sailing ship and brought them over the rolling Atlantic, past Saint Helena, to the shore at Galveston, Texas. The loss of them meant the loss of twenty thousand dollars.

Therefore, he obtained a ranch at Norwalk, near the ocean some twenty miles away, and there for ten years tended his strange flock, trying to attract some visitors from Los Angeles to whom he might sell feathers. Neither the visitors nor the surrounding gentry purchased his plumes, so he had to send them to London, and sell them wholesale in the open market, the ostrich-feather market of the world.

At the beginning of the present century he moved nearer to Los Angeles, and with his increased ostrich population began to advertise

his feathers all over the United States. In five years he was a millionaire; he then transferred his interests to an incorporated company, and sailed for his native land. The British Government employed him in recruiting work, and his three sons entered the army; one of these fell at the Dardanelles. In 1920, while engaged in a game of tennis, he passed away, evidently owing to strain on the heart. He was an athlete in his youth and had won gold and silver cups at Charterhouse School for various athletic feats.

This is not the case of a poor boy rising to wealth and influence by his own unaided exertion, but of a rich man's son who endowed a continent with a useful industry—the manufacture of ostrich feathers, giving employment to thousands of women, and in the future to be one of the greatest commercial assets of California and Arizona. He was a man of strict integrity, respected by those who were in his employ for years, and by all the bankers and commercial powers with whom he came in contact. For ever will the name of Cawston be honoured in California.

## Books Received

IN "Songs of the Birds" (London: John Lane, The Bodley Head; 6s.) Professor Walter Garstang essays the task, which may well be regarded as an impossible one, of translating bird music into letters of the spoken alphabet set to music of ordinary notation. Whatever bird-lovers may individually decide as to the success of his efforts in musical bars, prose and poem, thus to convey the melody and *timbre* of Warbler, Wren or Finch, they can have but one opinion as to the interest and charm of the essay on "The Interpretation of Bird-Music," by which these are prefaced. "The number of our countrymen and countrywomen," as Dr. Garstang truly remarks, "who can pick out an individual song from the orchestra of Spring, and correctly identify it, is extraordinarily small." He might go further and say that the number who can identify any song, heard alone and clearly, is negligible, even among learned ornithologists and intelligent country children. Anything which can add to this number adds immeasurably to their pleasures in life and helps to an appreciation of bird language and of its value both aesthetically and scientifically. Bird-students are not likely to neglect Dr. Garstang's considered and suggestive contribution to a fascinating subject.

"Robin in Khaki: A Book of Birdeens," by Isa J. Postgate (London: The De la More Press; 3s. 6d.), consists of a series of pleasant little sketches of wild birds individually known to the writer, which will be appreciated by those who, disliking the cage, have and love their pets in home and garden. Not every dweller by the North Sea can boast of twelve species as visitors to sitting-room and bedroom, including a Goldcrest who came to drink from the ewer; while a Robin singing from the cruet-stand, or a Tit pecking on the top of a candle seem ordinary occurrences in Miss Postgate's home. Readers must not be deterred by the somewhat out-of-date title.

"Sea and Shore Birds, and How to Identify Them," by R. H. W. Hodges (London: The Epworth Press; 1s. 6d.), is one of a useful "How to Identify" series, and of a size to pack handily in the holidaymaker's case or slip into his pocket. It is fully illustrated in black and white.

Nos. 1 and 2 of "Natureland," Dr. Graham Renshaw's new venture, has various illustrated articles and notes on birds, including "Waxwings in Norfolk," by Mr. A. H. Patterson, and "The Hiding Instinct in Birds," by Mr. W. Shore Bailey. The prospectus may be had from the Editor, Bridge House, Sale, Cheshire.

## Bird and Tree Challenge Shield Competition

As mentioned elsewhere, a most generous donation from a member of the Society's Council has been given for the special purpose of advancing and encouraging observation and love of birds through the Bird and Tree Scheme. The Council will therefore be able to extend the Competition to counties other than those already invited to take part, and to offer additional County Challenge Shields. What counties should be undertaken is under consideration.

At the invitation of the Board of Education, two lectures dealing with the Society's Bird and Tree Scheme will be given at Balliol Hall, Oxford, on July 4th and 11th, in connection with the Teachers' Course on Rural Science. The lecturer will be Mr. J. R. B. Masefield, M.A., a member of the Council of the R.S.P.B.

Schools entered for this year's competition are reminded that the selected six essays from each team should reach the Secretary, R.S.P.B., 23, Queen Anne's Gate, S.W., by September 1st. If, for special reasons, the writing or local judging is delayed, the teacher is asked to notify the Society.

Among the many festivals held during the last six months, all too numerous to be reported here, may be mentioned: *Coleshill*, where the Bucks Shield and prizes were presented by Mrs. Walker; and the head master (Mr. Stubbings) remarked in his speech that no subject in the whole curriculum was more educational or had greater value in the formation of character than Bird Work, which also developed mental powers and the use of language in a way no other subject did. *Headbourne Worthy*, where additional prizes were given by Mr. W. Hunt; *Boscombe Girls* (Hampshire Shield), where Mrs. Suckling's play, "The Royal Twins," was performed, and an address given by Sir Daniel Morris; *Brathay District*, marked by a delightful lecture on the birds of the district by Mr. Arthur Astley; *Whitechapel* (Lancs), with a charming address by the head master on "The Language of Birds"; *Burtonwood* (Lancs), where a neighbouring competitor, Penketh, joined in and gave special dances; and *Brinklow* (Warwick), where the children gave a capital entertainment, with the very pleasant and practical result of a donation of two guineas to the R.S.P.B. funds.

## The Sparrow Club

"It is an extraordinary and deplorable state of affairs that such time as the country is spending thousands of pounds annually in research work seeking to discover means of checking the depredations of insect pests, and fruit-growers and others are losing many thousands more through the damage caused by such pests, nothing has been done to stop the indiscriminate slaughter of birds—Nature's own remedy for the evil. In country newspapers, particularly those of the fruit-growing county of Kent, one continually reads of the battues carried out by the rat and sparrow clubs, amongst which there appears to be an enthusiasm, worthy of a better cause, to beat each others' records. The very fact of those two species of God's creatures being bracketed together in the appellation shows a want of knowledge concerning their relative economic values. Rats are vermin, but it would be a bold person who would classify even the humblest of the feathered tribe in such a category.

"Our protest against these slaughter clubs, however, is not based on the number of sparrows they destroy—for sparrows in superabundance are capable of much mischief—but what we do object to, and that most vigorously, is that

under the pretence of destroying vermin an incalculable amount of mischief is done by the indiscriminate slaughter of bird life, for who supposes for a moment that the 'sportsman' bent on filling his bag stops to see if it is a sparrow he is bringing down. Indeed, it is openly avowed in the lists published that hundreds of blackbirds, linnets and other most useful feathered friends have been destroyed. Such an avowal ought to render those responsible subject to prosecution. It is difficult to write with restraint on such wanton destruction, to say nothing about the debasing effects on the minds of the juveniles who are encouraged to take part in these massacres of the innocents."—*Fruit, Flower and Vegetable Trade Journal*, April 15th, 1922.

At the annual dinner in connection with the Speldhurst and District Rat and Sparrow Club, in April, 1922, it was stated that during the past year the number of rats destroyed was 2,597; moles, 600; stoats, 200; "birds" (no species mentioned), 1,000. The Chairman of the Rural District Council is "President."

The Great Chart Club claims to have killed 143 "Sparrows" during 1921, and 124 "Tom-tits."

## IN THE COURTS

**TAKING EGGS.**—At *Kendal*, on May 13th, James Fishwick was fined 20s., and James C. Fishwick, his son, 10s., for taking eight eggs of the Lesser Black-backed Gull on Foulshaw Mosses. Defendant said he was a naturalist, who went up and down the country taking photographs of birds and their nests; he had permission to go on the land, and was not a collector. It was not until other persons on the gullery took eggs that he took any. There were about 2,000 birds, and he saw only about 50 eggs, so there must have been wholesale robbery on. The Bench drew attention to the fine of £1 per egg to which defendants were liable.

**BIRDCATCHING.**—At *Nottingham*, on April 20th, Hiram Thurmand and Arthur Wilson, labourers, were summoned for cruelty to Linnets. They were found by the police with nets set and three braced Linnets tied to pegs. Two of the birds were lying on the ground exhausted, and one died in the constable's hand: the other was fluttering, and on seeing the policeman Wilson picked it up, twisted its neck and threw it in the hedge. Defendants said they had "forgotten" the large cage with seed and water they usually took out. Fined 30s. each, with a reminder that they were liable to the extent of £25. (Whether or not the nets were confiscated is not stated.)

**THE FLIGHT OF THE CAGED BIRD.**—At the *Thames Police Court*, on April 17th, John Heath, of Limehouse, was fined 10s. for keeping three Linnets in cages so small that the birds were ragged and almost tailless. At *West London*, on April 27th, a fine of £10 and 3 guineas costs was imposed on Thomas Stagg, bird-dealer, of Portobello Road, who was keeping Linnets, Chaffinches and Goldfinches in cages so small that they could scarcely move, with the result that they were bruised in trying to spread their wings, and had their feathers worn off. Defendant said these cages had been used for many years.

**TAKING A BIRD FROM ITS NEST.**—At *Longon*, on May 1st, a youth of 16 was ordered to pay 4s. for taking a hen Robin from off its nest. Seeing the police, he let it go. (The police could find abundant cases of the taking of both birds and nestlings if they saw as much of country lanes and country boys as the non-uniformed country resident sees.)

**PEREGRINES OR PIGEONS?**—At *Newport, I.W.*, on April 8th, Ernest Redfern and James H. Rideout were charged with shooting two Peregrine Falcons, one at Ventnor, the other at Carisbrooke. They were shooting Woodpigeons, and gave the excuse that they thought the Falcons were Pigeons. Redfern said he "had no time to distinguish before he fired," and did not discover what the bird was until he got it home. The Magistrates dismissed the cases. (These birds are exceedingly rare on the south coast, and in the Isle of Wight have but one breeding-place, which is protected by a Watcher of the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds.)

**COLLECTOR AND EGGS.**—At *Roborough (Devon)*, on June 7th, S. T. Stidstone, of Revelstoke Lodge, Torr, Yealmpton, and R. F. Lintern, a youth in his company, were each fined £1 for taking two eggs from a Buzzard's nest. (The case was reported by a member of the R.S.P.B., who was able and willing to supply evidence that the boy was seen to climb the tree and Mr. Stidstone to receive and blow the eggs. The Society at once communicated with the police.)

## "A TIRED TRAVELLER"

(The Redwing).

By W. H. HUDSON.

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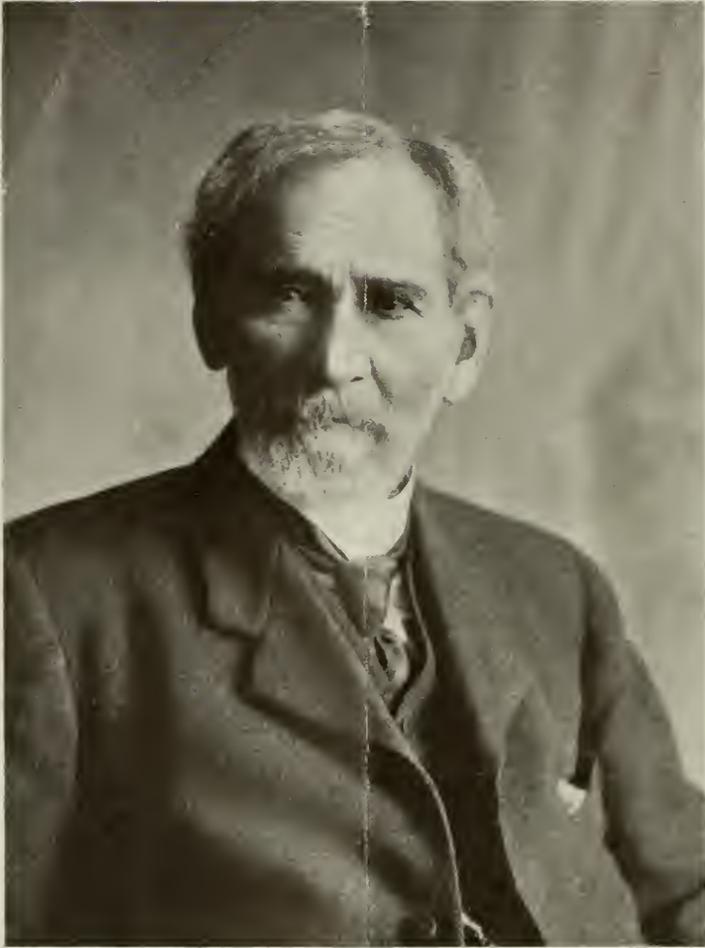
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The late Mr. W. H. HUDSON, F.Z.S.,  
Member of Council, Royal Society for the  
Protection of Birds.

# Bird Notes & News

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[No. 3.

## Mr. W. H. Hudson

THE greatest blow the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds has sustained befell it in the death, at 40, St. Luke's Road, W., on August 18th, 1922, of Mr. W. H. Hudson, F.Z.S. He had been in failing health for some years, suffering from a heart complaint, and had spent his winters in Cornwall to escape the damp and fogs of London; but there was little sign of age about his tall upright figure, his alert mind, and his untouched faculties. His work occupied his attention almost to the last, as he was closely engaged in the preparation of his forthcoming work, "A Hind in Richmond Park," involving the consideration of migration, the musical sense in animals, and other problems; and the doctors' reports afforded no special alarm to his friends. On Monday the 14th, however, he had a severe heart-attack; there was no rally as on previous occasions, and early on Friday morning, saying he felt drowsy and thought he could rest, he fell asleep, and an hour or two later was found to have passed away.

Mr. Hudson's eminence in the world of literature, where he held a place unique and unapproached, has not unnaturally overpowered all else in the tributes that have appeared in the newspapers. The clarity and beauty of his style, the close and patient observation and understanding sympathy with which he interpreted Nature, the striking individuality and personal charm revealed in his treatment even of simple sights and sounds and every-day adventures, have

made themselves felt by every reader of his works. Probably no writer has been more deluged with letters from all over the world, expressing not only gratitude for the pleasure his correspondents have gained from his books but also a longing to come into direct touch with the man whose spiritual fineness and insight irradiated narrative and philosophy.

"The death of Mr. Hudson," remarks the *Times* (August 19th), "robs English letters of a great figure and the literature of Nature of one of her most tuneful and imaginative interpreters. He had much of the passionate feeling for Nature which is conventionally called Celtic. But so far from his writings being marked by the nebulosity which is often associated with that literary adjective, it is distinguished by a limpid clearness. The unusual combination of vigorous lucidity with an almost mystical sensitiveness towards Nature gives his writings a great and lasting charm." They stand by themselves, as far removed from the artificial formality of the 18th century as from the strivings and affectations of the 20th. In his own way, comments the *Morning Post*, as exquisite a stylist as Walter Pater and elected a member of the British Academy as the highest distinction that could be offered the literary artist, he "was never guilty of a sloppy thought or a slovenly sentence."

But the loss to the Society is not alone that of the greatest of English writers on Nature in general and Bird Life in particular. Mr. Hudson was intimately

associated with the work from its earliest days, and has been its friend through thirty years of struggle and effort. He joined the young association in 1891, when it was first started in London, and was but a group of women fighting an evil fashion, with men as "honorary" co-workers. He became a member of the first Committee that was formed, in 1893, and remained continuously on the governing body, keenly watchful and helpful even when, of late years, unable to attend many of the Council meetings.

In 1892 the third of the Society's publications, "Ospreys, or Egrets and Aigrettes," came from his pen and at once placed the campaign on a different platform from that which it had occupied. In 1893, and again in 1897, he brought the hideous slaughter of birds by the plume-hunter vividly before the nation through the columns of the *Times*, which on each occasion supported his protest with a leading article. In 1895 "A Letter to the Clergy" appealed for the help of ministers of all denominations in bringing home to women their partnership in the hateful business. "If in every pulpit of the land," wrote Mr. Hudson, "this shocking story of the egrets were told, surely for once humanity would prove stronger than fashion." That either the pulpit failed of its duty, or Fashion proved stronger than the Church, is but too well known. It was still to be 26 years before even a maimed measure passed through Parliament.

Meanwhile, in 1894, Mr. Hudson had struck at another evil, his pamphlet "Lost British Birds" pointing to the continuous loss of the noblest British species, not wholly or mainly through natural causes, but through callous brutality, the keeper's gun, and the collector's greed. He had spoken with noble indignation upon the wanton destruction of animal life, in reference especially to the big-game hunter, in his work "The Naturalist in La Plata," published in 1892, a work which, by its intimate knowledge, depth and originality

of thought, and beauty of language, gave its author his place once and for all among the classics. He dealt with the matter in its more English aspect, as touching the collector, in "Birds and Man" (1901), a volume containing some of his freshest and most delightful papers. In this, discussing the threatened extermination of the Dartford Warbler, he poured contempt upon the whole deadly craze for destroying unutterably beautiful and intelligent life in order to fill glass cases and cabinets with dead trophies and specimens. Here, and again and again in subsequent years, he urged that no general law for protecting species (on paper) would ever suffice, since collectors come from the wealthy classes who can evade such a law; and that the one way of saving rare British birds was by the prohibition of all private collecting and collections. "This," he wrote in the *Field*, December 14th, 1912, "is a very big order, I am told, because the collectors are an influential class, and there are a good many of them even among our legislators. But we are living in strange times, getting more and more democratic. The feeling for preserving our wild life—or what is left of it—grows apace, and possibly we shall have the cry raised that the wild birds are the people's birds for all time, and must not be sacrificed for the sake of the comparatively few persons who like to amuse themselves by collecting rare birds."

In "Lost British Birds" he divided the blame among "the following three inveterate bird-destroyers who have done and are doing the most to alter, and, from the Nature-lover's point of view, to degrade the character of our bird population: the cockney sportsman, who kills for killing's sake; the gamekeeper, who has set down the five-and-twenty most interesting indigenous species as 'vermin' to be extirpated; and the greedy collector, whose methods are as discreditable as his action is injurious." The sportsman has been more or less cramped by the law; the gamekeeper is becoming better informed. At the time of his death, Mr.

Hudson was planning an enlarged edition of "Lost British Birds," but his hand was held by an exasperated despair when he looked out upon the unchecked course of the bird-collector and of his brother-claimant to "scientific" notoriety, the rapacious oologist.

With the feathered woman and the collector was bracketed another topic which aroused Mr. Hudson's anger to the full; the doings of the unspeakable bird-catcher and of his ally and employer the bird-cager. In "Birds in a Village" the happy days described with such delicate charm become clouded when he is introduced to the methods of the catcher at Cookham Dene; and on his initiation began an attempt to secure protection for all birds in Maidenhead Thicket which went on for years, only to end (temporarily at least) in failure because of the refusal of an otherwise friendly sportsman to have the guns of his keepers controlled. In the same volume the fanciful chapter "The Eagle and the Canary" and a part of the final "Appendix" sought to reach the bird-lover who makes prisoners of his pets. The leaflet "Bird Catching" (1894) contains a demand for further legislation to save depleted species. The Act of 1896 enabled County Councils to do something in this matter; and the Goldfinch, taken as a case in point, has now (1922) been protected in all but three of the administrative county areas of England, and has, as Mr. Hudson predicted, quickly recovered its numbers in spite of the cry that high farming had caused its disappearance.

No plea more touching, more eloquent, could be put forward on behalf of the less fortunate cousin of the Goldfinch than the story of "A Linnet for Sixpence," written by Mr. Hudson for the Society in 1904. This was succeeded in 1911 by a leaflet for children, "A Thrush that never Lived," which forms a characteristic contrast to the crude little tracts on kindness generally put into children's hands; and a third pamphlet, in 1914, threw a much-needed light "On Liberating Caged Birds."

Mr. Hudson's latest gift to the Society, "The Tired Traveller" (reprinted from "Birds and Man"), appeared last year. He also wrote an introduction to Waterton's plea for "The Barn Owl," issued in 1895, and one of the Educational Series of leaflets, that on the Pipits. Over and beyond all this have been letters to the papers on various Bird Protection subjects, notably a strong protest in the *Times* in 1900 against the proposed erection of a Physical Laboratory in the Old Deer Park, which would have ruined and destroyed the adjoining Cottage Gardens at Kew as a bird sanctuary. His advice was also constantly sought in the making of Bird Protection Orders under the Acts of 1894 and 1896, since no one knew as he did the birds and the characteristics of the counties.

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It will thus be seen that throughout the arduous years of a struggling literary life, the great naturalist whom every Nature-lover mourns, gave of himself and his work without stint to a cause neither rich nor popular, intent only on saving the creatures he loved. His writings laid the foundation of the belated Plumage Act; they brought about the Act prohibiting the taking of birds by hooks, and, to a great extent, the Pole Trap Act. Beyond results that can be seen, his influence has effected more than can ever be estimated, and none can doubt that his voice will continue to speak down the ages. Litterateurs at last agreed to give him, almost too late for him to heed or care, that place in English literature which he won long ago; but what have the naturalists as a body, and the section of the world which stretches out avid hands for his first editions, done for the cause which was nearest to his heart? It is a good many years since, having spoken his strongest against the feather-wearing fashion, he vowed that he would speak no more on the detested thing, and he kept the vow even through the

newspaper word-feuds of 1913-4 and 1920-21. With the same sickness of heart he saw the bird-catcher still devastating the country side with net and lime, the wild bird—the very expression of aerial motion and liberty—still wearing out its life behind cage-bars, keeper and gardener continuing to trap and shoot without sense or mercy, and the collector grown not less but more of a menace to the existence of the rare British birds. The hope to which he clung, more than to legislation, more than to any appeal to grown man or woman, was the education of the children, the formation through school influences of a better and truer relationship between boys and girls, and the little feathered people round about them; the impress of sympathy and love on the malleable nature of youth; and the consequent wearing down of ignorance and cruelty. It was as arrows in the hands of a giant, to this end, that he saw the possibilities of the Society's Bird and Tree work in the schools. So great was his faith in it that he had this year made over to the Society the sum of £1,000, to be used solely in the extension and working of the scheme.

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Born on an *estancia* on the pampas of Argentina, "in a house quaintly known as 'The Twenty-four Ombú Trees,'" Mr. Hudson has told something of the story of his early life and his inborn passion for Nature, in the strange and fascinating autobiography, "Far Away and Long Ago" (1918). His father was English, his mother belonged to a New England family. Life in the wild land was full of interest, excitement, and adventure; to the genius of the boy the limitless plains of La Plata were a very land of wonder and delight, recalled with extraordinary vividness half a century afterwards during convalescence in a sick-room in Cornwall. The narrative, however, is brought down only to the tragedy of his sixteenth year, when acute

rheumatic fever, following after an attack of typhus, left heart trouble which he was then assured would allow him only a few short years of life. The doctors were wrong; but the verdict brought to an end youth's untroubled joy in existence, and turned thought to introspective questionings.

Further than this the public has never been taken into confidence. A reticent man, with no desire for company or social life, and with a small circle of intimate friends, Mr. Hudson had scant toleration for the publication of private concerns, and a deep detestation of "literary ghouls" who might rake over his papers after his death. All that the world needed to know was in his books. Coming to England, a young literary aspirant, in the seventies, he became first known to the critics as writer of a romance of love and war in Uruguay, "The Purple Land," and to naturalists by the "Argentine Ornithology" (1889), which was sponsored by the late Dr. W. L. Sclater, who supplied the more strictly scientific portion. Such works of note were varied, for the boiling of the slender pot, by a certain amount of magazine writing and fiction, much of which is lost; but neither his taste nor his style lent itself to rapid production or popular favour. "Green Mansions" (1904) owes its fascination to a rare poetry of language and exquisite beauty of description rather than to the supremely imaginative and tragic story. "A Crystal Age" pictures an Arcadia too unhuman to appeal; the wild and weird short stories contained in "El Ombu" indicate what the author might have done if (unhappily, as bird-lovers would say) he had trained his genius to fiction. But it is on the successive Nature books that his fame will rest. "The Naturalist in La Plata" (1892) was followed by his first essay in the life of the English country, though by this time he knew it well—"Birds in a Village"; and then came "Idle Days in Patagonia" (1893), "British Birds" (1895), "Birds in London" (1899),

"Nature in Downland" (1900), "Birds and Man" (1901), "Hampshire Days" (1903), "A Little Boy Lost" (1905), "The Land's End" (1908), "Afoot in England" (1909), "A Shepherd's Life" (1910), "Adventures among Birds" (1913), "The Book of a Naturalist" (1918), "Birds in Town and Village" (1919), "Dead Man's Plack" and "An Old Thorn" (1920), and "A Traveller in Little Things" (1921). The two sumptuous volumes of "The Birds of La Plata" (1920) contain Mr. Hudson's portion of "Argentine Ornithology," omitting Dr. Sclater's. In the preface to this work he recalls a letter received from a brother in Argentina, in 1899, urging him to return to his native country and dedicate his whole time to the observation of its fauna. "I read the letter," writes Mr. Hudson, "with a pang, feeling that his judgment was right; but the message came too late. I had already made my choice." And he adds that his choice was probably the wrong one. For his own sake, perhaps. But to the lover of England's birds, and England's country, and England's literature, the saying is a hard one.

In these later years publishers in England and the United States competed for his books; reviewers pelted him with ecstatic eulogy. In 1901 he had been awarded a Civil List Pension of £150 "in recognition of the originality of his writings on natural history." It meant much to him then. In 1921 he resigned it on the ground that he was no longer in need of the money. Alone in the world, and exceedingly simple in tastes and habits, he had by this time little use for panegyric and its results.

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Something his books owed no doubt to their memories of two continents. From the boundless spaces of Argentina, with its untilled pampas and half-wild gauchos, he passed to the green meadows and old-time villages of England, always able to recall not only the brilliant bird

life he had first known, but the habits and language of each species; and to contrast them with the sombre-coated songsters of his new home. The English downland, the little English hamlet, the English lanes and woodlands, the English cottagers, won his heart, as summer after summer he rambled in quiet ways over many a county, becoming familiar with hundreds of small villages in a way few English men can equal. The New Forest, the Sussex Downs, Wiltshire byeways and sheepfolds, Cornish rocks and Norfolk cliffs—he knew and made himself a part of all, just as whatever bird he had most newly seen and watched became, as it seemed, his favourite bird, and the most lovely. And whether it was the elusive furze-wren on a Surrey common, the jays of Savernake, the jackdaws of Penzance, the wood-wrens of Wells in Somerset, or the wild geese of Wells-next-the-Sea; or a shepherd's dog, or a cow in an old lane, or a grasshopper or a dragonfly; or a ribbon of blue vernal squills, a patch of chequered fritillaries, or a yellow mimulus by the river; he could see and write of each and all with a charm that made it for the moment the one thing of interest for himself and his readers. It was all Life, the abounding life of a world made very good. But woven in with the golden threads was a weft of the deepest sadness, the consciousness of Death.

The funeral took place on August 22nd, at Broadwater Cemetery, near Worthing, where Mrs. Hudson, who lived for many years of invalidism at Worthing, was buried last year, and where Richard Jefferies also lies. The service was of the simplest; the Rev. S. V. F. Griffiths officiated; and only a small gathering of old friends was present. The Society was represented by Mr. F. E. Lemon, Hon. Secretary, Mr. Ernest Bell, Mr. J. Rudge Harding and Miss Gardiner.

L. G.

## English Woodlands and Modern Forestry

IN the Spring Number of BIRD NOTES AND NEWS it was intimated that the article on "Bird Sanctuaries" would be followed by one dealing with sanctuaries in other countries; but before passing to these it has become desirable to say something further of the conservation of English wild life, and the provision of sanctuaries, in connection with the work of the Forestry Commission. The hope of every student and lover of Nature is that the new activity will prove of the utmost value in the preservation of the impoverished wild fauna still remaining in Great Britain. The hope, however, must be supported by keen watchfulness and ready activity on the part of all Nature-lovers if it is to be realised. Even the best of Government Departments is apt to choose the easiest path of good intentions and the slackest methods of wait-and-see, if public opinion is not firmly expressed and public interest vigorously maintained.

The destruction of old woodlands, hastily taken in hand, more or less (often less) advisedly for national purposes in war-time, has been and is continuing. In part it is purely commercial devastation, undertaken for profit without any further heed. The wood is bought by the man who has money and wants more, the axe is applied, the timber fetches a good price, and the area is left in ruins or is "ripe for development." In part, however, there is some ground for the fear that it may result from the commendable efforts of the authorities to add to the timber supply of the country and to lessen the enormous sum now paid out of the country for wood which may well be grown on our own soil. Old trees, of various species and various ages, are condemned as unfit; undergrowth is cleared away, lines of straight neat firs and larches are planted. The old woodlands were the last refuge of many of the small beasts which now represent the rich wild life of the ancient forest, and were the homes and nesting-places of wild birds, some of the most useful of which depend upon trees for food and nesting holes. The new woods offer no cover for shy and defenceless things, no nesting-places for birds.

In the solution of the question lies to a serious extent the future of English wild life. It would appear to depend upon (1) the setting apart of a portion of each area as an untouched, safeguarded, and permanent sanctuary; (2) such provision as can be made of nesting-boxes and other encouragement to birds in the new woods.

So far at least as the birds are concerned, it has to be remembered that they are essential to a forest if the devastations of caterpillars, boring beetles, and larch-fly are not to overtake it. No scientific forestry in the world can afford to dispense with the assistance of the bird's beak.

"Birds," said the late Dr. Gordon Hewitt, who well knew what he was talking about, "are the most powerful insecticides we have. We should be well advised to follow the guidance of those European countries who regard the encouragement of birds by the provision of nesting-boxes as an essential element in Forestry systems."

"The service that birds perform in protecting woodland trees," says Dr. Forbush, State Ornithologist of Massachusetts, "is more nearly indispensable to man than any other benefit they confer on him."

"Between birds and forests," says Dr. Frank Chapman, of the New York Natural History Museum, "there exist what may be termed primeval economic relations. Birds are not only essential to the welfare of the tree, but the tree is necessary to the life of the bird."

Apart from the economic question, and that of the preservation of our fauna from the historical and scientific point of view, there is another side that perhaps touches the general public still more closely: the educational (using that word in its broadest sense).

The Rev. H. Northcote calls particular attention to this in a letter he has sent to the Forestry Commission.

In this he writes:—

"The woods and wild lands of Britain are entering on a period of transition. They are falling out of the hands of private owners into those of Government. This may well be in many respects, and in the particular respect which I have in mind, a change to the good. We may expect to have a consistent, continuous policy in dealing with the wild lands, a policy which will be handed down from generation to generation. . . .

"Is the Forestry Commission going to give us forests that will be not only commercially satisfactory from the point of view of timber supply, but also—as forests have hitherto been—*interesting, educating*, satisfying to that craving for wild Nature which people have felt and will continue to feel, side by side with the progress

of civilisation? It may well be that in some areas timber must be the chief consideration. But if you take forestry all round, if you think of what the wild lands will mean to the nation of the future, it is easy to understand how it is that many people, in a time of transition like this, when the old woods and moors are being so rapidly and extensively transformed, are anxious, are almost apprehensive, lest the new forests which they already see in the making should turn out to be *beastless* and *birdless*, devoid of living interest and educational power.

"Practically everyone recognises that there has been of recent years an enormous increase of intelligent interest in wild living Nature. The output of literature on the wild life of Britain alone is very considerable, and is eagerly read by the public. The natural history museums and gardens attract a constant flow, and on general holidays enormous crowds of interested visitors. Again, Nature study is coming more and more into vogue in our system of education. It is no longer merely a hobby for a few. It is being taken up with keen interest by an ever-growing number of children and young people, on whose minds it exercises far-reaching beneficial effects. It helps forward in various ways—as one can see particularly in the Nature study reports from American schools—the right moral development of the children. It refines and humanises

them more effectively perhaps than any other factor in their education. I can testify to this from my own observation; and have moreover documentary evidence of this welcome fact.

"If the Forestry Commission, whilst it clears and replants large areas of land, is indifferent to the fate of the wild life inhabiting those areas, then the wild creatures—the few British species that are left us—will be driven off the cleared land for lack of shelter, and will be left to the chance mercies of neighbouring landowners on properties perhaps not well found in woods and cover; and then it is extremely doubtful whether any of them will survive.

"The Forestry Commission has it in its power to save the situation. It has the lands, the means, the authority, the opportunity."

The following reply has been received from the Forestry Commission to a letter from the Hon. Secretary of the Watchers' Committee of the Society, as to the preservation of Bird life in the forestry areas:—

"No special precautions are taken for the conservation of Bird life on the areas acquired and planted by the Forestry Commission. The fact that large areas are being enclosed and so secluded would, however, tend to encourage the presence of birds and there is an advantage if certain birds are present in our plantations."

## London's Bird Sanctuaries

THE success, even in their first season, of the sanctuaries in Hyde Park and Kensington Gardens has been marked, and will encourage the Parks Authorities of other cities and towns to adopt this eminently economical method of enriching the local bird life. Yet the recommendations of the Committee which have been carried out, writes a correspondent of the *Times* (July 25th, 1922), "have so far been merely negative. They have cost the taxpayer little or nothing. They have consisted merely in restraining the officious activities of the gardeners in mowing down the tall grasses, cutting the undergrowth, pruning the shrubs, and raking, sweeping, and scarifying the surface of the ground.

"There has been a little planting of suitable shrubs and bushes, but it must be four or five years before the benefits of these can make themselves apparent. Altogether twenty species have bred this season in Hyde Park

or Kensington Gardens. The following are included: Song Thrush, Mistle Thrush, Black-bird, Redbreast, Hedge Sparrow, Lesser White-throat, Chaffinch, Great Tit, Blue Tit, Wren, Spotted Fly-catcher, Starling, Tawny Owl, Mallard, Wood Pigeon, Moor Hen and Coot. All through May, June and July some Swifts have been hawking over the Long Water. There were, it would seem, two pairs, and they may have bred in some neighbouring steeple.

"The sanctuary along the bank of the Long Water is still rather devoid of cover. Yet in it, or in the neighbourhood, the present writer noted the following species during the winter or spring of 1922: Black-cap, Garden Warbler, Wood Wren, Sedge Warbler, Pied Wagtail, Grey Wagtail, Lesser Spotted Woodpecker, Great Crested Grebe, Dabchick, and Kingfisher. It is not impossible that some of these, in course of time, may stay and nest."

# The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds

## COUNCIL MEETING

THE quarterly meeting of the Council was held at the Guildhall, Westminster, on July 21st, 1922, the Chairman, Sir Montagu Sharpe, K.C., presiding.

The Hon. Secretary's report stated that the Privy Council had acceded to the request of the Chairman for the amendment of the paragraph in the Society's Charter which limited the number of its Fellows to 500. In consequence of the increase in the Society's membership, the number is now altered to two thousand. The issue of an amended Bird Protection Order for Worcestershire gives the full protection of the Goldfinch for which the Society has been appealing for some years. Fifteen Bird and Tree Festivals had been held, and five lectures given, illustrated by the Society's lantern slides. The progress in Parliament of the Oil in Navigable Waters Bill was reported; as was also the Reception given at the Zoological Gardens to welcome Mr. Gilbert Pearson, President of the Audubon Association of America, and the formation of the International Bird Protection Committee recorded in the Summer Number of BIRD NOTES AND NEWS. In a cordial and graceful letter since received by the Hon. Secretary, Mr. Pearson wrote: "One of the most enjoyable memories of my trip to Europe will be the reception of the Royal Society. I was much touched with the feeling of good-will manifested, and the pleasant way in which my remarks were received. I am very glad I had the opportunity of meeting you and seeing as much of you as I did, and from now on will hope to keep in closer touch with you in your splendid efforts."

The Finance and General Purposes Committee presented the accounts for the quarter, noting that a bequest of £35 13s. had been received under the will of the late Mr. William Farmer, who left the residue of his estate to be divided among societies for the protection of children, animals and birds. The Council had to deplore the death of Canon Vaughan, of Winchester, an Hon. Secretary of the Society in Hampshire since 1905. The appointments were approved of Miss A. M. Christian as Hon. Sec. for Hampstead, Major Teichmanner, for the Littlestone District of Kent,

and Dr. R. C. C. Clay, Salisbury. The following Fellows and Members were elected:—

FELLOWS:—Admiral Sir R. Bacon, K.C.B., Hon. B. Barrington, H. P. Burrell, M. Jules Buysens, Edward Clodd, J.P., Herbert E. Cobb, A. C. Davey, Sir H. Bryan Donkin, Miss E. Elphinstone, Chas. F. Faulkner, H. R. Hooper, Capt. J. P. Hudon, A. G. Hudson, Mrs. Scarboro' Johnson, Benjamin Kulese, F.C.I.S., John B. Kesteven, Arthur H. Moorton, Mrs. Newton, W. Romaine Paterson, H. W. Rawlinson, Sir Mark L. Romer, Rev. T. F. Royds, Hugh F. Spender, Emil Teichmann, F.R.G.S., Major H. W. Thatcher, Henry C. Trollope.

LIFE FELLOW: Sir John F. Ramsden.

MEMBERS: Mrs. C. J. Allin, M. N. Asterley, Miss Barclay-Smith, Miss P. Barclay-Smith, Miss Bible, R. Bourke, Nicholas M. Bray, Richard E. Bromet, E. C. Buchan, Miss Rosa L. Buckle, R. W. Butler, John Campbell, Miss Chadwick, Sir Arthur Churchman, Bart., M.P., Percy Clark, J.P., Mrs. Cohen, Mrs. R. W. Courtney, H. Davis, Miss Mercy Denton, Miss M. B. Dockray, Miss Jessie Donald, Mrs. W. C. Drummond, Mrs. Dunn, George Ellison, Miss Anna Ewart, Miss Alice Fletcher, Miss Alice Foster, Miss Mirabel Fowke, Miss Anna Fox, Mrs. Edmund Garrett, Miss M. E. Garwood, Mrs. Alys R. Giles, Lt.-Gen. Sir John Goodwin, A. E. Greenhill, Mrs. Greenhill, Mrs. Radclyffe Hall, J. P. Hardiman, C.B.E., Mrs. H. G. Holden, James Hirst Hollowell, Mrs. J. B. Hyde, Miss Inge, H. W. Jacob, M.D., M.A., Major J. W. Jardine, Edward Johnson, Capt. H. Kindersley, E. R. Koek, C. F. Krabbé, Miss Ada C. Lance, Cecil Lay, Maurice J. Lipscombe, Mrs. Lord, Alex. D. Mackay, Miss Agnes Martelli, Rev. M. McLean, Dr. Arnold McMillan, Miss Mercer, Mrs. Macrae Moir, Mrs. Chamberlain Mole, K. O. Hardiman Nash, Mrs. J. Hardiman Nash, Miss P. Nash, H. D. Parker, Capt. P. Fitzgeorge Parker, Mrs. Payne, Dr. G. Peachey, E. S. Peacock, R. W. Pethen, F. Lort Phillips, Miss Radford, F. Rennert, Lady Ridsdale, Miss W. Rintoul, Miss N. C. Ripley, Mrs. Jessie Rowlands, Miss J. J. Saint, Col. E. W. Shaw, J.P., Miss H. C. Shroerluke, George Smith, Miss Smyth, H. J. Spon, W. Lees Stenning, Mrs. Lees Stenning, Rev. Reginald Stowell, B. M. Stratton, F. Sudlow, Mrs. C. M. Tanner, Mrs. A. Thompson, John O. Thornton,

Miss Helen Tombleson, George E. Urry, S. J. Vilisid, the Misses Walker, E. Ward, M.D., John Watson, J. H. Wenham, George Whale, F. Whittingham, R. H. Whitworth, Miss Margaret Whyte, Miss Amy Williams, C. Howard Willson, Miss Anna E. Wood, Miss L. Wootton, Mrs. Wyllie.

LIFE MEMBERS: Herbert M. Bucknall, Lt.-Col. A. E. Sealey, Hon. Mrs. R. E. Vaughan-Williams.

Sir Mark Lemon Romer was elected a Vice-President.

The Chairman reported respecting the amendment and probable introduction of the Wild Birds Protection Bill; and the Secretary on her visit to Oxford during the Teachers' Rural Science Course, and the lectures given on the occasion by Mr. Masefield, to whom the thanks of the Council were voted. A special Bird and Tree Committee was appointed, to consist of Sir Montagu Sharpe, Sir John Cockburn, Mr. Hudson, Mr. Masefield, Mr. Bell, Mr. F. E. Lemon, Mrs. Lemon, and Miss Gardiner, with power to add to their number.

Various other matters were considered; and on the motion of the Chairman, seconded by Mr. Rudge Harding, a resolution was carried deploring the recent wanton destruction of a Heronry in Staffordshire during the breeding season, and requesting the County Council to give the bird and its eggs full protection.

### OBITUARY

The Society shares in the great regret occasioned throughout the Diocese of Winchester by the death of Canon John Vaughan, who had been a Local Hon. Secretary in Hants since 1905. Of his work and influence as a Churchman this is not the place to speak, and in science his passion for botany came first, as evidenced by his books on wild flowers; but he was the deeply sympathetic friend of all animals. His knowledge of and affection for the birds of Hampshire—the Kestrels of the Cathedral tower, the Owls and Warblers of the Cathedral Close, and the many charming species of the valleys and uplands he knew and loved so well—were made evident in writings, sermons and lectures. His articles about them were well known to readers of the *Times* and other publications.

Living until recently in a venerable house into which is built part of the "pilgrims' hall" of Plantagenet days, his own garden was a

paradise of both birds and flowers. An earnest sympathiser in the work of the Society, he took much interest in the Bird and Tree Competition in the elementary schools. Canon Vaughan preached in the Cathedral on "Animal Sunday" (July 9th), with special reference to the Martin Centenary, dwelling on the expression of Christianity by love for "all things both great and small"; but almost immediately afterwards he was struck down, and never recovered consciousness, dying the following day. He was 67 years of age, and was a son of the late Rev. Matthew Vaughan, of Finchingfield, Essex.

Mrs. Owen Visger, whose death at the age of 80 occurred at Grange Park, Ealing, on July 30th, and who was well known as part-author of the many works published under the signature of "A Son of the Marshes," was a very old friend and worker in the cause of the R.S.P.B., of which she became a member in 1894, joining the Committee early in the following year. She was a hearty supporter of the work, frequently giving it the aid of her pen; and, as the *Times* remarks, "wrote with a real knowledge and love of Nature which must have inspired thousands of people with a new enthusiasm for the observation and study of the wild life of the country." Born in Staffordshire, she married, first, Mr. George Newton Owen, who died in 1876, and, secondly, Dr. Harman Visger. Mrs. Visger was a great traveller, utilising her experiences in some of her literary works; and her later books on natural history included "The Country Month by Month," written in collaboration with the late Prof. Boulger, and annotated by Lord Lilford; and "Birds Useful and Harmful," which is a translation with additions and adaptations of a volume by the Director of the Hungarian Ornithological Bureau.

### WOMAN'S EXHIBITION

The Society was among the exhibitors at the *Daily Express* Woman's Exhibition at Olympia, London, July 12th—29th, 1922, occupying a space in the gallery, where various other societies, hospitals, etc., had stands. The stall was made to look attractive by a display of bird-pictures, including original water-colours by Mr. Thornburn and other well-known artists, on its walls, and by an exhibition of lantern-slides and illustrated literature. In the centre, specially railed, hung the beautiful painting of "The Sorrowing Angel," by

G. F. Watts, R.A., lent from the Compton Gallery through the kindness of Mrs. Watts, and by special permission of the Trustees of the National Gallery. This picture was painted by Mr. Watts, an early supporter of the Society, to express his loathing of the feather-fashion and to help in the anti-plumage campaign. It represents an angel with bowed head, bending over a marble tomb, on which are the bright feathers of birds, while the spirit of evil looks out, grinning, below. When completed, the painting was exhibited at the New Gallery in 1899, inscribed:—

“A dedication to all who love the beautiful and mourn over the senseless and cruel destruction of bird life and beauty.”

The picture was first reproduced by the Society as a frontispiece to Mr. Hudson's letter to the *Times*, and the *Times* leader, which made up the pamphlet “The Trade in Birds' Feathers” (1898), but a fresh reproduction was

made for an Exhibition leaflet. Other pictures included the original drawing, “Gannets and Guillemots,” from Mr. Hudson's “British Birds,” kindly lent by Messrs. Longmans, Green & Co.; the original picture of Light-house Bird-rests (erected by the Society), by permission of the *Sphere*, where the reproduction appeared; and a humorous drawing, “A New Seaside Terror,” calling attention to the oil-waste peril, by permission of *London Opinion*.

A show of green and brown food-tables, shelters and trays for birds, and of “Treehole” nesting-boxes, supplied for the Society by Messrs. A. H. Moorton, was another outstanding feature of the exhibit.

Mrs. Frank E. Lemon, assisted by members of the Council and others, had charge of the stand, which attracted much attention and made the work known to many visitors who were evidently unaware before of the extent and interest of the Society's operations.

## The Plumage Trade

THE Millinery Chamber of Commerce of the United States, representing the most reputable millinery houses in the country, continues to support the Plumage law of the States and the efforts of the Audubon Association (which it fought prior to the passing of the Act). In view of attempts that are being made to legalise the importation of “moulted” feathers, the Chairman of the Plumage Committee of the Chamber has addressed the following letter to the Textile Branch of the Government Department of Commerce, at Washington:—

“I refer to the reports from the American Consul of Trinidad, B.W.I., to the Department of Commerce regarding the method of collecting Aigrette feathers in Venezuela, and which you were good enough to forward to the Millinery Chamber of Commerce, in view of pending alterations to the Tariff Act of 1913.

“This Act was for the protection of wild birds, both native to the United States and foreign countries, and with this object in view was made very drastic. Consul Baker states that the large majority of Aigrette feathers exported from Venezuela are ‘moulted’ feathers, and therefore the gathering of them occasions neither cruelty nor the possibility of the extermination of the birds. This may be true as far as Venezuela itself is concerned, provided some method could be found of so

branding all moulted feathers from that country that there could be no possibility of any feathers from killed birds being included, but there would be the danger of the shipping of Aigrettes from other countries into Venezuela and re-shipping from there as native to that country, and it would take very little to so change their appearance as to make it practically impossible for the Venezuelan authorities or the American Custom Officers to detect the difference. Furthermore, I question whether the distinguishing features of feathers taken from dead birds could not be so obliterated as to deceive even the most experienced, which would be an inducement for unprincipled handlers of the article to break the law and defeat its object.

“Paradise Plumes have for the past few years been smuggled into the United States (being prohibited of importation) in such enormous quantities as to become a scandal, and in order to protect legitimate dealers in permitted feathers and to assist the Government Authorities in enforcing the existing law, the Millinery Chamber of Commerce acting in conjunction with Dr. W. T. Hornaday, of N.Y. Zoological Society and the Permanent Wild Life Protection Fund, and Mr. T. Gilbert Pearson, President of the National Association of Audubon Societies, introduced an amendment to the law of 1913 and which is incor-

porated in the Tariff Act now before the Legislatures, putting the burden of proof of legitimate ownership of all prohibited plumage on the possessor. If Aigrettes were allowed entry the amendment, as applied to this article, would be nullified and result in fraudulent practices.

"Moreover, the sale, etc., of Aigrette feathers is prohibited under the Migratory Bird Act, and also by a large majority of the States of the Union under their own State laws.

"It is not the intention of this Committee to raise any objections to legitimate trading with another country or take any action detrimental to the best interests of the Millinery Trade, but it feels that any alteration in the existing law is to be deprecated; and I venture to think that if the Treasury Department, the Department of Agriculture, Mr. Pearson of the Audubon Society, and Dr. Hornaday of the Wild Life Protection Fund, were consulted, this opinion would be endorsed."

## Economic Ornithology

### FARMERS AND BIRD-CATCHERS

THE agricultural correspondent of the *Daily Telegraph* writes (August 10th, 1922):—

"Farmers are complaining about townsmen haunting their hedgerows and catching Goldfinches and Brown Linnets. These birds feed themselves mainly on charlock, and the Goldfinch has a partiality for the seeds of thistles and other weeds. The Bullfinch, another bird captured by the townsman, loves dock-seeds. These birds materially help to keep down weeds among growing crops."

Farmers should insist upon Goldfinches and Linnets being protected all the year by their County Council Order.

### FRUIT-BLOSSOMS AND BIRDS

Mr. John Weathers writes to the *Field* (August 19th, 1922), from Isleworth:—

"It is astonishing what ignorance still prevails amongst market gardeners and farmers (and through them amongst the public generally) in regard to the value of birds to cultivated crops. Just as, years ago, the now highly-esteemed Honey Bee was looked upon as an enemy of the fruit-grower, so are most birds to-day—more especially the Bullfinch, Chaffinch, Rook, Starling and Wood Pigeon. Scarcely a year passes but some superficial observer will write to some paper and make a grievous charge against some bird or another, supported by what at first sight appears to be convincing evidence. A Wood Pigeon or Starling is shot in a plum or apple plantation, and when cut open any number of fruit buds may be found in the crop. Surely no further evidence is needed. Those buds were potential fruit and a loss, therefore, to the fruit-grower.

"Now the point arises, is the mere presence of flower buds or other vegetable buds in the

crop of a bird sufficient evidence in itself to justify the destruction of the bird? What evidence is there to prove that in addition to the fruit buds there were not also maggots or caterpillars that were preying upon them at the very time when the bird gobbled up bud and caterpillar together? But, it will be asked, if maggots or caterpillars were on the buds and were swallowed by the birds, should they not be as easily discovered in the bird's crop as the flower buds? But maggots and buds are quite different in texture and composition, and the maggots are much more quickly digested inside the bird than the tougher buds. This does not appear to have occurred even to those well-known friends of birds who maintain that birds are the friends, not the foes, of farmers and gardeners.\*

"If this question of the rapid digestion of maggots and caterpillars and the comparatively slow digestion of fruit buds in the stomachs of birds were more carefully investigated, it is more than probable that most birds would be looked upon with greater favour by growers than they are at present. If a maggot is attacking a fruit bud, the bird on the look-out for food cannot easily avoid taking bud and maggot together.

"While it is, of course, unfortunate that any good fruit buds should be destroyed by birds when preying upon maggots, the loss in this direction is a mere bagatelle in comparison with the good that is done by the destruction of the caterpillars. There are millions of fruit blossoms every year that escape both birds and caterpillars, yet they never develop into mature fruits. Speaking as a fruit-grower with as much to lose or gain as others from

\* This important fact was pointed out by Mr. W. H. Hudson, but is ignored by the majority of observers and investigators.

birds and caterpillars, I am in favour of encouraging the birds, which I look upon as my best friends, as they are a great help towards keeping maggots and caterpillars down to the minimum of annoyance."

### THE RAT-WAR AND OWLS

Writing in the *Observer* (July 9th, 1922), Mr. H. Mortimer Batten points out that the war on rats has not been altogether advantageous to the woodlands and their denizens. Rat-proof buildings and ricks, restrictions as to harbouring rats, and other efforts to get rid of them from buildings has driven the rodents in search of new quarters in woods and hedgerows, where they are very unwelcome aliens. He proceeds:—

"A short time ago I was in a small wood which stands three or four miles distant from the nearest farm, and I was astounded to find an immense number of half-grown rats lying dead every here and there among the trees. Every one of them had been killed in the same way, and lay decapitated, but otherwise untouched. The work was clearly that of Owls, and the number of Owls' feathers lying about furnished further proof. Let me, therefore, strongly urge that the rat war has brought about increased necessity for the preservation of the Owl, namely, the long-eared, brown, and barn species. Keepers often shoot Owls as injurious to game, but the rat invasion of game coverts is far more injurious, and the Brown Owl is the most assiduous of our natural rat traps. All possible steps should be taken to assist these birds to multiply."

## Notes

THE Oil in Navigable Waters Bill, for preventing the discharge on the sea of oil-waste from vessels using oil-fuel, received the Royal Assent before the close of the Parliamentary Session. As explained in the Summer Number of BIRD NOTES AND NEWS, this is but a preliminary step, as only the three-mile waters of Admiralty jurisdiction can be dealt with; and the utmost need remains for international action. Supporting the Second Reading in the House of Commons, on July 5th, Sir W. Mitchell-Thomson pointed out that the escape was already a source of danger from fire in harbours; while in seaways and on sea beaches it was a serious nuisance, and there was hardly a seaside resort on the narrow waters round the coast from which complaints had not been received in increasing volume. The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds had made the strongest representations with regard to the effect on bird life; the oyster fisheries were menaced, and there was some fear as to effect on other fish. Sir George Renwick gave instances of ships being involved in flames through a match or a cinder dropped into the oil round about it, and said that shipowners and harbour authorities were prepared to shoulder the obligations of the Bill. The Second Reading was carried by 98 to 16.

\* \* \*

An incident recently reported by a member of the R.S.P.B., usefully illustrates the

fact too frequently overlooked by bird-lovers, that protests against cruelties and illegalities of various descriptions can often be made more effectually to the employers of an offender than to the offender himself. "Passing a certain lock on the Thames," he writes, "I noticed a Chaffinch, very wild, in a very small cage, and protested against its being kept in such conditions. The lock-keeper would not release it, and I wrote to the Conservancy." The Conservancy replied in due course that they had looked into the matter and the bird had been liberated. Similar appeals might often be addressed to authorities in the case of birds in model dwellings, factories, and so on, where the direct appeal proves waste of breath. Not all indignant observers will be at the trouble taken in this instance, and not all authorities will prove so sympathetic as the Thames Conservancy; but a reasonable letter will generally be read: not an anonymous one.

\* \* \*

The French Government has just made a fresh order in connection with the International Convention of 1902.

"Having regard to the necessity of putting an end to the barbarous practice of certain bird-catchers of capturing Finches or other small birds and putting out their eyes with the object of enhancing their value as singing birds,"

as the preamble runs, the Minister of Agriculture and the Minister of the Interior have made

this practice illegal, and further ordain that all small birds kept in cages by permit of the Prefect, may be so kept solely on condition that they are not blinded. It may startle some people that such a horrible barbarity should survive to the present day. A good many things are also still tolerated in England that startle the public, at least for an hour or two.

\* \* \*

The general ignorance existing regarding Birds and their protection was recently illustrated by a case heard before the Keswick Bench, and some newspaper comments upon it. As related on page 48, an hotel servant was summoned for prodding down Martins' nests, so that five nestlings were thrown on the pavement below and killed. (They were persistently called "Swallows," but that is a minor matter.) The writer, who comments inconsequently on the case, is only aware that Thrushes have attacked his pear-tree, that Sparrows commit depredations "on every kind of growing stuff," and that "the feathered tenants in the eaves and spouts are at liberty to spoil clothing, disfigure property, and generally make themselves unmitigated nuisances." Swallows or Martins or Sparrows, all are alike to this aviphobist, dangerous to clothes and pear-trees, existing in "thousands, each capable of carrying on the mischief-making work," and the case "shows the law to be even more wild than the birds." The Westmorland County Council, who have wisely extended protection to the invaluable and beautiful Swallow tribe, may thank the journalist for his compliment, and wish him a little more ornithological knowledge.

\* \* \*

Two very pleasant donations to the Society's funds have come from youthful friends of the birds lately. One is a subscription to the Hut Fund (Hermaness) from ten small girls of a Sunday School class, who read the story of H. Edmundson and his birds in a Church magazine. The other is a gift of 25s. to Brean Down Bird Sanctuary from "Messrs. Chirrup and Tweet," under which name a little damsel held a sale of cakes and sweets, "all profits allocated to eminent excellent objects." The profits being chiefly in farthings—as the Right Hon. W. H. Smith used to say was the case with the fortune he accumulated from railway station bookstalls—the young manageress evidently understands business.

The new Hut on Hermaness is a great success, and well appreciated by the Watcher who occupies it. Compared with the old one it is a handsome erection. The special fund, however, was considerably short of meeting the cost. The Watchers' Committee have also to look forward to heavy outlay on replacing the bird-rests at the Caskets Lighthouse, which were fast rotting. The Caskets was one of the Lighthouses first provided with perches for migrants, and these have served for the spring and autumn migrations of nine years; so that they have lasted well. As these expenses come quickly on the renewal of the perches at Spurn, and as expenditure on the ordinary Watchers' work is constantly increasing, it is feared that Bardsey Lighthouse must wait some time longer.

\* \* \*

Writing in Dr. Graham Renshaw's magazine, "Natureland" (Bridge House, Sale, Manchester), Mr. E. M. Nicholson notes that even yet the Longtailed Tit has not fully recovered from the severe winter of 1916-17. "Throstle, Blackbird, and Starling recovered amazingly fast; Green Woodpecker, Stonechat, and others are still recovering; while the Goldcrest's tiny song falls once more in a cascade of delicate drops from yews and fir trees. But the Longtailed Tit is still in single families where there used to be flocks; a brood of from seven to fourteen, sometimes twice in a season, seems to have utterly failed to restore it to its pre-frost condition." Unfortunately, he does not mention the district of which he writes. In the same number is an article on "Animal Associations," by Mr. G. T. Rope, to which most observers could add instances. The use by birds of the old nests of other species is probably a good deal more common than is generally supposed.

\* \* \*

Mr. Wilfrid Scawen Blunt, traveller, poet, and politician, was best known to the public as an anti-British revolutionary while a close friend of statesmen of all views, as the writer of some amazingly candid diaries published in 1919, and as a breeder of Arab horses. But his sympathies with humanitarian effort were broad and deep, and are strikingly set forth in his poem "Satan Absolved: A Victorian Mystery" (1899), in which he reviews the

desolation of the earth and the slaughter of its joyous wild life by man. In this occur the lines :—

Behold, Lord, what we bring—this last proof in our hands,

Their latest friendliest spoil from Thy fair tropic lands,  
The birds of all the earth unwinged to deck the heads  
Of their unseemly women ; plumage of such reds  
As not the sunset hath, such purples as no throne,  
Not even in heaven, showeth—hardly, Lord, Thine own ;

Such azure as the sea's, such greens as are in spring,  
The oak-tree's tenderest buds of watched-for blossoming,  
Such opalescent pearls as only in Thy skies  
The lunar bow revealeth to night's sleep-tired eyes.  
Behold them, Lord of Beauty, Lord of Reverence,  
Lord of Compassion, Thou who meetest means to ends,

Nor madest Thy world fair for less than Thine own fame,  
Behold Thy birds of joy, lost, tortured, put to shame  
. . . These dead wing cry to Thee !  
Arise, Lord, and avenge !

Mr. Blunt, who entered on his 83rd year in August last, died at Shipley, Horsham, but it was with Crabbet Park, near Three Bridges, that he was associated as host to many friends, and as horse-lover. He married Lady Anne Noel (grand-daughter of Byron), afterwards Baroness Wentworth, who shared his desert wanderings and dwellings in Arabia and Egypt. He became a Vice-President of the R.S.P.B. in 1906.

## Bird and Tree Challenge Shield Competition

### LECTURES AT OXFORD

In connection with the Short Courses of Instruction for Teachers in Elementary Schools, arranged by the Board of Education, the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds was asked to supply two lectures on Nature-Study, with special reference to the Bird and Tree Scheme. These were associated with the Rural Science Course held at Oxford, July 1st—15th, 1922, and were kindly undertaken by Mr. J. R. B. Masefield, M.A., a member of the Council of the Society. The Course was under the direction of Dr. W. K. Spencer, H.M.I., and more especially devoted to plant physiology and botanical research work, twelve lectures being given by Dr. Keeble, Professor of Botany in the University. The teachers invited were limited to a certain number from each county.

Mr. Masefield's lectures, which were illustrated by lantern slides, were given on July 4th, in the Hall of Balliol College, and on the 11th in the theatre of the University Museum. They covered a wide field, dealing with lost and vanishing species, and the reasons for their decrease and disappearance, migration, sanctuaries, the economic value of birds, the work of the Society, legislation and education, interspersed with personal experiences and stories. On each occasion there was a large and interested audience ; and votes of thanks were given to the lecturer on the proposition of Mr. H. M. Richards (Chief Inspector, Board of Education) and Dr. Spencer, respectively.

In addition to these lectures, a delightful talk on birds was given in the laboratory of the Botanic Gardens, by Mr. T. Johnson, H.M.I.,

who has had some experience of Bird and Tree work in Somerset, and who set forth its aims and objects admirably, while giving suggestions for the education of young children preparatory to the essay-writing stage. (This Mr. Johnson put at 11—13, but capital papers frequently come from children of nine and ten.) The teacher, he remarked, was apt to say "Another subject !" for a curriculum already full, and his answer to this was that no teacher should put in a subject unless he thought it the right thing to do and should never do so against his inclination. The next objection was likely to be, "Shall I have any weight of public opinion behind me ?" and in reply to this he would read a leading article which appeared (June 3rd, 1922) in the *Manchester Guardian*, reminding them that what the *Guardian* thought on Monday Manchester thought on Tuesday and the rest of England thought on Wednesday ! To consider, first, how not to do it, Mr. Johnson referred to the study of Nature in the old way by the set lesson of half an hour, on the Sparrow, for instance, with total disregard of the live bird chirping on the window ledge ; and to the wretched things called object lessons, in which a mass of instruction was poured out which the child was supposed to assimilate, and didn't. The true way was in the interested observation of the living thing ; as an accomplished inspector had said to him, he would regard that as a successful lesson on the spider if the boys had learned to watch and not to squash it. It had been said that children came to school ignorant and curious and left it ignorant but incurious ; and this, if true in any sense at all, was a

frightful slur upon the educational system. The curiosity of the child was one of the greatest assets of the teacher, whose business was to stimulate and guide it; and the speaker gave instances of the way in which children had drawn instruction and delight from swallows and owls nesting in the schoolhouse. The note-taking needed for the Competition trained them in observation and in the orderly recording of events; and he laid special stress upon the training of the ear in learning the notes of wild birds, which not only afforded great pleasure and was of immense assistance in identifying species, but produced the intelligent listening required in many occupations of life, from the doctor with his stethoscope to the chauffeur alert to the sounds of his machine and the railway-man tapping the wheels of the coaches. Mr. Johnson also afforded a lesson in intelligent recitation by showing how Tennyson's "Throstle" might be given.

A large amount of R.S.P.B. literature, not only on Bird and Tree Competitions, but on Bird Protection work in general, was taken by those present at the meetings, and the Secretary of the Society (Miss Gardiner) was there to answer questions. It is hoped that a good proportion of the teachers will communicate further with the Society and introduce the scheme (if they have not already done so) into their schools.

#### "WHAT MANCHESTER SAYS TO-DAY"

Among several recent articles for which the Society has to thank the Press is the following on the Bird and Tree Competitions, which appeared in the *Manchester Guardian* on June 3rd, 1922:—

"We are glad to learn from the report of the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds that there is a brisk revival of interest in the Society's excellent scheme for bird and tree competitions in elementary schools. This interesting and successful experiment suffered, like other good institutions, in the war, and the war has given it an added importance. For the war led to a destruction of birds of all kinds, in the panic about crops, which brought quick retribution in a great increase of insect pests. It led also to a great destruction of trees, and vast spaces were stripped of their woods in the search for timber. After those impoverishing years the task of conserving our natural possessions becomes more urgent

than ever. It is only gradually and slowly that we have learned their value. . . .

"The best help of all that can be given in the struggle to preserve the beauty and charm that we are so apt to destroy wilfully or carelessly is to be found in such schemes as the Bird and Tree competition. We are glad to learn from this report that the Lancashire Education Authority and the county director, Mr. Gater, give very active encouragement to it. Mr. Gater spoke of its educational value, and it must be clear to anybody that no geography lesson from a text-book would touch a child's imagination so vividly as a simple account of the migrations and travels of the bird he can see and hear in his village. The most hopeful development of our time has been the change that has come over the name of naturalist. The word was often used to describe a man who was interested in stuffed birds; the collector who gave the fullest play to his most selfish instincts, and was chiefly concerned to have in his possession something that nobody else had. We now understand by the term a man whose weapon is not the gun but the camera, who does not want to have a dead bird on his mantelpiece, but to watch a live bird in the tree; whose interest is not in specimens, but in the free and beautiful and happy life of a living creature. The bird and tree competitions will breed a race of such naturalists in every village, and their study of the habits of birds will glow with all the excitement and romance that were once associated in boys' minds with the killing of birds or the plunder of their nests."

#### COMPETITION NOTICES

The Essays for this year's Competition are now in the hands of the Judges, and any schools which have not yet sent in their papers should do so as quickly as possible. The results will be made known to all competing schools as soon as the judging is completed, but competitors are asked to remember that it necessarily takes time to read and report upon the large number of papers received.

It is hoped to add in 1923 to the list of counties in which Challenge Shields are offered; and the Secretary of the Society will be glad to hear from Education Authorities and teachers desiring to adopt the scheme or to receive particulars and regulations.

## IN THE COURTS

**TAKING EGGS AT AINSDALE.**—At *Southport*, on June 26th, C. H. Gowland, of Aintree, was summoned for taking wild birds' eggs on the sandhills at Ainsdale. The Chief Constable stated that the Southport Order prohibited the killing of all wild birds and the taking of all eggs in this area, and the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds had appointed Watchers to see that the law was obeyed. Wilfred Clarke, a Watcher, saw defendant searching the ground. Asked what he was doing he said he was looking for a Shellduck's nest. "You know they are protected here," said Clarke, and defendant replied, "Yes, but I did not think they were protected this much"—meaning, presumably, that he did not think there would be Watchers on the spot. On Clarke's order he produced four Plovers' eggs, two Terns' eggs, and a blow-pipe. The Chief Constable added that the wholesale destruction of birds along the coast had been appalling. For some time past there had been absolute slaughter in this district, and for this reason the Order had been granted by the Home Secretary. This was the first prosecution under that Order, but several others were pending. Defendant was fined 10s. an egg, £3 in all, the Chairman stating that the full penalty of £1 per egg would probably be imposed in any subsequent cases.

**AN UNEXPECTED LESSON.**—At *Newport (Mon.)*, on August 7th, George E. Norman was summoned for using nets for catching wild birds. He had four cages containing Linnets and a net set between. He said he was only learning how to catch them, and had "a fine erection" at the rear of his house where they would have "plenty of liberty." The Mayor, in ordering defendant to pay the costs, said the object of the law was that wild birds should be preserved for the pleasure of everybody.

**THE PROFESSIONAL BIRDCATCHER.**—At *Blackburn*, on August 31st, John Elliott was fined £1 for using bird-lime and being in possession of newly caught birds. He had four freshly-taken birds in a cage, and two decoy birds, and admitted having taken 27 birds in one morning. The Chairman (Dr. J. Barr) said the law should prevent the catching of wild birds at any time of year. (The prosecution was only possible because the close-time in Lancashire has been extended to September 1st.)

**THE CATAPULT.**—At *Nottingham*, on August 9th, George Hallam and Horace Hart, two youths, were fined 40s. for cruelty. Finding nests containing fledglings they fired into them, smashing the nestlings' legs and tearing their bodies.

**WANTON DESTRUCTION OF MARTINS.**—At *Keswick*, on August 26th, Walter Lowden, boots at the Queen's Hotel, was charged with killing five young Swallows on August 10th. He was seen leaning out of a top-floor window of the house, knocking down the nests under the eaves. Two young birds fell out of one nest and were killed on the pavement. He then went to another part of the building and prodded the bottom out of a second nest, when three other nestlings fell and were killed. The manager of the Hotel was standing in the Market Square, warning defendant when people were about to pass. For the defence it was stated that the birds made a mess about the hotel and were a nuisance. Mr. Lloyd Wilson suggested that the nests should be destroyed while the eggs were in. The Clerk said that was an offence too. (Laughter.) Dismissed on payment of costs.

LEAFLETS by Mr. W. H. HUDSON.

**"A TIRED TRAVELLER"**

(The Redwing).

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TREE NEAR A FARM IN SOUTH WALES IN THE BRANCHES OF WHICH,  
FIFTY YEARS AGO, THIRTY KITES USED TO ROOST.

“The Kite is another melancholy example of the effect of the pitiless persecution of some of our finest birds by game-preservers, and, as the species became rare, by collectors of ‘British-killed’ specimens and ‘British-taken’ eggs.”—Hudson’s *British Birds*.

“There are still many ‘Kite’s Nest Farms’ scattered about the country, and it was not till towards the middle of the last century that the bird began to grow really uncommon.”—Collett’s *Handbook of British Inland Birds*.

(See page 50.)

# Bird Notes & News

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

Vol. X.]

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[No. 4.

## Watchers and Watching

### BRITAIN'S RARE BIRDS

THE Watchers' Committee of the Society have, as usual, issued the Report of two years together, for the economising of printing and postage; and the new issue, sent to all subscribers to the Watchers' Fund, contains detailed accounts, 1921-22, from all the areas which are under the special care of the Committee. Fuller details are regularly received from the officers themselves, a remarkably keen and devoted body of men, whose vigilance and loyalty alone make it possible to preserve the rare birds of the British Isles from the greed and cunning of collectors. All the districts have been visited by members of the Committee and by friends specially qualified to judge of the work done and of the status of the birds.

During 1921 twenty-seven Watchers were employed at eighteen stations in fourteen areas, and in 1922 thirty-three men at twenty-three stations, the guard having to be strengthened at some points and new areas undertaken. The most important districts are still the Shetland Isles in the far north, and Dungeness in the south-east corner of England, both noted as the breeding-places of birds which would undoubtedly have disappeared but for the Society's efforts. Other areas include Brean Down, where a delightful Bird Sanctuary is brought about by the Society renting the shooting rights; the Freshwater district of the Isle of Wight, an island which might in itself be made a bird paradise; Portland Isle, Dorset, put forward by Mr. Edmund Selous as a peculiarly suitable headland for a sanctuary if collectors

and bird-catchers can be kept off; Tintagel, Cornwall; Anglesey; Ainsdale, Lancashire, where trespassers of a somewhat rough type have to be dealt with; Ennerdale, Cumberland; Aldeburgh, Norfolk, recently made a protected area at the request of the Society, and guarded by notice boards; Seamere (Norfolk); Inchmickery; Newburgh (Aberdeenshire); and the Orkneys.

To mention all the species of birds which have been protected and preserved by this anxious and carefully directed work would be to enumerate practically all those which are of infrequent occurrence or on the dangerous borderland between infrequency and extreme rarity. These, it must be remembered, comprise not only those so scarce as to be unknown to the great majority of people and in immediate danger of extermination (Kentish Plover, Sandwich and Roseate Terns, Phalarope, etc.), but a great number of most interesting birds, such as Terns, Shellducks, Eiders, Grebes, Fulmars, Solan Geese, Divers, Merlins, Buzzards, Peregrines, Ravens, Stone Curlews, Herons, Curlews, Redshanks, Rock Pipits, more or less scarce if not in immediate peril. The yet commoner but equally delightful small birds, Goldfinches, Wheatears, Stonechats, Corn Buntings, Wagtails, Linnets, Larks, Ringed Plovers, and so on, also share in a protection from many enemies which is theirs through the presence of Watchers.

The two birds perhaps best known to the public as owing their very existence to unceasing watchfulness are the Kite and the Chough. That the Kite as a

British breeding species *exists* is about all that can be said; but if adequate help is forthcoming, it ought to be possible to save this splendid bird, which in olden days was common in the streets of London, but whose nests in Great Britain can now be counted on the fingers of one hand.

"In 1921 three Kite families were safely reared, and in 1922 there was good hope of there being an addition to this number; but disaster befell one nest, owing to photographic persistence and enthusiasm, as the parent bird was frightened and remained too long away, and the young died of cold and exposure. Great pressure had been brought to bear upon the Watchers' Committee to grant facilities to the photographer and against their better judgment a permit was reluctantly given to the well-known bird lover and naturalist for whom it was sought. Notwithstanding this set-back it is the intention of the Watchers' Committee to continue the protection of the Kites, and extra precautions will next year be taken if subscribers to the Watchers' Fund will make sufficiently generous contributions to meet the increased expenditure."

The difficulties of the task are increased by the death in August, 1922, of the Rev. D. Edmondson Owen, who for many years had superintended the work locally.

The Choughs hold their own and that, if not eminently satisfactory, is many degrees better than extirpation. "This interesting and extremely handsome bird," wrote Mr. Hudson, 25 years ago, "has been diminishing in numbers for a long period, and it is now become so rare that, unless strong measures to secure its protection be at once taken, its eventual extinction in this country must be regarded as merely a question of time." Writing in 1922 to the Watchers' Committee, the Rev. Percival Pott expresses the opinion, from 30 years' study of the Cornish coast, that they have increased, though but slightly, in recent years, "an increase attributable, without doubt, to the good work of the

Bird Protection Society and its Watchers."

"But it must be admitted that the increase is very slight and out of all proportion to the number of young hatched out annually.

"... Perhaps the well-known quarrelsomeness of the Chough, especially during the breeding season, coupled with its excessive fastidiousness in the selection of a building site, may account for a good deal. And to this has to be added the depredations of other birds and a very considerable mortality occasioned by rabbit traps."

A second Watcher has been found necessary on this coast, and two new ones at Dungeness to safeguard the Kentish Plovers and other rare species from the collector. In various districts there are other dangers than the human one to hinder progress. Bad weather has often disastrous results, and in the July rainstorms of 1922 no fewer than 200 young Common Tern succumbed on Dungeness beach. In the Shetlands and Orkneys the birds suffered somewhat less from the absence of summer, but the Watcher's new Hut on Hermaness was rendered the more essential; "the tame Richardson Skuas were a bit shy of it at first," writes Mr. Edwardson, "but soon made themselves at home."

#### LIGHTHOUSES

The Bird-Rests at the Lighthouses have proved more expensive than usual, thus delaying the hope of erecting others at Bardsey. In 1921 £70 had to be expended at the Spurn Lighthouse, where the perches had been damaged beyond repair by heavy seas, and at the South Bishop Lighthouse four dozen of the perches had to be renewed. At St. Catherine's renovations had to be undertaken after the autumn migrations of 1921, and the lower perches round the gallery at the Caskets had to be renewed in the spring of 1922. It will thus be seen that at all four Lighthouses extra expense has been incurred, in addition to the regular cost for Spring and Autumn erection and dismantling of the bird-saving apparatus.

"The reports from the Light-keepers, of the numbers of birds and the variety of species

which, on misty and rainy nights, cling in clusters to the perches, demonstrate the necessity for the continued maintenance of these harbours of refuge for bewildered and tired bird-travellers.

"Larks, Wagtails, Wheatears, Warblers, Pipits, Ring-Ouzels, Redstarts, Flycatchers, Chiffchaffs, Blackcaps, Redwings, Rock Doves, Starlings, Whinchats, Goldcrests, Blackbirds and Thrushes are among the birds most frequently recorded as having used the perches. Woodcock and Snipe have also been seen.

"A variety of matters other than those directly connected with the employment of their own Watchers have occupied the attention of the Committee, such as the condition of the birds in the Farne Islands, the Argyllshire Vermin Club and similar Associations inimical to wild bird-life, compensation to farmers for alleged depredations by birds-of-prey in certain cases where proof to the contrary has been unobtainable, the erection of notice-boards, and the insertion in newspapers of warnings against the infringement of the Bird Protection laws, the continued use of the pole-trap, the temporary protection of individual species specially threatened, the preservation of Heronries, etc.

#### COASTGUARD

"Assurances have been received from the Admiralty that instructions are still in force, and orders issued to the coastguards to co-operate with the Society in carrying out the provisions of the Acts of Parliament for the Protection of Wild Birds, and pleasing information has come to hand which goes to prove that many of these men are individually interested in this work, and are conscientiously carrying it out."

The Committee have to deplore the loss this year of two prominent members, Mr. W. H. Hudson and Mr. J. L. Bonhote, and they have also lost three Watchers—Mr. W. A. Nicholson, Hon. Watcher of Inchmickery since 1909, who is taking up his residence in Vancouver; Mr. James Hay, of North Roe, who, owing to ill-health and advancing years, has to retire from the position he has since 1908 faithfully and honourably filled; and Mr. Philip Hawkings, who from his childhood up has helped to protect the birds on Breaun Down, but is leaving for New Zealand.

It can hardly be contended that the extensive work of the Committee in their untiring efforts to maintain and protect unimpaired the avifauna of the British Isles is an expensive work when it is carried out for a bare five hundred a year, a hundredth part of the price that would be paid to secure one "old master" for some art gallery. It is rendered possible only by a great amount of voluntary labour over and beyond the loyal and devoted service of the paid Watchers, and yet this sum is not forthcoming from the ornithologists of Great Britain. The amount received for 1921 (including two large donations) and for 1922 (up to December 1st) amounted in all to barely £550. The regular subscriptions to the Lighthouse Fund are not enough to pay for the annual upkeep of the perches. The special appeal\* for a hut in which the lonely Watcher on Hermaness must find shelter day and night realised about half its modest cost.

One of the urgent matters now before the Watchers' Committee, and the whole Council of the Society, is the destruction of bird-life by the discharge of oil-waste from petrol-driven vessels in sea and rivers. The Oil in Navigable Waters Act, which came into force on January 1st, 1923, prohibits this in British territorial waters, but is acknowledged as of little avail until international regulations are made. Strong effort was apparent to keep the stuff off our coasts during the bathing season; but with the autumn the trouble breaks out again. One of the Society's Dungeness Watchers writes, December 19th:—

"On the foreshore I have seen nine Scoters with oil on their plumage, and many more seem to be making towards the shore. Several Guillemots are completely covered; it is pitiful to see them trying to rid themselves of the terrible stuff; undoubtedly all must perish, even those with the least bit of oil on; in my experience none recover. I am taking on myself the painful duty of putting them out of misery in the most humane manner."

\* See BIRD NOTES AND NEWS, Spring, 1922.

## The late Mr. W. H. Hudson

MR. W. H. HUDSON, whose sympathy and active support were with the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds from the time of its institution to the day of his death in August last, has left the Society residuary legatee under his will. By the gifts made to it in his lifetime and by the estate now bequeathed, he indicates his express desire for the extension of the Bird and Tree educational schemes in the elementary schools, and the provision of attractive literature in connection with this. In regard to the latter, he states in a paper accompanying the will that he wishes leaflets and short pamphlets to be published suitable for the reading of children in village schools. "The leaflets are to be composed more or less on the lines of those I have written for the Society; each is to be illustrated with a coloured figure of a bird, the writing is to be not so much 'educative' or 'informative' as 'anecdotal.' This, I find, is the easiest way to attract the child's attention to the subject. The coloured picture, the story told, excite that interest in and love of the birds which leads to their protection. I think the Society should print two or three leaflets of this kind each year, if not more."

The leaflets already issued, to which allusion is made, are: "A Thrush that never lived," "On liberating Captive Birds," "A Linnet for Sixpence," and "A Tired Traveller," and Mr. Hudson had specified several chapters in his published works which he wished to be adapted for this purpose.

Mr. Hudson directed that all his MSS, notebooks, and letters, and any scraps of written paper (unless specially marked for publication, in which case they are to be offered first to his publishers, Messrs. J. M. Dent & Sons) should be destroyed.

He left £100 to Miss Linda Gardiner, secretary of the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, in appreciation of her many years' work in the cause of bird

protection, and in gratitude for her friendship; £100, a copy of his "Argentine Ornithology," and all the books by himself on his bookshelves, to Morley Roberts, in remembrance of their long and close friendship; £100 to Edward Garnett, of Edenbridge, in recognition of his helpful friendship.

After a few smaller bequests, the residue is left to the Society.

Dr. Philip Gosse, who joined the Council of the R.S.P.B. last year, contributes to *The Bookman's Journal*, (October, 1922) an "Impression" of Mr. Hudson which will be of interest to the many who knew the great writer only through his books. It happened that the meeting to which Dr. Gosse alludes (October, 1921) was the last Mr. Hudson attended; later in the year he left London for Penzance, not returning until the middle of June, 1922. He writes:—

"It was at a Council Meeting of the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, held in London in 1921. The meeting had been proceeding for some time when the door opened and there entered a figure which could not fail to arrest attention.

"It was evident that the new-comer was embarrassed, as, after the door closed behind him, he stood for a moment with his back to it, glancing round him with a sort of shy defiance. He made me think of a jaguar, or puma, or of some such trapped wild animal, as he searched round the room as if for some way of escape.

"At once I felt sure that this arresting (and arrested) figure could be none other than the man in the whole of England I most wished to meet. His embarrassment was over in a few moments, as various friends gathered round to welcome him.

"There is always, I have found, a risk of disappointment in meeting for the first time a man whose works have delighted and inspired one; but with W. H. Hudson the first impression was anything rather than disappointing. He was remarkably tall, thin, and still active, and although he was an old man, his agile

# W. H. HUDSON MEMORIAL

## EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE :

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MUIRHEAD BONE

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*Hon. Treasurer* : HUGH R. DENT, Aldine House, Bedford Street, W.C. 2

*Hon. Secretary* : MRS. FRANK E. LEMON, Hillcrest, Redhill, Surrey

**A**T a meeting convened by Mr. Cunninghame Graham and Mr. J. M. Dent, supported by Viscount Grey of Fallodon, and attended by many friends of the late Mr. W. H. Hudson, held in London on November 28th, 1922, a proposal to commemorate his name and work was considered, and it was determined that a fitting Memorial to the peculiar quality of Mr. Hudson's genius would be a representation in stone or marble which should bear a medallion of him, and also serve as a drinking and bathing place for birds; such Memorial to be erected if possible in connection with a Bird Sanctuary in one of the Royal Parks of London.

It was also resolved that Professor William Rothenstein's painting of Mr. Hudson should be secured for presentation to the National Portrait Gallery, in the event of the trustees being willing to accept it. [Professor Rothenstein has subsequently most generously offered his painting to the Committee as a free gift, which the Chairman has gratefully accepted on their behalf.]

An executive Committee has been appointed to carry out these proposals, with instructions to issue a public appeal for funds to enable them to do so, and it is hoped that this appeal will meet with a generous response.

Small donations will be welcomed as cordially as larger gifts, for it is believed that, among followers in Mr. Hudson's footsteps and readers of his books, there are many, only able to afford very modest contributions, who would wish to be associated with this Memorial of a great writer.

Upon a proposal made by Lord Grey, the meeting also agreed that after defraying all costs in connection with the Painting, the Memorial, and the Sanctuary, the remainder of the moneys subscribed should be used to promote the wishes of Mr. Hudson\* as expressed in his will, with regard to providing leaflets, pamphlets, and pictures designed to excite in children "that interest in and love of the birds which leads to their protection."

Donations should be sent to the Hon. Treasurer, Hugh R. Dent, Esq., Aldine House, Bedford Street, W.C. 2, or can be paid direct to the "W. H. Hudson Memorial Fund," at the London County Westminster and Parr's Bank, Covent Garden Branch.

\* *Note.*—Mr. Hudson, in writing in March, 1922, of his bequests and gifts to the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, and his wishes with regard to pictures and leaflets for children, said :—

"For the first years the interest of the money must suffice ; afterwards the capital may be used as required. But I hope that the capital may be ADDED TO BY OTHERS, so that the publications which are suitable for distribution on Bird and Tree Day may be kept up indefinitely."

William Henry Hudson died in London on August 18th, and was buried at Broadwater Cemetery on August 22nd, 1922.

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To HUGH R. DENT, ESQ.

1923

Hon. Treasurer, W. H. Hudson Memorial Fund

Aldine House, Bedford Street, W.C. 2

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movements were those of some graceful wild animal, and I felt that to see him at his best, I should observe him on the open pampa of Argentina, rather than in the cramped confines of a committee-room in the Middlesex Guildhall. His white hair was frizzled and wiry, his eyes dark and piercing beneath prominent brows. Noticeable were the long nervous fingers of his hands.

"It was presently my good fortune to be introduced to him. At first our acquaintance seemed in danger of ending abruptly. I was nervous, and he seemed to be somewhat off-hand, almost rude. But when I told him that I had lived at Beaulieu, in his beloved New Forest, his whole manner changed, and all at once we were on the easiest of terms. From then onwards he was delightful, talking freely about his favourite bits of the Forest, particularly of the wood known as the King's Plantation—about days spent in watching and listening, especially listening, to birds, naming, as I remember, the songs of the red-shank, and the white-throat, and what evidently interested him very much, the 'thrumming of the woodcocks courting.'

"He talked also about Dartford Warblers, and was hopeful that these favourites of his—he liked to call them 'Furze Fairies'—would continue to hold their own in the South of England. He told me also about his yearly visits to Norfolk—I think, to Wells—each November and December to watch the winter birds that congregate on the mud-flats there by the sea; but he found he could no longer stand the cold, as his heart was weak, nor, for the same cause, could he spend the winter in London, being compelled to seek the more congenial climate of Cornwall.

"I led him on to talk about his books, by telling him the prices now asked by second-hand booksellers for some of his first editions. This subject obviously pleased him, and he told me that, only a few days previously, a copy of his 'Argentine Ornithology' had been sold for twenty-two pounds. He also told me he was bringing out a new edition of his 'Lost British Birds' with some fifteen coloured plates by Gronvold, and that he was withdrawing from circulation the old edition of this pamphlet, which had been issued by the Society many years previously. He was good enough to give me a copy of this now obsolete issue to add to my collection of his works, since, though I already possessed most of the pamphlets he wrote from time to time for the Society, this one I had never even heard of."

Dr. Gosse goes on to recall an earlier acquaintance with Mr. Hudson when, from the trenches near Armentières, he wrote in 1915 to tell him of the relief afforded by reading one of his books amid the sickening squalor of war, and received in reply a characteristic letter, which is given in full, from "the man who has done more, probably, than any one of our times to foster and encourage a love of all wild living things and, above all, of our native wild birds."

#### MEMORIAL TO MR. HUDSON

At the instance and invitation of Mr. R. B. Cunninghame Graham, a number of Mr. Hudson's friends met together, on November 27th, at Aldine House, W.C. (by the kindness of Messrs. J. M. Dent & Sons), to consider the question of a Memorial and what form it should most fitly take. Mr. Graham presided, supported by Viscount and Viscountess Grey of Fallodon, Mr. Ernest Bell, Mr. J. Bone, Mr. Muirhead Bone, Mr. Theodore Byard, Mr. Joseph Conrad, Mr. J. M. Dent, Mr. Hugh Dent, Mr. Gerald Duckworth, Mrs. Dummitt, Mr. C. S. Evans, Mr. John Galsworthy, Miss L. Gardiner, Mr. Edward Garnett, Mr. Edmund Gosse, Dr. Philip Gosse, Mr. Rudge Harding, Miss Violet Hunt, Mr. Holbrook Jackson, Mr. and Mrs. Frank E. Lemon, Mrs. Reginald McKenna, Mr. H. J. Massingham, Mr. G. H. Milstead, Mr. H. W. Nevinson, Mr. S. K. Ratcliff, Major Roberts, Prof. Wm. Rothenstein, Mr. E. Rhys, Mr. J. C. Squire, Mr. G. F. Wilson.

Letters of regret at inability to attend and expressing sympathy with the object of the meeting, were reported as having been received from Earl Buxton, Mr. G. K. Chesterton, the Hon. Mrs. F. D. Drewitt, Mr. J. Drinkwater, Mr. W. R. Ogilvie Grant, Mr. Maurice Hewlett, Mr. Wynnard Hooper, Mr. H. F. Jones, Mr. E. V. Lucas, Mrs. E. Fuller Maitland, Mr. Walter de la Mare, Mrs. Naylor, Mr. B. L. Richmond, Mr. Morley Roberts and Margaret, Ranee of Sarawak.

The Chairman, one of Mr. Hudson's oldest friends (and to whom "El Ombu"

is inscribed), referred to their mutual love for and associations with the Argentine, and said that he had seen the Argentine Minister before his recent departure for South America with regard to the memorialising of one of the greatest sons of that country in the land of his birth; and that he had promised to go out to Buenos Aires and dedicate such a memorial in due course.

After some discussion, and various suggestions, it was agreed that the Memorial should take the form of a drinking and bathing fountain for wild birds, to be erected if possible in association with a "Hudson Bird Sanctuary" in one of the London Parks. A proposition that a bust of Mr. Hudson should be presented to the National Portrait Gallery was negatived by the statement of Mr. Edmund Gosse (one of the Trustees) that no posthumous portrait was ever accepted; and it was then agreed that the portrait by Professor W. Rothenstein be acquired and offered to the Trustees of the Gallery, and that any further sum subscribed should be devoted to increasing the fund entrusted by his will to the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, for the education of children. Lord Grey spoke of Mr. Hudson's very earnest desire for the furtherance of this work as the most hopeful and the most essential means of creating and increasing that love for birds which would lead to their better protection in the years to come.

Professor Rothenstein has since most generously offered his painting to the Committee as a free gift, which the Chairman has gratefully accepted on their behalf.

The following have been elected as an Executive Committee with power to add to their number, for the carrying out of the proposals: Mr. Cunninghame Graham (Chairman), Viscountess Grey, Mr. Muirhead Bone, Mr. J. M. Dent, Mr. Gerald Duckworth, Miss Linda Gardiner, Mr. Edward Garnett, Mr. Holbrook Jackson, Mrs. R. McKenna, Mr. H. J. Massingham; Mr. Hugh Dent, Hon. Treasurer, and Mrs. Frank E. Lemon, Hon. Secretary.

#### PROPOSED BIRD FOUNTAIN

Mr. Cunninghame Graham writes to the *Times* (December 11th):

"Your readers have already been acquainted with the suggestion to commemorate the name and work of the late Mr. W. H. Hudson by a memorial in keeping with the peculiar quality of his genius. At a meeting attended by a number of his literary friends, preference was given, as has been reported, to the proposal to erect, in connection, if possible, with a 'Hudson Bird Sanctuary' in one of the Royal Parks, a symbolic representation in stone or marble, which should bear a medallion of him, and should also serve as a drinking and bathing place for the wild birds he loved so well.

"It would be impossible to commemorate such a man as Mr. Hudson within four walls, impossible to recall his happiest work, his deepest teaching, his sweetest days, without reference to those beings 'of all living things made most lovely,' the sight of which, as he has told us, best medicined his tired vision and whose music best restored to vigour his weary brain.

"The association with a London park might seem less appropriate than some cairn on a downland height, or some finely wrought well-head in a hidden village of Wiltshire or Somerset; but no special association linked his life with any one of the quiet green places of which he wrote. It was, after all, in the crowded capital of the Empire that Mr. Hudson for over thirty years had his permanent home; among London's bricks and mortar that he died; and it was from his pen—the pen that wrote of vast pampas and wide downs and deep country lanes, the pen of the mystic and the poet—that there came the first plea for the bird sanctuaries of the London parks. It was his vision that first perceived in the Londoner's soul the longing for a sight and sound of wild birds even before tulips and geraniums—the perpetual hunger of the heart and craving of those who are compelled to live apart from Nature . . . and the refreshment they experience at the sight of trees and grass and water, and, above everything, of wild and glad animal life.' What Mr. Hudson saw a quarter of a century ago has at last been seen by a Government Department, and it is surely well that his vision and his wish should be recalled by the thousands who resort to our great parks and the thousands who will make the pilgrimage to the memorial.

"It is worth recalling that he placed the opening of his first book on English bird life

in St. James's Park, and that Richmond Park enters into the title of his last work.

"It is hoped that a generous response will be made to this appeal, so that the work may be carried out with as beautiful a design, as good workmanship, and in as imperishable material as possible. Small donations will be welcomed as cordially as larger gifts, for it is believed that among followers in Mr. Hudson's footsteps and readers of his books there are many only able to afford small contributions who would wish to be associated with this memorial of a great teacher. It was, moreover, their lives into which he entered with most sympathy and which he most hoped to influence as is shown by his bequest."

Donations should be sent to the Hon. Treasurer, Mr. Hugh Dent, Aldine House, Bedford Street, W.C.1, or can be paid direct to the "W. H. Hudson Memorial Fund" at the London County Westminster and Parr's Bank, Covent Garden.

The first list of subscriptions includes the following:—

£50—R. B. Cunninghame Graham.

£25—Mr. and Mrs. Muirhead Bone; J. M. Dent & Sons, Ltd.; John Galsworthy; Edward Garnett; H.H. Margaret, Ranee of Sarawak.

£20—Viscount Grey of Falloodon, K.G.; Viscountess Grey.

£15 15s.—Miss C. V. Hall.

£10 10s.—Hon. Mrs. Bontine; Dr. and Hon. Mrs. Dawtrey Drewitt; Royal Society for the Protection of Birds.

£5 5s.—Mrs. Ella Fuller Maitland; Miss L. Gardiner; Mr. and Mrs. Frank E. Lemon; Prof. and Mrs. W. Rothenstein.

£5—The Marquess of Crewe, K.G.; Dr. Emilio Gutienele; E. V. Lucas; Duchess of Portland.

£3 3s.—Mr. and Mrs. N. H. Arnison; Hon. Mrs. Arthur Henniker.

£2 2s.—Earl Buxton; John Byers; Edmund Gosse; J. Rudge Harding; Mr. and Mrs. Percy Leake; Miss Lowry; E. G. B. Meade-Waldo; H. W. Nevinson; Miss E. M. Williams.

£1 1s.—A. Conyers Baker; Maurice Church; A. T. Cummings; Mrs. Dummett; Algernon Gissing; J. W. Haines; J. Hamer; H. Festing Jones; G. E. Lawrence; Miss E. E. Lewis; G. C. Nevile; F. B. B. Nichols; Miss L. Pollock; Morley Roberts; Sir Montagu Sharpe, K.C.; D. M. Stevenson.

£1—Lady Bruce; Ralph Peck.

10s. 6d.—Mrs. M. H. Paterson.

10s.—L. Leslie Brooke; A. P. Dawson; Lady Jekyll.

Within the space of but a few weeks have been published the last work written by Mr. Hudson. "A Hind in Richmond Park" (J. M. Dent & Sons), and the first two volumes of the Memorial Edition, prepared by the same publishers, consisting of his two earliest works, "The Purple Land that England Lost" (1885) and "A Crystal Age" (1887). These latter, both fiction, contain less of his own special subjects, his outlook on nature, at once scientific and emotional, and his outlook on life, at once philosophical and poignant—than perhaps any other books that came from his pen. The "Hind," on the other hand, has more of analytical and speculative inquiry than any other, based on an extraordinary wealth of examples and instances. The increase in reflective musing, and the decrease of direct and joyous communion with nature, tell of advancing years. It would be difficult to find other indication of age.

"A Hind in Richmond Park" deals with the senses of animals, including man, civilised and uncivilised, and the lesser creation; and Mr. Hudson himself was in writing it absorbed by the subject. The mass of illustrative notes employed, many of them referring back to his experiences on the Pampas, indicate that it had fascinated him long before he meditated following up impressions with comparison and induction. The fascination now grips the reader.

For the bird-lover the greatest interest will lie in the numerous passages concerning the sight and smell of birds, bird-music, the sense of direction and the migrating instinct. All are extraordinarily full of theory and hypothesis that "make to think."

The last chapter was not entirely written when the writer laid down his pen for the last time; but the incomplete script has been interpreted and arranged as the publishers say, with "loving patient care" by Mr. Morley Roberts.

# The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds

## COUNCIL MEETINGS

MEETINGS of the Council of the Society were held at the Guildhall, Westminster, S.W., on October 20th and December 15th, 1922, the Chairman, Sir Montagu Sharpe, K.C., presiding.

The Reports presented by the Hon. Secretary referred feelingly to the death of Mr. W. H. Hudson, of Mrs. Owen Visger, and of Mr. L. J. Bonhote; and on the motion of the Chairman, seconded by the Hon. Secretary (Mr. Frank E. Lemon), it was unanimously agreed to record on the minutes the deep regret felt by the Council at the loss of Mr. Hudson, their old and valued colleague of many years' standing, as well as their appreciation of the valuable services rendered by him to the cause of bird-preservation, not only in connection with the Society, but also by the influence of his books and letters. It was also agreed that letters of regret and condolence should be written to Mrs. L. J. Bonhote and Mrs. Belcher (Miss Visger).

The Hon. Secretary reported the issue of Bird Protection Orders for Cambridgeshire, extending the Wicken Fen area order; for Somerset, protecting the eggs of the Lapwing; and for the County Borough of Liverpool, giving protection to all birds throughout the year. Thirty-one lectures had been given. The awards of the judges in the Bird and Tree Competition were made known and approved. Correspondence with the Forestry Commission and other bodies was considered, and the passing of the Oil in Navigable Waters Act recorded. At the later meeting, the initiation of the W. H. Hudson Memorial was reported, and a donation from the Society of ten guineas was unanimously voted. It was further decided to purchase for the Society a set of the Collected Works of Mr. Hudson, which is being issued by Messrs. J. M. Dent & Sons, to whom permission has been given to include leaflets written for the R.S.P.B.

The Finance and General Purposes Committee presented the statement of accounts, which included, besides the intimation of the bequest from Mr. Hudson, small legacies from the late Mr. W. Farmer and the late Miss Cox. The appointments of Miss P. Barclay-Smith and Miss W. M. Stephens on the Secretarial staff of the Society were confirmed. The following Fellows and Members were elected:

FELLOWS:—J. H. de N. Abbott, Miss Attwood, Sir William Bennett, Captain H. E. L. Bolton, F. Bostock, Rev. Canon Brook-Jackson, Miss R. Burroughes, Mrs. Capron, Miss Barbara Clayton, B. S. Collard, Miss J. E. Collingham, R. F. B. Cross, Sir Gerald du Maurier, Miss Dunlop, R. C. K. Ensor, Miss Isabella Ford, Rev. A. Linzee Giles, Algernon Gissing, Miss Alice M. Grimes, Miss Horsfall, Miss Hudleston, Misses Hunting, L. Campbell Johnston, G. W. Lloyd, M.D., Miss N. F. Loch, Miss May Michaelson, Arthur H. Norris, Mrs. Wilfred Parr, Roland T. Pounds, Kenneth R. Swan, Eugene Todd, Mrs. A. M. Wallis, Mrs. Williams, Miss E. M. Wilson, L. M. Wynch.

MEMBERS:—Mrs. Abel, Miss Lucy Alcock, Miss M. Aldred, Arthur Astley, Miss F. A. Baker, J. Bassnett, Miss E. Bateson, Miss Batt, Mrs. Beardsell, Mrs. Lindsay Bergham, Miss N. Bewley, Mrs. Rodger Pest, Miss Bible, Percy Billington, Mrs. Bissell, Mrs. E. C. Bird, Rev. E. C. Blaxland, F. A. Bolton, Mrs. F. A. Bolton, Misses Bolton, Miss Adela Brant, Miss Dorothy Brooke, Mrs. Brooks, Miss Hilda G. Brown, Mrs. Brudenell, Mrs. Burley, Miss D. Burroughes, Alex. Cameron, G. A. Capron, Mrs. Carr, Mrs. F. B. Challinor, Miss Rosa Chapman, Ralph Chislett, Mrs. Chorley, Miss C. Claughton, Mrs. W. W. Cobbett, H. E. Cookson, H. C. Cremen, S. A. Collard, Miss Helen Dalrymple, Mrs. Despard, Mrs. Dicksee, R. Dobell, Mrs. R. Dobell, A. E. Dunham, Miss Marjory Dunham, Miss Phyllis Dunham, Mrs. Duval, Mrs. R. Emmett, H. B. Elling, Mrs. F. Ellison, T. B. Faithfull, Mrs. Fenn, Arthur Finn, Mrs. M. F. Ford, Mrs. Freer, Mrs. Friedenham, Hon. Juliet Gardner, W. Ganley, Mrs. Goodenough, Miss Grieve, T. W. Greene, Miss Gulland, C. Gyzen, Miss K. L. Hall, Major Hall, Percy J. Hanson, Miss M. Hart, Miss Clare G. Hargrove, T. O. Harrison, Miss Hamer, Lt.-Colonel G. A. Hawkes, Rev. E. Hanson, Miss Haynes, Miss Mary M. Hayward, Mrs. Heavyside, Richmond Hellyer, Miss Barbara Highton, Henry Holiday, Miss Winifred Holiday, Miss C. R. Holland, Miss Vere Hutchinson, Mrs. Henry Jones, Mrs. H. B. Jowitz, Miss K. Jacques, Miss F. M. Keith, Mrs. K. Kane, Miss E. M. Kane, Miss M. K. Kane, Miss M. E. Knight, Miss Agnes Leith, Arthur H. Lemon, C.M.G., Mrs. A. H. Lemon, H. R. Lemon, R.E., Miss Linton, Miss L. J. Lutton, Miss Lyle, Miss Mackay, A. J. W. McNicol, William Marshall, Samuel Mann, G. H. Millar, Mrs. Moorhouse, Mrs. S. Moberly, J. E. P. Morris, The Lady Newborough, E. A. M. Norie, Mrs. Palairot, Captain G. Penruddocke, Hon. Mrs. Parsons, Mrs. Peel, Captain Oliver G. Pike, Mrs. de Quincey, Miss

Joan Reid, Mrs. Richards, J. B. Rattar, Rear-Admiral Reeves, Ernest Roberts, Miss Robinson, Miss Helen G. Romer, A. M. Rope, Miss Catherine Sharpe, Edgar C. Smith, Miss Ethel A. Shipman, Miss Woodd Smith, Miss Bertha Wood Smith, Mrs. Stephens, Miss M. Stephens, George Stockwell, F. E. Stokes, M.D., D.P.H. John Taylor, Miss Taylor, Miss Joan Thompson, Claud V. Ticehurst, M.D., Miss Octavia Townsend, Miss Troast, Mrs. Verner, Miss V. Vicars, Samuel Walkden, Mrs. Seymour Walkden, Mrs. W. L. Waugh, Colonel W. H. F. Weber, C.M.G., D.S.O., R. G. Weston, Miss S. Wilberforce, James Willcocks, Miss Vera Williams, Harold E. Witham.

LIFE FELLOW : Mrs. Hector McLean.

LIFE MEMBERS : W. E. Candy, John Hamer, George Hubbard.

The extended report of the Watchers' Committee for the two years 1921-22, published in detail for issue to subscribers to the Fund, was presented; and the reports of meetings of the Watchers' Committee on October 20th, and of the Publicity Committee on December 6th, were reported.

Business with reference to the International Committee for the Protection of Wild Birds, the H.O. Wild Birds Advisory Committee, the London Park Sanctuaries and other matters was dealt with, and the issue of a leaflet on the formation of bird-sanctuaries on public or private land, was considered.

### OBITUARY

THE Society has sustained another heavy loss in the death, at Las Palmas, on December 22nd, 1922, of Mr. Aubyn B. R. Trevor-Battye, F.L.S., F.Z.S., F.R.G.S., of Ashford Chace, Petersfield. Mr. Trevor-Battye, who was an accomplished zoologist, botanist and writer, was best known in the scientific world as the first Englishman to explore Kolguev Island, in Barent's Sea, off the north-west coast of Russia, in 1894; he was an extensive traveller, also, in other lands, was zoologist to the Conway Arctic Expedition in 1896, and made a special study of nature and scenery in Crete. Author of "Icebound on Kolguev," "A Northern Highway of the Czar," "Camping in Crete," and "Pictures in Prose." He was editor-in-chief of natural history for the Victoria History of the Counties of England, and for some time

proprietor and editor of "The Artist."

Always a close student of bird-life, Mr. Trevor-Battye edited Lord Lilford's work on birds in 1903, and joined the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds in 1905, being elected a member of the Council almost immediately and retaining his seat until his death. He was also a thoroughly sympathetic member of the Watchers' Committee. One of the gifts of his pen to the Society was the poem "Christmas in the Lines, 1917," published as an inset to the greeting-card of that year and afterwards set to music. His charming personality will be no less missed than his ornithological knowledge.

Mr. Trevor-Battye, who was a son of the Rev. W. Wilberforce Battye, of Tingrith Manor, Beds, and Little Hampden, Bucks, was 67 years of age, and had been in ill-health for some years; it may be doubted whether he ever fully recovered from the privations of his winter on Kolguev.

Never perhaps have six months in the Society's history brought so many losses of influential and enthusiastic supporters. It has lost three distinguished members of its Council—Mr. Hudson, Mr. Bonhote and Mr. Trevor-Battye; and among others who will be keenly missed are Mr. J. H. Gurney, of Keswick Hall, Norwich, Norfolk's eminent and leading ornithologist, who died on November 8th; Mrs. Lloyd Theakston, of Barmouth, ever an enthusiast on behalf of the weak, a champion of humane causes, and one of the most ardent and helpful workers for the cause of the birds in Wales (October 8th); the Rev. D. Edmondson Owen, Vicar of Llandoverly, who, like Mrs. Theakston, combined ornithological with archæological interests; Mr. A. K. Loyd, K.C.; Lady Herdman; and Mrs. Irene Osgood, the novelist, whose grounds at Guilsborough Hall were a very paradise for the birds she loved to encourage and protect. In Virginia, where she was born, Mrs. Osgood founded "Christmas parties for the birds," which she introduced in her English home, and she was part author of "The Winged Anthology."

## Notes

THE Royal Parks Bird Sanctuaries Committee, appointed by Lord Crawford, has issued a first report which will give pleasure and satisfaction to the nature-loving Londoner. They recommend the formation of such sanctuaries in Hyde Park and Kensington Gardens (where the arrangements have already been to a considerable extent carried out), St. James's Park (the present water-fowl island), Regent's Park (the island in the lake), Richmond Park (the Isabella and other plantations, with special encouragement for the Great Crested Grebe on the Pen Ponds), Greenwich Park (two areas in the Wilderness); and it will be learned with particular pleasure that by the King's consent similar sanctuaries are contemplated in Buckingham Palace Gardens. The many species of birds nesting in and visiting Hyde Park have been already referred to in BIRD NOTES AND NEWS, and the list of trees and shrubs recommended will be useful to other Park Authorities. The report is issued from H.M. Stationery Office; price 7d.

\* \* \*

Liverpool has succeeded in obtaining the first Order issued in England protecting all wild birds throughout the year. This was brought about for the express purpose of stopping birdcatching in the suburbs in the open season; and hearty congratulations must be offered to the Secretary of the Liverpool Branch of the R.S.P.C.A., and to the local Hon. Secretary of the R.S.P.B., who worked in energetic accord for this object; also to the City, which furnishes so excellent a lead. Dundee obtained a similar measure some years ago. This protection, while putting a stop to the predatory bird-catcher, does not interfere with the rights of landowners and tenants in regard to non-scheduled birds, and is, therefore, so eminently reasonable that it tempts to the use of the old tag, *O si sic omnes*. Also, why not *sic omnes*?

Meanwhile we have Magistrates like Mr. Francis, at Westminster, and Lord Deerhurst, at Pershore, expressing that loathing for the catcher's trade, which is fairly general among English people; and we have caged birds, nets, bird-lime, and the like freely advertised (except in cases where a protest from the Society brings about an occasional withdrawal, and in this connection the thanks of bird-lovers may be offered to that popular journal *The Fruit Grower*). Also we have continual protests against the sale in big stores of song-birds as food, and the appearance of skylarks on the menu of the too-well-fed; with advertisements such as this:—

To Lark Catchers.—Unlimited number Blackbirds, Larks, Fieldfares . . . wanted throughout season. " . . . Smithfield Market."

\* \* \*

It is high time that some specific definition should be attached to the words "naturalist" and "ornithologist," so that the general public may know what the terms indicate and what are the aims and policy pursued by such persons, and by societies composed of such persons; in fact, not ostensibly. There might then be means for judging how far the existence of some of these individuals and some of these societies is inimical and dangerous to the preservation of the rarer forms of life. Instances have continued to come to light since the protest made by Earl Buxton at the Society's last annual meeting; and the latest is perhaps the most shameless. A society of "field naturalists" (there is no occasion to advertise it) has recently sent out a circular asking for specimens for the local museum of some of the very rarest of British birds—birds which are in many cases protected by law, birds which would be protected in every possible way by any bird-student with one atom of decent feeling or with one spark in his soul of that spirit and perception which alone qualify the true

naturalist. Among the species named are the Kentish Plover (the remnant that would have been extirpated long ago but for the Society's Watchers), the Dartford Warbler, the Bearded Tit, the Black Tern, the Sandwich Tern, and the Marsh Warbler; and lest the excuse should be raised that gifts from old collections are being asked for, the circular specifically states that they should be sent stuffed or

immediately after death, and as the ready-mounted are preferred the opportunity is taken to advertise a local firm of bird-stuffers. Is it well that one generic name and one handbook should cover associations which prompt to bird-destruction of the most mischievous kind, and associations of genuine naturalists which honourably strive for bird-protection?

## Books Received

"A BIBLIOGRAPHY of the Writings of W. H. Hudson," by G. F. Wilson (*Bookman's Journal*, 14s.).—For several years past Mr. Hudson's writings have gradually been advancing in value, not only with naturalists and lovers of good literature, but with that special section of the book-loving world which collects first editions; and at the present moment there are perhaps no publications by modern writers more in demand, both in this country and in the United States, than some of his scarcer works and those that are out of print. To all such collectors Mr. Wilson's Bibliography will be invaluable and indispensable. Now that the great writer's hand is at rest for ever, it assumes a further and fuller interest for all his admirers, who will feel their indebtedness to the compiler. Mr. Wilson's work, though so opportunely published, is no hasty or hurried-up production. It has clearly been with him a labour of love, and he has devoted infinite care to the search for early, unsigned and hitherto unknown contributions to magazines of long-ago, as well as to the precise format of first editions of acknowledged volumes. Some help was afforded by Mr. Hudson himself, who furnished the clue to several anonymous or pseudonymous articles and stories. Eight title-pages are given in facsimile, including that of "Lost British Birds," a pamphlet written for the R.S.P.B., and now unobtainable in any edition until the new and enlarged one upon which Mr. Hudson was at work at the time of his death can be issued.

Bindings and collations are detailed with great exactitude, and a brief biographical note is added. The publishers have done their part well, as might be expected, in the matter of type and general get-up. In a future edition, perhaps, Mr. Hudson's purely scientific papers, appearing in learned societies' proceedings, might be noted, though they naturally come outside the actual scope of the volume.

"BIRDS IN FLIGHT," by W. P. Pycraft, F.Z.S., with 12 coloured plates and other illustrations by Roland Green, F.Z.S. (Gay & Hancock, Ltd., 15s.). No attribute of the bird is more fascinating to the bird-lover or more deeply interesting to the bird-student than that of flight, and of late it has been the subject of discussions innumerable in the hope that some of its secrets may be made to yield knowledge and help to the aviator. For this technical consideration of mechanical flight, Mr. Pycraft's work, as he says in his preface, is not intended; and for this most of his readers will be thankful. His aim is to help those who hope to identify the flying bird, not by some "ready guide," which so many people seem to expect and which Nature has made impossible; but by information and description which will stimulate and help forward the study of the genuine learner. The evolution of wings, their size and shape in relation to flight, modes of flight, and accounts of some characteristics of flight in bird families which will enable the student to tell birds on the wing, with

notes on the wings of nestlings and the history of flightless birds; these are some of the subjects treated in Mr. Pycraft's attractive volume. The publishers have seconded the attractions of science thus happily made alluring by the addition of illustrations at once helpful and beautiful. It is enough to quote Mr. Pycraft's comment: "Where birds are concerned, few artists in the past, and very few in the present, have shown any ability to combine accuracy in drawing with ingenuity of composition and faithfulness in colouring. Mr. Green has shown this rare combination." The pictorial charm of Mr. Green's art is already well known to the public.

OUR BIRDS: their Haunts and Nests (T. N. Foulis), First and Second Series, contain a series of photographs, chiefly of nests and young birds, by Charles Reid, of Wishaw, with brief accompanying letterpress. Mr. Reid's skill is well known, and the little books are well and attractively got up.

ST. RUBE, and other Bird Stories, by Isa J. Postgate (The Faith Press, London, W.C.) consists of a series of legends and stories of saints, birds and men, such as are associated with Miss Postgate's fanciful and bird-loving pen, and should be an attractive book for children. Illustrated by Elsie Kohler.

## Bird and Tree Challenge Shield Competition

THE Elementary Schools are now in a fair way of recovery, it may be hoped, from the effects of the war, and from the generally unsettled state of things that followed the war and diverted the attention of Teachers, and Managers also, from the question of Education pure and simple. With the new trend in educational principles; the new desire to stimulate agriculture (if the country is to be fed) and to make the country a desirable place to live in (if agriculture is to survive); and with the recognition at long last of the outstanding fact that nature-study cannot be disconnected from Nature and administered in slabs from manuals; the Society's prescience in starting its Bird and Tree Scheme becomes patent. The meetings at Oxford this summer, stamping the approval of the Board of Education upon methods already highly approved by Education Directors in every County where they have been worked, have coincided with the generous gift, and subsequent bequest, of the late Mr. Hudson, which have not only rendered an extension of the work financially possible, but have made clear the fact that this training of the children is the thing he would most desire to honour his memory and fulfil his hopes.

The issue of a new booklet on the scheme, containing a portrait of Mr. Hudson and particulars of the Competition, will, it is expected, make it widely known and adopted. Though limited by the Society to Elementary Schools, the central idea is readily adaptable to Secondary and Private Schools.

A large number of Schools new to the Competition enter this year; but a certain number of old Competitors are absent for one reason or another. A new county, Surrey, had been invited to join in, but unfortunately does not provide a sufficient number of Teams to warrant the award of a County Shield this year. After this preliminary canter no doubt the scheme will be better known, and more courage on the part of Teachers and Schools should lead to a success second to that of no county. New work can, naturally, rarely vie with that of Schools well accustomed to a procedure fresh and strange in the first instance. Children have been used for generations to having their educational food cut up and administered to them in a certain place, between certain hours of the day. Essay competitions have long been identified with verbal reproductions (as far as possible) of lesson or lecture, or with compositions on fancy subjects, where

lack of knowledge is atoned for by pleasing verbiage and good spelling. But for Bird and Tree papers the child's own observation, thought, discoveries and ideas are sought; initiative is encouraged; intelligence that leads to knowledge and interest that evokes sympathy are more to the purpose than book-learned statements and memorised sentiments.

The wonder is perhaps that the children take to the new style of thing so quickly and obviously enjoy it so thoroughly. Much, of course, depends upon the Teacher; in some schools nature-study had been conducted on similar lines already, with country rambles and happy chatter; in others it had meant terrible words like "chlorophyl" and "dichotomous," and the bringing to school of eggs one wanted for oneself or for swapping.

The two main defects, both with inexperienced Teams and in much of the general work, are (1) too great dependence on books, lessons and hearsay; (2) too great concentration on nests and eggs, with neglect of the bird itself, its habits, food, and, above all, notes. Evidence of carefully-kept notebooks is greater than formerly, and the best effect of all is produced where the making of notes has helped to form the picture in the brain and led to the acquiring of definite facts; but where at the time of writing the notes themselves can be left behind and memory reconstruct bird and tree brightly and clearly. Some of the children achieve this happy result with remarkable success.

The choice of subjects continues to improve. Though the commoner species naturally form the subjects of the greater number of papers, there are good essays on such birds as Wild Duck, Tern, Little Grebe, Snipe, Kingfisher, Green and Great Spotted Woodpeckers, Wheatear, Whinchat, Crossbill, Dipper and Oystercatcher; and on Hornbeam, Guelder Rose, Spindle-tree, Whitebeam, Ilex, Dogwood, Spruce Fir, Aspen, Bird-Cherry and Mulberry.

The Judges for the whole Competition were: Sir Montagu Sharpe, K.C., Mr. H. G. Alexander, Miss Clifton, Mrs.

Edward Clodd, Mrs. Frederick Dawson, Mr. F. Martin Duncan, Mr. J. Rudge Harding, Mr. J. R. B. Masefield, Mr. H. Moss, F.R.H.S., Miss Pollock, Rev. W. A. Shaw, Rev. J. G. Tuck, and Miss Gardiner (Secretary).

### INTER-COUNTY SHIELD

The Inter-County Shield, for which competition is limited to County Shield winners of the year and "Champion" Schools which on account of continued successes have been ruled ineligible for their County Shield for the time being, is this year awarded to Leicester Road School, Bedworth (Warwickshire), an old and enthusiastic competitor. The second place is given to the Victoria School, Wellingboro', whose name is already on the trophy; and the third to Newburgh, Lancashire's champion school, which won it last year. In speaking highly of the original observations of the winning Teams, the Judge adds: "One of the best single essays, if not the best, is the Dipper, from Cartmel Fell. I know the bird well, and several of its characteristics not generally mentioned in textbooks are referred to by the writer. Another good one is the Pied Wagtail from Bedworth. The three Tree Essays from Wellingboro' are of a high standard. Altogether the essays are above the average of those I have had before, and all show increased intelligence."

Newburgh, though a young Team, having lost some of the leading members of last year's winning Team, does notably excellent work so that its county is strongly represented.

### COUNTY COMPETITIONS

#### BUCKINGHAMSHIRE

Bucks is still among the lazy counties, and does not make good use of its fine opportunities. Possibly the well-trod road seems easier than new paths, and the fact that a bird is a bird and a tree a tree seems enough, without any inquiry as to what bird or what tree or as to the association of either with man. Those Schools which compete demonstrate, however, that good work can be done in the county, and the Shield is closely contested. A new

name will appear upon it this year, that of Haversham, which wins by the intelligent and unconventional manner in which first-hand matter is treated, while the little sketches are original and illustrative. Certificates go to Coleshill, which maintains its high standard and has excellent subjects; Cuddington, with particularly neat and nice little papers; and Pitstone, where there are promising young naturalists; while the Girls' Team from St. Mary's, Amersham, make a capital start on the right lines, and with further practice will not confine themselves so closely to the nesting season.

#### CUMBERLAND

Last year Seaton Camerton succeeded in wresting the Shield from St. John's Girls, Keswick, but this year Keswick, with a valiant effort to surpass its former achievements, sends in essays full of personal observation, all set forth in an easy, natural and sympathetic manner, and written for the first time without use of notes. It wins the day. Seaton Camerton, however, also using no notes, again does well, though the Bird papers are too exclusively papers on nests. It is regrettable that the Goldfinch, increasing in most parts of the country, is said to be decreasing in this district, where what the young writer sarcastically calls "bird lovers" appear to be still allowed to evade the law. This School provides two Teams, Keswick three. The smaller Schools of Cargo and Nether Denton had possibly enough to do to make up one, but those enlisted have worked enthusiastically and both are awarded Certificates.

#### HAMPSHIRE

The Council of the Society are disappointed that here, as in Bucks, better response is not made to their efforts for the benefit (present and future) of country dwellers and to the cordial commendatory words of the Education authorities. The work done here, too, is very good, but there ought to be a great deal more of it. It is a thousand pities when Schools which have entered and worked draw back at the last moment for fear their efforts should not be successful. In the effort lies the success, and the judges are glad to welcome elementary work, if sincere. The Isle of Wight and, with one exception the Boroughs, do nothing. Ridge so frequently in the van, wins the Shield once more, the Boscombe Girls taking Second Prize; but some delightful papers, fresh and individual, come from Headley (Holme School),

Headbourne Worthy and Durley. Highly promising, again, is a new School, Twyford; and Hinton Ampner does pleasant work; while Wickham, if but moderately satisfactory, could probably do better if the children put a little more "snap" into their work.

#### LANCASHIRE

Lancashire continues to do excellent work in the Competition, and there is very little that is dull or careless in the numerous papers examined, many of them being individual studies of an admirable kind, giving pleasant glimpses of country round about the Schools and lively pictures of its Birds and Trees. Those written without aid from notes, often the case in Lancashire, are as a rule most successful in this respect, sometimes with the corresponding defect of too sketchy a treatment of the special subjects. Newburgh C.E. being, as a Champion School, out of the running for the County Shield, the final competition lies with Cartmel Fell, Bolton-le-Sands R.C., and Buckhurst, the first-named coming at the head with admirable papers, and the other two being bracketed equal seconds. The variety of subjects in all these teams is notable, and an essay on the Oyster-catcher by a boy of nine at Bolton-le-Sands is a capital piece of observation, while Buckhurst excels in graphic pictures of Trees. Certificates go to Adlington (St. Paul's), Blawith, Brathay District (Skelwith), Burtonwood, Hollins Green, Samlesbury, Satterthwaite, Walmsley C.E., and Withnell U.M. A number of other teams are highly commended.

#### NORFOLK

It is impossible to offer anything but hearty congratulation to Norfolk, which furnishes essays from over eighty Schools. Good work, too, most of it, though some crude and elementary enough, the Teachers no doubt recognising the fact—very insufficiently appreciated in general—that the work itself is of infinitely more importance in the education of children than the competitive victory, the honest effort far more inspiring than the easy win. Three Schools send such observant, bright and sympathetic essays that it is not easy to place them first, second and third. Necton ultimately takes the Shield, with Postwick and Bracon Ash equal seconds. Admirable, also, are the papers from Saham Toney and Worstead, and Certificates go likewise to Bergh Apton, Beechanwell, Colby and Felmingham,

St. Faith's, Fakenham, Ketteringham, Mattishall, Thetford, Toft Monks, Toftwood, East Tuddenham, Brockdish, Feltwell, Blickling, Sprowston and Elsing. A high total of marks for very good and promising papers is also secured by Castle Rising, Croxton, Sporle and Topcroft, who head the list of those Highly Commended.

#### NORTHAMPTONSHIRE

The general improvement in the Northants essays, noted last year, is again very marked. The only check on the satisfaction the Judges feel in noting this conspicuous rise in the average merit lies in the fact that the number of competing Teams is smaller than in some previous years; therefore, it may be, to some extent, that less promising and less interested Schools have dropped out. This would be most regrettable, as with patience and perseverance any Team may quickly improve provided the children once acquire love for wild life and for outdoor observation of it. There are, on the other hand, some distinctly promising newcomers. The Shield reverts to the Victoria School, Wellingborough, where the young naturalists watch and note with zealous and sympathetic enthusiasm. Hemington and the Girls' Team of All Saints, Wellingborough, must be bracketed for the second place, and it was difficult to relegate Middleton Cheney to the third. The winners of the "Excellent" distinction are Culworth, Welton, Maidford, Wellingborough (All Saints' Boys), Greatworth, and Sywell. The papers gain much more character and vigour as the Teams become more at home in the work; and the list of Birds studied is greatly extended, without counting the canary and parrot put forward by one Team!

#### SOMERSET

As usual in these later years, Somerset does well enough to give assurance that with greater industry and determination it could do far better. The work is all pleasant outdoor work, the observation good (bolstered up with a little cramming here and there), the writing is easy and natural, and the Birds and Trees are well chosen. No one School stands out pre-eminently, which is generally a healthy sign, and certainly none is conspicuously poor. Two new competitors, East Mark and South Perrott, take at once a good place. There are again fresh and interesting papers from Chillington, winner of the Shield last year; but the award goes this time to North

Perrott, where there are some very keen little observers, and papers on the Heron and Brown Owl win special commendation. A very good batch of essays, bright and original, comes also from Norton Fitzwarren's young Team, one member of which is only eight; and Winsham and Chedington (the latter a regular migrant to the Competition from over the Dorset border) show a nice feeling for nature and a commendable amount of knowledge.

#### WARWICKSHIRE

It was remarked last year that the Warwickshire work was being reinforced and stiffened to a noteworthy extent by entries from Schools within the educational boundary of Birmingham. Still more markedly is this the case in 1922, and the time may come when Birmingham will need a Shield of its own. Five City Teams enter the lists, and to judge by their essays there is no difficulty in finding excellent subjects for study within the wide limits of the Midland Metropolis. Hall Green and Erdington make secure the reputation they gained in 1921, but the most keenly observant papers come from Stirchley Street, a new entrant which shares second place with an old friend, Mancetter. The Shield is won by the charmingly spontaneous essays from Leicester Road Council School, Bedworth. Though the competitors are younger than the average, there is no doubt as to the adjudication of the award. Curiously enough, some of the village schools rely far more on books and other second-hand material than do the borough boys and girls; but good personal efforts to attain first-hand knowledge are conspicuous in essays from Brinklow, Glascote, Astley, Rowington and Solihull. Marston Green (a new competitor), Temple Grafton and Binton do best with Trees, Great Alne with Birds.

#### OPEN CLASS

It was the intention of the Society to add a Surrey Challenge Shield to the list this year; but since of all the schools which entered teams, only four kept up the work and sent in essays, such an award must obviously stand over until earned by a considerably stronger competition. The best work comes from the girls of Ingram Road School, Thornton Heath, a great suburb thus exhibiting more knowledge and love of nature than all the bird-haunted regions round Dorking or Haslemere. It does so well as to gain a Certificate, Shamley Green coming second; a Redhill School (Frenches Road) and Capel

(Dorking) are third and fourth. None of these, however, succeeds in bearing off the First Prize from older hands, as is but natural; and Hinton Waldrist (Berks.) and Slindon (Sussex) take the lead, essays from the former including some good observation of the Reed-Warbler. Walshaw (W. Yorks.) does excellent work; the Slad School, Stroud (Glos.) and Horsted Keynes are notably promising first-year students; Felixstowe Ferry (Suffolk), Totley (Derbyshire), Colden (W. Yorks.), and another newcomer, Stubbings (Yorks.), do well; Waltham St. Lawrence (Berks.) and Gazeley (Suffolk) would have secured higher places if more outdoor observation was discoverable in their papers.

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#### IN THE COURTS

**THE COSTERMONGER AND HIS LARKS.**—At *Westminster* on November 25th, William John Warwick, a Westminster costermonger and bird-dealer, was fined forty shillings, with three guineas costs, for cruelty to three Larks. The birds were found in a miserable condition, with wings badly bruised, attention to their state having been called by Mrs. Hilda Sherwood. Mr. Francis, the magistrate, said it was a most deplorable trade. It was a monstrous thing to keep Larks in cages, and he would release every such bird kept as these were. Defendant said he had kept birds as a hobby for forty years; he loved to hear them sing, and cruelty was the last thing he would think of. He would take his other Larks into the country and release them. [We hope someone saw it done.—ED.]

**BIRDCATCHING.**—At *Newport (Mon.)*, on November 5th, Henry Jones, convicted of setting a net to catch Linnets, said he was catching them to sell at 6d. each, and did not know it was against the law.

**WILD BIRDS AT BREYDON.**—At *Great Yarmouth*, on September 11th, Samuel Colby was convicted and fined for shooting a Ringed Plover at Breydon Water, an area under the protection of the Norfolk Wild Birds' Protection Committee. The Watcher saw the bird shot, after which men threw mud and sticks at it as it was wounded, but it got away. There had been much shooting on Breydon lately.

**BIRD-SLAVES.**—At *Eritih*, on October 7th, James Roper was fined 30s. for cruelty to decoy Linnets. The police explained that water-troughs were sunk in the ground containing water and seed to attract birds, and the decoy birds were pinned to the ground by braces in the usual way and made to flutter. Defendant pleaded that he was out of work and had spent months in training the birds. He was in receipt of about 32s. a week from the Guardians, and was stated to have been a regular bird-catcher on Sundays when in work.—At *Pershore*, on September 19th, John Stokes was fined £2 for torturing a decoy Linnet. He was on a common, with other men, using nets to catch birds, and the decoy bird's feathers were bloodstained. Lord Deerhurst said it was one of the cruellest things that could be done.

LEAFLETS by Mr. W. H. HUDSON.

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*G. C. S. Ingram,*

*[Copyright Photo.*

**WHINCHAT**

(with food for young in its beak).

*From "Natureland."*

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# Bird Notes & News

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## More about Bird Sanctuaries

ACCORDING to the *Times*, Sir Lionel Earle, Permanent Secretary of the Board of Works, and Chairman of the London Parks Sanctuaries Committee, has been astonished at the enthusiasm created by the proposal to set aside these sanctuaries, and by the torrent of inquiries which has descended upon him as to how such refuges can be made. The idea has indeed taken with the public in a manner that shows how little beyond a shining example and a lead is needed to stir up popular delight in wild birds as free and unmolested fellow-citizens. Especially, no doubt, does the pleasure of seeing a more abundant and more varied bird-life round about its own home and haunts appeal to the non-scientific bird-lover, who is too often left entirely cold by efforts to save even the most interesting of disappearing species which do not come within his own ken. The love and protection of birds not unnaturally begins at home. It has been touching to note the anxious ignorance with which information has been sought and given in newspaper correspondence, and the curious questions which have been asked of the R.S.P.B. as to the nature and results of a sanctuary. How soon would these Park sanctuaries be "put up"? What birds would come to them? Would the nightingale be heard next spring in Hyde Park? How many birds were "turned out" to stock the place?—are some of the queries which have been put to the Society; while an eager observer remarked in one of the papers how pleasingly the presence of a Blue Tit in the Embankment Gardens gave proof positive of the value of the yet barely marked-out bird-refuges in Kensington!

### WALTON HALL

The idea of sanctuaries is of course no new one. Eighty years ago Charles Waterton, who might well be adopted as one of the patron-saints of Bird Protectors, made Walton Hall, in Yorkshire, the earliest model of its kind. The house was moated, there were ponds and swampy places in the grounds, old majestic trees, ivy-covered ruins, holly hedges to keep out cats and other poachers; and all manner of nesting boxes and holes were contrived for Owls and Woodpeckers, Tits and Starlings. Circular starling-towers, on a base five feet high (a height which Waterton calculated was safe from the spring of a cat), and constructed something after the fashion of a dove-cot, were built; yew-hedges were specially favoured for sheltering small birds; cavities in old tree-trunks were formed and shut in with doors, to attract Cole-Tits, and an old oak was hollowed out to serve for Owls. Round about the grounds was built a wall eight feet high, and this was raised to sixteen feet where it bordered the canal, in order to defy guns from barges. The very year the wall was finished came the Herons, birds which Waterton especially valued, and soon established a heronry within the grounds. At one time he had his fish-ponds drained on account of the number of rats which infested them. On this he comments:—

"Had I known as much then as I do now of the valuable services of the Heron I should not have made the change. The draining of the ponds did not seem to lessen the number of rats; but soon after the Herons settled here to breed, the rats became extremely scarce, and now I rarely see one in the place. I often

watch the Herons on the banks of some other stone-ponds with feelings of delight; and nothing would grieve me more than to see these valuable and ornamental birds sacrificed to the whims and caprices of man."

Nowadays it is usually the greediness of the angler and the Fishery Board which seeks to exterminate this fine bird.

Those who are anxious to make bird-sanctuaries of their grounds might do worse than study Waterton's devices, who solved the question "how to attract and protect wild birds" long before the German von Berlepsch elaborated a system; but in place of hollowing out nesting-places in rotten wood, they can now procure the more scientific "tree-hole" nesting-boxes ready-made. For owners of small grounds who wish to plan and plant so as to gain the incomparable charm of bird-form and song, the R.S.P.B. provides suggestions in a new booklet, "Small Bird-Sanctuaries and How to Make Them," by Mrs. Ella Fuller Maitland, with an added note by Mrs. W. B. Gerish.

### NATIONAL SANCTUARIES

The public and national form of bird-sanctuary has come into being in more recent years, impelled in many cases by the reckless destruction of wild life by settlers in new lands. The United States has taken the lead, and now possesses a wealth of wild-life reservations, thanks to Dr. Hornaday and the Audubon Societies, and also to President Roosevelt. Canada followed, owing mainly to the labours of Dr. Gordon Hewitt, whose posthumous book, "The Conservation of the Wild Life of Canada," is the finest monument to his magnificent work. Africa, Australia, New Zealand and India have also done something; but infinitely more effort is needed in all these lands to preserve not only the native birds but the whole fauna from ignorant and heedless destruction.

In Europe, Holland undoubtedly takes first place for its fine bird-sanctuaries, secured through the efforts of such

eminent enthusiasts as Professor Swaen, Dr. Buttikofer, Mr. A. Burdet, Mr. Thijssse, and others. Among recent efforts is notable that of Bohemia, which is planning (or may now have established) several sanctuaries, especially for water-fowl. The whole subject is one of those down for discussion by the International Conference at Paris this summer.

Great Britain has no national reserve for its surviving wild life. The New Forest, Epping Forest, and part of Cornwall have been suggested for the purpose, but even the Forests remain in a semi-protected condition. The law permits County Councils to prohibit the killing of birds and taking of eggs in defined areas, but it does not empower the appointment of keepers or wardens; and without some guardianship such areas have a very limited value. In some of the more noteworthy of these (as in other important breeding-grounds) the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds employs experienced Watchers. For the rest, local bodies and private individuals are responsible for such bird-reserves as Britain possesses.

### MUNICIPAL SANCTUARIES

The Bird Sanctuary proper, large or small, as an essential feature of public grounds, is a thing for which the Society has been contending for many years, and it is eminently satisfactory to find that its efforts are at last bearing fruit.

There is no doubt that other cities and towns will follow the example of London in establishing inner Bird Sanctuaries in their public parks. Manchester Parks Committee, for instance, has already approved of five such, and a list of 42 species is given as already inhabiting one of these. Places like Bournemouth, Cheltenham, Folkestone, Tunbridge Wells, will find careful preservation of bird life at least as paying an asset as asphalted promenades and beds of geraniums, and a better commercial proposition in the long run than the cutting down of woods, and notices to quit to rooks and small

birds. One essential, however, must be borne in mind. While the inner area is secured for a safe breeding site, bird-protection in both park and town as a whole should not be overlooked. Warnings against birdnesting, etc., in public grounds should be something more obvious than a bye-law amid fifty others on a notice-board; and the borough should possess a Protection Order at least as inclusive as the county Order, and preferably much more so. Manchester, which has all these years been without an Order, is now combining its scheme of sanctuaries with application for an all-the-year Protection Order for the Borough similar to that secured by Liverpool.

Beyond the "fairies' corner" of the parks, there are other even more important sanctuaries yet to be made. Cemeteries have been suggested more than once; Mr. Gilbert Pearson advocates this for the United States by a special pamphlet. All municipal sewage farms and water companies' reservoirs afford admirable opportunity for preserving and encouraging many rare birds. An appeal has already been addressed by the B.O.U. to the Reading Corporation to proclaim their sewage farm a Bird Sanctuary. Here, in 1922, writes Mr. H. M. Wallis in the *Reading Mercury*, "between twenty and five-and-twenty species were noted,

all foreign and some of extreme rarity."

"Birds from Iceland, Norway, Spitzbergen, and the deltas of the great Siberian rivers, met others from Holland, North Africa and Spain. The movement is plainly increasing, and apparently a new inland line of migration for sea-birds is in course of establishment under our eyes. If these lovely creatures are let alone there is no telling the extent and interest of the phenomena which may follow."

The same thing, in varied ways, is true of such places all over the country. Waders, Terns, and Ducks in particular are attracted and find food; and some would probably remain if safety were assured and the collector and the man with a gun were barred out. Reservoirs, again, attract innumerable bird visitors. The Metropolitan Water Board has the opportunity of giving a splendid lead here. On all its reservoirs, it appears, birds are protected, save in one instance, where the Saturday afternoon sport of a small party of gunners is maintained at the expense of full security for Great Crested Grebes and other beautiful occupants of the water. But for this unfortunate exception, the Water Board might enjoy a share of the public favour and enthusiasm which has been showered upon His Majesty's Board of Works, with the pleasant knowledge that it too is showing forth a long-called-for and popular example.

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### THE DUKE AND THE JAYS

Mr. Gilbert Ludford writes to the *Hampshire Chronicle* (March 16th, 1923):—

"Many years ago I was assisting at a shoot at Welbeck. At the end of one beat one of the guns—I think the late Lord Berkeley Paget—was fondling a dead jay and lamenting it should be necessary to kill so handsome a bird. The Duke of Portland, joining the group at the moment, expressed himself in complete sympathy. 'But,' he added, 'is it necessary?'" Turn-

ing to the head keeper he requested him to summon the heads of the various beats. When they were all assembled—some eight or nine of them—"Now," said his Grace, "I don't want you to tell me what you've heard or what you have read, but simply what you know from your own personal observation: Has any one of you ever actually *seen* a jay with a pheasant's egg?" No one had, but one man had found an empty pheasant's egg beneath a jay's nest. Verdict: "Not proven." I should doubt whether any jays were shot thereafter in the Clipstone coverts."

## Oil on the Waters

### THE TRAGEDY OF CERYLE

[The following paper is contributed to the *Egyptian Gazette* (1922) by a correspondent who may be here identified as Mr. R. E. Moreau, the Society's Hon. Secretary in Egypt.]

No one who has ever been in Egypt can have failed to notice the black and white Kingfisher. Everywhere there is water he is to be found, and everywhere he goes he is the life and soul of the place. Summer and winter, on the broad stream of the Nile, on the innumerable canals, on the expanse of the flood-waters, on the merest drains and pools in the fields, he plies his trade with a light heart. There is none of the sombre and aloof intentness of the great soaring birds, none of the skulking of so many of the Warblers. He lives his life before every man's eyes with an immense vitality and a splendid carelessness of their regard.

In shape, in nesting-habits, and in diet, he closely resembles our own familiar blue-green and russet bird at home. He is indeed more sociable. If one is found fishing, two or three more are frequently within call, and sometimes several nesting-holes can be found close together in a scarp of sand or mud overlooking the water. Greater differences are in flight and voice, which in each species seem specially designed to harmonise with one another. It is impossible to imagine their voices transposed. What could suit the unerring arrow-like velocity of blue-backed *Alcedo* so well as his high-pitched squeak, uninflected—no more than a needle of sound? Ceryle, the pied, flies quite differently. He obviously has to work hard for every moment he is in the air. There is nothing of the Humming-bird about him, no mysterious blur of wings. Quite appropriately his voice is at once ragged and vigorous, a loud rattling twitter. When two or three are gathered together in play or in anger, the noise of their ringing chatter is wonderful to hear.

His methods of fishing are two. He does sit on a perch like any other unenterprising Kingfisher and wait for his prey to swim beneath him. But here in Egypt boughs and railings over the water are comparatively rare. So what does he do but make a point of vantage for himself in mid-air. He hovers. It is a remarkable piece of business. The Kestrel seems to achieve it by virtue of the wide expanse of his tail, which, fully outspread, acts as a drag both against his tendency to glide forward and downward by his own weight and against such forward drive as there is in the carefully regulated 'wing-beats. But Ceryle possesses nothing like such a tail. It seems to me that in his case his whole body must act as the necessary stabiliser, for it hangs at a steep angle in the air, while his head and long black bill are bent sharply downwards in scrutiny of the water below. It looks hard work. There is none of the neat and easy flicker of the Kestrel. Working on the hinge of the neck the whole body shakes with the vigour of the effort. Yet not a tremor seems to move the head. It is as motionless as if it were held fixed in space by an invisible hand. And so, by some means known only to himself, he gains the requisite steadiness of view. Again and again he may change his position in the air, letting himself slip suddenly from his old coign and bringing up to a new point in a graceful-rising curve. Fish sighted, he turns heels over head instantaneously and dives with a splash.

I did not know how much I thought of Ceryle till one of them died a day or two ago in my hands. Indeed, he made me feel that he ought to have an obituary that should be partly an appreciation and partly a protest, albeit despairing, against his miserable death and its cause. It would really have been difficult for the most patient investigation to discover a more effective means for the painful elimination of water-birds. The dregs of an oil-boat, the cleanings of an oil-fueler,

go into the sea not far from the shore. Being practically indestructible, they drift about until at length brought up under the urge of wind and tide along a stretch of coast. There they form a margin of black filth deadly to any winged thing that comes in contact with it. Where I found my Kingfisher on a half-eroded sandbank in Lake Timsah, a belt of it lay on the windward side immediately under a group of nesting-holes. Nothing more efficacious could be conceived. The old birds bringing food are lamed if they settle at the edge of the water; the young are caught in the fatal stickiness on their very first exit from the nest.

Imagine any bird smothered in tar. Imagine every feather soaked and clogged

with the filthy stuff. Imagine every web dragged and the buoyancy gone out of it. Above all is a pied Kingfisher deprived of flight by such means, a pitiable thing. Is there any bird more utterly dependent on his wings than he? Death comes slowly and unmercifully after hours of agony. The best that can happen to a bird once fouled is a sudden blow from a Hawk or Gull. It is utterly impossible for them to cleanse themselves, and there is no natural means of cleansing them. Under the application of the only solvent, petrol, they die. Starvation, exposure to the full glare of the sun for many birds, the extremity of thirst, are the lot of the victims. It seems, too, that the vile stuff has an irritant effect on the skin.

## Economic Ornithology

### THE BULLFINCH

IN reply to an unfavourable article on the Bullfinch, published in the *Morning Post*, the Rev. W. A. Shaw writes from Peper Harow Rectory, Surrey:—

“I am always glad to see a party of Bullfinches clearing the buds off any fruit trees in my garden, and look upon them as useful friends, and not in any way beautiful sinners. Every gooseberry bud they have dropped, when I have thrown my cap at them, has been grubbed. Only one or two bushes have been attacked, out of many, and these have borne some fruit and done well the next season. In Surrey I have three quince trees and to one of these, at intervals of two or three years, from three to five Bullfinches pay a visit, and stick just to one part at the top of the oldest tree and the side branches of a young one. The fruit crop on the trees attacked was heavy, and the pruned parts bore the next season. So, too, with medlars and damsons in Sussex. For a week a party of six Bullfinches worked a patch of heather on Peper Harow Common, but I have never seen any other part touched. One of the finest sights of the garden is to see an old cock enjoy a raspberry, drupel by drupel, and I wish the Black-bird fed as slowly! Bullfinches do good too by eating the seeds of dock, thistles and

dandelions, as well as those of hips and spindle-tree. May observation conquer a wrong tradition.”

Writing on the same bird in the *East Anglian Daily Times* (February 27th, 1923), Mr. Felix Walton says:—

“There is one bird which, during the next two months, will be subjected to much destruction, and fall victims to the gun of the gardener and fruit-grower by thousands. This is the Bullfinch (*Pyrrhula Europæa*). He is a truly British bird, and looks it, and the cock is one of the most brilliantly coloured birds of all our residents. Unfortunately he has got a bad character, and his enemies have no mercy on him; they hang him, or, rather, shoot him first and try him afterwards, wherein he has my sympathy, because I do not believe his character is as bad as it is represented. We cannot, however, get away from the fact that he takes heavy toll of the young buds of fruit trees in the Spring of the year, but Nature provides such a surplus of these that cherry and plum trees, for instance, can spare these in large quantities and not suffer, because no cherry or plum tree could bear the enormous crop of fruit which would be forthcoming if these all came to perfection. In fact, in the case of plums, we generally have to thin them out ourselves when they get about half-grown,

not only to get finer fruit, but to enable the branches to carry their burdens without breaking down. I am afraid the Bullfinch does considerable damage to the gooseberry crop by taking toll of the luscious young buds. But even here I think if there are two buds together, the one containing an insect and the other not, he will choose the one first which contains the insect, which would of itself destroy the bud if left alone, and would propagate his species and so provide for further damage in the future. The Bullfinch is largely an insect feeder, collecting all kinds, and especially larva, and one of his favourite foods is the larva of that destructive pest the

Winter moth, of which the greater number destroyed the better. He is a brute. The Bullfinch also largely feeds on seeds and berries, including those of dock, thistle, groundsel, plantain, blackberries, chickweed, ragwort, and other worries of the gardener. One Bullfinch has been known to take 238 seeds of the common spearthistle (*Carduus lanceolatus*) in twenty minutes. I once examined the crops of twenty Bullfinches in the Spring, and in only two of them were there buds; all the rest were insects. This is why I look favourably on the manners and customs of the Bullfinch, and believe the good he does more than balances the harm."

## The Trade in Birds' Plumage

### BIRDS OF PARADISE IN EGG-BOXES

AT Marlborough Street Police Court, on February 28th, before Mr. d'Eyncourt, Raymond Colhoun (28), of Cleveland Street, Fitzroy Square, W., and Louis Constant Fleming (25), of Kensington Garden Square, merchants and French citizens, were charged with being concerned together in importing or bringing into the United Kingdom five packages containing Birds of Paradise and other prohibited plumage, the treble value of which (forfeitable on conviction) was not less than £7,500.

Mr. F. Dart, from H.M. Customs and Excise Department, Custom House, prosecuted. Mr. Frank E. Lemon watched the case for the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds.

One of the officers of Customs on duty at Newhaven on February 25th, supervising the discharge of the steamer *Paris*, found among the cargo five cases of eggs addressed to Fleming-Colhoun, St. Anne's Court, Dean Street, Soho. He opened one case with a wire, and under two layers of eggs found a box containing plumage. The case was resealed and allowed to go on, the officer meanwhile communicating with the Customs authorities in London. The crates were opened at St.

Anne's Court, in the presence of Mr. Renshaw, Chief Inquiry Officer of H.M. Customs, and in each was a box containing Bird of Paradise skins entire and Egret feathers. A document found by Mr. Renshaw related to previous consignments of eggs to defendants, and there was also a paper bearing the words "Plumes 86 et 120 Blanzy." Defendants expressed surprise when the feathers were found, and Fleming said he was a French subject, sent over by Mr. Henry, a merchant of Paris, to establish an egg agency owing to the favourable exchange. Both denied any knowledge of the plumage.

Dr. Percy Lowe, from the Natural History Museum, said the Birds of Paradise came from Dutch New Guinea.

The case was adjourned, defendants being allowed bail in £1,000 each.

At the adjourned hearing, on March 13th, Mr. Harry Myers, for the defence, urged that there was no evidence to show that defendants knew or could be expected to know of the presence of feathers in the boxes until the Customs officer discovered them. It was evident that they were engaged in the egg trade. Colhoun, examined by Mr. Dart, said that the words and figures "Plumes 86 et 120" referred to pens. He and Fleming had sold about fifteen or twenty cases of eggs.

In answer to Mr. Dart, he admitted that at the beginning they had between £11 and £12 a week for selling them, but at the end not so much.

Mr. d'Eyncourt said that the word "concerned" in the charge meant having knowledge, and if there was reasonable doubt as to knowledge on the part of defendants—which on the evidence he was inclined to think—he could not convict. He thought they were innocent vehicles in the matter, and dismissed the case.

Mr. Dart stated that instructions would have to be given by the Board of Trade and the Commissioners as to what should be done with the smuggled feathers.

Two other cases of smuggling have been detected by the officers of H.M. Customs at Newhaven, and were dealt with by the County Magistrates at Lewes. On January 30th Messrs. Jenner & Co., of Princes Street, Edinburgh, were convicted of importing prohibited plumage and fined £30 with £31 10s. costs; and on February 20th Messrs. Sale & Norwood, of Conduit Street, London, were fined £20 with £31 10s. costs. In one case twelve samples of the feathers found were sent to the British Museum (Natural History) for identification, and these were found to consist of six specimens of the Lady Amherst Pheasant, four of the Argus Pheasant, one of the Chinese Pheasant and one Ring-necked Pheasant. All of these were contraband goods, except the last-named bird, which has been placed on the Schedule to the Act by the Advisory Committee.

#### PROHIBITION IN SINGAPORE

The following Order, dated June 12th, 1922, has been passed by the Legislative Council of the Straits Settlements under the Provisions of the Prohibition of Exports and Imports Ordinance 1922:—

"That this Council prohibits absolutely the import into the Colony and the export from the Colony of the plumage of any bird except ostriches, eider ducks, birds imported alive,

and birds ordinarily used as articles of diet, and plumage actually used as wearing apparel of a passenger, and skins for scientific purposes."

Dr. J. C. Moulton, of the Raffles Museum, in urging legislation on the Government, stated that since the importation of plumage had been prohibited in Great Britain, Australia and America, it was desired to bring the laws of the Colony into line, with a view of preventing as far as possible the destruction all over the world of harmless birds for indefensible purposes. Dr. Moulton showed that Singapore, as a port of transshipment, was an important factor in the trade, since birdskins from anywhere in the Far East or Middle East must of necessity pass through that port. There was also undoubtedly a trade in Birds of Paradise going on in Singapore, he himself having been offered a case of twenty skins. He added that action on the part of the Government of the Colony "towards the suppression of a trade which has long remained a blot on civilisation will be welcomed by all English-speaking countries, who alone have had the courage to adopt legislation to stop it."

#### MARKET FOR POULTRY FEATHERS

The *Journal* of the Ministry of Agriculture (December, 1922) draws attention to the desirability of poultry-keepers bearing in mind the possibility of marketing the feathers.

"From information which the Ministry has obtained from various sources, it appears that large quantities of poultry feathers are annually imported from China, United States, France and Portugal, and that some are exported from this country to the Colonies. The weights and values of these imports in 1920 was 79,115 cwt. at £587,516."

It appears that English feathers have been regarded as inferior, in not being so free from dirt and impurities as the best imported, but this is obviously through want of care, and the prohibition of wild-bird plumage is likely to increase demand for that of poultry.

# The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds

## ANNUAL MEETING

HER GRACE THE DUCHESS OF PORTLAND, President of the Society, presided at the Annual Meeting, held (by permission of the Middlesex County Authorities) at the Guildhall, Westminster, on March 7th, 1923. There was a large attendance of supporters of the work, including Sir Montagu Sharpe, K.C., Chairman of the Council; Earl Buxton, Hon. Treasurer; Mr. F. E. Lemon, Hon. Secretary; the Duke of Rutland, K.G., the Countess of Shaftesbury, Lord Lilford, Lord Desborough, Sir John Cockburn, the Hon. Mrs. Dawtrey Drewitt, Miss C. V. Hall, Mr. T. Hastings Lees, the Hon. and Rev. Dr. Lyttelton, Sir William Portal, Bart., and Mrs. R. W. Williamson, Vice-Presidents, Mr. Meade-Waldo, Miss Clifton, Mrs. Edward Clodd, Mr. J. Rudge Harding, Mrs. F. E. Lemon, and Mr. W. P. Pycraft, Members of the Council.

Sir Montagu Sharpe, in moving the adoption of the Report and Accounts, reviewed the work of the year and alluded to the great increase in the work and business of the Society, and the extended support it had received, as necessitating the removal of the offices to more commodious quarters at 82, Victoria Street. He drew attention to the inadequate support given to the Watchers' Fund, and in reference to the anticipated Bird Protection Bill, to be introduced by the Home Secretary, expressed the opinion that taxidermists and sellers of wild birds' eggs should be licensed and required to keep a register of the skins and eggs they received. Sir Montagu also spoke of the heavy loss sustained by the Society in the death of Mr. Hudson and of his endowment of the Bird and Tree Scheme.

The President, in seconding the resolution, also deplored the death of Mr. Hudson, and believed it would have given him pleasure if he could have known that the memorial to him would take the form of a Hudson Bird Sanctuary and Bird-

Fountain. She had been greatly touched to read that since the death of Robert Louis Stevenson the Samoan chiefs had forbidden the discharge of any gun within earshot of Vailima lest the birds which sing around his tomb should be frightened and suspend their constant requiem. A passage in the Report recording that Skylarks were still offered for sale in provision stores caused her grief and indignation, but she was glad to say she saw fewer than formerly at fashionable entertainments.

The re-election of Her Grace as President was moved by the Duke of Rutland, who said that English birds required more protection to-day than ever before, because so many areas were being covered with houses, and some that were built were hideous enough to keep every self-respecting bird out of flying distance of them. Lord Desborough seconded the motion, which was enthusiastically adopted.

The election of Council and Officers, moved by Lord Lilford, was seconded by Dr. Lyttelton, who spoke especially of the Society's work in the elementary schools. He would not disguise the fact that, as an old schoolmaster, he was at first inclined to fear there was going to be one more ill-judged experiment; but it had become evident that the Bird and Tree Scheme was run by people who understood teaching and were possessed of skill and discretion. He recalled the fact that some twenty years ago the Board of Education proposed to encourage an interest in and love of birds by providing every elementary school in the kingdom with the feet of bullfinches, the beaks of thrushes, and the wings of other beautiful birds; he at once wrote an extremely tart letter to the Board, and next day a revised edition of the instruction was issued, and the feet of bullfinches remained in their proper place. Natural history, properly taught, and music were doing more than any other

subjects to stimulate the intelligence of the young.

The resolution was carried unanimously, as was also a motion, brought forward by Mr. F. Spriggs, calling for more efficient methods to prevent the taking and caging of wild song-birds during the winter months as well as through the summer. This was seconded by the President.

A special feature of the gathering was the presentation by Her Grace of the Inter-County Bird and Tree Shield to Leicester Road Council School, Bedworth (Warwickshire). The school was represented by its Head Master, Mr. J. Edwin Cooper, Mrs. Cooper, and four members of the Team.

The meeting concluded with a vote of thanks to the Duchess of Portland, moved by Sir John Cockburn and seconded by Sir William Portal.

A full account of the proceedings will appear in the Society's Annual Report.

### COUNCIL MEETING

Sir Montagu Sharpe, K.C. (Chairman), presided at the meeting of the Council of the Society at the Guildhall, Westminster, on February 2nd, 1923.

The Report of the Hon. Secretary alluded to the deep regret with which news had been received of the death of Mr. Trevor-Battye, Member of the Council since 1905, and a vote of sympathy and condolence with the Misses Trevor-Battye was passed. The issue of a renewed Order for Hampshire, protecting all wild birds' eggs on Lord Selborne's sanctuary at Oakhanger, was reported; and also an amended Order for East Yorks, giving protection to the eggs of the Fulmar Petrel, which nested on the Yorkshire coast last year. The Council expressed their desire to support Miss Cochrane's effort to secure all the year protection for the Skylark in Cambridgeshire. Fifteen lectures, illustrated by the Society's slides, had been given, and several Bird and Tree Festivals held.

The Finance and General Purposes Committee presented the Statement of Accounts for the year 1922. The ap-

pointment of Miss Clare Capron, Hathersage, Derby, as Hon. Local Secretary for the Society, was confirmed, and the following Fellows and Members were elected:—

FELLOWS:—Miss Hanson Caine (Hants); H. Carron-Scrimgeour (Surrey); Herbert A. Day (Norfolk); Mrs. E. K. Goddard (Wilts); Mrs. W. E. Harrison (Staffs.); Miss M. Knight (Sussex); Mrs. F. E. Marshall (Cumberland); Miss A. J. Partridge (Surrey); Rev. Charles E. Raven (Surrey); P. W. Thompson (Hants); William N. Walker (Fife); Mrs. Whitaker (Yorks.); T. I. A. Williams (S.W.); Gwynne Witherington (Sussex).

MEMBERS:—Miss Allen (Devon); Mrs. Bingham (co. Mayo); Miss F. S. Butler (Cornwall); Dr. Buttkofer (Rotterdam); Douglas Carr (N.W.); E. A. Constable (Birmingham); Mrs. George Cookson (Devon); Mrs. Cowper (Westmorland); L. M. Crayford, Mrs. L. M. Crayford (W.); Rev. Canon Daustini Cremer (Sussex); Miss M. F. Dallas (Devon); Miss M. J. Dobie (Cheshire); Mrs. Eland (Middlesex); Mrs. George Evans (Devon); Mrs. Felton (S.E.); Maurice Flower (Wilts); Leslie Foxall (Lancashire); Miss Helen Gosse (Hants); Miss Catherine Graham (Essex); Miss G. Graham (Wilts); Miss Georgina Harris (Cheshire); Roland Heathcote (Lancashire); Rev. A. H. Hildebrand (Sussex); Mrs. Jones Leslie (Devon); Miss E. M. MacGregor (Lancashire); Miss E. Mahony (Glos.); J. T. Marsh (Lancs.); Basil Napier (S.W.); Miss Emily Newling (Cumberland); Miss G. L. Pennington (Hants); Mrs. Pratt (Derby); Mrs. Rintoul (N.W.); Miss M. Richardson (Glos.); Miss C. C. Rogers (Cornwall); Miss Constance Spender (Somerset); Miss Sutton (Worcs.); Miss Thornely (Westmorland); Mrs. M. L. Twitchin (Lancashire); Miss Alison Webster (Staffs.).

AFFILIATED:—The Gilbert White Fellowship.

Messrs. Woodbridge and Sons, having kindly undertaken to act in that capacity, were appointed Hon. Solicitors to the Society. Mrs. Edward Clodd was elected a member of the Council. Mrs. F. E. Lemon reported on the conference of members of the Farne Islands Association, the R.S.P.B., the Society for the Promotion of Nature Reserves, the British Ornithologists' Union, and the Yorkshire Naturalists' Union, with reference to Bird Protection on the Farne Islands. Two members of the Council were appointed to represent the Society on the International Committee for the Protection of Wild Birds, and delegates were also appointed to attend the International Congress at Paris, June, 1923. A letter was read from Mr. J. C. Moulton, Raffles Museum, Singapore, with regard to the trade in bird-skins, especially Paradise plumes, in Singapore, and the quantity

of these imported into England through Singapore. Mr. Moulton's efforts have now led to the issue of a Government Order prohibiting both import and export of feathers.

Among other questions considered were the continued destruction of sea-birds by oil-wastage from ships, and the danger to bird-life in various parts of England by the burning of gorse and heather in the nesting-time.

Next meeting of the Council, April 13th.

Just as BIRD NOTES AND NEWS goes to press comes the sad news of the death, at Woodcote, Epsom, on April 5th, of the Hon. Mrs. Arthur Henniker, a keen and most sympathetic member of the Council since 1904. Mrs. Henniker, who was a daughter of Lord Houghton and sister of the Marquess of Crewe, was born in 1855, and married Major-General the Hon. A. Henniker, who died in 1912.

A discovery of considerable interest to collectors of Mr. Hudson's first editions concerning the real first issue of *Hamp-*

*shire Days* is recorded in the March number of *The Bookman's Journal*, where also appear some other addenda to the bibliography of the great naturalist's writings.

In the Winter Number of BIRD NOTES AND NEWS it was stated that the memorial to Mr. W. H. Hudson would, if possible, take the form of a drinking and bathing place for birds in one of the London Parks, together with the presentation of his portrait, generously given by Professor Rothenstein, to the National Portrait Gallery. The portrait has now been hung (Room 35); and H.M. Board of Works has approved the Committee's scheme for a sanctuary in Hyde Park, which, with its handsome design, memorial piers, provision of water and special shrubs and trees, and fine symbolic figure in stone, will be a noble feature of the Park. It waits the King's approval. Those who wish to be associated with this memorial should send subscriptions to the Hon. Treasurer, Mr. H. R. Dent, Aldine House, Bedford Street, W.C.2.

## Notes

Two cases have already been heard in the Courts under the Importation of Plumage Act, which came into force in April, 1922, bearing out the contentions of the Society that trouble was courted by the "compromise" clause in place of exclusion of all wild-bird plumage from importation. The question is not whether this or that species is numerous enough to stand a commercial drain upon it, but whether the addition of any species does not add unreasonably and unnecessarily to the work of enforcing the law. The first case concerned the identification of certain plumage which had been stopped at Newhaven. Twelve specimens were sent to the Natural History Museum, all feathers of foreign pheasants, and one of these was found to be a species that has been added to the schedule of the Act for admission.

*The Drapers' Record* (March 10th, 1923) comments:—

"There is such an immense variety of plumage, and such a number of alternative methods of treating and dressing feathers, that even those with a life-long experience of the trade are not always readily able to identify the class of plumage to which a particular feather or mount should be assigned. How, then, is the trade buyer to safeguard himself against offending the Act?"

Two well-known firms, says the same writer, have been convicted, although in each case "it was clear that the infringement was unintentional," while made-up millinery has passed the Customs by means of false declarations. "Such a position is intolerable and vexatious beyond sufferance." The difficulty is obviously exaggerated, seeing that so far only twelve species of the world's bird life are placed on the admission

schedule. But it gives reason why this number should not be added to, and still more reason to deplore the departure made by the Act from the simple and effectual lines of the Society's Bills and of the Government Bill of 1914.

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The second case was one of smuggling pure and simple. Again at Newhaven the Customs Officers, with the acumen which sometimes suggests that they must have mastered the secrets of Maskelyne and Devant, seized five packages which professed to be crates of eggs from France. Underneath the eggs in each package were boxes containing Egret plumage and Birds of Paradise, liable to a fine of treble their value, or over nine thousand pounds. The goods were followed from Paris to Soho, and the consignees, two Frenchmen, were charged with the offence. When told of the presence of the plumes, said the Customs Inquiry Officer, they expressed great surprise; they were innocent dealers in eggs, establishing an innocent egg agency in London. Eventually the magistrate let it go at that. The plumage was confiscated; but he considered there was insufficient proof that these egg-dealing Benjamins had any knowledge of the valuable presents which some kind Brother Joseph had hidden in their sacks.

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Another interesting judgment is that given at the London Sessions in a trade appeal against a conviction obtained by the R.S.P.C.A. for cruelty in keeping wild birds confined in dirty "mouse-trap" cages. It is eminently satisfactory to note that the appeal was dismissed with a strong comment from the Chairman on the need for putting a stop once and for all on to this species of inhumanity. It is to be hoped that the catching and caging of birds, not merely in reference to times and seasons, but from the humane point of view, will be dealt with in the next Bird Protection Act. To relegate the question to the Act designed mainly for the protection of

domestic animals, and leave it to the personal judgment of every magistrate whether the confinement of a bird of the air in a cage 7 inches by 4 inches, or in a cage perpetually darkened, is or is not permitting "unnecessary suffering" by a "wanton or unreasonable act," is to derogate infinitely from the strength and logic of Acts for the protection of birds.

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The first monument to a Bird was put up in Utah, in gratitude to the Gulls, who stayed a locust plague. The second, apparently, has to be credited to Germany. A memorial to commemorate the services of the Carrier Pigeons in the war has been erected in Merseburg, Prussia. But the gratitude of man cannot be reckoned on by the creatures to whom he is indebted. Airmen have constantly studied the flight of birds in the hope of learning more of the secrets of flight, and are still advised to do so; but one of the illustrated papers tells how the "sportsmen" of a Spanish aerodrome amuse themselves by pursuing and shooting the Great Bustard from aeroplanes. "Twenty-eight Bustards were bagged in eight shoots. The Premier of Spain was present at the last, when six birds were brought down." England exterminated its Bustards long ago, or the "sport" might have been enjoyed on Salisbury Plain.

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Every bird-lover will sympathise deeply with Mrs. G. F. Watts in the destruction by fire a few weeks ago of the terracotta potteries at Compton, while rejoicing at the escape of the Art Galleries, where so many of the great artist's pictures are housed, including "The Sorrowing Angel," lent for the Society's Stand at Olympia last summer. The aim of the industry which has given so much beautiful work in British clay to the world, was to develop the artist-craftsman, beginning with the village lads, who were eager to produce bricks of their own making and decoration for the Compton Memorial Chapel. The Potters'

Art Guild resulted, and under the fostering hand of Mrs. Watts, has for twenty years maintained the traditions of the art-craftsmen of old. Among the works unhappily destroyed was a statuette of St. Francis, intended for South Africa.

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One of the difficulties in regard to all Bird Protection Acts will no doubt be the need for giving in county posters and advertisements the local names of birds which are, or are not, to receive special protection. The ordinary man hardly recognises one species from another by any name at present, as was made evident at Aberdeen the other day, when controversy arose in a bird-catching case as to whether the bird caught was a Linnet or a Greenfinch. In country places the familiar soubriquet is as likely as not to be something different from the "book" name. Norfolk, for instance, persists in dubbing the Wren a Tomtit, and the Missel-thrush a "Felt" (or Fieldfare). An interesting effort has been made lately by the *Fruit-Grower* to identify the "Gally-bird" reported by a Kent correspondent as a "rare bird" useful in the orchard. It appears that in Sussex, the Isle of Wight, and elsewhere, this is

the old name for the Green Woodpecker. Perhaps some reader of BIRD NOTES AND NEWS can suggest the derivation.

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Still greater are the troubles of County Councils when Welsh counties have to be dealt with. Here there are two languages to complicate matters, as well as different Welsh names in different districts. Glamorgan, for instance, has issued notices giving English and Welsh names for each bird, but, according to the *Cambrian Daily Leader*, this does not say that the Welsh name is the Glamorgan name. You may call a Woodpecker a Gally-bird in one county and the Goldfinch a Proud Tailor in another; and if you wish to be understood of the people in South Wales you must consider whether the dialect is North Walian or Morganwg or Gwentian or Devetian, and must name the Woodpecker Coblyn-y-Coed or Taradr-y-coed, and the Goldfinch Teilwrlunden or Penewryn accordingly. If the day ever comes when one schedule serves the whole of Britain, it will still need half a hundred translations for local use, since local names are almost as bewildering as scientific nomenclature.

There is a variety of short papers dealing with birds in the issue of *Natureland* which starts the second volume of Dr. Graham Renshaw's quarterly (Bridge House, Sale, Manchester). Perhaps the two most interesting to bird-lovers are those which begin only in this issue, the Rev. J. G. Tuck's on Nesting-boxes, and Mr. A. H. Patterson's on Starlings. Mr. Patterson describes the great Starling flocks wheeling over the Norfolk marshlands as a much rarer sight now than in the past. It would appear, therefore, that there is at least one district where the species is less and not more common than it was thirty years ago.

Charles Macintosh, the Perthshire postman-naturalist, whose life, by Mr. Henry Coates, has just been published, attempted to take a census of the birds of the Bran river valley in

the breeding-time, and while finding Sparrows and Starlings "innumerable," declares the most common bird at that time to be the Willow-Warbler. This is, of course, a purely local estimate in an exceptional district, where Curlews and Redshanks were almost as many as Thrushes; but it accentuates the strangeness of the fact that not one person in a hundred knows the Willow-Warbler or its song. Macintosh was one of the observant and non-collecting naturalists. His biographer writes:—

The only weapons he carried on his ornithological excursions were his field-glasses and his note-book, yet with these he was often able to gather information which he could not have got had he scared off the birds with a gun. The birds, indeed, seemed to know that they had nothing to fear from him, and would often answer his skilful imitations of their calls. As we have already seen, his musical ear assisted him greatly in identifying the songs of the different species, and the varying notes they produced at different seasons."

## From Correspondents

## ABOUT OUR SWALLOWS

Mrs. SMYTH sends the following extracts from a friend's letter:—

*She* came back, in the middle of the awful April storms, alone. Some days she stayed on the old nest, moping, till 10 o'clock in the morning; other days she went off at daylight and came back at dark, looking for her mate, I think. Then, ten days later, he arrived. Perhaps he had been blown out of his course in the storm. Such a chattering and excitement followed, after which they began fussing over the house. It had come away from the wall and was not very safe. They decided on repairs, and put a coping of mud bricks round the top. This made it so much heavier that one fine night it tumbled down when she was in it, but luckily she had not started laying. It weighed over  $\frac{1}{2}$ -lb., and the outside was full of long horse-hairs woven into the mud. They decided to look out for a new site, and devoted several days to the search, at last deciding that the old place was best. I was away at the time, and when I came back they had made a good start. I instantly put up a little shelf just below, as I had heard they liked this, but I wondered if this would frighten them away. They came back together, rushed away, came back one at a time, in and out, in and out, all commotion and excitement. Next morning they were hard at work and had started a new foundation so as to rest it on the shelf. It reminds me of nothing so much as a dentist stopping a tooth, there is such an amount of poking and prodding and fitting in. Then a straw is brought and fitted down; sometimes one end jumps up and has to be forced down again and again till it stays in the right place. . . .

. . . (Later.) The young birds have been a joy to watch, and during the first flight neither the servants nor I could get any work done. When they were learning the first day, Thomas sat in the drive, and the mother-bird flew into his face three times to get him to move. He was not troubling his head about her or her babies, and just went on washing, and would have remained there an hour if we had not called him in. It was funny to see the excitement of the bird and the indifference of the cat.

## ROBIN STORIES

My Robin has spent the autumn and winter with us—in and out of School all day long, In School he comes on to my desk, and sometimes perches on the piano while I play. He hops under the desks among the children's feet. They are very fond of him, and he knows it. Last year he brought his wife into the kitchen on St. Valentine's Day and wanted to build in a cupboard, and when I refused to let him he went right away for months.—(Hants.)

It may interest the Society to know that a white Robin has taken up its abode close to our house. Like all Robins, it is friendly and easily approached, which enables one to examine it closely. A most uncanny-looking little bird, it appears silvered all over, but more pure white than silver is. The breast shines out red through the silver, but head and all the rest are white. An ordinary Robin is its close companion. It does not sing, so that it is probably a hen bird.—(Devon.)

A pair of Robins last spring built their nest in our tool-house, in the corner of the wall, resting on some straw cases which I hung up ready to put round the strawberry roots. They did not mind us going in and out of the house in the least. The walls are coloured pink, and what I think was so clever of the birds is that they put a bit of brown paper in the corner so that the tail of the sitting bird should not be noticed against the pink. One of the little ones became so tame that after a time he took crumbs from my hand, and would come when I called "Bob," if he was anywhere within hearing, landing on the ground a few inches from my feet.—(M. C. P., Dorset.)

Being a gardener, I am brought in contact with birds and have always been one to protect them. Last summer I made a pet of a young Robin, which grew so tame and so fond of me that he used to come and settle on my hoe while it was in my hands, also settle on my boots. It was a common occurrence for him to perch on a basket which I was carrying on my arm whilst gathering fruit and vegetables and also come for his bath close to me, whilst twenty feet away would sit Blackbird, Thrush, Sparrow, Wren, Linnet, on a fence, wondering how in the world he dared bathe in a flower saucer at my feet. He stuck to me like glue, but now he has mated and I see less of him.—(A. H. B., Kent.)

## Bird and Tree Challenge Shield Competition

THE celebration of Bird and Tree Day, with presentation of County Shields, prizes and medals, and the sending in of entry-forms for the 1923 Competition, have been the chief events of the past three months, most important of all being the trip to London of the Head Teacher (Mr. J. Edwin Cooper) and four members of the Team of Leicester Road School, Bedworth, Warwickshire, to receive the Inter-County Shield from the hands of the Duchess of Portland, at the Society's Annual Meeting. Haversham (Bucks), North Perrott (Somerset), Bedworth (Warwickshire), and Cartmel Fell (Lancashire) have received their respective Shields. Ridge (Hants) divides its festivities, the tree-planting, with accompanying entertainment and tea, having taken place in March, to be followed by the presentation of Shield and prizes in April. In April, also, Keswick (Cumberland) and Wellingborough (Northants) will have their Festivals; and in and among these bigger occasions come the no less interesting and pleasurable days of other successful Schools.

Entries show new Competitors in every county, and there will be a struggle for the first added Shield, depending on the numbers of teams entering from Kent, Oxfordshire, Derby, Suffolk, Gloucestershire, Surrey and Middlesex. Additional entries may still be sent in, addressed to the Secretary, R.S.P.Birds, 82, Victoria Street, S.W.1.

### THE CUMBERLAND SHIELD

The Director of Education for Cumberland (Mr. G. B. Brown) has sent a circular letter to the Head Teachers of all Senior Departments of Cumberland Schools, in which he writes:—

“At the last meeting of the School Management Committee the Report on the Bird and Tree County Challenge Shield Competition, in which the work of several Schools in this County area received appreciative criticism, was presented. I am desired to express the gratification of the Committee that such good

work has been done and to congratulate, on their behalf, those Schools which have gained, or have seriously attempted, success in the County and National Competition.

“The Committee noted with much regret, however, that there had been of late years a persistent falling off in the numbers of competing schools in their area, and that there was some danger of the withdrawal of the recognition of Cumberland as an independent field.

“A competition of this kind does much to foster habits of accurate observation and a love of nature. It brings admirable influences to bear on much of the out-of-School life of the children and helps to give liveliness and individuality to the curriculum. The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds does its part well. The Competition is widely spread and is broad in its conception. The report on the Competition is especially helpful since criticism is constructive and individual.

“I am to ask that the Head Teachers of the County will in return give their support in greater degree to this admirable movement.”

The Warwickshire County Shield was presented by Mr. Bolton King, Director of Education for the county, in the presence of a large gathering at a picture-palace in the town. In his address Mr. King said he did not think there was anything better for a school to-day than to take up the study of natural history. Canon Evans commented that it was a credit to the whole town that the school had done so well; and Mr. Cooper, headmaster, added that they had 202 children who had signed cards not to destroy birds' eggs, and they were studying 52 different birds and 54 different trees.

At the Boscombe Festival, the Director of Education and members of the Bournemouth Education Committee were present, and the prizes were presented by Councillor Mrs. F. E. Laney, J.P. Dr. F. G. Penrose, in an interesting speech, remarked that opportunities for studying wild life were getting fewer and fewer, a matter of great concern and sorrow to many. Land was being covered with houses, and the big estates which were a great factor in the protection of wild life were being sold. The country from Poole Harbour to Christchurch Harbour was an elysium if human beings did not destroy its charms. A fairy play was performed by the girls.

Every year there are a large number of interesting little notes of things seen by Bird and Tree Cadets. Here are a few from the papers for 1922 :—

Wren's nest made of hornbeam catkins.  
Moorhen's eggs in nest of Woodpigeon.  
Tits taking possession of House-Martin's nest.  
Wren's nest in House-Martin's.  
Kestrel following the plough for grubs.  
Starling laying egg in nest occupied by Swallows.  
Tits trying to catch frog-spawn in stream.  
Young Willow-Wrens fed with green caterpillars.  
Cuckoo's eggs in nests of Robin and Meadow Pipit.  
Young Cuckoo fed by Sedge-Warblers.  
Seven different bushes growing out of old Willow.

Local notes on the uses of wood are often noteworthy, such as that on the preference for Copper Beech in the making of bobbins ; but the tree which arouses the greatest enthusiasm (even more than the Walnut with its fascinating

stain) is the Elder. Elderberry wine is clearly not out of fashion, nor is elder-flower water, while the juice will also "dye your hair lovely," and one young writer of 11, who must have studied an old herbal, says :—

"It possesses neither beauty nor fragrance, but it is very good for some medicinal purposes, such as aches and shrunken sinews. The young buds mixed with butter is excellent for aches. The ointment obtained from my tree, elderflower tea, and elderberry wine are equal to most medicines. The berries make excellent wine and some people say that elderberry vinegar is excellent for colds. When its fruit is boiled it loses its sickly taste. Elderberries are said to be one of the engredients of port wine. The old branches make skewers for butchers. Its berries are used for dye in Scotland. They are selected as soon as they are deep green and are used for both fomentations and cataplasms wounds. They are a cure for inflammation. They serve to make pickles of a very good flavour. Spirit is drawn from my tree's bark."

## In the Courts

**THE SALE OF PROTECTED BIRDS.**—At *Winchester*, on March 2nd, Mr. Charles Bunker, poulterer, was summoned for exposing Green Plover for sale contrary to the Hampshire Bird Protection Order, which protects the bird all the year with a maximum fine of £1 for each one offered. Accused stated that three Plovers were purchased with a number of Pigeons, and hung up for sale, and he was ignorant of the existence of any law on the subject. A fine of 10s. in each case, with one guinea costs, was imposed.—At the County Police Bench, on the same day, a man named Neaves was convicted of shooting the birds at King's Worthy, but was let off with a payment of costs. He said he was out pigeon-shooting and did not kill the Lapwings intentionally.

**THE BIRDCATCHER.**—At *Epsom*, on February 12th, William Giles, Joseph Porter and Nathaniel Burfield were fined for being in possession of five recently taken Chaffinches, and for causing them unnecessary suffering. The men were seen by the police at Bookham Station with bird-catching paraphernalia, and were followed. They got out at Leatherhead, but at Waterloo the birds were found under the carriage seat, in a cotton bag, one of them dead and two others unable to fly.—At the same Court, on February 19th, Henry Coverton, of Bethnal Green, was ordered to pay costs for using birdlime and a decoy bird at Ewell. The bird, etc., were forfeited.—In a case at *Stratford* (Essex) a mistake was made in proceeding against F. T. Nightingale for taking wild birds instead of for cruelty to decoy

birds, but the Bench ordered the birds to be liberated.

**THE SMALL-CAGE EVIL: APPEAL CASE.**—An appeal case of some importance was decided at the London Sessions, on March 9th, in favour of the R.S.P.C.A. Two Inspectors of the Society found a number of Chaffinches in very small cages, some of which measured 4 inches wide back to front, 6½ inches long, and 7½ inches high. The cages were very dirty. The Society took proceedings on the ground that the birds were caused suffering. The London Stipendiary Magistrate, Mr. Cairns, convicted and fined the defendant (Thomas Mills) £5 and £2 2s. costs. Against this conviction the defendant appealed. The Society called a number of expert witnesses, including Mr. Seth-Smith, Curator at the Zoological Gardens, and Mr. W. P. Pycraft, Assistant Keeper at the British Museum (Natural History), who stated that the birds had no possibility of exercise and that it was practically impossible to keep such small cages clean ; birds in their wild state were scrupulously clean, and it caused them extreme discomfort and suffering if they were not able to keep themselves so. In dismissing the appeal with costs the Chairman (Mr. A. J. Lawrie) said :— "The Justices are satisfied these birds were kept in a dirty state and the cages were too small. To keep birds in cages of that size is in our opinion causing unnecessary suffering. If it is the practice (as we are informed it is) to keep the birds in these small cages for the purpose of making them sing then the sooner the practice is stopped the better."

# The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds

82, VICTORIA STREET, LONDON, S.W.1

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*Photo, Anderson, Rome.*

*[Copyright Photo.*

ST. FRANCIS PREACHING TO THE BIRDS  
From the Fresco by Giotto

*By Permission.*

# Bird Notes & News

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

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[No. 6.

## The Bird Sanctuary at Assisi

A CENTURY and more ago Goethe, a solitary wanderer, visited the little Umbrian town of Assisi. He climbed the steep street to the Piazza, looked for a few moments at the portico of the ancient temple of Minerva, which stands to-day as it stands in Giotto's fresco in the great church; and then he went away. To-day three hotels can scarcely accommodate the crowd of visitors of all nationalities who flock to Assisi at Easter. They do not come to see the temple of Minerva: there are better temples at Rome and elsewhere. They come to see the glories of 13th and 14th century art in the little town, the delightful hill country close at hand, and the superb view of the Plain of Umbria with its walls of soft-contoured hills; and they come because Assisi is the home of St. Francis, the "great lover" of all things in heaven and earth.

Standing between earth and sky out on the turfy top of Monte Subasio, to whose skirt the town clings like a child to its mother, the visitor may feel something of that joy in the freedom and purity of the outdoor world which was his to the very end; and may hear in fancy the sound of his voice breaking forth in the impromptu hymns and songs of his own making, in praise of Brother Sun or Brother Sky or "my little sisters the birds."

Looking up the green length of the valley to where it melts darkly into the mountains at the southern end, are seen the little towns with their towers and campaniles, growing like colonies of mushrooms on every buttress and coign of vantage on the lower slopes—towns with magical names, Spallo, Foligno,

Spoletto, each with its special legend of some miracle or deed of love wrought by the Poverello during one or other of his Umbrian pilgrimages. Specially dear to bird-lovers should be Bevagno, for here, according to tradition, was one of the places where he preached to the birds.

A mile or so from the town walls a path climbs along the side of Monte Subasio among olive groves where the white oxen are ploughing, until, rounding a corner, it turns its back on the plain and makes for the heart of the mountain. The pilgrim, hot and tired, perhaps, after the long climb, stops for a moment to admire and rejoice before hurrying on with renewed energy. For here the mountain suddenly breaks down into a deep gorge; its sides are dotted with trees of many kinds, but chiefly with ilexes, the beautiful bushy evergreens for which visitors to Italy learn to be grateful even under only an April sunshine. A wall runs round the wood, and the first sign of man within is a notice:—

*Bandita assolutamente la Caccia*

(Shooting strictly prohibited). The path leads on into the upper part of the wood, and here, just where the mountain sides fall sheer into the dry gorge below, a tiny monastery has been built. It is now five hundred years old, and in its humble unpretentiousness is quite in keeping with its wonderful surroundings. As the visitor approaches the door Brother Blackcap bursts into a song of welcome, calling forth a tribute of thanks. It seems but natural in such a place to talk to the birds and trees. The little merry-eyed friar who opens the gate completes instead of spoiling the picture. He does the honours of the romantic place in the

joyful yet reverent spirit which should make a true Franciscan. He bids the pilgrims squeeze through trap-doors to see the cave in the bed-rock where Francis slept and prayed before any monastery was built; he welcomes them into the tiny unadorned chapel where the saint and his first companions held their services. On emerging on to the little terrace overhanging the gorge, we see over the doorway through which we have passed a faded but pleasant old fresco of the Preaching to the Birds. The guide points out a rugged old ilex where Francis used to converse with them and sing with them "unofficially." As we stand on the single-spanned bridge over the gorge, looking between the branches out to the plain far beyond and below, or gaze up through the dark leaves at the blue sky and the top of Monte Subasio brilliant against it, the whole world seems transformed into bird-song; the wood rings with it; our hearts are tuned to it; our little guide's hearty laughter chimes in. The sense that the greatest of bird-lovers loved this place above all others gives to the familiar

melodies of Blackcap, Wren and Chaffinch a lovelier and more spiritual meaning.

On the way back the first Nightingale of the season bursts into song in the olive groves, crowning the joy of the past hour. In the evening, as we sit on the balcony watching the sun set over Perugia, the evening sky is alive with Martins, darting and floating and twittering round the colonnades of the great convent that buttresses the town on the west. For St. Francis's sake these birds are protected in Assisi. As the sun sinks and the far hills glow out in high relief for the last half-hour before dusk, a familiar shape flaps out from the convent walls close beside us. The chestnut-coloured back gleams for a moment in the sun, the purple tail outspread; then Brother Kestrel swoops back into the unassailable stone sanctuary from whence he came. The Hawk was one of St. Francis's favourite birds; one of these birds, it is said, used to wake him every morning when he was in retreat on the Verna, and it is good to find it at home under the shadow of his own church walls.

MARY TREVELYAN.

A portion of the park surrounding Easton Lodge, near Dunmow—itsself a surviving portion of Hainault Forest—has been set aside by the Countess of Warwick as a special Bird Sanctuary in memory of Mr. W. H. Hudson, and was formally dedicated by Mr. R. Cunninghame Graham on June 21st. The small house half-hidden in the park, dating from Elizabethan times, is to contain a collection of Mr. Hudson's books.

The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds has addressed a circular letter to the Municipal Corporations of England, pleading for definite bird sanctuaries in public parks and other Corporation property, after the example set by H.M. Board of Works in the Royal Parks. Liverpool and Manchester have already taken steps in this direction; so too, it appears, have Bristol, Walsall and Brighton. It is hoped that further replies

and particulars will be available for the next number of BIRD NOTES AND NEWS.

A new Norfolk nature-reserve is Scolt Head, a cluster of sand-dunes on an island of about 1,200 acres situated off the north coast of the county. It has been known as the "bird island," but the birds have been greatly reduced by persecution; and the flora is also interesting, especially in the salt marshes between the dunes and the sea. As there is no bridge connecting the island with the mainland, and it is at all times difficult of approach, while a solitary bunaglow is the only dwelling of man, it should not present many problems in watching to the Norfolk and Norwich Naturalists' Society, who, it is understood, are undertaking the guardianship. The land was purchased from Lord Leicester by public subscription, and the deeds handed over to the National Trust on June 11th.

## The Swallows

“WHAT has become of our Swallows?” is a question often asked by country people during recent years, for there is a general agreement that there has been for some time a shortage of these delightful summer visitors.

It has been assumed that the scarcity of the birds in the country is largely due to the persecution which they underwent on their migration through other countries lying to the south of these islands; and especially in the south of France, in certain districts in and about the Delta of the Rhone. There is no doubt that, some years back, cruel havoc was played in the Camargue, a district of arid plains, marshes and lagoons, some of the latter of great extent. Light nets were stretched over the lagoons, ostensibly for catching Starlings (probably coming to roost in the reeds) and certain marsh birds, which was permitted: but many thousands of Swallows and Martins were taken in these same nets, each Spring, *though the “chasse” of these birds was really prohibited.*

For about 20 years I have spent some weeks of each Spring, excepting the War period, near Hyères, which is well placed for observing spring migrants; and have met there several naturalists, notably Dr. P. Siepi, late of the Museum at Marseilles. While greatly deploring the slaughter, they have told me something of the destructive work, winked at by those who should have enforced the law! Tens of thousands of Swallows and Martins were sent to Paris plumassiers, for millinery purposes; while huge quantities were eaten as “petit gibier,” at certain auberges in the district, frequented largely by commercial travellers, while the season lasted! A letter before me, written by a M. A. Soubeiran, of St. Gilles (Gard), to my friend M. L. Coulet, of Hyères, who most kindly undertook to write to M. Soubeiran, as having formerly been one of the chief local agents in the business, states that “From the year 1885 to 1895

approximately, the fashion for stuffed birds for ladies’ hats being in great vogue, the Chimney Swallows in spite of their ‘gentillesse’ (!) received no pity: and for some years in the month of May, at the time of their passing, a great number were taken in nets in the Plain of Beaucaire, the Marshes of Bellegarde, Arles, and St. Gilles—in spite of the fact that *hunting these birds was prohibited*, and that one could only obtain them clandestinely. Now the use of nets is completely prohibited, and has been for a long time past. There are no longer any net hunters, and the Swallows have no longer any need to fear the ‘Chasseurs,’ at any rate in the region with which I am acquainted.”

Dr. Siepi, in *La Feuille des Jeunes Naturalistes*, says that he considers that the worst time for the birds was between 1876 and 1890, a period commencing nine years before that given by M. Soubeiran, and terminating five years earlier. But it is to be noted that neither of these gentlemen considers that there has been any demand in Paris for these birds since 1895, owing to the change of fashion. Exactly when the diminution of Swallows and Martins, summering in this country, became so marked as to attract attention is difficult to estimate. Probably it varied in different places. But amongst the chief causes which prevented the numbers of our birds from recovering, after the wholesale destruction in France to supply the millinery trade came to an end in 1895, probably climatic influences have played their part, and among seasons since 1895, no Spring can have been less favourable to spring migrants than that of 1917. In France an improvement began to be noticed. Dr. Siepi writes in the paper above referred to: “Since the mode for wearing little birds changed to the made-up plume, the destruction of Swallows has been less profitable: and now we witness (*in France*) an increase in their numbers.” I am

disposed to think that the reason why our Swallows and Martins continued to decrease in numbers after the persecution in France had ceased, and after an increase in their numbers had been noticed there, is due to the weather which we have experienced in recent Springs. As an example, I have looked up the temperatures recorded here from March 31st to May 10th of the year 1917. In these weeks, there were only eight nights in which the exposed mercury did not fall to the freezing point. It fell to  $-1^{\circ}$  on the night of April 1st, to  $10^{\circ}$  on the 5th, to  $20^{\circ}$  on the 11th, and to  $22^{\circ}$  on the 15th, 16th. On the first six nights of May it fell to the freezing point, or below. There were 10 degrees of frost on the night of May 7th, and the weather did not improve till May 11th. (A few Swallows were seen on April 28th, and the Cuckoo was first heard on the 30th.) I have no information as to the temperatures noted in other parts of this country, or in France, during the Spring of 1917.

Along the favoured Côte d'Azur, the migrants sometimes find that they have arrived too soon! "Even at Marseilles," Dr. Seipi writes, "it sometimes happens that, just as the Swallows arrive, there is a sudden drop in the temperature, caused by the mistral, the icy north-east wind. One may see the birds collected in great numbers on the ledges of buildings, where they wait for an improvement of the weather, or death. Once during a mistral which raged for several days, hundreds of Swallows gathered about the neighbouring buildings; and some found their way into the lofts of the Museum, where I myself, in two days, gathered 62 corpses." "It is certain," he goes on, "that at that time great numbers of these birds must have perished in our region."

M. Soubeiran says in the letter from which I have already quoted, "I wonder if we must not attribute the diminution in the number of these birds to the cold weather which we so often experience in Spring? The Swallows arrive here during the first fine days of March. Then

suddenly even in April we have frosts. How many times have I not seen these birds in terrible weather, come to take refuge in the yards and stables, where they vainly seek food, which they do not find; tired by a long journey, and finding nothing to eat, they soon die."

Last Spring, 1922, we had some very unpleasant weather at Hyères, and much mistral. The Swallows, etc., arrived in "rushes." On April 5th, quantities of House-Martins and a few Swallows were in the town and the surrounding country till midday, when they passed on. On the 17th there must have been many thousands of Swallows (only) near the sea, and about the town; and everywhere where I was that day, say three miles square, there were no visible insects flying, but a bitter wind, and the birds were hunting up and down behind buildings and trees, wherever some shelter could be found.

On the 25th there was a very bad mistral; on the 26th about 60 Common Swifts, four Alpine Swifts, and many hundreds of House Martins were flying about our hotel, which faces the saltpan and sea beyond. They had evidently just arrived. By 9 a.m. they had all passed on. During these weeks the local papers were reporting weather which was seriously affecting the crops, and travellers described snowstorms through Central France, and sometimes snow lying along the line, as far south as Avignon. The destruction of delicate birds of passage last Spring in France must have been deplorable. This Spring the birds were constantly coming in from March 27th to April 22nd, when I left Hyères, but with much more favourable weather.

It is early yet to judge how our migrants have fared since they reached us this Spring. But birds that catch their insect prey on the wing, must often have had difficulty in providing for themselves, and still more for their hungry broods, during the past few weeks.

W. H. ST. QUINTIN.  
(E. Yorks.)

27th June, 1923.

## Economic Ornithology

THE Rev. J. R. Hale writes to *British Birds* (June, 1923) to say that in a nest of the Brown Owl in Kent, containing two newly-hatched young ones, he counted thirty long-tailed field-mice.

### THE LAPWING

In the House of Commons on June 5th, Major Douglas Brown asked if attention had been drawn to the decrease of Peewits in the northern counties this year: if this decrease is attributed to the increasing collection of eggs: and if, in view of the value of this bird to agriculture, the advisability of strengthening the law dealing with the collection of Peewits' eggs will be considered?

Mr. Bridgman (Home Secretary) replied: My attention has not been drawn to the particular decrease of the bird in the northern counties, but I am aware that a resolution on the general decrease of the bird throughout the country was passed on the 10th May by the Council of Agriculture for England and Scotland. It is proposed to insert a special proviso for the protection of the Peewit and its eggs in the Wild Birds Protection Bill.

### THE BULLFINCH

In the Burton Wood (Lancashire) Parish Magazine the Rev. A. M. Mitchell quotes the defence of the Bullfinch in the Spring Number of BIRD NOTES AND NEWS, and adds:—

The misjudgment of the Bullfinch (and the sparrow) goes very far back. In our Burton Wood records for the 18th century we read of the sentence of death pronounced against the innocent: "At a public meeting held in Burton Wood on November 23rd, 1797, it was agreed that whereas there was allowed from the Parish of Warrington threepence a dozen for sparrow heads, we whose names are hereafter recorded do allow threepence per dozen for sparrow and gold and flax finches' heads, and likewise sixpence per

dozen for bullfinches' heads, to be paid by the Chapel Warden."

"Flax" finch is the Chaffinch, and from the amounts paid it would appear that the "gold" finch was more common than the Bullfinch in those days, since the 18th century vestries, in their sublime ignorance, usually paid the most for the rarer birds, just as do their successors the "Sparrow" clubs to-day. The Burton Wood order against the Bullfinch was rescinded in 1805, but the learning of many a sparrow-club is a hundred years or so behind that of the old vestries.

### TO SAVE THE FRUIT

The destruction of apple and plum orchards in Kent by winter-moth larvæ, and the damage done elsewhere by caterpillars and blight (aphis) this year, has again drawn attention to the necessity for protecting birds instead of killing them. Mr. F. C. H. Borrett writes in the *Morning Post* (June 23rd, 1923):—

If any men richly deserve the plague of caterpillars and other insects with which they are now receiving punishment, it is the majority of fruit growers. In Kent I have seen piles of dead birds in every corner of a cherry orchard, and have heard the guns going from sunrise to sunset, the dead and wounded birds falling continuously in all directions. On asking a man whether he killed every bird that came into his fruit orchard, his answer was that he killed every bird he could—of every sort—when his fruit was ripening and ripe.

Other writers point out that the winter-moth is destroyed by Great Tit, Willow-Wren and other warblers, Jackdaw, Starling, and Jay, Dr. W. E. Collinge recording 100 umber and winter-moths taken in an hour by Great Tits from an infested tree.

Growers undoubtedly are beginning to realise their mistake. The owner of large orchards in the Woodnesborough district is reported to have said:—

"Our orchards are a wilderness. Bird destruction must be stopped. We must have more birds, as more birds mean fewer insects."

## Notes

THE statistics of prosecutions under the Wild Birds Protection Acts, given elsewhere, is an interesting study. No one can for a moment imagine that these represent a tenth, or a fiftieth, of the offences committed. Various forms of destruction of bird life escape the net of the Acts, but infinitely more swim merrily in and out of the meshes; and the proportion of the figures for the counties, all strangely small when the illegal destruction of bird life by all classes and ages of persons is considered, is probably in inverse ratio to the actual breaches of the law in the several counties, and represents not comparative criminality but the comparative energy of the authorities. The nestlings catapulted or stoned to death, the small birds illegally caught, the eggs illegally taken, in one county: would they not furnish cause for 137 prosecutions in one county? It is the usual thing to blame the laws. There are at least four factors: (1) the complications and exceptions and involutions of the law; (2) want of knowledge and inaction on the part of the police; (3) absence of education on the matter; (4 and chiefest) the apathy of the public.

\* \* \*

The Bird Protection Society of South Africa is making steady progress and the prospects of wild birds in that wide land have grown very much brighter during the last twelvemonth, thanks to such men as Professor Warren, and Mr. Fitz-Simons. The latter writes, under date 23rd March, 1923:—

"We are constantly getting the various divisional Councils to protect birds in their areas or divisions, and we are now aiming at getting one Ordinance passed by Parliament to cover all the Union of South Africa and to make it a permanent measure. The Government is being petitioned to introduce legislation for the protection of insectivorous and all other wild birds useful or not injurious to agriculture in the Union. All the S.P.C.A. Societies are backing me up."

Mr. Fitz-Simons has a work in the press on South African birds.

\* \* \*

It is somewhat curious that two such contrasting pictures of Italy and her wild

birds should be presented at the same time as, on the one hand, that from Mr. Watson and Miss Pertz, dealing with the wholesale destruction of birds (both for eating and for caging) by the "rogoli" or "roccoli," with the horrible additional brutality of blinding birds; and on the other hand, the idyllic scene drawn by Miss Trevelyan. Mr. H. D. Astley and other writers long since described the roccoli and raised a protest which it was vainly hoped might have some influence with the Italian Government. Miss Trevelyan writes as a lover of the fair country in which her father, Dr. G. M. Trevelyan, has taken so deep an interest, and of which her grandmother, Mrs. Humphry Ward, has in her novels given such brilliant glimpses. As bird-student she says:—

"There were more birds in Italy than I had hoped for. There were Whitethroats, Swallows, Martins, Swifts, Serins, Pied Flycatchers, Redstarts, Hawks, Blackbirds, and of course Nightingales. The Thrush does not sing there as he does in England, and though there are plenty of Chiffchaffs I never heard a Willow-Wren. In Rome my chief delight was the Swifts. All day and especially towards evening they circled in swarms over the City, screaming like ghosts: no one seemed to persecute them or take any notice of them. One thing which struck me as strange when we were staying by the sea at Rapallo was the complete absence of Gulls and sea-birds of any sort. The hills and wooded villages running down to the cliffs were full of birds, but sea-gulls there were none though the coast was rocky and wild, and I sadly missed them."

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A pleasant comment on all three communications is supplied by the news that on June 12th the Italian Legislature passed a new law to remedy some of the evils frequently deplored by English visitors. It forbids altogether the use of the vertical nets so destructive on the mountain passes, prohibits snares, and imposes several limitations and restrictions in the use of the roccoli and similar traps. It is to be hoped, as the *Times* remarks, that the law will be gradually widened and strengthened, and the memory of St. Francis thereby honoured in his country.

Lord Rothschild, on behalf of the British Ornithologists' Union, has addressed a letter to the Minister of the Interior of Poland, protesting against the offer of prizes to fishermen by the Board of Fisheries of the Pomorska Izba Rolnicza in Torun, for the heads of Kingfishers, Herons, Ospreys, White and Black Storks, Gulls, Common Divers, Great Divers, and Bitterns. They especially draw attention to the position of the Black Stork, already so rare over the greater part of Europe that it is only by special protection their extermination has been prevented: probably not more than four or five pairs exist in Poland. A protest from the B.O.U. against the killing of rare species, even in another country, should have weight, though it may be feared that England, with her persecution of Heron, Bittern, and Kingfisher by angling syndicates, and of every rare species by collectors, is not so well equipped as might be for the post of mentor.

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The new Nature-Protection Law of Finland, passed on February 23rd, 1923, includes a clause for the suppression of the Pole-Trap. This is the more satisfactory from the fact that the Scandinavian countries are closely linked in their humanitarian work, and therefore a similar enactment may be hoped for in Norway, where this abominable device is said to be largely used, chiefly, it is further said, for the benefit of British sport. The Finnish law has been obtained through the exertions of the Animal-Protection society, which has done much for the birds of that country and has a very keen and active president in Mrs. Constance Ullner, of Helsingfors.

\* \* \*

A good deal has been written about the value of the cinema in education, and of its merits as a teacher of natural history. The majority of people have their own opinions as to the educational merits of the ordinary cinema, and of its possibilities. Two or three English lecturers have demonstrated its fascinations where

the film-taker was a genuine nature-lover as well as a photographer; the names of Captain Oliver Pike, Captain C. W. Knight, and Mr. Kearton at once suggest themselves. But there is need for infinite caution on the part of educational enthusiasts before they accept a good many pictures that are on the market. In some the humane side of the matter is conspicuous by absence. It is also well to note where the film originated; this would save newspaper critics and cinema-visitors from descanting on the knowledge of British birds imparted to British children by pictures of King-bird, Flicker, and Wood Thrush!

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The camera itself, so delightfully welcomed (possibly with more zeal than discretion) as the saviour of the wild birds, is liable to become their enemy, as the Watchers' Committee of the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds knows only too well. It is a thousand times better than the gun: that goes without saying; but the ardour of the photographer to secure his picture is extremely apt to override care for the safety of the birds. Old birds are kept off the nest until the eggs are chilled or the young perishing with cold and hunger. The nests themselves are denuded of cover and protection by the cutting away of foliage and of branches to give an "exposure" which may suit the man with the camera but is fatal to the birds. Harm is not intended; but little heed is paid to the fact that harm is done. A correspondent of the *Manchester Guardian*, for instance, writes (May 31st, 1923):—

"The collector and the man with a gun are not the only enemies of the raptorial birds of the Lake District. The photographer, too, unless he be as sympathetic and understanding a naturalist as he is a skilful cragsman and camera-man, is in a fair way to becoming as accursed as the people who shoot at sight or take rare birds' eggs to gratify their vanity or their lust for pecuniary gain. A pair of peregrines, with the first of the eggs laid on April 12th and with the clutch completed on April 16th, were kept off their eyrie for two hours and deserted. The weather was bitterly cold, and instinct told the birds that it was useless to resume sitting. The attempt to photograph the eyrie was a failure."

Even worse cases have occurred, affecting

species more rare than the Peregrine ; and this season the Watchers' Committee

were compelled to refuse all permission to photograph in " watched " areas.

## The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds

### COUNCIL MEETING

THE quarterly meeting of the Society was held at the Guildhall, Westminster, on April 13th, 1923, Sir Montagu Sharpe, K.C., Chairman, presiding.

The Hon. Secretary's Report recorded with sorrow the death of yet another member of the Society's Council, whose losses have been so heavy during the last twelvemonth. The Hon. Mrs. Arthur Henniker had sent a message of regret at inability to attend the Society's Annual Meeting, on account of ill-health, but the fatal end of her illness was wholly unexpected. A devoted friend of birds and of all animals, her interest, sympathy and influence will be greatly missed. The Council unanimously desired that letters of regret and condolence should be sent to Mrs. Henniker's brother, the Marquess of Crewe, and to her niece, Lady Cynthia Colville. The funeral took place at Finningham, Suffolk, on April 10th, when a wreath was sent from the Council.

The Report stated that two Bird Protection Orders had been issued, one for Westmorland, giving all the year protection to the Green Woodpecker and protecting its eggs, and removing special protection from the Lesser Blackbacked Gull; and the other for Staffordshire, adding the Heron to the schedule, this being due to Mr. Masefield, who brought to notice the shooting out of a heronry when the birds were nesting. Forty lectures had been given: by the Rev. F. T. Blathwayt, Mr. R. J. Cragghill, Mr. A. C. Fraser, Mr. Gilbert-Cooper, Mr. J. E. Hall, Rev. J. Heaton, Mr. C. T. Hirst, Mr. S. Henry, Rev. J. E. Kelsall, Mr. J. R. B. Masefield, Mr. W. Marshall, Mr. C. H. Peppiette, Mr. H. C. Playne, Mr. W. Raw, Mr. A. B. Rendall, Mr. Thomas Smith, Rev. J. G. Tuck, Mr. C. W. Turner, Dr. C. B. Ticehurst, Mr.

H. Vicars Webb, Miss E. Williams, Sir D. Wilson-Barker, and others. Some thirty Bird and Tree Festivals had been notified. The removal of the Society to its new offices at Grosvenor Mansions, 82, Victoria Street, was announced.

The Finance and General Purposes Committee presented the quarterly statement of accounts and bills for payment. A legacy of £10 had been received under the will of the late Mrs. Witchell, widow of Mr. C. A. Witchell, of Cheltenham, formerly an Hon. Local Secretary of the Society. Mr. W. J. Atkinson had resigned the Hon. Secretaryship for Hythe, which he had held since 1916, and cordial thanks were voted for his services. His place is taken by Mrs. Nicholas Wood. Miss M. B. Gaskoin resumes the Secretaryship for Tunbridge Wells; Mr. Thomas Smith, Froghall, Stoke-on-Trent, becomes joint-Secretary with Mr. E. J. Bolton in Staffordshire; Mrs. Barnard was elected Hon. Secretary for the Merstham district of Surrey, and Miss Borrow, Haddenham, for West Bucks.

The following Fellows and Members were elected:—

FELLOWS:—Cresswell A. Cresswell (W.); Miss Darby (Bucks); Midshipman J. Furse, R.N.; Hon. Mrs. H. N. Gladstone (Hawarden); J. Rudge Harding (S.W.); Captain C. W. R. Knight (Kent); H. P. Macmillan, K.C. (Edinburgh); Mrs. A. L. Norris (Essex); Mrs. Cecil Parsons (Surrey); Miss Alison Pumphrey (Northumberland); Norman Southern (Northumberland); Hon. Mrs. Dudley Ward (S.W.); Commander A. T. Wilson, R.N., Mrs. Wilson (Brecon); Viscount Wolverhampton (Norfolk).

MEMBERS:—Henry J. Allen (Worcs.); J. Seymour Allen (Yorks); Miss Ballard (Worcs.); Miss Helen Barlow (W.); Miss Beckett (Glos.); Miss Binyon (Worcs.); Miss A. Borrow (Bucks); Lieut. C. J. Boyle (Jamaica); George Smith Brook (Yorks); Miss D. E. Brown (Wales); Miss I. J. Bruce (S.W.); Miss E. Burrows (Devon); Miss P. M. Butler (Berks); J. T. Capron (Yorks); Lieut.-Colonel Cator (Hereford); Mrs. B. Collard (Kent); Miss D. E. Coller (S.W.); G. E. Collins (Surrey); Miss Crace (Bucks); Mrs. S. R. Davidson (Middx.); Ben Dawson (Yorks); Mrs. Des Voeux (Hants); Mrs. D. Devant (N.W.); Miss E. A. Dickinson, Miss M. Dickinson (Kent); Miss

E. Duff, Miss H. L. Duff (N.W.); Mrs. David Ferguson (N.W.); Ivie M. Fulton (Cheshire); Dr. M. Gepp (Salop); Mrs. Hall (Devon); Mrs. A. Harrison (Durham); Miss Florence Hay (Berks); Miss Hibbert-Ware (Essex); Thomas Hodgson (Oxon); Walter Hopwood (E.); W. E. Houlbrook (Yorks); Mrs. H. F. Houlder (Surrey); S. Houlston (Warwick); Miss Penelope Hull (Northants); Mrs. Humfrey (Wales); H. W. Jarman (Hants); Harold G. Kenyon (Herts); Miss G. Lewis (Essex); M. McKerrow, M.C., M.B. (Cumberland); Mrs. Maconochie (Berks); Mrs. R. V. Macrory, Master R. D. Macrory (Ireland); Mrs. F. W. Maude (S.W.); Miss F. Maude (Berks); Major Noott (Kent); Samuel Ogden (Lancs); Mrs. Parker (Bucks); Frank Peake Parkin (Surrey); Mrs. Payne (Suffolk); A. Rose (Glos.); Miss Mary E. Scott (Yorks); Mrs. Seaton (Salop); Miss W. Smith (Glos.); Mrs. Squire (Bucks); J. Stericker (Surrey); Major H. J. Stevenson (Midlothian); Mrs. F. Storr (Surrey); Miss Tattershall (N.W.); Miss R. Trevor-Battye (Hants); Viscount Ullswater, G.C.B. (Suffolk); Mrs. Usher (Berks); William Walker (Midlothian); Mrs. Wemyss (N.W.); Miss A. Whitehouse (Warwick); Captain R. W. Willis (Essex); Edward A. Wilson (Glos.); Mrs. Wilson (Berks); Miss A. Wood (Warwick).

LIFE MEMBER:—Miss Lloyd Theakston (Lancs).

AFFILIATED:—Quintin C.E. School, Birmingham.

It was suggested and agreed that in addition to the lending of lantern slides for lectures by Fellows and Members of the Society, further lectures should be prepared to be loaned with slides *en bloc*.

The Watchers' Committee presented the report of their meeting held on February 28th, and subjects arising out of it were discussed, including the protection of wild birds in Epping Forest and the continued use of the pole-trap. The Standing Committees were elected for the year, namely, the Watchers, Finance and General Purposes, Publications, Publicity, and Bird and Tree. Mr. A. Holte Macpherson was elected a member of the Council. Sir Montagu Sharpe and Mr. Lemon were nominated as the Society's representatives on the International Committee for the Protection of Wild Birds. The International Congress to be held in Paris was also discussed, and it was decided that the Society's delegates should especially bring forward the questions of the destruction of birds by oil-waste on the sea and the plumage trade. Letters on various matters were read and considered.

THE SOCIETY'S WORK.

By request of the British Broadcasting Company, Sir Montagu Sharpe broad-

casted from the London station, on May 16th, a ten minutes' talk on the work of the R.S.P.B. From correspondence since received it is evident the address, brief as it had to be, roused considerable interest, and Sir Montagu has since repeated it for other stations.

In the April number of *Natureland* (edited by Dr. Graham Renshaw, Bridge House, Sale, Manchester), Mr. C. B. Horsbrugh comments on the Report of the Society's Watchers' Committee as of interest to all who are striving to protect our rarer British birds:—

“Thanks to the often very arduous labours of the watchers, many rare species are on the increase. . . . It is pleasant to note that Peregrine and Buzzard, Raven and Chough are holding their own.”

THE WILD BIRDS PROTECTION ACTS

The following particulars, taken from the Blue Book of Criminal Statistics, show the number of prosecutions under the Wild Birds Protection Acts in the year 1920:—

Bucks .. ..	5	Warwickshire ..	19
Cambridge ..	2	Westmorland ..	4
Cheshire .. ..	1	Yorks—	
Cornwall .. ..	7	E. Riding ..	2
Dorset .. .. .	1	W. Riding ..	8
Durham .. .. .	3	Wales—	
Essex .. .. .	2	Anglesea ..	2
Glos. .. .. .	1	Brecon ..	3
Herts .. .. .	1	Pembroke ..	1
Kent .. .. .	5	County Boroughs—	
Lancs .. .. .	9	Manchester ..	2
Lincs .. .. .	1	Tynemouth ..	1
Notts .. .. .	1	Norwich ..	1
Somerset .. ..	4	Southampton ..	1
Isle of Wight ..	1	Portsmouth ..	2
Staffs .. .. .	5	Hastings ..	1
Surrey .. .. .	13	Birmingham ..	5
Sussex .. .. .	3		

Metropolitan Police Area, 20—Total, 137.

The average number of prosecutions per annum for periods of five years prior to 1920 was as follows:—

1896—1900 .. ..	284
1901—1905 .. ..	440
1906—1910 .. ..	314
1911—1915 .. ..	202
1916—1920 .. ..	96

INTERNATIONAL  
NATURE-PROTECTION CONGRESS

AN International Congress to consider the protection of Nature, including wild life, natural scenery and reserves, was held in Paris on May 31st and June 1st, 2nd and 3rd, 1923, the summoning Societies being the Société Nationale d'Acclimatation de France, the Ligue Française pour la Protection des Oiseaux, and the Société pour la Protection des Paysages de France. The general President was M. Louis Mangin, President of the first-named body and Director of the Natural History Museum of Paris, the Secretary of the Organisation Committee being M. R. de Clermont.

A large number of countries were represented by delegates from one or more societies, including most of the nations of Europe (except Russia and Germany), the United States and Japan. Mr. T. Gilbert Pearson, President of the National Audubon Association, was among those present, and the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds was represented by two members of its Council, Mr. J. Rudge Harding and Mr. Keith Henderson, another member, Mr. Meade-Waldo, attending for the Society for the Promotion of Nature Reserves.

The Congress was divided into five sections, the first of which concerned animal life and was presided over by M. Jean Delacour, President of the Ligue for the Protection of Birds, while others were devoted to forests and the acclimatisation of plant life, art and nature in regard to town-extension, scenery and so on, reserves and refuges, public parks, etc., and the preservation of the landscape.

Nature, in her three kingdoms, as the prospectus of the Congress pointed out, is menaced on all sides by the progress of industry, and the caprice or the utilitarianism of men has placed many species of animals and plants in danger of extermination. Animals which should be preserved for their utility, their beauty or their rarity, are destroyed and massacred, some to the verge of extinction, and under the cover of industrial progress trees

and forests are removed and the most picturesque scenery and most artistic landscapes ruined. All the friends and defenders of Nature, it was urged, ought to unite and organise in order to make their protests heard and to safeguard for the future our inheritance in Nature.

Discussions in the various sections were well sustained. A full report of the proceedings is to be issued. Here it must suffice to mention the very useful papers, suggestions, and resolutions of Mr. Gilbert Pearson (U.S.A.), Madame Schleimer (Luxembourg), M. Gerrard de Pattere (Hungary), M. J. Sztolcman (Poland), M. A. Burdet, M. P. G. Van Tienhoven, and M. J. Thijsse (Holland), in the Bird section. Attention to the danger to sea-birds through the discharge of oil-waste on the sea, was dealt with in a paper by Mrs. F. E. Lemon, Hon. Sec. of the Watchers' Committee of the R.S.P.B., who urged all Bird Protection Societies the world over to convince their respective Governments of the necessity for proper scientific inquiry into the problem of how to deal with this oil. The proposal was strongly supported, the French and Dutch delegates having personally witnessed the dying miseries of some of the countless sea-birds that are driven ashore hopelessly saturated with the filthy and glutinous scum; and a resolution was adopted that, in view of the destruction of birds and fish-spawn, and of the effect on bathing-resorts:

"Les pays maritimes consultent leurs corps scientifiques pour tenter de trouver un procédé permettant aux bateaux d'évacuer ou transformer leur restes d'huile sans se borner à les déverser par dessus bord."

The social side of the proceedings was at least as successful as the business, the hospitality shown making the gathering a very pleasant one. On the last day of the Congress, Madame Delacour received the delegates at her beautiful old chateau of Clères in Normandy; M. A. Chappellier, M. de Clermont, the Prince Paul Murat, the Marquise de Pierre, and others assisted in making them welcome during their stay in France.

A general hope was expressed that similar meetings may take place at least

biennially, if not annually, in one country or another, since International Co-operation is essential if the rarer and more lovely species of birds are to be saved from an untimely end.

#### INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE FOR THE PROTECTION OF BIRDS

This Committee, it will be remembered, was inaugurated by Mr. T. Gilbert Pearson, of the National Audubon Association of America, on the occasion of his visit to England last summer. The first meeting of the British section was held on May 28th, 1923, at 32, Smith Square, Westminster, by invitation of Mrs. R. McKenna. Those present representing various societies interested in the subject were: Earl Buxton (in the chair), Sir Montagu Sharpe and Mr. F. E. Lemon (Royal Society for the Protection of Birds), Lord Rothschild, Dr. F. Dawtrey Drewitt, Mr. H. S. Gladstone, Dr. Percy

Lowe, Mrs. McKenna, Mr. J. H. Massingham, Dr. Chalmers Mitchell, Mr. Richmond, Dr. J. Ritchie, and Mr. W. L. Slater. Viscount Grey of Falloodon, Dr. Eagle Clarke and Mr. E. G. B. Meade-Waldo were unable to attend. The agenda included the consideration of the scope and general policy of the Committee with regard to:—

- (1) Protection of birds on migration;
- (2) Collection of information bearing upon the food of special categories of birds, such as sea-birds, insect-eating birds, or fruit-eating birds;
- (3) Consideration of the species of wild birds at present permitted by law to be imported as food into the United Kingdom;
- (4) Special protection of birds in out-of-the-way parts of the world;
- (5) Prohibition and regulation of acclimatisation of foreign species;
- (6) Consideration of nature-reserves or sanctuaries at home or abroad;
- (7) Policy to be pursued in regard to the Plumage traffic;
- (8) Collection and filing of statistics obtained by the Committee.

## The Plumage Trade

A MEMBER of the R.S.P.B. wrote in May to a well-known firm of drapers in London, to protest against being shown in their millinery department a hat made entirely of the heads and wings of small birds. She received the following eminently characteristic reply:—

“We find there is a demand for this kind of thing, and we are therefore bound, in the interests of the business, to stock same. We may mention that we are ourselves not in favour of these hats, but we are compelled always to study what is good for the business, having the interests of the shareholders always to consider. We may say that birds are now well protected by the Plumage Act, and we should have nothing in stock contrary to that Act.”

Without examining into the ethics of this epistle, or asking whether women really go into a shop and ask for hats made of birds' heads and wings, or whether these particular heads were imported, and if so, when, it may be pointed out that the greater number of these businesses are now limited companies, and that the responsibility rests with both the shareholders and the customers. The battledore and shuttlecock way of

shifting responsibility is as old as Adam and Eve, and the first dealer in apples had the excellent excuse that the lady clearly wanted the fruit though she knew the prohibition even better than the woman of to-day knows that birds' plumage is contraband. But such tactics do not make for the credit of the dealer or the customer.

Many correspondents of the R.S.P.B. evidently imagine that the Plumage Act settled once and for all the buying and selling of wild birds' plumage, and they marvel at the flaunting display of osprey and paradise feathers in shops and catalogues, and at the booming of them in women's columns and other fribble of the Press. The newspaper manager would no doubt make the same reply as the drapery director; he has to concentrate on £ s. d. The Act does not touch sale and wear. It only prohibits importation. Firms and women alike are aware that for good and sufficient reasons urged by humanity and science, and

after long years of investigation and consideration, the trade in wild birds' plumage has been placed under a ban by the two leading nations of the world, Great Britain and America. It is up to firms and women alike to respect the spirit and intention of the law.

A report in the *Agricultural Journal of India* (Vol. XV.) on the economic value of the Blue Jay, or Indian Roller, as an extremely useful bird in India and Ceylon through its destruction of cutworms and other agricultural

pests, has the suggestive comment that "The bird is protected under the Wild Birds' and Animals' Protection Act. In spite of this, Europeans frequently shoot them, especially in the neighbourhood of military cantonments, for the sake of the brilliantly coloured wings," and in spite of this, the common Jay has been added by the Board of Trade Advisory Committee to the schedule of the Plumage Act as a bird whose feathers may be imported into this country. It is the name by which the Roller has commonly been imported.

## Moor-Burning

THE destruction of wild birds through the burning of gorse in nesting-time has been referred to more than once in BIRD NOTES AND NEWS. In consequence of several complaints, and of a question from the Dorset County Council as to the legality of the proceeding, a letter on the subject was, on April 13th, addressed by the Hon. Secretary of the Watchers' Committee of the R.S.P.B. to the Wild Birds Advisory Committee (Home Office) asking that some power should be given to Councils to deal with the matter. There is no law at present for checking an evil which is a serious menace to ground- and gorse-nesting birds, the only provision dealing with it being a clause in the Malicious Damage Act 1861 which is of no practical use in the majority of cases.

The Home Office referred the question to the Ministry of Agriculture, who replied that landowners were not likely to burn heather at a time prejudicial to grouse, and as regards gorse referred to their leaflet on "Improvement of poor hill pastures," in which it is recommended that gorse should be burnt in the latter half of July in order that the plants may be entirely destroyed, since spring or winter burning only makes "the pest shoot from the stumps more densely than ever." As the object of gorse-burning is understood to be the production of young growth and not eradication, this advice is poor comfort to those who wish to save the birds.

The Society accordingly invited the Dorset Council to support their recommendation that it should be made an offence to burn gorse or heather after March 31st in any year, but the Council's Wild Birds Protection Committee "decided not to take action."

"J. M. D." writes in the *Morning Post*, June 2nd, 1923 :—

Here in Dorset, as in many other English counties, moors are burnt at their owners', or tenants', own sweet will. Often during the month of June can be seen smoke-wisps curling and red fires glowing along the horizon. Now the small insect-eating birds of Great Britain are an invaluable asset to the farmer. Though in an indirect fashion, they are as great income-earners to him as are the grouse to the Highland laird. And for one small bird which makes its nest in the garden hedge a dozen nest on the open moorland. What, then, must be the devastation wrought in their ranks by these late spring and early summer holocausts? As in the case of moor-burning in Scotland, a date ought to be fixed after which these fires must cease. That date need not necessarily be April 20th, but we have scores of eminent ornithologists who, meeting in conclave, would definitely fix it. After which an Act could be passed which neither landlords nor tenants dare contravene. Perhaps the most convenient manner of passing this enactment would be to affix it as a clause to the Wild Birds Protection Act, which has already done such yeoman service for our honest, hard-working British birds.

## From Correspondents

### GORSE-BURNING

I AM glad to see in our Manx paper one writer pointing out the cruelty there is in burning the gorse bushes during May and nesting-time. The gorse is one of the glories of Manxland, and grows here much more luxuriantly than in England, where the climate is colder; consequently there are more nests in the bushes here than elsewhere. It would be well if farmers were reminded to burn their gorse at the back end of the year. There is, I believe, a law against burning in the nesting-time, but evidently it is unheeded.—A. C. GREENE.

### THE DERIVATION OF "GALLY-BIRD"

In your Spring Number (p. 76) you invite some reader of BIRD NOTES AND NEWS to suggest the derivation of "Gally-bird" (or "galley-bird"), a name applied to the Green Woodpecker in Kent and elsewhere. The Rev. Charles Swainson, in his "Folk-lore and Provincial Names of British Birds," says: "Galley-bird—merry or laughing bird (from A.S. *gal*, merry)." If this is the derivation it is easy to see how the name originally came to be used for the Green Woodpecker, though it is also used in connection with other species of the family which, unlike the Green Woodpecker, do not laugh. Thus in the work quoted, "French galley-bird" is given as a Sussex name for the Lesser Spotted Woodpecker, and Mr. N. F. Ticehurst in his "Birds of Kent" gives "Magpie Galley-bird" and "Galley-Magpie" as Kentish names for the Greater Spotted Woodpecker. The Anglo-Saxon "*gal*" is the root from which our word "*gala*" (a revel or fête) springs.—A. HOLTE MACPHERSON.

### NEST MADE OF CONFETTI

Miss Firbank writes from Boscombe: "I wish you could have seen a Chaffinch's nest that one of the Cadets showed me. It was built near the railway station, and a cat had pulled it down. We thought at first it had the usual lichen and moss on the outside, but closer examination showed the lichen to be white confetti, with jagged edges, and the moss was the green bast used to tie up flowers, all woven in and wrinkled up to resemble moss. There had evidently been a wedding party at the station!"

### BIRD DESTRUCTION IN ITALY

Mr. J. B. Watson, a Fellow of the Society, writes:—

Visitors to the Italian Lake district walking on the foot-hills may often have noticed semi-circular pergola-like arrangements of wooden stakes about 10 feet high, upon which bushes are trained to grow. Near by is a small building with a scaffold-like erection beside it, both being also camouflaged with creepers and bushes. These harmless looking erections are traps for taking wild birds, the house for the birdcatcher's paraphernalia, and the platform on which he conceals himself when on the lookout.

The traps are used in the autumn months at a time when migrants are passing through on their way South, to their winter quarters. The stakes are covered with nets, limed twigs are used, and the birds are attracted to the traps by means of decoy birds confined in cages. Enormous numbers of birds for eating and other purposes are taken, including small insectivorous song-birds, Redstarts, Warblers, and the like.

Perhaps the most distressing part of the whole business is the treatment of these decoy birds, mostly Chaffinches and Bramblings. They are confined singly in tiny cages about six inches square, which are hung up on the walls of many houses in the towns and hamlets. These birds present a pitiable appearance, many of them having had their eyesight destroyed presumably for the purpose of making their call-note more penetrating. To many people this revolting cruelty may seem hardly credible. But the writer himself witnessed it in the district of Gardone.

As regards the wholesale destruction of insectivorous birds, this would appear to be a matter of serious economic importance for others besides the Italians.

Another Fellow of the Society, Miss A. J. Pertz, calls attention to the same subject:—

I was staying in an old Italian hill-town last May, and one evening I strolled outside the gates into the fields, walking beside Indian corn six feet high and olives and mulberry

trees. The farmers and their families were resting near their farms after their day's work and their white oxen were already inside their stalls. Sitting down some little distance beyond to admire the vegetation and distant hills, I suddenly noticed some strange lopped trees, covered with old white lime, and close by were two little brown huts, covered with dead rushes and leaves. Opposite the huts were depressions in the ground full of weeds and wild flowers. I then realised that these were "Rogolos," the Italian name for bird-snaring stations. In the spring they must have been covered with fresh green, to make them indistinguishable among the surrounding vegetation. I had noticed numbers of tiny cages hanging on the walls of the houses inside the town, each with its wild bird inside, and on inquiry I learnt that these little birds had been caught early in the Spring on their migration northwards, and were now being

kept to act as decoys this Autumn, when the Southern migration takes place.

A man hides himself inside the hut and listens for the approach of a flight of birds; on hearing them he pulls a cord connected with a decoy bird, who, feeling pain caused by the tightening of its harness, cries out. The flying birds hear the cries of distress and fly downwards to the rescue of their comrade; some alight on the freshly limed trees, others are immediately covered by a fine large net which the hidden man dexterously draws over them by means of connecting cords. The captives are then either sold for the Italian gentleman's breakfasts, or caged.

I fear that these "Rogoli" exist in all parts of Italy, and especially on the southern slopes of the Alps, as at Lanzo d'Intelvi, for instance, where I noticed that the surrounding trees were leafless owing to the destruction from caterpillars.

## Bird and Tree Challenge Shield Competition

JUDGING from the very large number of entries received, 1923 should see the strongest Bird and Tree Competition yet held. The only requisite is that the work and enthusiasm of Cadets should continue and that there should be no holding-back when the time comes for writing essays. It happens sometimes that new entrants, Schools or Cadets, become faint-hearted and think it "no use" sending in papers. Never was a greater mistake. Every child and every school should do its best. It is not the Shield that is the true prize; it is the observation, the patience, the knowledge (however small or elementary), the "look-about-you" habit, the listening ear, the power of thinking, the growing appreciation of nature's beauty and of sympathy with nature's life. To gain these is to win a book that is never dull and never read right through. There is also to be considered the check and disappointment afforded to the children by not sending in essays, however simple they may be; the stimulus given by the award of Montagu Sharpe medals for the best papers of Teams even where that Team cannot yet take a high place in the school-against-school competition. Several new counties enter this year; and the provision of a Challenge Shield depends upon the number of entrants. Which county or counties will claim the offer?

### A PRIZE-WINNER'S LETTER

The following letter from Hugh Howes, who won the first prize in the "Tailby" Owl Competition, has been received with pleasure by the Bird and Tree Committee:—

"I beg to thank you very much for the lovely Prize that I received for my Owl Essay. My Father and Mother and Teachers are delighted and think I am very lucky to own such a book. I am sorry I have left school, for I loved the nature work there so much, but I shall always study and watch birds and protect them. Everyone wants to read my book. I shall value it all my life."

The volume was Mr. Pycraft's "Birds in Flight," with Mr. Roland Green's illustrations.

### SHIELD FOR GIRL GUIDES

The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds is this year offering a Challenge Shield to Girl Guides, to be competed for annually by Guide or Ranger Companies. The 1923 Competition takes the form of "Bird Logs," and marks will be given for: nest observation and protection; feeding, and observation of natural food; observation of songs, call notes, etc.; records of definite bird-protection. Particulars appear in the May number of the *Girl Guides Gazette*, which has also two good letters on bird-protection, and an amusing account of nesting Wrynecks.

A Hampshire Teacher writes :—

"I showed our books, medals, etc., to our new Inspector and he was very much interested. He knows a great deal about birds and was so pleased to find a Wagtail sitting on six eggs in the boys' playground. Now the girls have two Linnets and a Thrush sitting in their playground, and the boys have a Goldfinch and a Great Tit. They had a successful brood two years ago. About six longtailed Tits' nests have been found in the fields round about this year. This place is full of nests and hardly any get taken. But the young birds fare badly; the Rooks are blamed for taking them, but it may be the Little Owl—we have a good many of them about. One of my boys knows

a Kingfisher's nest with eggs. He did know a Snipes' nest, but it was near another village and got taken. We have a hen Chaffinch with an injured wing in the School just now. She is getting very perky and beginning to talk to me, but cannot fly yet. I never let sick birds go till they can fly out of the windows (or, better still, the ventilators, which are higher), for then I know they will be safe from cats. They always run about the School, and we just keep the doors shut. They grow tame very quickly. It is wonderful how soon they get to understand us and trust us.

This is clearly a model Bird and Tree School. How many others can give as good a list of nests round about the schoolhouse ?

## In the Courts

THE CAGED BIRD : MAGISTRATE'S COMMENT.—At *Old Street* (London), on April 16th, a bird-dealer was summoned for having in his possession 29 Linnets, recently taken, and with omitting to give them proper care and attention. The man had 16 birds in a cage measuring 11½ in. by 6½ in. by 21 in. Mr. Clarke Hall, the magistrate, said that by the Wild Birds Protection Act all that he could do for a first offence was to administer a reprimand. He felt it was disgraceful that in the streets of London birds should be kept in small cages beating against the bars. He had reprimanded the man, but he did not suppose it would have the slightest effect. In addition, he ordered the payment of five guineas costs.

fined £2 for cruelty to a Rook. After shooting the bird he tethered it in a maimed condition to a stake in the ground for three days in order to scare other Rooks.

BIRDNESTING ON WIMBLEDON COMMON.—At *Wimbledon*, on May 30th, five boys were summoned for taking birds' eggs on Wimbledon Common, where all birdnesting is prohibited under the Wimbledon and Putney Commons Bye-laws; and a sixth for taking a nest of young Blackbirds. The prosecutions were brought about by the Head Keeper, as a warning to boys frequenting the Common who, through mere destructiveness or under the plea of "nature study," diminish one of the charms of the place and break the law. Being a first conviction the lads were ordered to pay 4s. costs each, and the Chairman expressed the hope that bills issued by the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, warning people against the illegal taking of eggs and birds, would be displayed in all schools.

THE LAPWING.—At *Edinburgh*, on May 7th, a payment of £1 was ordered in a case of taking a Lapwing's egg despite the display of many prohibitive notices posted throughout the district.

"RECENTLY TAKEN."—At *Belfast*, on March 29th, a dealer was charged by the Ulster S.P.C.A. with having 13 newly taken Linnets in his possession. Defendant received the birds from Ballymena on March 16th, when they were seen, and appeared absolutely wild. Defendant put in a letter from the catcher stating that he caught them before Christmas, and the Bench dismissed the case, saying that the Society had achieved its object in having the matter brought before the public. (The chief object achieved is in showing how useless are the efforts of bird-protectors while the words "recently taken" remain on the Statute-book.)

A similar case was heard in the *North London* Court on May 4th, when John Parish, of Holloway Road, was fined 20s. with two guineas costs for causing unnecessary suffering to birds on his premises. He had five Chaffinches, a Goldfinch, 15 Linnets, three Greenfinches, and three Yellowhammers; the largest cage was 8 by 7 by 5 in., and the smallest 7 by 7 by 5 in. All the birds had torn wing feathers, and two had no tails at all. On a further count of possessing newly caught birds, the magistrate said he was not satisfied as to the recent taking. There was, however, evidence that they had been kept too long in the small cages. The wonder was that thousands of people would stare in bird-shops and watch wild birds confined in such cages without it conveying anything to their intelligence.

At *Liverpool*, on May 3rd, William Henderson was fined 40s. in the case of a Linnet, said to be so clogged with dirt and so exhausted that it fell from its perch to the bottom of the cage. Defendant said it was moulting.

A WARNING TO ROOKS.—At *Hull*, on April 10th, George Richman, market gardener, was

# The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds

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YOUNG PEREGRINE FALCON

Illegally taken from the nest on Great Orme's Head. Restored to liberty through the intervention of Mr. G. A. Humphreys, J.P. (Agent for Lord Mostyn), and the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds.

*Photo. by Mr. H. Ricketts, Llandudno*

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# Bird Notes & News

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

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AUTUMN, 1923.

[No. 7.

## The Falcons of Great Orme's Head

THE young Peregrine Falcon whose photograph appears in this number of BIRD NOTES AND NEWS, has been through an adventure which at one time seemed likely to be for him a tragedy. He first saw the light in a nest under the Lighthouse on the Great Orme's Head, that magnificent promontory which lends the chief charm to Llandudno. He was hatched under good auspices, for the birds here are protected by the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, through the co-operation of Lord Mostyn and his Agent, Mr. G. A. Humphreys, J.P. But in June the nest was raided by one Enoch Williams, a labourer of the town, who took the young bird and was seen near the Market Hall, endeavouring to sell it for 35s., a crowd of people being attracted by the loud screeching protest of the furious young prisoner and his attempts to get out of the undignified basket in which Williams had placed him. A local policeman, knowing that a look-out was being kept for persons who molest and destroy wild bird life in the neighbourhood, took Williams off to the Police Station, where he was duly warned and charged with being in possession of a young Peregrine Falcon contrary to the law.

On being informed of the occurrence Mr. Humphreys went to the station and examined the bird, and found it ruffled and ragged and suffering from a damaged wing and injured feet, no doubt the result of imprisonment. On one leg a toe had lost its nail, and on the other a toe seemed dead, the Falcon not using it when grasping. He was too young to be let free, and consequently a home was given him in an outside aviary at

Gloddaeth Hall, the residence of Lord Mostyn.

On July 9th, Enoch Williams was prosecuted by the Society, and was fined the nominal sum of 5s., with a warning against further stealing. The forfeited bird remained, by willing consent of the Bench, in the aviary, where he was attended and fed by Lord Mostyn's keeper and gardener, and soon began to eat and thrive till, in ten days' time, he could fly well and seemed in beautiful feather and fit to take care of himself. Mr. Humphreys decided to set him free. He was first photographed by Mr. Ricketts, but with some difficulty as he was very wild and dashed against the wire when the camera was brought near. Soon after noon, on July 27th, the door of the aviary was opened, the bird being then on a central perch and facing the outside; and the young Peregrine, within three or four seconds, flew straight through the doorway and with a lordly sweep crossed the ground at great speed in a south-easterly direction for about half a mile, then swerved to the north-east and was lost to view.

At the hearing of the case the chief defence raised was a statement of the number of homing-pigeons killed, or believed to be killed, by the Falcons for their young, as indicated by feet and rings found in the nest. This was obviously no admissible answer to the charge of infringing the Protection law, but has led to an outcry from fanciers for the removal of protection from the bird.

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A large number of articles have regretfully to be held over, including "The Swallows," "An Egyptian Sanctuary," "Birds of Jamaica," etc.

## PROTECTION OF THE PEREGRINE

In my opinion the Peregrine Falcon should most certainly be protected. It is one of the noblest of all our birds, and no one with even the very slightest taste for Nature could wish for its extinction, which will not be very long in coming about, so far as the British Isles are concerned, unless protective measures are enforced.

LILFORD.

*Sept. 11th, 1923.*

People who may advocate the destruction of the Peregrine Falcon, one of our finest birds of prey, can know little of this splendid bird. Those who have witnessed the flight of Falcons, both wild birds and those trained to fly at game-birds such as grouse and partridges, will have seen the Peregrine's magnificent powers on the wing and can understand the thrilling excitement of witnessing a really fine flight.

In certain districts where homing-pigeons are of special interest one can understand that the Peregrine is not a popular bird among fanciers, but among the majority of Englishmen, who call themselves sportsmen, the flight of the wild Peregrine is a joy for ever and once seen can never be forgotten.

W. R. OGILVIE-GRANT.

*Sept. 10th, 1923.*

Of course I think the Peregrine should be on the protected list.

E. G. B. MEADE-WALDO.

*Sept. 9th, 1923.*

Shall the Peregrine still be protected? It is a destructive bird; when hungry, or when its young call for food, it has the audacity to stoop at and destroy private property! Can any sin be more reprehensible?

Such are the questions asked by the Fancy, not of show pigeons, but of the racing bird. One young Falcon, illegally taken from the nest, legally transferred from the lawbreaker to better hands and finally released, has brought the matter to a head. If once for all the

matter can be settled, and the law of the land upheld, our persecuted Falcons may be saved and every bird-lover bless that little bird.

The owners of racing pigeons, quite correctly, accuse the bird of slaying their homers. Of course it does if they will persist in racing their birds under its eyrie. The Peregrine is carnivorous—so are we; the Peregrine kills to live—so do we; and if succulent food is provided for it, it will, naturally, accept the gift. But why, it may be asked, is the Peregrine protected? It is no one's personal property now, even if it once belonged to the Crown or to those favoured by the Crown.

Are we for ever, then, to be ruled by this craze to protect property? Urged by earnest, disinterested men, after years and years of struggle, our legislators were persuaded that the protection of wild birds was a National duty, and the Wild Birds Protection Acts came into being. The Nation demanded them. Now and again a section, with vested interests, demand their repeal or amendment; their sacred pockets are touched. If we listen to every complaint from those who fancy that they have a grievance against this or that bird, we shall soon be back in the dark ages when birds were only protected when they provided sport for the privileged classes, and, what is more, we should live in an agriculturally ruined country.

But, it will be argued, a very large number are interested in this sport, and, if the truth is declared, large sums of money pass over the results of the races. Exactly, and because gambling is interfered with by the Peregrine, the bird must be removed!

Two or three questions may be asked by the bird protector. What proportion of the pigeons that are lost are slain by Falcons? In the first place there are lamentably few Falcons left, and now that they are rare the rapacious egg-collector is striving to make them extinct. Secondly, there are a very large number of pigeon owners who, by enticing the

passing homers and by bob-wires, replenish their stocks. Next are the men who, when pigeon races are on, wait in suitable spots for the sport of bringing them down and enjoy pigeon-pie. I have known men who boast that they get many. And, lastly, there are the elements—fog, storm, and even light contrary winds—which slay or fatigue the racers and thin their numbers. If there were not these hazards racing would lose much of its zest.

What would happen if all our Peregrines were destroyed neither the pigeon fancier nor the protector can answer, but it is absolutely certain that something or somebody would suffer. The destruction of natural checks, the raptorial birds,

by the game-preserver has already shown a terrible chain of disaster—increase of farmers' pests, such as mice, rats, and voles, and the conversion of formerly innocent species of birds into enemies by their overabundance.

Apart from economic questions is the æsthetic and humanitarian argument. We who care for birds for their own sakes, and because they are not our property but that of every one and of all generations which will come after us, cannot agree that any species shall be wiped out to please the few whose sporting pleasures or private pockets are menaced.

T. A. COWARD.

*Sept. 10th, 1923.*

## The Wild Birds Protection Bill

THE long-promised measure for the consolidation and amendment of the Bird Protection Laws was introduced in the House of Lords on June 28th, 1923, by Viscount Grey of Fallodon, and passed, with a few alterations, on July 30th. It is expected that the Bill will be introduced in the House of Commons by the Home Secretary, as a Government Bill, in the coming autumn session.

A Committee to inquire into the working of the existing Acts was appointed by the Home Office in 1913. Owing to the War the issue of the Committee's Report and the Minutes of Evidence was delayed until 1919. A summary of the main recommendations was published as a Supplement to the Autumn Number of BIRD NOTES AND NEWS. Since then the Report has been considered, and more than one provisional Bill drafted in accordance with its recommendations, by the Home Office Advisory Committee, which was constituted in 1920, under the Chairmanship of the Duke of Rutland (who resigned through ill-health) and subsequently of Lord Grey of Fallodon. Lord Grey's Bill, now before Parliament, is the ultimate outcome of that Committee's careful deliberations.

Comments and criticisms made both in Parliament and, more conspicuously, in the Press, have vividly indicated the amount of ignorance which prevails in regard to the existing law; and it may be useful to state briefly what the Acts in force provide in the way of protection for our Wild Birds, and in what way the new Bill differs from them. Some minor critics have no doubt reasons of their own for distorting the intentions of proposed legislation, including those who have been shouting loudly in various journals that the poor man is being deprived of his "hobby" and his "pets" and that the "ordinary citizen" is not to be allowed to keep so much as a canary in a cage. One such critic, in his efforts to stir up opposition to the measure, makes the remarkable statement that "a Bill backed by the Duchess of Portland and others may be introduced in Parliament shortly to stop the keeping of wild birds in captivity" and that "a similar Bill" introduced by Lord Grey has passed its second reading. To have done at once with this form of mis-statement it may be

said that the Bill does not touch on caging, as such, and that questions of cruelty to captive birds will continue to be dealt with under the Protection of Animals Act.

### THE EXISTING ACTS

The existing Acts for the Protection of Wild Birds to be repealed by the new Bill, are nine in number. The oldest, and the bed-rock of existing legislation, is that of 1880, amended in 1881, which (1) gives a statutory close-time to all wild birds from March 1st to August 1st; (2) prohibits shooting or netting of birds during that time and also sale and possession of recently taken birds after March 15th. The close-time period may be varied in length by the Secretary of State on the application of a County or County Borough Council. (3) An exception is made to permit owners and occupiers of land to take or kill, or authorise other persons to take or kill, such birds as are not mentioned in the Schedule to the Act. This Schedule therefore contains the names of all birds fully protected during the close-time, the Act of 1881 adding the Lark.

(4) In 1888 a special Act was passed for the protection of the Sand-Grouse.

The birds named in the Schedule to the Act of 1880 for protection from all persons during the close-time, remained a fixed list until 1894. The Act of that year enabled County Councils (5) to add to the number, and (6) to give protection to eggs of named birds or to protect all eggs within defined areas.

The Act of 1896 (7) authorised the making of areas in which the taking of all birds may be prohibited. It also (8) gave power to protect named species beyond the close-time, thus making possible both all-the-year protection and the prohibition of Sunday shooting and catching. The latter, however, is a roundabout process.

In 1902 came the Act (9) empowering the forfeiture of birds and eggs illegally taken. The confiscation of nets, traps, and decoy-birds had been provided for by the 1880 Act.

In 1904 the Act generally known as (10) the Pole-Trap Act was passed; also (11) the Act for protecting birds in St. Kilda, a corner of the kingdom purposely omitted by previous legislation.

In 1908 the taking of birds by hooks and similar instruments was made illegal (12).

### THE NEW BILL

Lord Grey's Bill again enacts (1) a general close-time and proposed to extend it to Sept. 1st, but the old date was unfortunately restored in the House of Lords. The period may be varied, generally or locally, for all or any birds, by the Secretary of State. It prohibits during this time (2) the killing, injuring, or taking of wild birds; sale or possession of bird, skin, or plumage, where such is illegally taken, between the fifteenth day after the beginning of close-time and the day close-time ends. In the case of scheduled birds, nest and eggs are included in the prohibition. The time limit does not apply in the case of birds protected all the year. (3) The privilege to owners and occupiers is continued in the case of non-scheduled birds, but authority passed on to persons outside their employ must be in writing.

(4) The Sand-Grouse is completely protected by inclusion in the First Schedule of the Bill.

The Acts of 1894 and 1896 are superseded mainly by the formation of two Schedules in place of the original one. (8) The first contains the names of birds to be fully protected throughout the year; (5) the second, those to be fully protected during the close-time. In both cases nest and eggs are also placed under protection.

The Schedules may be varied and (7) bird-sanctuaries created by the Secretary of State, after consultation with local authorities as to local order and with owners and occupiers of the land in regard to sanctuaries.

Sunday protection (8) is given to all birds.

The forfeiture of bird, nest, or eggs (9) is made compulsory, and any gun or other instrument may be also forfeited at the option of the court.

The provisions of (10) the Pole Trap Act and the Act of 1908 (12) are incorporated in the new Bill.

The Bill extends to St. Kilda (11) with the addition of the St. Kilda Wren to the First Schedule and omission of the Fulmar Petrel from the Second Schedule.

Under the Acts of 1894 and 1896 it is required (13) that County Councils should give public notice of any Order made under them, three weeks before it comes into operation each year by advertisements in local papers and "by fixing notices in conspicuous places, and in such other manner as the State Secretary may direct or the Council consider expedient." (Unfortunately full use has never been made of this last provision.)

The penalty (14) for non-scheduled birds is a reprimand and costs for a first offence, and not more than 5s. and costs subsequently; in the case of a scheduled bird, or of eggs, a fine not exceeding £1.

(13) The local authority is to exhibit and keep exhibited from Feb. 1st to Sept. 1st a summary of the provisions of the Act and of Orders under it "in such manner and form as the Secretary may direct." No place or places are named, except the elementary schools or their vicinity, localities which bird-catcher and collector are not likely to frequent. There is no provision for making known winter protection.

The penalty (14) for an offence under the Act is a fine not exceeding £5, with a possible £10 or a month's imprisonment for a subsequent offence.

### THE SCHEDULES

The species on the list in the existing Acts, and therefore protected in every county during close-time, include Owls, Kingfisher, Woodpeckers, Goldfinch, Nightingale, Hoopoe, Oriole, Bee-eater, Bittern, Grebe, Phalarope, Greenshank, Divers, Dotterel, Fulmar, Lapwing, Ruff, Skuas, Spoonbill, Stone Curlew, Terns, Wild Duck, Whimbrel, and Woodcock. All of these are in one Schedule or other of the new Bill.

On the old list, but *not* in the new schedules are, among others, the Cuckoo, Curlew, Gannet, Guillemot, Kittiwake and other Gulls, Nightjar, Puffin, Redshank, Roller, Sandpiper, and Skylark.

New names, placed on the *Second* or Close-time Schedule, include Cirl Bunting, Crossbill, Marsh Warbler, Pied Fly-catcher, Rails, Capercaillie, Swans, and Wild Goose.

The *First* Schedule of the new Bill, giving complete protection all the year from all persons, includes Bitterns, Buzzards, Woodpeckers, Owls (except Little Owl), Shrikes, and Raven; the majority of the birds named in it (about 25 species) are extremely rare and local, such as Chough, Crested Tit, Bearded Tit, Dartford Warbler, Golden Oriole, Kentish Plover, Kite, Waxwing, Black Redstart, Avocet, Spoonbill, and Bustard.

### NEW FEATURES

So far, then, the proposals are by way of variations on the existing law. There are, however, a number of new features.

A Wild Birds Advisory Committee is to be appointed by the Secretary of State to advise with regard to the administration of the law and as to projected schemes for the protection of Wild Birds, at home or internationally.

The better protection of rare birds from private collectors is aimed at by a clause requiring taxidermists, and dealers in birds' eggs, to keep a register of scheduled birds and eggs brought to them, "with details of the locality from which they came and of the person from whom they were procured," such register to be open to the police.

The police are to have the right to stop and search persons reasonably suspected of committing an offence; also to enter upon land or premises where there is reasonable cause to suspect certain offences are committed.

Onus of proof is more fully thrown on the possessor of bird or egg where illegal taking is suspected.

Licences may be granted to kill or take birds or nests and eggs "for any scientific purpose, or for the purpose of the protection of property, crops or fisheries, or for any other special purpose

approved by the Secretary of State." Obviously this clause will require very careful watching, and needs to be more clearly expressed and more strongly hedged about.

The use of mechanically-propelled boats and aircraft, and of bird-lime and braced or maimed decoy-birds, for killing or taking wild birds, is prohibited.

The sale of Lapwings for food in close-time, and the taking of their eggs, except by owner or occupier of the land before April 15th, is prohibited.

The suppression of birdcatching on highways and commons is a concession to that public opinion which one trade cannot expect to defy for ever.

The suggestion of a licence for catchers is a more debatable matter. Presumably the idea is to place names and addresses in the possession of the authorities and weed out a certain number of back-yard "aviaries"; but the proposed payment is only 5s. for a first and 1s. for subsequent annual payments, and it is hard to imagine that any benefit can accrue to set against the grave objection to "licensed" birdcatchers.

The liberation of imported birds of any species is prohibited except by leave of the Secretary of State. (Probably birds other than British birds is intended.)

### HOW THE ACTS HAVE BEEN UTILISED

It is interesting to examine into the extent to which Local Authorities have availed themselves of the power placed in their hands by the Acts of 1894 and 1896, particularly as this has direct bearing upon the question of the Scheduled birds, the composition of the Schedules being the most vexed portion of the Bill. In drawing these up no heed has been paid to the old Schedule of 1880 (admittedly a defective one); but it is worth while considering the birds that figure most often in County Council Orders and those listed for the County Councils Association in 1895 by Mr. Howard Saunders and Colonel Irby as deserving of complete close-time protection.

Sixty-two County Councils in England and Wales (including all the English ones), 32 in Scotland, and 60 County Borough Councils have obtained Orders for the furthering of bird-protection; 51 of the English and Welsh Orders, and all the Scottish ones, add species to the schedule of those completely protected during the nesting season; 62 English and Welsh Orders, and 32 Scottish, protect some birds all the year round. The lists vary enormously in length and in the species selected, but the tendency has been to extend them more and more as time has gone on. The diversity of choice suggests that many considerations and local conditions have been taken into account.

#### CLOSE-TIME PROTECTION.

In England and Wales, where no attempt has been made (as in Scotland) to introduce uniformity, and each county has acted entirely "on its own," the species which figure most frequently on the lists for close-time protection over and above those scheduled by the Act (which were not then discussed) are: \*Buzzard, added by 39 County Councils; \*Hobby, 35; \*Swallow, 35; \*House-Martin, 35; \*Kestrel, 33; \*Sand-Martin, 33; \*Merlin, 32; \*Swift, 32; \*Honey Buzzard, 31; Kite, 29; Wryneck, 29; \*Osprey, 27; Goldcrest, 26; Redbacked Shrike, 26; Pied Flycatcher, 26; Peregrine Falcon, 25; Yellow Wagtail, 25; Bearded Tit, 25; Pied and Grey Wagtails, each 24; Spotted Flycatcher, 24; Blackcap-Warbler, 22; Grasshopper Warbler, 22; Wheatear, 21; Chiffchaff, 21; Raven, Redstart, Sedge-Warbler, Wood-Warbler, Treecreeper, Wren, each 20.

\* Recommended as additions to the Schedule by the C.C. Association.

#### ALL-THE-YEAR PROTECTION

The species which have obtained the widest suffrage in England and Wales for protection throughout the year are: †Goldfinch, 55; †Kingfisher, 52; †Barn

Owl, 50 ; †Longeared Owl, 48 ; †Tawny Owl, 47 ; †Shorteared Owl, 46 ; †Green Woodpecker, 39 ; †Spotted Woodpeckers, 37 ; †Lapwing, 33 ; †Bittern, 31 ; Buzzard, 29 ; †Nightjar, 26 ; Kite, 24 ; Honey Buzzard, 24 ; Goldcrest, 24 ; Hobby, 22 ; Merlin, 22 ; Kestrel, 21 ; Osprey, 20 ; Lesser Redpoll, 20 ; Wren, 20.

†These species are in the 1880 schedule, so that it is illegal for *any* person to kill them at any time where this additional protection is given to them.

#### PROTECTION OF EGGS

The opportunity for constituting areas in which all birds or all eggs are protected has not been so much utilised as might have been expected. Probably it is felt that unless watchers can be appointed, as is done by the R.S.P.B. and by local bodies in various instances, "paper" protection only informs the collector that something of value is to be found there. In 19 counties there are "protected areas," nearly all of them being on the coast.

#### A REASONABLE BILL

The proposals made by the Bill unquestionably mark a considerable advance upon present legislation. It may appear to many people regrettable that the opportunity was not taken to remodel and simplify the whole law after the manner broached by Sir Montagu Sharpe, but the majority of the Advisory Committee considered amendment on the old lines more judicious. In seeking to make the law more uniform they have happily retained one of the best features of the present law—that elasticity which permits of variation to suit varying conditions in different parts of the country—and they have provided for alteration where and when needed, by the Home Office Advisory Committee as well as by local authorities.

That there will be doubts and objections raised in regard to certain provisions, or the want of them, is inevitable. A few suggestions that seem most essential have been put forward by the R.S.P.B. There will also be opposition from parties who are, or think themselves to be, adversely affected in pursuit or pocket. But it is earnestly to be hoped that the measure, to the consideration and constitution of which so much time has been given by highly qualified men, will have thorough and practical support from all who are interested in the right and reasonable protection of our wild birds. Members of the Society and others interested, should see to it that the Bill is loyally supported by their representatives in the House of Commons.

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Readers of BIRD NOTES AND NEWS who desire to recall the history of the Bird Protection Laws of Great Britain, or to compare existing legislation with that proposed, or with that of other countries, can obtain from the R.S.P.B. *The Story of Bird Protection in Great Britain* (6d.), giving a brief account of the various enactments from early times ; *Acts and Orders*, with text of the Acts in force and notes by Mr. F. E. Lemon, LL.B., C.A. (3d.) ; *Chart List of Birds*, with summary of the Acts (3d.) and (6d.) indicating the birds named in the schedules of the Bill ; *Comparative Legislation for the Protection of Birds*, by Mr. A. Holte Macpherson ; *The Rationale of Bird Protection*, with notes on legislation in Greater Britain, by Mr. F. E. Lemon. The two last-named are rendered somewhat out of date by more recent legislation and by the war, but the various views held in European countries and in our Colonies upon the protection of birds, afford interesting comparisons and suggestions.

# The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds

## COUNCIL MEETING

THE Council of the Society held their quarterly meeting at the Guildhall, Westminster, on July 20th, 1923, Sir Montagu Sharpe, K.C. (Chairman), in the chair.

The Report of the Hon. Secretary stated that a circular letter had been sent to Borough Councils in England and Wales suggesting the provision of bird-sanctuaries in public parks and gardens, on the lines of those instituted in the Royal Parks; a large number of sympathetic replies had been received.

A letter from the Clerk to the Metropolitan Water Board was read, notifying formally the abandonment of shooting on the Walthamstow reservoirs. Bird Protection Orders had been issued for Barrow-in-Furness (consolidating and amending those of 1918 and 1921, and renewing the protection of all eggs on Walney Island), and for Hastings (renewing protection of eggs in areas already protected and adding St. Leonard's Gardens). Seven lectures had been given with the Society's slides as illustrations, by Mr. Masfield, Mr. T. Johnson, H.M.I., Mr. H. H. Wardle, Mr. W. S. Peach, and Mr. A. S. G. Mardon. Reports were presented of the meetings of the International Bird Protection Committee and the International Nature - Protection Congress.

The statement of accounts, furnished by the Finance and General Purposes Committee, showed that £400 had been received as a final sum from the Executors of the late Mrs. E. Phillips. The Hon. Secretary presented a statement showing the present financial position of the Society and the probable expenditure for the year in the various departments of the work. Deep regret was expressed at the sudden death on June 9th of Mr. W. B. Urwin, H.M.I., Hon. Secretary for Birmingham; Mr. Urwin took special interest in the Bird and Tree scheme, and through his influence several large Birmingham schools had entered and

done remarkably well. A most sympathetic letter to the Society was found on his table, one of the last he wrote. It was directed that a letter of condolence should be sent to Mrs. Urwin. The death was also reported of Miss Georgina Wolfe, Hon. Secretary for Southsea since 1907. The following Fellows and Members were elected:—

FELLOWS:—Roland Antrobus (Warwick); Col. Stanley Barry (S.W.); Miss Beveridge (Edinburgh); Miss Gladys Caird (N.W.); Miss Mary Carson (Kent); Miss S. L. Chambers (Staffs); Mrs. Danvers-Nevill (Kent); H. A. Davidson (Cumberland); J. M. Dent (W.C.); Charles E. Fletcher (Kent); Mrs. Robert Fuller (Wilts); Mrs. G. O. Garrick (Surrey); Mrs. Hugh Hunter (S.W.); Miss Kenning (S.E.); E. J. Lovegrove (N.); J. H. R. Nicholl (Herts); Cecil Norman (S.W.); Mrs. Steele Park (Hants); Clarence D. Smith (Northumberland); Miss Streetfield (Sussex); Sir George Sutton, Bt. (Kent); Herbert L. Thowless (U.S.A.); Miss Sybil Waller (Hants); Pickford Waller (Hants); Miss M. A. Watson (S.W.); W. Weed (Kent); Arnold S. White (Cheshire); Mrs. C. A. White (Herts); Mrs. W. Don (Forfar).

MEMBERS:—A. Allsebrook (Sussex); Mrs. H. C. Anstey (Staffs); Miss Barker (Surrey); Brother Finn Barr (Yorks); Charles S. Bayne (Sussex); F. G. Beckett (Sussex); Miss R. F. Bere (Devon); Edward E. Berry (Italy); Miss Esme Bingham (Hants); Tom Bomford (Somerset); J. W. Boothroyd (E.); Miss Jane Boschetti (Glos); Miss A. C. Bryson (Wilts); Miss N. Burrage (Norfolk); Mrs. C. R. Buxton (N.W.); John Cassidy (Lancs); Mrs. Chamberlayne (Warwick); P. G. Cheek (Middx.); Miss A. H. Coates (Wores); Miss Alice Evans (Cornwall); Norman Fifield (Surrey); G. W. Finn (Kent); B. F. Fletcher (N.); Hon. Charles Forester (W.); T. Brereton Foster (Surrey); Willoughby Gardner (Wales); Miss M. Gepp (Essex); Miss F. B. Glennie (Hereford); Sir George Macpherson Grant, Bt. (Scotland); Mrs. J. H. Grant (Sussex); Miss B. E. Greville (Suffolk); Miss Hanson (N.); E. J. Harrison (Lancs); Miss F. Hayward (Sussex); Miss I. Nora Hill (Middx.); Robert Howard (Kent); Miss Howson (Derby); A. R. Hughes (Lancs); Mrs. C. W. Huson (Hereford); Miss Alice James (Wales); Miss D. James, Miss M. James (Bucks); Captain J. N. Kennedy (S.W.); Miss Elsie Kitching (Westmorland); Miss M. N. Kirkby (Staffs); Mrs. John Large (Hants); Rev. Dr. Wm. McConachie (Berwick); Miss Amy Mansfield; Edmund H. Martin (E.C.); Miss Mason (Yorks); Mrs. Morgan (Kent); Miss M. R. Moor (Cornwall); C. H. Payne (N.W.); Miss Mable Peake (Glos); Thomas Plowman (Middx.); Mrs. Fitzwalter Plumpton (Kent); Mrs. Pott, Miss Gladys Pott (S.W.); Rev. H. Ingamells Powell (Cornwall); Henry Prestoe (Sussex); Miss F. A. Randell (Yorks); Miss Clarice Reed (Durham); Miss W. F. Retter, Lionel E. Retter (Somerset); Mrs. Wm. Rowland (Surrey); Arthur L. Salmon (Glos); Mrs. M. M. Scott (Hants); Miss E. C. Sims (Kent); Rev. A. R. Simpson (Kent); Miss E. L.

Urling Smith (Glos); Kenneth Spence (W.); Miss Sturt (W.); Lady Jerningham (S.W.); J. E. Titley (Warwick); Miss M. Trevelyan (Herts); Lady Tucker (S.W.); G. H. Underhill (S.W.); Miss E. C. Underwood (Lincs); Col. H. Warde (Kent); Mrs. Waterfield (N.); Brian Weston (Sussex); Mrs. Wright (Essex); Robert A. Wright (Cambs).

LIFE MEMBERS:—Miss Beatrice R. Homan (S.W.); Philip F. King (Lancs).

AFFILIATED:—1st Chesham Guides. Broomsgrove School Natural History Society.

The Watchers' Committee reported with regard to the need for increased placards and wardens in Epping Forest, especially during the nesting season. The Society's inspector had in three weeks' watching warned over 200 persons found disturbing the birds; catapults and illegally taken eggs had been confiscated, all birdnesting and bird-catching being prohibited by the Forest bye-laws. Various contraventions of the W.B.P. Acts and the action of the Committee thereon, were also discussed.

The Publicity Committee reported on bird-protection in Italy, the sale of Skylarks for food, the British Empire Exhibition, 1924, and other matters.

The introduction in the House of Lords of the Bird Protection Bill; the appointment of Lord Ullswater as a member of the Board of Trade Advisory Committee on the Plumage Act, in succession to Earl Buxton, appointed chairman; the judging of Bird and Tree Essays in the 1923 Competition; and other subjects were considered. Thirty-eight Bird and Tree Festivals recently held included the presentation of the Hampshire Shield to Ridge School, at Broadlands, Romsey, by Mrs. Wilfred Ashley.

Next meeting of the Council, Oct. 19th.

### GREETING CARD

Mr. A. Thorburn has once again given one of his charming pictures of bird-life for the Greeting-card of the R.S.P.B. This time it is "King Harry" (the Goldfinch), and the card may be had, with or without calendar for 1924, from the Society, price 4½d., or 4s. 3d. a dozen, post free.

### THE LATE MR. W. H. HUDSON

The memorial to Mr. W. H. Hudson in Broadwater Cemetery has now been completed and was in place on the anniversary of his death, August 18th. As he had expressed a wish that anything erected at his grave should be similar to the cross to Richard Jefferies, who also was buried at Broadwater, the memorial consists of a simple cross, bearing his name with dates of his birth and death, together with the words he had previously placed on the temporary stone to the memory of his wife. On the kerbing which surrounds the grave is the inscription: "He loved birds and green places and the wind on the heath, and saw The brightness of the skirts of God." The last words, it is hardly necessary to say, are those he himself quotes from Bryant at the conclusion of the fine opening chapter of *Birds and Man*:—

"It was the nobly expressed consolation of an American poet, now dead, when standing in the summer sunshine amid a fine prospect of woods and hills, to think, when he remembered the darkness of decay and the grave, that he had beheld in nature, though but for a moment, The brightness of the skirts of God."

A record of the purely scientific work of Mr. Hudson is furnished by Mr. G. F. Wilson in the *Bookman's Journal* of January last. It begins in 1866 with explorations undertaken for the Smithsonian Institute of Washington, U.S.A., and includes twenty-seven contributions to the Proceedings of the Zoological Society of London.

Messrs. J. M. Dent and Sons will publish this autumn the new and enlarged edition of *Lost British Birds* which Mr. Hudson was engaged upon at the time of his death. The rough and disconnected notes he left have been copied, collated, and amplified from letters in her possession, by Miss Linda Gardiner, who had assisted Mr. Hudson in preparing the material. The original pamphlet dealt with 13 birds; the new book includes 25 "Lost, Vanishing, and Rare British Birds," with coloured plates by Mr. H. Grönvold.

### RESERVOIRS AS BIRD-SANCTUARIES

THE desirability of making all Water Companies' reservoirs sanctuaries for wild birds was touched upon in the Spring Number of BIRD NOTES AND NEWS, when special reference was made to the shooting which hitherto has been permitted at the Walthamstow reservoir. With this exception the Metropolitan Water Board's reservoirs have been practically protected areas, since they are of course private property and no shooting is allowed; and for three years the Society has been striving to secure the same privilege for the birds at Walthamstow and Clapton, the reply each year seeming to indicate that the feeling of the Board was veering in their favour. The only shooting permitted was by private parties on Saturday afternoons in autumn and winter, but this was sufficient at least to endanger and frighten away many of the most interesting species. An extraordinary number of birds haunt the place in both summer and winter, keen observers having arrived at a total of some eighty species seen on the water and the lands adjacent, including some whose names would be as strange as the sight of them to most Londoners and who are seldom imagined as visitors to the metropolitan area.

The Society's activities were first aroused on the subject by the London Natural History Society, who have all through given valuable help. In May of the present year a circular letter was sent, together with BIRD NOTES AND NEWS, to all the members of the Water Board, renewing the petition and pointing out that the area might conceivably become the finest bird-sanctuary in the vicinity of London. The Selborne Society's attention was also drawn to the matter, probably through a paper read at a meeting of the L.N.H.S. last April by a keen local bird-observer (Mr. R. W. Pethen), and they arranged for a deputation to wait on the Committee of the Board who had the matter in hand.

The deputation was received on July 4th, when representatives of the R.S.P.B. and the Essex Field Club were also present; but happily eloquence was not needed and those in attendance were at once informed that the Committee had agreed to accede to the request. The following highly satisfactory letter, dated July 4th, was received by the R.S.P.B. from the Clerk to the Board (Mr. G. F. Stringer):—

“Adverting to previous correspondence which has taken place between yourself and the Board with reference to the shooting of wild fowl, etc., on the Board's waters, I have much pleasure in formally notifying you that it has been decided, as a result of representations which have been made by your Society and other kindred societies, to abandon the practice of shooting wild fowl, etc., on the Board's Reservoirs.”

The Water Board and the public may both be congratulated on thus securing this fine sanctuary, and there is little doubt that the public will express their cordial appreciation by assisting the keeper in every way to preserve and protect the birds of the reservoirs and neighbourhood.

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### THE POLE-TRAP

THE following letter from Sir Montagu Sharpe (dated August 18th) appeared in the *Daily Telegraph*, August 21st, 1923:

In to-day's issue of your paper it is reported that “a splendid specimen of a Golden Eagle has been caught in a trap at Tighnabruaich, Argyllshire.” It would be interesting to know whether the bird was caught in a pole-trap, a most cruel instrument, fixed to a pole in a clearing, holding in its teeth the legs of the alighting bird, which flutters and struggles in agony until death, or a gamekeeper chancing to pass by, ends its sufferings. It is illegal to affix a pole-trap, but detection, followed by a prosecution, is not always an easy matter to bring about. I regret to say that it has been reported to the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds that this trap is far too common in parts of Scotland.

## Notes

THE story of the Peregrine Falcon, taken from the Great Orme's Head and hawked about in a basket in Llandudno Market, has gained exceptional attention on account of the attempt made by pigeon-fanciers to introduce into it the destruction wrought, or said to be wrought, by these falcons among homing-pigeons and a widespread statement of the number of pigeon legs found in the Peregrine's nest. Unquestionably the Peregrine, a bird of prey, does catch some homing-pigeons; possibly a good many, since the birds are weakened by long flights and in a condition to be readily caught. Nevertheless, the charge against it is a feeble one. The breeding and training of carrier-pigeons is a commercial matter, and carried on for commercial purposes that are of no more benefit to the nation than the training of falcons for falconry. A good deal is made of their services in the war, when no doubt great numbers were used to carry messages and great numbers also died in doing so. It is to be hoped that in any future war the development of wireless will do away with the need for using the birds. While they are used, either for war-time extremity or for peaceful racing, they have to face the dangers to which birds are liable—wind and fog and storm, and telegraph wires and the man with a gun, and often fall exhausted (as reported again and again to the Society) before reaching their goal. The one danger, it appears, which they are not to be allowed to meet, is that from another bird. It hardly seems reasonable that such a complaint should be raised by the men who send them forth.

\* \* \*

The homing-pigeon, again, is more or less an artificial product, specialised by training, and may be bred to any extent. "The Peregrine, the most perfect of the falcons (as Mr. W. H. Hudson wrote)—perhaps, as some naturalists think, the most perfect of the entire

feathered race—maintains a precarious existence on the boldest sea-cliffs." It is now exceedingly scarce, and once lost to our islands will be lost for ever.

\* \* \*

Dr. W. T. Hornaday, ever alert in the conservation of wild life, sends news of the probable extinction of the Heath Hen of the United States. The bird is a species of grouse, easily hunted and killed in its open country haunts, and of this full advantage was taken by hunters. So far back as two centuries ago efforts began to protect it in New York State. Other States followed more recently, but the flocks were already decimated and weakened. In 1916 there were some 2,000; then a forest fire took heavy toll of the sitting hens. In 1922 there were only 117. Dr. Hornaday uses the opportunity to sound an alarm on behalf of the Prairie Chicken and the Quail. "Unless immediate steps are taken by state legislature to reduce radically the present open seasons and bag limits and to make bird preserves, the Quail is absolutely certain to disappear in our own times."

\* \* \*

A pleasant story comes from Newcastle. During repairs to the Cathedral new ventilators were necessary and though great care was taken that no birds should be imprisoned when the new covers were cemented on, a brood of sparrows got fastened in. The anxiety of the parent birds made known that the little family was imperilled. The rest of the story may be told in the words of the *Newcastle Chronicle* (July 24th):—

The mother sparrow was seen to be making frantic efforts to feed the young ones through an iron grating and a day or so elapsed before a man could be found to cut out the iron covers and so release the birds. In the meantime the parents remained close to the ventilator which is near the roof, and at night could be seen sitting quite close to it. Each morning they were early astir to find provender for the captive brood, and made most determined

efforts to get morsels of food through the small holes in the ironwork of the ventilator. The mother sparrow put up a most tenacious fight to save her offspring, as several days elapsed before the birds were released. The little ones were safely got out, apparently no worse for their experience, and the family is once more united in a new home among the trees in the churchyard.

\* \* \*

The curious blindness to the economic value of wild birds which characterises the general publications of the Ministry of Agriculture has frequently been noted. Another instance occurs in an article in the August Number of the JOURNAL on the liver rot of sheep. Details and scientific names of the snail-hosts of various species of the worm, a record

of experiments with sulphate of ammonia and copper sulphate in ditches and in laboratories and their result, even a note on the value of ducks, are all set forth. No hint whatever of the value of the charming little Wagtails which haunt stream and pasture. Yet even in the Board's own leaflet on Wagtails (one of the seven or eight on birds that were brought out a quarter of a century ago) it is stated that they destroy quantities of these snails and therefore do good service to sheep-farmers, in addition to their value in eating wireworms and many of the tiresome insects that haunt cattle and sheep. Would it not be common sense to suggest the protection of such birds or does laboratory research close the eyes to Nature's provision in such matters?

## The Plumage Trade

### PLUMAGE IMPORTATION ACT

THE names of the Green Pheasant, the Copper Pheasant, and the Golden Pheasant were added to the Schedule to the Importation of Plumage (Prohibition) Act, 1921, by virtue of the Importation of Plumage (No. 2) Order, 1922, dated June 12, 1922.

The Advisory Committee in recommending the addition of the names of these birds to the Schedule, further recommended that the matter should be referred to them again for review after the expiration of twelve months. The Committee have now reconsidered this question, and have recommended that the Golden pheasant should be included in the Schedule for a further period of twelve months, but that the Copper and Green pheasants should be removed from the Schedule at the end of the present year.

The Board of Trade accordingly desire it to be known that an order will be made in due course removing the names of the Copper and Green pheasants from the Schedule, with effect from January 1, 1924.

After this date, therefore, the importation of their skins and plumage will again be illegal.

The Swan has been added to the scheduled birds.

### WHAT IS "MARABOU" ?

A large number of queries reach the R.S.P.B. from ladies who wish to know how and from what bird "marabou" feathers are obtained, and if they are permissible wear for members of the Society. The only answer possible is that the "Marabou" Stork and its relations, from which the peculiarly light and soft feathers are nominally obtained, have not been placed upon the schedule of the Act, and therefore no case has been made out for their importation and all those brought into this country are contraband goods. The birds have been persecuted to the verge of extermination and have become rare.

It is fairly obvious that a great quantity of the cheap stoles, etc., sold under this name are not what they profess to be. The feathers may conceivably be obtained from certain species bearing similar down

which are scheduled by the Act. But as long as they masquerade as marabout it is impossible for ladies to know what they are getting; and remembering the extent to which they were duped in regard to "osprey" plumage they will be chary of believing statements put forth by the trade.

### ENFORCING THE LAW IN AUSTRALIA

The following extract from the *Adelaide Chronicle* shows that Australians have not only adequate laws on the plumage question but that they are able to give prompt effect to them:—

An Adelaide lady, noted for her smart dressing, has been spending a holiday in Melbourne. In all the glory of a new and

particularly expensive millinery "creation," which boasted a magnificent Bird of Paradise plume as its sole trimming, the lady passed slowly along Collins Street seated in a limousine. Many glances were cast at the hat, but one was even more prolonged and searching than the rest. Curiously enough, it was a man who stared so hard and long. He was a Customs official, and he stopped the car and politely requested the lady to accompany him to the office of the Collector of Customs. It appears that Bird of Paradise plumes are banned. The lady was able to give a satisfactory account of how she obtained possession of the plume and she was allowed to retain it, but she was advised to remove it from her hat, and this was done before she left the building. The ban on Bird of Paradise plumes extends throughout the Commonwealth, so that it is unlikely that the hat will be seen in Adelaide in all its original glory.

## Economic Ornithology

### THE RAT PLAGUE

THE following resolution has been passed, on the casting vote of the Chairman, by the Central Executive Committee of the Scottish National Farmers' Union (June, 1923):—

"That this committee is of opinion that the plague of rats and mice is largely due in many districts to the destruction of owls, hawks, hedgehogs, badgers, weasels, and cats by owners and lessees of shootings and their gamekeepers, and that the burden of destroying rats and mice should fall on those who destroy their natural enemies, and not solely on the occupier, as under the Rats and Mice Destruction Act, 1919. Steps should therefore be taken to have the 1919 Act amended, so as to throw the burden on the party who destroys these natural enemies, except with the consent of the occupier of the holding."

### THE FARMER AND HIS WORKPEOPLE

In one of his vigorous articles in the *Huddersfield Examiner* (June 15th, 1923), Mr. Oswald Mosley, Curator of the Ravensknowle Museum, quotes from the *Canadian Forestry Journal* concerning the loss sustained in America through the devastations of insects, and the

work which is, and which might be, done by birds to save all manner of crops. "In our brilliant career as Americans," says this writer, "and with a strong hold on the thought that the Lord will provide, we have killed just about 90 per cent. of our birds. Is it any wonder that the ten per cent. cannot keep down the pests?" And he proceeds to enumerate some of the achievements of Quails and Pine-Siskins and Tree-Swallows in destroying weevils and "bugs." Mr. Mosley adds:—

"It is sometimes said that there is not the same need in Britain to guard against insect depredations as there is in America. But this is a mistake. Proportionately the above remarks apply to this country as well as to America. The chief difference is that some of the above kinds do not occur in Britain but they are replaced by others equally injurious. There is another difference—certain parts of the United States, with their extremes between summer and winter, are subject to fluctuations of insect life not known in England, and one season may have disastrous results, while in Britain it is a more gradual, but everlasting gnawing. The American attacks may be compared to an intermittent fever, while in England it is more like a decaying consumption, but in both cases the matter is serious.

"It is also said, in this country, that insect ravages cannot be controlled by birds, and chemical remedies must be used. Of course they cannot. Does any sensible man expect to run his business satisfactorily after dismissing ninety per cent. of his workpeople? But give the birds their former status, and then see what they can do. America saw its sin in this respect long ago, and at once came to the penitent form, and immediately began to take steps to redress the evil. But England, as a country, has not yet seen its sin, and such half-hearted laws as have been passed have only been obtained after years of struggle and delay, and are very largely totally disregarded."

### SOME BIRD FRIENDS

In the garden of the house where I happen to be writing this a pair of Great Tits have a family of young in an old pan. As we sit at meals, in full and close view of the pan outside, the comings and goings of the parent birds make a spectacle that threatens to become monotonous. Once or twice we have timed the birds, finding that food is brought to the nest about 150 times each hour—more than 2,000 separate visits during the birds' working day of 16 hours. So far as one can see, a single caterpillar is brought each time. These

grubs are the larvæ of one of the geometer moths, a noticeable pest on the neighbouring trees. If we assume that each parent carries the caterpillar no more than twenty yards, this means exactly one hundred miles flight in a day. . . . Beyond the garden, in a hole in a small elm, another pair of Blue Tits are rearing a crowd of young. Their feeding habits are slightly different from those of the Great Tits. To-day the Blue Tits have been working the oaks, which are already showing distinct signs of the ravages of geometer caterpillars. The Great Tit carries single caterpillars, but I notice that the Blue Tit hops and flits about the twigs until it has secured a dozen or so small caterpillars. These (by the look of things as we watch the nest) are shared out amongst the brood. Working in this way the Blue Tit does not visit the nest so often; we counted about 15 in ten minutes—say, about 90 visits each hour.

Looking up from my paper, I see a Goldcrest gathering tiny insects in the branches of a pine tree. This bird, like the Blue Tit, fills its mouth with flies before returning to the nest; and last night we watched a pair of Tree Pipits collecting, mouthfuls at a time, the big crane flies now so conspicuous in the fields.—F. J. STUBBS, in the *Oldham Chronicle*, June 2nd, 1923.

## Bird and Tree Challenge Shield Competition

THE Judges in the Bird and Tree Competition have a busy time before them, the number of Teams entering showing, as anticipated, a considerable increase this year. Norfolk still takes the lead in point of numbers, and contributes some six hundred essays. The results will be made known and reports sent to all the competing Schools at as early a date as possible.

### ROADSIDE TREE PLANTING

In the House of Commons in July, Col. Ashley (Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of Transport) informed Viscount Curzon that he fully shared the desire that roadside tree planting should be extended in suitable cases and as far as funds permitted. For some time he had been in consultation with an expert as to the species to adopt. In the case of the new great west road he had already

agreed on a tree-planting scheme with the Middlesex County Council. Sir C. Yate asked whether roadsides could be planted with apple trees, as in France and Germany. Col. Ashley: "Can Sir C. Yate assure me that the apples will not be stolen?" (Laughter).

Laughter is easily evoked in the House, but, after all, the public would not be much worse if the apples were taken than if they had never been there, even if it is to be believed or granted that English children are of necessity greater thieves, as well as more essentially nest-destroyers, than those of other countries. The Bird and Tree Competition has amply shown that all depends upon the way in which the child is taught. Plant the trees on Bird and Tree Day, place them under the care of Bird and Tree Cadets of the neighbourhood, and see if some fruit is not left to

distribute among the scholars as well as to provide jam and tarts!

### WHAT TEACHERS SAY

Among the pleasant letters received from Teachers with reference to Bird and Tree work, two may be quoted, one showing what good results may be attained by where neither teacher nor child set out with special knowledge but where both are ready to use eyes and ears; the other illustrating the gain even in a suburban school, where real outdoor nature-study might hardly be looked for. The first went to one of the leading local judges of essays in Norfolk, Mr. Fred V. Cole, to whose sympathetic encouragement the Competition in that county owes very much:—

“Emma — was afraid to enter the Bird and Tree Competition at first, as she felt she knew nothing about birds. But, as I told her at the time, I was in the same boat, yet we both had eyes and ears. Events proved that she used hers to good purpose, as she gained a medal and a book prize for her essays. She has left school now, but I am happy to think that her year's work in this school has opened her eyes to a world of which she might have known little or nothing had it not been for the Bird and Tree Scheme.”

The second came to the Secretary of the Competition:—

“The work this year has been a greater pleasure than ever to the girls. They have finished the year's work and the essays for 1923 have been sent in, and now they are most anxious for the new Teams to be formed and for the selection of birds and trees next to be studied to be decided upon. Some girls have even begged their parents to let them remain at school a little longer so that they may continue this study. We are very proud of this, since ours is a very poor district where the children have to be wage-earners as soon as possible. I should like to say that every girl in my senior class kept up the study and wrote both essays. It was very difficult to pick out the six best.”

### RURAL SCIENCE IN SCHOOLS

A Rural Science Course again formed one of the features of the Short Courses of Instruction for Teachers in Elementary

Schools arranged during the summer holidays by the Board of Education. This year the meeting took place in July at Cambridge. Unfortunately, the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds could not be personally represented, as was the case last year, but a large amount of Bird and Tree and other literature was available, and in a delightful lecture, with lantern illustrations, given by Mr. T. Johnson, H.M.I., hearty commendation was given to the scheme.

The hearty thanks of the Society are due to Teachers present at the Course in 1922 who have given such invaluable help to the work as is demonstrated in the following letter from a county in which the value of bird life is little understood:—

“Ever since my visit to Oxford last July I have been trying hard to get the people here interested in the protection of bird life. We are in the midst of a large fruit-growing district and I have always been against the destruction of birds and birds' eggs, knowing what friends birds are to rural workers. This year we have been visited by various pests in the orchards, in common with other districts, and at last it has been proved to the small holders that where birds, both wild birds or poultry, have unrestricted run of an orchard, that orchard is bearing a better crop of fruit. I have also induced some gardeners to observe for themselves the good that birds do in devouring hosts of grubs, etc., from the trees. They are so fully convinced that they have impressed on their children the benefit of leaving birds unmolested. I have also given several lessons on the protection of all birds, and my dictum has been ‘If you don't leave the birds alone there will be no fruit trees, say, ten years hence, for insect pests will have then complete mastery and nothing will grow.’ Some folk already see the red light, I am glad to say.

“With the adults and children in this frame of mind—the minority yet, but the majority next year I hope—I have persuaded my top classes to join in your Bird and Tree Scheme. They have already given me the promise neither to rob nests nor if they can help it, to let others rob them, and to observe for themselves the relationship between wild birds and insect pests.”

The allusion to fruit-growing suggests the experience of a gardening correspondent who relates the story of a wired-in enclosure containing his bush-fruit and thus protecting them from birds all the year: First year, splendid crop, jubilation; Second year, riddled leaves, poor crop, indignation; Third year, bushes blighted, caterpillar *triumphans*, no crop, lamentation.

### IN THE COURTS

**TRAPPING RACING PIGEONS.**—At *Willesden*, on September 1st, Charles Byford, a Harlesden youth, was fined 25s. for trapping racing pigeons belonging to the National Homing Union. Defendant said he had been trapping pigeons for about a year, and it was stated to be a common offence.

**THE BIRD FANCIER.**—At *Portsmouth*, on September 3rd, three foreign dealers were convicted of cruelty to captive birds. In one instance there were about 50 birds on the premises, and a Linnet was in a cage 6½ by 4 by 7½ inches. Defendant said the cage was "of the usual type."—At *Sutton*, on August 31st, Edward Jaquest was fined 20s. He had 12 Linnets in a cage 24 in. by 9 in. by 6½ in., and said this was the "standard" size for two dozen birds; one was dead.

**CAGED GOLDFINCHES.**—At *Framlingham*, on September 9th, Robert Darnell was convicted of having recently-taken young Goldfinches in his possession. Evidence was given by Mrs. Edward Clood, local hon. sec. for the R.S.P.B., and by Mr. J. B. Watson, a Fellow of the Society. The caged birds were on defendant's premises, and he afterwards said he caught them on a tree in his garden and had sent them to his son at Leamington. (Evidently this man should also be prosecuted and the birds confiscated and liberated.) The Bench dismissed the case with a caution (although this alternative is not given by law in respect of scheduled birds).

**TAKING EGGS.**—At *Southport*, on July 4th, Alexander Reid was fined 40s. for taking Tern's eggs at Ainsdale on June 4th. Questioned by a Watcher for the R.S.P.B., he denied having taken them, and when made to produce them said he did not trouble to read the warning notices.—Three boys were also fined 30s. each for taking a number off on the same area. Among them they had

stolen about 20 eggs before being chased and caught by the Watcher, the possible penalty being £1 per egg.—At *Cupar Sheriff Court*, on July 17th, Alexander Meldrum was ordered to pay 25s. for taking 16 Tern's eggs from *Tentsmuir*, owned by the Dundee Corporation.

## The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds

82, VICTORIA STREET, LONDON, S.W.1

*President:* Her Grace The DUCHESS OF PORTLAND  
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J.P., C.A.  
*Secretary:* Miss L. GARDINER

### The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds

provides Bird Rests at Lighthouses, Challenge Shields and Prizes for Bird and Tree Competitions in the Elementary Schools, Watchers to safeguard rare birds, Educational leaflets and lectures, and is now engaged in an earnest endeavour to stop the destruction of Sea-birds caused by waste oil discharged into the sea, and to preserve Wild Birds from extermination at the hands of Plume-hunters, Bird-catchers, and ruthless Egg-collectors.

The R.S.P.B. has framed and obtained Five important Acts for the Protection of Wild Birds in the United Kingdom, and has helped to secure many County Council Orders.

The R.S.P.B. facilitates arrangements for Bird Lectures, Meetings, and Entertainments, by lending Lantern Slides (from its collection of 1,000), typed Lectures and suitable Songs.

### Birds have so many foes that they need the help of generous and courageous friends

Any person interested in promoting the objects of the Society, and willing to abide by the rule to refrain from wearing the feathers of Wild Birds, except those of the Ostrich, and of birds killed for food, is therefore cordially invited to become a Fellow, by subscribing an annual sum of not less than one guinea, or a Member by an annual subscription of not less than five shillings.

Cheques, Postal Orders, etc., to be sent to the Hon. Secretary, Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, 82, Victoria Street, S.W.1, and crossed Westminster Bank.

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BITTERN AND YOUNG.  
From "Birds and their Young."

(By kind permission of Messrs. Gay and Hancock)

# Bird Notes & News

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

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## The Late Mrs. Suckling

It is hardly too much to say that every ardent worker in the humanitarian cause laments the passing away of one of the pioneers of the movement in this country, Mrs. Florence Horatia Suckling, who died at her home, Highwood, near Romsey, Hants, on December 10th, 1923. Mrs. Suckling had laboured earnestly and incessantly for the welfare of animals for more than half a century, and her name is almost as well known in animal protection circles in the United States and the Colonies as in England, owing to the constant correspondence she kept up with leading workers there.

Born at Highwood some seventy-five years ago, daughter of Vice-Admiral W. B. Suckling, she early came under the influence of the late Lady Mount-Temple, and the coterie of animal-lovers that gathered at Broadlands, including the Rev. F. O. Morris, the Rev. Basil Wilberforce, and John Ruskin. At the age of sixteen she began active efforts on behalf of the animals by teaching the village children, and from that time onward her interests centred in the education of the young, so that she was naturally an enthusiastic supporter of the Bird and Tree Scheme of the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds and greatly rejoiced in the frequent successes of Ridge School, situated not far from Highwood, where she frequently addressed the children and gave them all possible encouragement. Her early work also brought her in contact with Mr. John Colam, then in the full vigour of his long and ardent labours as Secretary of the R.S.P.C.A., and probably few people did more to determine the lines upon which she worked. She held for

forty-seven years the post of Hon. Secretary for that Society for Romsey, and was one of the originators of the Band of Mercy movement.

It is hardly necessary to say that Mrs. Suckling was from the first a warm supporter of the Society for the Protection of Birds. She became in the early days of its existence Hon. Secretary for the New Forest, and subsequently a Fellow and Vice-President, retaining the Secretaryship until the time of her death. Nor was she at any time or in any sense a nominal or apathetic Secretary. Her fluent and eloquent speech, at meetings, summer gatherings at Highwood, and lectures, and even more her facile pen, were constantly devoted to the service of the "lower brethren," and the bird-world in particular had a place very near her heart. In letters to the Press all over England, written whenever some special plea was needed, or some special information, plea, or warning, needed circulation, and in a weekly column for children in the local newspaper—continued up to the last—she inculcated and inspired humanity, justice, and affection for the animal creation; and few weeks passed in which her voice was not raised on behalf of the birds, victims continually to the greed and cruelty of man. She did not approach the matter as an ornithologist or as one with any personal interest to be served by the preservation of any special birds. To her all birds were simply charming and sentient fellow-creatures, part of the great chain of life, with their place and work in the world and their rights as citizens of that world. Her early acquaintance with Charles

Darwin half unconsciously deepened her sense of relationship and responsibility for the welfare of all creatures. She constantly watched and loved the Wag-tails and Goldfinches, the Flycatchers and Goldcrests, and many other species, which built every year about her house ; but so far as mercy and kindness went a House-sparrow was as dear to her and as important as a Nightingale or a Hoopoe. Like St. Francis she regarded all as her little sisters. In the work of the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds she upheld the efforts of the Watchers' Committee mainly on account of the Lighthouse perches for the preservation of migrants, in which she greatly delighted, and because of its vigorous steps to put down the hideous pole-trap and its efforts to defend the wild bird against all forms of catching and trapping and caging cruelties. Above all, the Bird and Tree Scheme, as already mentioned, had her warmest approval ; the opportunities it affords for acquainting children with the charm and the usefulness of birds, and for enlisting their young and generous sympathies, led her to regard it as the finest of movements in connection with elementary schools.

The Highwood estate was a sanctuary for all wild creatures. No hounds crossed it in pursuit of the hunted fox, no game was shot ; and on this point Mrs. Suckling

was happy in the hearty support of Captain Suckling, R.N., her cousin, whom she married in 1876. They were indeed in mutual support an ideal couple, and led what may be termed an ideal life, as owners of property, lovers of man and bird and beast, and constant champions of the weak and oppressed.

Mrs. Suckling was best known, and would wish to be remembered, as a passionate and thoroughly consistent humanitarian, but she had other pursuits, taking a keen part in archæological research and particularly in genealogical investigation. For many years she was a member of the Hampshire Field Club and the Southampton Rambling Club and wrote various papers on historical subjects and on the history of the district in which she lived. Her connection with the family of Lord Nelson is well known, and one room in Highwood was devoted to relics of the great naval hero.

For a long time Mrs. Suckling had suffered from bronchitis in the winter season, and physical infirmities and deafness interfered with outside work, while the loss of Captain Suckling in 1922 left her peculiarly lonely, but to the end she persevered with efforts in the cause to which she had given her life, and was seriously ill for hardly more than a week. The immediate cause of death was heart failure.

## The Caging of Wild Birds

THE following letter has been sent from the R.S.P.B. to the officials connected with the Dover Fur and Feather Show recently held at Dover :—

“Members of the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds have called the attention of the Council of the Society to the statement made in the *Dover Express and East Kent News* of October 26th last, that British Wild Birds such as the Goldfinch, Linnet, Siskin, Redpole, Blackbird, Starling, Thrush, Redwing, Fieldfare, Ring Ousel, Whitethroat, Stonechat, Nuthatch, Wagtail, Robin, Shrike, Corn-Bunting, Chaffinch and Greenfinch were on exhibition as CAGE

BIRDS at the Market Hall, Dover, on October 24th and 25th, 1923.

“This has caused great surprise and widespread indignation among naturalists and bird-lovers. That an important body like the Dover and District Poultry, Pigeon, Rabbit and Cage-Bird Society should apparently countenance and approve the caging of Robins, Wagtails, Stonechats, Corn-Buntings, Redwings, Linnets, etc., is most deplorable. To catch and cage such birds is by most ornithologists considered a monstrous cruelty, as well as showing a contempt for the Wild Bird Protection Orders, whereby in many parts of the country these birds are protected throughout the year.”

## AN EGYPTIAN "SANCTUARY"

If anyone were asked which group of migrants were the most difficult of approach, and had at the same time the best reason for their shyness, he would probably reply the Wild Ducks. And that these birds should choose to spend the hours of daylight on narrow waters comparable in width to a large room and constantly under human eyes, must be seen to be believed.

Yet that is what happens winter after winter in the Giza Zoological Gardens just outside Cairo. Except the predatory crows, no birds are ever molested there, and the presence of large trees, so rare in Egypt, attracts numbers of birds to breed, including some not commonly resident in the country. For instance, the Grey Heron, the Night Heron, the Buff-backed Heron, and the Little Egret have bred there successfully year after year, and taking small birds as well as big, a list can be made of twenty species which have nested in the Gardens.

Even exclusively water-birds are not unrepresented, for some of the narrow canals contain enough cover to encourage Moorhens to breed. The biggest piece of water is a pond about an acre and a half in extent and roughly circular where a few swans and pinioned ducks live. Even this area is encroached upon by an island, a spot more frequented by human beings than any other, since tea is dispensed there.

In October the wild duck begin to arrive and settle on the pond. Up to Christmas their numbers continue to thicken. By the end of January they begin their departure; and usually the last stragglers are gone by the end of May. At the height of the press the scene is a marvellous one. Even the narrowest canals are full of Teal, while the central pond is alive with Teal and Shoveler. On occasion there is a bird to every two square yards of water. Others are standing shoulder to shoulder along the stone coping, separated in places by nothing but an open wire fence and a strip of grass not three feet

wide, from busy paths. At such times it is a regular amusement of the pinioned Ruddy Sheldrakes, who are almost the heaviest birds on the pond, to walk along against the fence and shove their lighter companions into the water.

Although the bulk of the wintering birds are of two kinds only, Mallard, Gadwall, Garganey, Tuft, Wigeon, and Pochard may all be seen on occasion. So sure of themselves do all the ducks become that they pay no particular attention to the report of a gun near by. Then the changes of the birds as they emerge from eclipse to full breeding plumage can be watched at close range, and as the spring draws near, the courting display of the Teal. These smallest, neatest ducks of all seem indeed to forget wholly their fear of man. It is possible to throw a scrap of bread a foot or two into the water from the tea island and have two wild Teal race a swan for it.

Strangers seeing the composure and confidence of the ducks by daylight would never believe that they were wild. Many never give them a thought, taking them for granted as part of the stock of the gardens. But with twilight comes a change. As the Night-herons begin to fly off to the river, the ducks which were standing on the coping take to the water. All the birds begin to move about the surface and a murmur rises as of talk between themselves, gentle whistles from the Teal, conversational grunts from the Shoveler. Movement and sound become gradually more animated until every bird is swimming about vigorously on the crowded water and quite clearly labouring under some excitement. Suddenly some unseen climax is reached. The pent-up feelings of perhaps a score of birds overcome them. At one impulse they rise with what, at that close range, is a heart-stopping roar of wings, and hurtle overhead. Group after group follows suit with the unity of single birds, and in the gloom it is impossible to tell how each band makes ready for such concerted action. One would say that each had its acknowledged

leader who "picked up the eyes" of his followers as the impulse for flight gathered strength within him.

Soon, only here and there a pinioned duck is left, making pitiful attempts to follow the example of the wild birds.

They are away safely in the darkness, feeding in some pool or clover-field. Before dawn and the enmity of man can come upon them they will be back once more in their trusted sanctuary.

R. E. M.

## The Plumage Trade

THE many conspicuous advertisements of Egret and Bird of Paradise plumage which have continued to appear in milliners' catalogues and in the Press have brought many letters to the Society, mainly from correspondents who were under the impression that the Plumage Act prohibits the *sale* of wild birds' plumage, as earlier Bills proposed to do. The Act prohibits only the *importation* of such skins and feathers. Whether or not the spirit as well as the letter of the law is to be observed lies with the retail trade and still more with women. Those who continue to buy and wear Egrets, Paradise plumes, and the like are ostentatiously defying a law which humanity no less than science demanded, and are inciting the smuggling of contraband goods. But inasmuch as there are many women who have no heed to any of these things, and presumably insufficient brains to consider the question, they will no doubt continue to buy so long as advertisements and shop windows invite them to do so. In consequence of a recent advertisement of Birds of Paradise by Messrs. John Barker & Co., a letter was addressed to the firm by the R.S.P.B., and the Society can only hope that the attitude taken by this firm in their reply will be imitated by other large stores. The Secretary to the Company replied, under date November 20th, 1923 :—

"I am directed to acknowledge the receipt of your communication of the 16th inst. and to inform you that the advertising of the goods in question and to which you rightly take exception, has already been withdrawn.

"In such a large business as this, it is, of course, impossible for every advertisement to be submitted to the Directorate for approval, and to a great extent, Managers and Buyers,

with the Advertising Manager, have a practically free hand in the matter of publicity.

"I have, however, been informed that the goods in question were purchased before the Prohibition of Plumage Act came into operation, and although we are in entire sympathy with your protest, we must ask you to allow us to point out that apart from any advertising the goods in question are frequently inquired for by customers.

"At the same time, we quite agree that this demand should not be aggravated by advertising in the Press."

### ILLEGAL IMPORTATION FROM INDIA

At the Mansion House Police Court, on October 3rd, 1923, Douglas Bremner, of Messrs. Bremner and Laycock, New Broad Street, London, E.C., was summoned for dealing in plumage feathers in contravention of the Plumage (Prohibition of Importation) Act, 1921.

Mr. Beattie, prosecuting, said in August the firm received from a Calcutta merchant a parcel containing Egret plumage and sent it on to a firm of salesmen, who valued the contents at £12 18s. The parcel was seized by the Customs officers, as the importation of this kind of plumage was prohibited.

Bremner said that since the passing of the Act his firm had not had any dealing with the sender, whom they had warned that the importation of this kind of plumage was prohibited. The parcel was seized within a few hours of its arrival, so that he had no time to decide what he ought to do with regard to it, although he admitted sending it for the plumage to be valued.

Alderman Sir C. Johnston said he felt a certain amount of sympathy with defendant, but the Customs law had been broken and he could do nothing less

than fine him £20 with two guineas costs. Defendant intimated that he would appeal.

(It will be remembered that the export of plumage from India has been long prohibited, and that Egrets are especially valued in that country as insect-eating protectors of the paddy and cotton crops.)

### PLUMAGE ORDER

By virtue of the Importation of

Plumage (No. 2) Order, 1923, the Green (or Japanese) Pheasant (*Phasianus versicolor*) and the Copper Pheasant (*Phasianus soemmerringi*) have been removed from the Schedule to the Importation of Plumage (Prohibition) Act, 1921. The Order comes into force on January 1st, and accordingly as from that date the importation of the plumage of these birds will not be permitted without licence.

## Books Received

"RARE, VANISHING, AND LOST BRITISH BIRDS." Compiled from Notes by W. H. Hudson by Linda Gardiner. (J. M. Dent & Sons, Ltd., 10s. 6d. net.)—The last work from Mr. Hudson's hand is contained in the final chapter of *A Hind in Richmond Park* and in this work on the lost and menaced wild birds of Great Britain, which has now been issued by Messrs. Dent. It is a volume of historic value as a record of the times and circumstances in which some of the finest members of Britain's avifauna have been lost to this country, and as a revelation of the conditions under which others still preserve a slender thread of existence. What sort of birds these were, and are, can be judged from the twenty-five finely-coloured plates prepared, under Mr. Hudson's supervision, by Mr. H. Gronvold, and admirably reproduced. They range from the vanished Great Auk, exterminated as a witch by quaking Scotchmen, to the Bittern, shot every year on its attempted return to this country except in the one spot where once again it now breeds, and the little Kentish Plover, persecuted by the "cursed collector" and doomed but for the intervention of the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds.

The story of the unfinished work and its completion after Mr. Hudson's death may be given from Miss Gardiner's Foreword:—

For some years before his death Mr. Hudson had been anxious to prepare an enlarged edition of the pamphlet *Lost British Birds* which he

wrote in 1894 for the Society (now the Royal Society) for the Protection of Birds. In the midst of much other work, that he also hoped to accomplish, held back by weariness and ill-health, but constantly urged on by the sharpest and saddest of all goads—the consciousness that but little time remained to him for the completion of any task—this book seemed to be rarely absent from his thoughts. He referred to it the last time I saw him, deploring that the progress he had made was not greater owing to his absence from his books during the winter and spring spent in Cornwall, and to his pre-occupation with *A Hind in Richmond Park*. He spoke then of the increased need for such a book, and of the birds to be included in it.

The twenty-five birds in this book are fairly typical. One of them is wholly extinct; others are entirely lost to Great Britain; others again exist in such small numbers as to be unknown to all except the men who seek them in small and scattered areas, and these seekers are for the most part bent on further reducing the number in order to add specimens to private collections.

The material for this work, beyond the pamphlet of 1894, consisted of notes in pen and pencil, contained in note-books and on many loose sheets of paper. In a few cases the matter was fairly complete; in some, references and extracts were indicated only; in others the notes were rough, disconnected, and unfinished. Many were jotted down in an abbreviated form and were extremely difficult to decipher, even for those intimately acquainted with the handwriting. In putting them together I have transcribed every note with the greatest care, and every reference has been looked up and completed.

In a long review in the *Times* Literary Supplement (November 22nd, 1923) the writer says:—

The renewed breeding of the bittern in Norfolk after many years is very notable and encouraging; for in spite of its fairly frequent reappearances in spring, the "mire-drum" or "butterbump" might plausibly have been quoted twenty years ago as the very type of those birds of old England, such as the crane and the bustard, which were supposed to be doomed to extinction by the spread of cultivation. On this point there is a good deal of false argument. Unquestionably the reclamation of the fens, and many other changes in the face of England, down to the recent spread of fruit gardens and suburban allotments, have greatly changed the numbers of the different species. The bittern and water-rail are banished where the corn-bunting and hawfinch enter and thrive. But English landscape is so minutely varied, and small remnants of the untilled wilds survive with such persistency, that as one looks down the list of twenty-five birds elegised in this book, there is probably not one—not even the pelican, of which bones are the sole relic—that might not be thriving in small numbers to this day if cultivation, and we may add the spread of building, had been its only enemies.

Other foes have been hunters for the pot, game preservers, what Hudson calls "cockney sportsmen," who kill for killing's sake; specimen hunters, who, as Sir Thomas Browne wrote more than two centuries ago of the white spoonbill in Norfolk, kill "not for their meat, but for the handsomeness of the same"; small farmers who, as Hudson discovered, promise to be worse foes than the game-preserving landlords whose places they have taken; and last, and far worst of all, the collector, who glories in evading the law and redoubles his destructive efforts exactly in proportion as any species becomes rarer.

Hudson wished to make all collecting illegal; and if the threatened species cannot be preserved by any method less drastic, his demand will be strongly and widely reinforced. But the real pest is neither the bird's-nesting schoolboy nor the few great public or semi-public collections, whose guardians would be subject to public opinion, even if they were not self-disciplined. It is a comparatively small number of affluent people with warped tastes; and we may still hope that their mischief may be ended by more effective

administrations of the law, reinforced by the growth of sound public opinion and by ampler support of the bodies which act as policemen and guardians.

Much has already been done—largely by the inspiration of Hudson's own writings—to check and to convert those whose prime instinct is to give rare birds or their eggs, in glass cases, what he here calls "a quiet immortality aloof from the perturbations of nature." But it is still an uphill fight, and an expensive one; and while the various protective funds are forced to contrive curiously for want of money yet more birds may be lost to Britain for ever.

"LETTERS FROM W. H. HUDSON." Edited and with an Introduction and Explanatory Notes by Edward Garnett. (Nonesuch Press, 25s.).—Mr. Hudson's intense dislike of the idea of any published biography of himself, and the publication of intimate letters, is known, but it may be assumed without difficulty that he would have raised no objection to the printing of these letters to the literary friend for whose opinions he had perhaps the most regard. They are largely literary, but in the main describe those rambles about the country which resulted in some of his most delightful books, and the selection covers twenty years. All are characteristic of the man—what that Mr. Hudson ever wrote was not characteristic of him? and for that reason will not willingly be missed by the ever-widening circle of Mr. Hudson's admirers. The edition is, however, limited to 1,000 copies.

In a finely-written preface, Mr. Garnett says:—

"I have known several men of genius, remarkable minds, but no man's personality has ever fascinated me like Hudson's. I loved him for his bigness of nature, for his warm and tender heart, for his passionate intensity, for his capriciousness, but beyond this I took pure aesthetic delight in his character. I should think that few men have aroused such warm responsiveness in their fellows as Hudson. Wherever he went, wherever he appeared in roads or fields, in cottages, inns, country houses, people succumbed quickly to the spell of his personality. His tall dark figure, his brusque vivid talk, his magnetic eyes, his strength of manner and the spice

of mystery in his movements captivated his hearers. . . . Although Hudson himself might have regarded these letters to me as of little importance, they do in fact convey most characteristic glimpses of himself and of his astonishing vigour and vitality of spirit in his last twenty years. They illustrate in special his wide literary outlook. I print them believing that Hudson, the man and the writer will appear to posterity a far bigger figure than he appears to men to-day."

"BIRDS AND THEIR YOUNG." By T. A. Coward, M.Sc., etc. With twelve coloured plates and other illustrations by Roland Green, F.Z.S. (Gay & Hancock, 10s. 6d. net).—Eminently suited by its attractive appearance no less than by its contents for a gift-book, but far removed from the meretricious puerility of much "gift-book" literature, the third of Messrs. Gay & Hancock's bird annuals is perhaps the most fascinating of the three they have now issued. Mr. Pycraft's "Birds in Flight," issued last Christmas, was indeed an admirable exposition of that subject, but fascinating as is the study of wings, there is no doubt that the story of the young bird has a peculiar charm for both simple and learned. Needless to say, so accomplished an ornithologist as Mr. Coward has not produced a nursery book with tales of the imaginary experiences of baby Robins or infant Rooks; but intelligent boys and girls will be delighted to learn from it answers to many of the questions which occur, say to a Bird and Tree Cadet, in watching a nest and the development of nestlings. Their elders will enjoy and benefit by Mr. Coward's knowledge no less. There are chapters, for instance, on "The Helpless Group" and "The Precocious Group" and "The Behaviour of the Young," telling of the young Moorhen which scrambles over the edge of its nest into the water, and the young Grebe which climbs up on to its mother's back, and the little Plover which scuttles into safety, as contrasting with the skinny and blind baby Finch. There are also chapters on "Behaviour of the Young," "Behaviour of the Parents," "Food

and Feeding," "Lessons and Language," and so on to growth and adolescence, and right down to maturity, courtship, and song.

The illustrations will further advance the high reputation of Mr. Roland Green. The page of young birds, the Moorhen, and the Shelduck, are perhaps especially satisfactory in reproduction; but the line work is even more attractive than the coloured plates. One of these pen-and-ink plates is reproduced by permission, as frontispiece to the present number of BIRD NOTES AND NEWS, and serves well to represent both this book and Mr. Hudson's history of our lost and rare species.

"THE NATURAL HISTORY OF SOUTH AFRICA: BIRDS." By F. W. Fitzsimons. Two vols. (Longmans, Green & Co., 12s. 6d. each).—Of these two volumes, dealing, the one with the economic side of bird life, and the other with the various families and species of South Africa, a notice must be deferred until spring, as they are too important a contribution to bird literature to be cursorily dealt with in a brief space.

"A LITTLE BIRD TOLD ME." By W. G. Mathews. With 12 illustrations by K. L. Beard. (Gay & Hancock, 2s. 6d. net).—This is a pretty little book in which Mr. and Mrs. Robin and Mr. and Mrs. Crow, and other humanised birds, talk after the fashion set by the immortal Mrs. Trimmer. The sketches are sympathetic in feeling, if they do not advance knowledge to any extent, and the illustrations are nicely drawn.

"NATURELAND."—The January issue of this illustrated Magazine contains several interesting papers on Birds. Mr. G. J. Scholey relates the vagaries of an individual Cuckoo; Mr. Nicholson deals with the Crested Lark, rare in Britain though common in France; Mr. Patterson describes the habits of the pretty, shore-loving Turnstone; and Mr. Horsburgh relates the habits of Birds of Paradise, giving a photograph of their haunts in the depths of the jungle. The occurrence of a pair of Golden Oriole on Mickleham Downs during 1922 is noticed. The illustrated prospectus of *Natureland* may be obtained of the Editor, Dr. Graham Renshaw, Bridge House, Sale, Manchester.

# The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds

## COUNCIL MEETINGS

MEETINGS of the Council of the Society were held on October 19th and December 14th, 1923, at the Guildhall, Westminster, S.W., the Chairman, Sir Montagu Sharpe, K.C., presiding.

The Report presented on the former date by the Hon. Secretary stated that a letter had been addressed to every member of the Pembroke County Council, drawing attention to the urgent need for application to the Home Office for protection of the eggs of the Chough, if the birds were to be saved from extermination in the county by egg-collectors. At the December meeting the Hon. Secretary was able to make the satisfactory statement that an Order had been applied for and obtained, protecting the eggs of the Chough throughout the county. The publication by Messrs. Dent of Mr. W. H. Hudson's last work, *Lost, Vanishing and Rare British Birds*, completed and edited by Miss L. Gardiner, was announced. The Society's Christmas card, with painting of the Goldfinch by Mr. Thorburn, had been issued and found a ready sale. The aid of the Society had been invoked by the Société pour la Protection des Oiseaux in an investigation set on foot by the French Ministry of Agriculture into the feeding habits of the Rook. The subject of the alleged association between migrating birds and outbreaks of foot-and-mouth disease was also brought forward. Several reports were received respecting the destruction of sea-birds by waste oil.

*The Finance and General Purposes Committee* presented the accounts for the third quarter of 1923, and for October and November respectively, together with the accounts for payment. A legacy of £50 had been received under the will of Miss Helen Isabel Stewart, and £10 under that of Mr. T. B. Jefferys; and by the sale of some of the books left by Mr. W. H. Hudson to the Society as residuary legatee £303 had been realised. Miss

Margaret Williams was elected Hon. Local Secretary for Carmarthen. The following Fellows and Members were elected:—

FELLOWS:—Mrs. S. R. Benson (Cornwall); M. S. Berkeley (Perak, F.M.S.); Mrs. Leicester Carey (Kent); Miss Rosa Chapman (Kent); Miss S. M. Collie (Beds.); Miss A. M. Cummins, Miss E. A. Cummins (West Virginia, U.S.A.); Mrs. Richard Emmott (Hants); Captain Charles Evans (Somerset); Mrs. Farmer (Hants); Philip G. Gilchrist (Lancashire); Mrs. Samuel Garrett (Suffolk); E. W. Gough (Surrey); Alfred R. Holland (N.W.); Mrs. Jones Leslie (Devon); Lady Lucy (Kent); H. Vincent Marrot (W.); Miss M. R. Moor (Cornwall); F. H. Newberry (S.E.); Mrs. Wyndham Pain (Hants); Hon. W. J. Palmer (Hants); Hon. Mrs. Sopwith (Surrey); Mrs. H. M. Stanton (Glos.); Mrs. A. Stork (London, W.C.); A. W. Travis (Glamorgan); Miss A. M. Trused (Cornwall).

MEMBERS:—P. F. Ambrose (Maidstone); Rev. Charles Ayland (Worcs.); Miss Diana Baird (Worcs.); Miss Bayley (Worcs.); Dr. Belcher (Notts); Henry Berney (Surrey); Miss M. Lindsay Bergham (Kent); Mrs. Bennion (Hants); Miss H. M. Benson, Miss S. V. Benson (Cornwall); W. Booth (Cumberland); H. Branford (Devon); Miss Burgess (Middlesex); Mrs. David Bryce (Hants); Miss A. F. Bere (Leicester); Henry F. Compton (S.W.); Captain H. L. Conor (Cornwall); Lady Cotton-Jodrell (W.); A. Steven Corbet, B.Sc. (Berks); Hon. Mrs. Denison (W.); Charles F. Dickens (Hants); Miss G. E. Elwell (Kent); Miss Eyre (Devon); Harold Foster (Bucks); A. W. Frost (Essex); Miss E. M. Garmham (Glos.); Madame de Giberne-Sieveking (Kent); Mrs. W. Jacob Gibbons (Hants); Mrs. Eleanor Gissing (Suffolk); E. C. Green (Kent); Miss D. M. Harris (Suffolk); the Marquess of Headford (Ireland); Miss Grace Hamby (Cornwall); Rev. Gordon Hamlin (Dorset); Derek G. Hughes (Glos.); Dr. J. P. Hill (Suffolk); Mrs. M. Isaacson (Lancashire); Miss Eileen Jowett (S.W.); Rev. A. G. Kealy, R.N. (Yorks); Miss Charity Kittson (Sussex); Miss Knight (Morocco); Nurse Madge (Somerset); E. J. Mayne (Devon); Mrs. H. M. T. Mason (Kent); Charles A. Moss (Derby); Charles C. Nauwerck (Surrey); Rev. L. O'Hea (Oxford); W. H. Parkin (Yorks); Major Wisson Parsons (Dorset); Robert R. Payne (Glos.); Miss R. F. Pennell (Devon); Miss Plowman (S.W.); Charles B. Quain (N.); P. Ralfe (Isle of Man); Miss K. Redmayne (Lancs.); Dr. Robertson (Cumberland); Lady Rodd (W.); Mrs. Ada Rosedale (S.W.); Miss D. Rowland (Surrey); Samuel Samuel, M.P. (S.W.); A. St. George Sargeant (Cornwall); Mrs. Sheldrick (Suffolk); Commander S. M. Skinner, R.N. (S.W.); David P. Smith (Derby); Miss B. Solly (S.W.); Miss Somes (Devon); Miss H. A. Smythe (Warwickshire); J. E. Morland Sumner (Lancs.); F. Stephens (W. Yorks); Mrs. S. H. Uloth (Surrey); Miss Phœbe Walters (W.C.); A. H. Fabian Ware (W.); Robert Weed (Kent); F. R. L. White (Birmingham); C. St. L. Wilkinson (Somerset); Miss Margaret Williams (S. Wales); Miss M. Talbot Wilson (Rome); Frederick V. Wright (W.); Lady Wrey (Kent); Mrs. Warren Wright (Glos.); Mrs. L. M. Yorke (N. Wales).

LIFE MEMBERS:—H. P. O. Cleave (Berks); G. O. Humphreys (N. Wales); Thomas Harvey (Stirlingshire).

AFFILIATED :—British Columbia Ornithologists' Union; Ashton-under-Lyne, Oldham, and District Wild Birds Protection Association.

*The Watchers' Committee* reported especially with regard to the important work at Dungeness; the preservation of the Kites; and the conditions of bird life on Lundy Island, where the persistent egg-taking (though illegal) had led to a lamentable decrease in the birds; and other places, where depredations are attributable to collectors and also, it is believed, to the use of the illegal pole-trap. The status of certain species of rare birds was considered, and arrangements were made for special precautions in respect of these.

*The Publicity Committee* reported that at its meeting on December 5th it was recommended, among other things, that a petition be sent to the Incorporated Association of Retail Dealers, with regard to the sale of songbirds in poulterers' departments of affiliated stores; also that letters of protest be sent to the officials, members, and exhibitors associated with the Dover Cage-Bird Society respecting the caging of wild birds, and that such protests be repeated whenever opportunity demands.

*The Education Committee* reported that with a view to bringing the subject of birds and their protection to the notice of boys in Summer Camps, Mr. Robert Hadden was engaged during the month of August to visit Boys' Camps in Kent and Sussex, and give them talks about birds and distribute among them suitable leaflets. Permission was obtained from the Headquarters of the Boys' Brigade, the Church Lads' Brigade, the Boy Scouts' Association, and the Seaside Camps for London Working Boys. Mr. Hadden was cordially welcomed wherever he went, and every facility was given to him by those in charge of the Camps to get into touch with the boys. It was agreed that the work should be continued next summer on a more extended scale. The results of the Competition for Bird and Tree County Challenge Shields were announced, the decision in regard to the

Inter-County Shield not having been yet arrived at. A letter received from H.M. Chief Inspector of Schools in regard to the evil effects of certain forms of "Nature Study" was received, and hearty agreement was expressed with its tenor and its suggestions. It was reported that 39 Lectures, illustrated with the Society's slides, had been given.

*Wild Birds Protection Bill.*—A report was read of the Conference held at the Society's Offices on October 5th to consider the Wild Birds Protection Bill as passed by the House of Lords on July 30th, and the various amendments which had been proposed. Sir Montagu Sharpe presided, and Viscount Grey of Fallodon was present, together with Mr. E. W. E. Holderness, Secretary to the Home Office Advisory Committee. Lord Grey expressed his confident belief that if dropped as a Government measure this year it would be introduced under the Government ægis next year; but both Lord Grey and Mr. Holderness said that strong opposition was being put forward from certain quarters, especially the numerous bird-caging clubs and associations. The amendments to the Bill desired by the Council of the Society were then considered *seriatim*, and as they had not yet been before the Home Office Advisory Committee, Lord Grey, as Chairman of that Committee, gave them very careful consideration. Some of the more important he fully supported and intimated that they would in all probability be incorporated in the Bill before it went to the Commons. (In view of subsequent events the position of the Bill is, of course, entirely altered.)

The dates for Council Meetings in 1924 were agreed upon, and various other matters considered.

#### CORNISH MEMORIAL TO MR. HUDSON

Although there was a time when Cornish folk resented some of the comments on them in *The Land's End*, they appreciated the honour done their county by the residence among them of its

author for so many winters. They have commemorated him in a singularly appropriate manner, and one that Mr. Hudson himself, with all his dislike of monumental shams and pretences, might well have chosen had he looked for any memorial in the Duchy. Near Zennor there is a certain block of stone on which he loved to sit, looking at the view of the county to which ill-health had driven him and which he loved in many of its aspects. The stone had come to be known as "Hudson's seat," and now on it is carved the simple inscription, "W. H. Hudson often came here."

### OBITUARY

With great regret the Society has to record the death of Mr. J. H. Allchin, Curator of Maidstone Museum, who has been for twenty-eight years Hon. Secretary for Maidstone. He took keen interest in the subject, was an active and sympathetic worker, and frequently lectured in the town and district, while the bird room at the Museum bore testimony to his ornithological knowledge and enthusiasm. He practically made the Museum what it is to-day, one of the finest in the south of England, and he was also a keen antiquary and an accomplished artist. Mr. Allchin was one of the first observers to note the decrease of Swallows in England, and after careful investigations brought the question before a Conference in connection with the R.S.P.B. in 1898. In consequence of his paper, resolutions were passed urging County Councils to give the fullest protection to Swallows and Martins and their eggs, and suggesting a strong protest to the Governments of France and Italy against the destruction of migrating birds.

Mr. Allchin, who was 72 years of age, had been in failing health for some time and died on December 9th.

The death, on December 12th, of the Rev. Canon Theodore Wood, Vicar of St. Mary Magdalene, Wandsworth Common, removes a popular lecturer and writer on natural history. Son of one of the pioneers of humane Nature-study,

the Rev. J. G. Wood, Canon Wood specialised on beetles, but he wrote several books on birds, including an admirable little volume on "Our Bird Allies," and he was proud of the number of species which he had observed in his garden and on the adjacent common.

### EARL LOREBURN

For many years a Fellow of the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, the late venerable ex-Lord Chancellor, Lord Loreburn, was especially associated with the campaign against the use of the pole-trap, and he may be regarded as the Father of the Act prohibiting the use of this detestable invention, although it was actually introduced and steered through the House of Commons by Earl (then Mr. Sydney) Buxton. Lord Loreburn died on November 30th at Kingsdown House, Kent, in his 78th year. As Sir Robert Threshie Reid he was one of the most keen and uncompromisingly honest of lawyers, and as Lord Chancellor, comments the *Times*, he was not surpassed by any of the men whom he followed or preceded "in sterling and straightforward character and in single-minded resolve to administer the purest justice."

### PROTECTION OF WILD LIFE

Arising out of the International Congress for the Protection of Nature, held in Paris in the summer of 1923, a small and informal conference was held recently at the Natural History Museum to discuss the suggestion put forward at the Congress that an International Committee should be formed with the object of fostering Nature Reserves and protecting animal and plant life throughout the world. It was decided that the Society for the Promotion of Nature Reserves should invite the Societies in the United Kingdom which are interested in the matter to send representatives to a meeting to be held on January 14th, 1924, when the desirability of constituting such a Committee and the formation of a Joint Committee for the United Kingdom will be considered. The proposition is that this Committee should

undertake (A) the appointment of delegates to the International Committee (if formed); and (B) the co-ordination of the work of existing Societies in the United Kingdom.

### THE EATING OF SKYLARKS

For many years past a protest has been raised by the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds against the destruction of Skylarks in order that their tiny bodies may be used as a gastronomic dainty at city dinners and ballroom suppers, or served in puddings and pies at restaurants. It is believed that public opinion in general fully supports this protest. The following letter, dated December 7th, 1923, has been sent to the Incorporated Association of Retail Distributors, signed by the Society's Chairman and Hon. Secretary:—

The Council of the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds desire to bring to your notice the growing dislike among the public to Skylarks and other Songbirds being used for food and to the appeals which have been made to many large firms to discontinue the sale of these birds in their Poultry Departments.

By some dealers difficulty with regard to acceding to this suggestion is felt, unless all firms of a similar nature are generally agreed on the subject, and we have therefore been advised to ask you if the matter could be favourably considered by your Directors, with a view to firms affiliated to the Incorporated Association of Retail Distributors, being recommended to abandon the practice of putting these birds on the market.

To bird lovers, the eating of Larks is such an offence against good taste and the best kind of sentiment, that they feel compelled to refrain from making purchases at shops or stores where these birds are exposed for sale.

Among others, Mr. Selfridge and Sir Woodman Burbidge have expressed their sympathy with the desire to suppress this traffic.

Messrs. Selfridge & Co. write (November 24th):—

"We will not allow the department to expose Larks for sale, and only supply orders which we have specially contracted to supply."

The Haymarket Stores have replied

(November 11th) to a protest from Mrs. H. F. Spender:—

"I beg to acknowledge and thank you for your letter which I have submitted to the Managing Director, and I am pleased to be able to inform you that instructions have been given for the discontinuance of the sale of Larks in the Poultry Department."

Spontaneous action in the matter has, the Society is informed, been taken by Mr. French, Fishmonger, of Brighton, who has refused to deal in the bird since reading the account of it given in "The A.B.C. of Common Birds," and has declined to buy them from the Brighton catchers. In the hope that other poulterers will follow Mr. French's example, the R.S.P.B. has prepared appropriate cards, bearing Mr. Thorburn's picture of the soaring Lark, and suitable words, so that members of the Society and others may give them to the proprietors or managers of the stores at which they deal, as well as to their friends. They are obtainable from the Society's office at 9d. a dozen.

A letter has also been addressed to a number of representative people with a view to eliciting opinions against Lark-eating. Among the answers first received are the following:—

From the Duchess of Portland:—

"I strongly deprecate the slaughter of Skylarks and other singing birds, and I think that the sellers of such birds deserve the reproach they receive in the following lines of Ralph Hodgson:—

"I saw with open eyes  
Singing-birds sweet  
Sold in the shops  
For the people to eat,  
Sold in the shops of  
Stupidity street."

From Earl Buxton:—

"I am very glad to hear that some of the Stores and Poulterers are refusing to supply Larks and other birds to their customers. I hope their spirited example will be greatly followed. I am dead against these birds being killed in order to be eaten."

From Sir Montagu Sharpe, K.C.:—

"I fail to comprehend how any man who has stopped and listened to the thrilling notes

of the ascending Lark can afterwards sit down and knowingly eat the bird. He might just as well feed on his canaries, and probably would not detect any difference."

From Mr. T. A. Coward:—

"Surely this barbarous custom cannot survive. Doubtless the Lark is palatable—I don't know; I have never tried; I trust I never shall—but it can never be a valuable or necessary article of diet. Certain agriculturists have blamed it as inimical; no argument that I have ever seen moves me. It may do a little harm; I am sure that it does great good, but the economic position of the bird has no bearing on the question. Every Lark is a precious asset, for it is beautiful, and we cannot afford to lose a single object of beauty. The song may be inferior to that of Nightingale, Blackcap, Blackbird, or Willow-Wren; there is taste in this matter; but the bird's vehement trills, its glorious outbursts in the awakening year, are the very spirit of Music. To eat the Lark is selfish destruction of one of Nature's greatest gifts."

#### BIRD-FEEDING

It is surprising how easily birds may be tamed by providing food for them, and a few notes on the methods used and the results obtained may be of interest.

The first necessity is to provide the right sort of food. Bread and biscuit crumbs are always suitable. Nuts and fat for the Tits and Nuthatches, old meat and bones too, and any scraps of cakes or puddings. The food should be placed on open trays or tables, or hung in string bags. Coco-nuts, with both ends cut off, and walnut shells stuffed with fat, can be hung from twigs or balcony. It must be seen that there are no cats about, or the food will only tempt birds to their death. Another thing to take care about is that there should be nothing flapping in the wind near the food, and that the birds will not knock anything off the tables. Tins of food are not good, as they often get upset and the birds are scared.

Put the food, at first, at some distance from the house. The birds will soon come if they do not see too many people near the tables. When they come regularly bring the food, little by little, nearer the house. In time the birds will become accustomed to feeding on the window-sill. Always see that there is plenty of food, and also some water when there is frost. Many birds die by thirst when

the puddles freeze over. When the birds will come quite close to you never make a quick movement. Always watch through half-closed eyes and make no noise. These three things are all-important.

Where there are many Finches, it is good to put out bird-seed, and, in particular, hemp. It is as well, however, to scare away sparrows and starlings when possible, or the shy birds will never have a chance.

The following results were obtained one year, beginning in the spring and going on through the summer, which shows that winter is not the only time birds are glad of outside help. The food at first was put out on the verandah, but later brought into the house. The first bird to come regularly was the Chaffinch. Soon afterwards a pair of Willow Tits began to come. These would visit the store very often, four times in the minute, taking food away to hoard up. A Carrion Crow also began to come. Soon Thrushes and Blackbirds, Blue Tits, Great Tits, Marsh Tits, Cole Tits, and Willow Tits; Chaffinches, an occasional Bullfinch, Nuthatches and Sparrows all fed on our window-sills. We fed them from four rooms and often there were six or seven birds on each window-sill. Then we began to put food inside the rooms. The Blackbird would come in with his beak fringed with worms, and pack in a bit of nut. The Tits would come and sit on the flowers, hop about the room, and shriek at each other. The Nuthatches would hop about the floor, climb the table legs, and search everywhere for fresh food.

There was no fear: the birds were as much at home as in the trees. One would often be woke early by a chorus of Tits squabbling on the bed. If one had breakfast in bed the Tits and the Blackbird shared it. If one sat on a chair, with food on one's knee or in one's hand, the birds ate it. The Tits would sit above one's head and whisper. The Nuthatch would cling, upside down, on one's trousers. And all this for a little trouble each day!

When such results can be obtained easily, it is surely worth while to encourage the birds in every way.—J. FURSE, R.N.

[It is surely by an oversight that Midshipman Furse omits the Robin from his list of guests.]

#### THE BIRD'S EPITAPH

My song it was a song of purest mirth:  
I died of hunger on an ice-bound earth.

ELLA FULLER-MAITLAND.

## Bird and Tree Challenge Shield Competition.

### AWARDS FOR 1923

THERE has been a very considerable advance made in the Bird and Tree Competition, the number of Essays received for 1923 showing a big majority over the numbers of previous years. This is not to say that every competing county has excelled its former records; several still lag heavily behind; but in general this is the case, and a real effort seems to have been made in several instances to attain the pre-war standard. A larger number of counties are also represented. Some of these had been invited to enter Teams with a view to the provision of a County Shield if sufficient Schools competed, but of these only one, Gloucestershire, has risen to the opportunity. Kent and Oxfordshire fail badly, in spite of approval from the county authorities and of trouble taken to circulate the teachers. The good result in Gloucestershire Schools the Society owes to the interest taken in the scheme by Mr. W. L. Mellersh, of Cheltenham, an Hon. Secretary for the R.S.P.B., and it illustrates once more the value and necessity for personal interest and effort on the part of Nature lovers in the introduction of this valuable and most successful form of Nature-study.

Norfolk still stands at the head as regards numbers, some 96 Teams taking part. Here and throughout the Competition there is a marked increase in genuine outdoor observation, given in the simple and natural manner which the Judges welcome. They have to deplore comparatively few instances of the carefully written compositions devoid of first-hand study and of the personal touch, which are by some schools supposed to represent "Nature" teaching. When these appear they are difficult to appraise, since great pains are frequently evident; and though no proof appears that the writer has even seen the bird or tree described, it may be in some cases that the spontaneity of the natural child has been suppressed in order to produce an impeccable "essay." In one instance it is mentioned that a Cadet's

paper was not sent in, though the writer is a keen little observer, because it was "untidy." It is earnestly hoped that Local Committees and Judges will have no regard to this point, for important as neatness, spelling and grammar may be they count as nothing in comparison with real observation. The child's own discoveries and impressions, set forth freely and naturally, are wanted, no matter how bald the composition, how eccentric the spelling or how unorthodox the grammar. The whole scheme of the Competition is to foster the child's powers of observation, original thought, and sympathetic feeling, however crude the form.

Similarly, it is possible that the anxieties of Teachers and Local Judges may on another point defeat their kindly intent. From the multitude of papers received dealing with the commonest birds and with certain trees whose characteristics are most readily noticed, it seems likely that a detailed account of a Thrush's nest or a description of the "Christmas candles" and "conkers" of the Horse Chestnut may give such papers preference over shorter or more blundering efforts to write of Curlew or Whinchat, Spindle-tree or Dogwood. In the final judging higher marks are always awarded to those essays which show a desire and effort to attain fresh knowledge and to overcome difficulties by seeking out and studying subjects novel and interesting to the Cadet. The Judges notice a growing tendency to neglect the rule of the Competition which says that each of the bird papers must deal with a different species. In some cases this may be due to the greater number of Cadets at work and to a late substitution in the Team, but where, for example, three papers are written on one common bird and no explanation is furnished, the only remedy seems to be the disqualification of the Team. In a few cases also it is not clear that all nine children have written two essays, and this again is a very definite requirement.

Among the birds selected this year are Buzzard, Pied Flycatcher and Stone Curlew, which appear, so far as the Judges remember, for the first time. Oddly enough the most commonplace list comes from a district swarming with many varieties, while a pit village, where there is stated to be "practically no natural life," manages to write papers on such birds as Dipper Stonechat and Woodpecker—studied at first-hand, too, to judge from the papers sent in. The papers on Trees bear witness to the damage done throughout the country by the late frosts last spring and to the paucity of berries and nuts on the trees and in the hedges this winter.

The Judges for the Competition were: Sir Montagu Sharpe, K.C., Mr. H. G. Alexander, Miss Clifton, Mrs. Edward Clodd, Mrs. Frederick Dawson, Mr. G. A. Freeman, B.Sc., Rev. J. Clare Hudson, Mr. J. R. B. Masefield, Rev. W. A. Shaw, Rev. Julian G. Tuck, and Miss L. Gardiner (Secretary).

#### COUNTY CHALLENGE SHIELDS

##### BUCKINGHAMSHIRE

*Challenge Shield*—Cuddington C.E. School

Bucks, in contrast to other counties, makes no special advance this year. There are some fresh entrants, but these are almost counter-balanced by schools which have dropped out. This is often due to teachers moving to new schools and carrying their enthusiasm with them, while their successors fail to sustain even an established effort. There is nice work from the county, if it does not quite come up to the standard reached in pre-war days when zeal was keenest, and the excellent variety of birds chosen is noticeable. Last year's Shield-winner, Haversham C.E., again does exceedingly well, the papers being bright and natural, and it is by a very narrow margin that the trophy goes to Cuddington.

##### CUMBERLAND

*Challenge Shield*—Nether Denton

In awarding the Shield to Nether Denton the Judges have specially considered the freshness and originality of the observations and the simple and natural way in which they are related. This is the kind of work which the Competition wishes to encourage. There is a nice increase in the entries, and some of the new Teams are very promising. St. John's Girls, Keswick, have made a strenuous effort to retain the lead, but their papers seem lacking in enthusiasm for their subjects.

##### GLOUCESTERSHIRE

*Challenge Shield*—Slad C. School, Stroud.

Considering that this is the first year of the Competition, the Schools which responded to the invitation have done very well, most of the Teams having grasped the intention of the scheme and betaken themselves to the open-air for their studies. It is greatly to be hoped that a much larger number will enter in 1924. The Slad Essays are bright and natural, and there is individuality also in those from Tidenham, Eastleach Martin, Great Rissington, Nymphsfield, Redbrook, and Thrupp.

##### HAMPSHIRE

*Challenge Shield*—Durley C.E. School

It is pleasant to find Hampshire, one of the old friends of the Competition but one which had fallen off considerably of recent years, bucking up so well this year and sending in many new Teams. There is curiously little poor work from this county, few indeed of the bald spiritless papers which often mark first efforts in other counties. Short and simple they may sometimes be, but in all there appears genuine personal interest. It is a hard matter to decide which of some half-dozen Teams takes first place. Durley, however, cannot be denied. It is closely followed by several old Shield-winners—Ridge, the Boscombe Girls, Headley and Barton Stacey.

##### LANCASHIRE

*Challenge Shield*—St. Mary's R.C., Bolton-le-Sands

For several years there has been a heavy entry from Lancashire, and this time it is pleasant to find the number of schools still greater, and enthusiasm still greater also. Newburgh remains a Champion School for 1923, but will be free to compete for its county again in 1924, when other Teams will need to look to their laurels. Cartmel Fell, holder of the Shield, again does excellently, but on the whole the verdict favours Bolton-le-Sands, where ardent effort has been made to study uncommon species. As usual, Lancashire is notable for the number of admirable essays written without the use of notes, and for the freshness and originality of the work.

##### NORFOLK

*Challenge Shield*—Bracon Ash and Hethel

As in most counties, certain Schools come to the front year after year, despite changes and additions in competitors. Bracon Ash's papers are charmingly enthusiastic, and those from Little Dunham and Necton, both old Shield-winners, are full of personal observation. A long list might be given of other Schools sending in really admirable work, though there is too great a tendency to keep to well-known species of birds. Postwick, St. Faith's Girls, Wroxall, North Wootton, and a dozen other Teams gain the Certificate of Excellence.

##### NORTHAMPTONSHIRE

*Challenge Shield*—All Saints, Girls, Wellingborough

Marked progress continues to be made in the work from this county, and the variety of subjects chosen is in itself a proof of quickening interest and increasing knowledge. It is interesting to find the Kestrel one of the birds most frequently dealt with in the essays

selected, only the Chaffinch appearing more frequently. The best paper on the bird comes from the Victoria School Wellingborough, which is winner of the Second Prize. Greatworth is an excellent third.

### SOMERSET

#### *Challenge Shield*—Lovington C.E.

Here we have a new School accomplishing the unusual feat of winning the Shield in the first year it enters. The essays are good, straightforward, personal studies, with excellent subjects. It may be trusted that the success will not discourage them from doing still better next time, for there are a number of other new competitors, as well as old-established ones, who may well overtake them another year: Winsham, for instance, which is a close second, Widcombe, Oake, and North and South Perrott. It is pleasant to find a notable increase in the Somerset competitors.

### WARWICKSHIRE

#### *Challenge Shield*—Stirchley Street Boys, Birmingham

The little group of Schools under the Birmingham Authority have already done some excellent work, and this year one of them wins the Shield away from the Schools of the County. The boys display close and keen observation. Leicester Road C. School, Bedworth, however, again write capital papers, intelligent and sympathetic as ever, and take Second Prize. Rugby (Wood Street) Girls contribute an admirable set, and, like the Solihull Girls, have evidently enjoyed the work.

### OPEN CLASS

#### *First Prize*—Totley C.E.

There are a large number of entries in the Open Class this year, representing nine different counties. Several of these counties may be confidently expected to increase the number of their competitors and claim a Shield in the near future, notably Surrey, Suffolk, and Cornwall. Felixstowe Ferry, a constant worker, is given Second place, but there are some capital papers from a large number of Schools, the class being a much stronger one than in any previous year.

### INTER-COUNTY COMPETITION

#### *Challenge Shield*—Newburgh C.E. School, Lancashire

Eleven Schools were eligible for this Competition—the winners of the County Shields and the Lancashire Champion School, Newburgh. Capital work is sent in by all, and Newburgh is finally adjudged the winner. Its papers are excellent and the drawings specially good. There are errors in the natural history, the worst being that of including grain in the food of the Lapwing, but the root of the matter is contained in this School's enthusiastic and painstaking observations, and Newburgh has once again to be cordially congratulated. The Second Prize is taken by Bracon Ash (Norfolk), and the Third place is given to Durlley (Hampshire), where the average age of the Cadets is younger than in any of the other Teams.

*County Reports and criticisms on the Essays from each competing School will be forwarded to Competitors in due course.*

## From Correspondents

### THE SWALLOWS

It is obvious that the number of swallows which return to a given area will largely depend on the number which is permitted to breed there, and one of the causes which tend to a shortage of these birds is the inhospitable treatment which they too often receive from thoughtless and cruel people who destroy their nests.

I have observed that it is the custom in many places to break down the nests of the Swallows and Martins, often after the young are hatched, and such persistent destruction must have the effect of greatly lessening the number of birds in any district where it is practised. As a case in point, last summer I noticed that the Headquarters of the National Rifle Association at Bisley Camp had been chosen by House-Martins as a desirable building on which to hang their procreant cradles, but nearly all had been destroyed; the numerous fragments adhering to the eaves showed how many fruitless attempts to found a colony had been made. The camp swarms with flies, and the presence of the birds would be most beneficial, but they are discouraged, whereas if their nests were spared they would the next year be enabled to take possession of them at once, and thus expedite their domestic arrangements.

This summer, in Cornwall, I have deplored the same senseless destruction. Old houses, inns particularly, which I remember as a boy were graced by rows of Swallows' nests, are now bare.

It is the same in Sussex villages. Bramber used to be populous with Swallows and Martins, but the nests are now few and far between.

Remonstrances are met by the reply, "Oh! they make such a mess"; but unless the nests are built directly over a window the droppings from the young birds fall on the ground and are quite inoffensive.

Surely everyone should afford a welcome to our spring visitors; they ask us for nothing, they find their own food—greatly to our advantage; they are their own architects and will, if permitted, provide their own dwellings. Why should we destroy these monuments of patient industry, and inflict a house shortage on the little builders? It is a condition the hardship of which we know.—EDGAR SYERS.

## NESTS OF WIRE

LIEUT.-COLONEL P. H. KEALY, R.E., writes from Poona, India, that when visiting Ahmednagar on a tour of inspection he found in some empty barracks sixty-six Doves' nests constructed entirely of binding wire, with just a wad of soft material on top. The barracks had been surrounded by barbed wire during the war, and when it was removed the binding wire was snipped off in lengths of two or three inches and left lying on the ground.

## IN THE COURTS

BIRDCATCHER'S CRUELTY—EXEMPLARY SENTENCE.—At *Devizes*, on October 3rd, David Dunn, an employee of the Hackney Borough Council, was convicted of the possession of two recently caught Goldfinches and with cruelty to a decoy Goldfinch and Linnet. It appeared that Dunn was in the habit of visiting the hills around the Cheverells annually to catch birds, but in writing to explain his absence from the Court he said he could not afford the fare to Devizes. He regretted what he described as "these unfortunate circumstances" and said a conviction might injure him so far as his employment was concerned. It was stated that Dunn had a full bird-catching apparatus, and the decoy birds were in a terrified and exhausted condition. One was in a very emaciated state and the other showed signs of bad treatment; the R.S.P.C.A. Inspector said that to work them in the way described caused great and unnecessary pain. The Chairman said the case was the most disgusting and cruel case they had had before them for many years, and they fined defendant £10 on the charge of cruelty and £1 in respect of each of the birds in the other charge, the kit to be confiscated and the birds liberated; or a month's imprisonment.—At *Lincoln*, on September 14th, Albert Ball was fined 25s. and 15s. costs for cruelty to decoy Redpolls.

THE DEALER AND THE BIRDS.—At *West Ham*, on November 18th, Albert Hodson was fined 20s. and 21s. costs for keeping 13 Linnets, a Chaffinch, and two Redpolls in small and dirty cages, the largest of these being 7¼ inches by 6¾ by 4½ inches. Mr. Alex. Pearce, M.R.C.V.S., said that 80 per cent. of birds kept in such cages died. Defendant said he had asked the legal sizes for various birds. (There is no "legal size" for a cage.)—At *Mortlake*, on

November 14th, Henry Warner was fined 40s., or 21 days, for keeping a number of wild birds in small cages and in a filthy condition. The Chairman said that any future case would be more severely dealt with.

BIRDS FOR THE POT.—At *Kingston*, on December 10th, Frederick Strong and Charles Cooper, two young men, were fined £1 each for cruelty. Stopped by the police they were found to be carrying a Yellowhammer and eight Thrushes in a sack; Strong had six other birds in his pockets, four being dead, and Cooper was in possession of a catapult. They said they took the birds to put in a pie.

MORE CASES AT AINSDALE.—At *Southport*, on October 1st, Harold Jones and James Hough were fined 10s. each for illegally taking wild birds at Ainsdale, and a further 10s. for trespassing in pursuit of game. The case was proved by Wilfred Clarke, Watcher for the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds.—In the same Court three brothers named Dewsbury were fined 10s. each for trapping Linnets at Ainsdale. This case also was proved by Mr. Clarke. Defendants said they had been catching birds for 25 years and had never been charged before. (If the Southport Bench would make up their minds to stop these infringements of the law by a few drastic sentences, they could no doubt soon put an end to them.)

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*Spring Number, 1922.*

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23, Queen Anne's Gate, London, S.W.1.

FOUNDED 1889.

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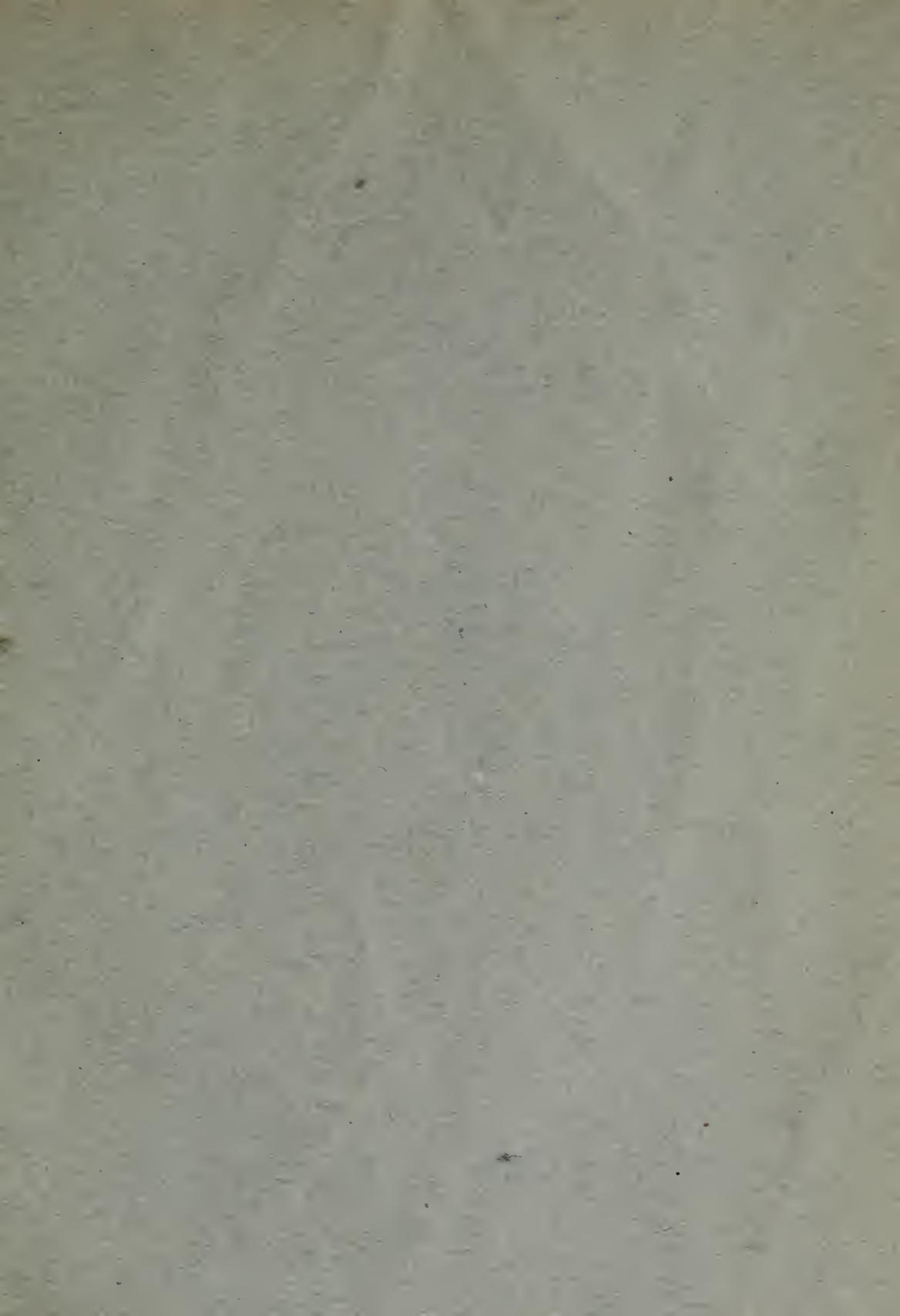
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*(From a recent Photograph).*

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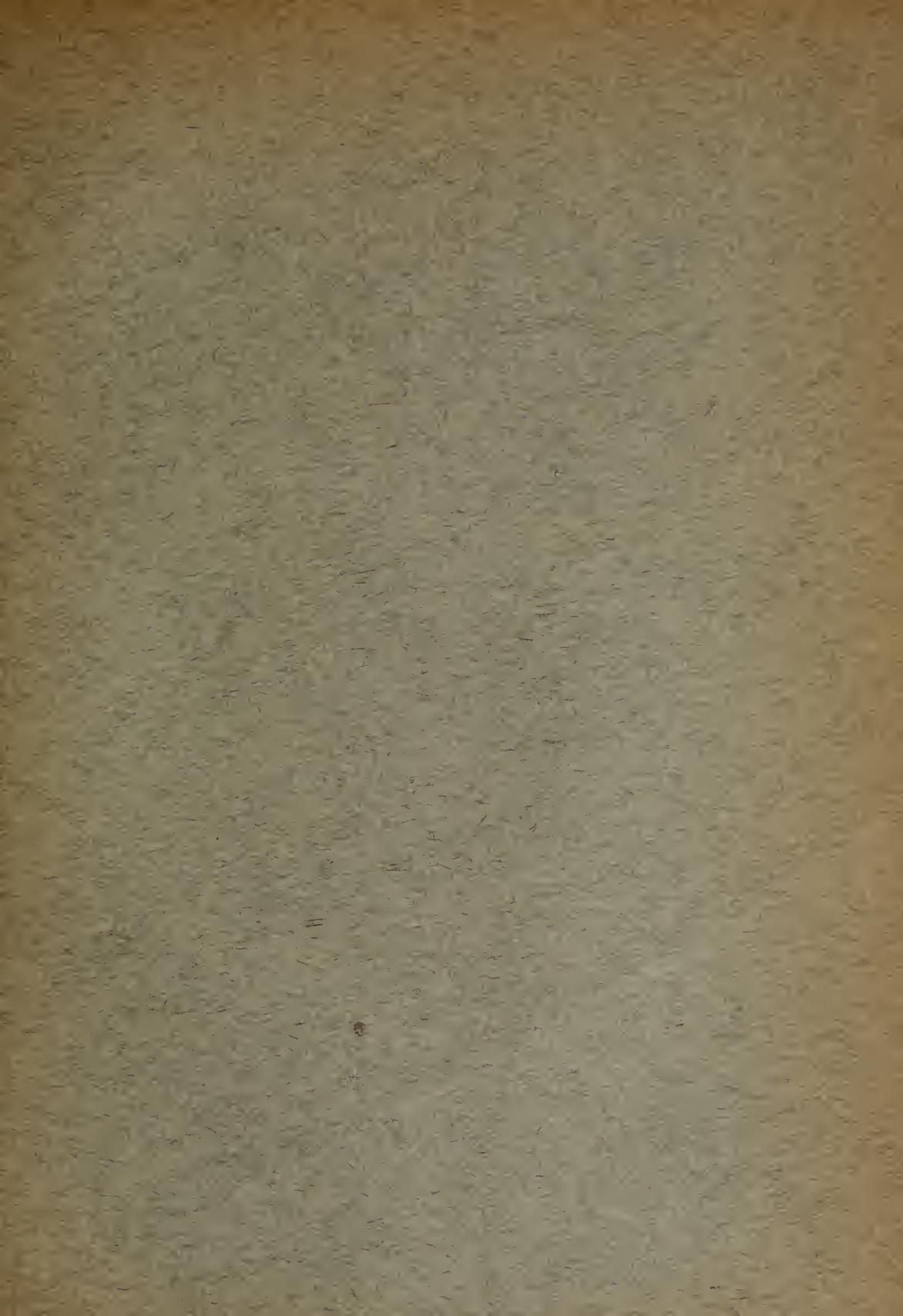
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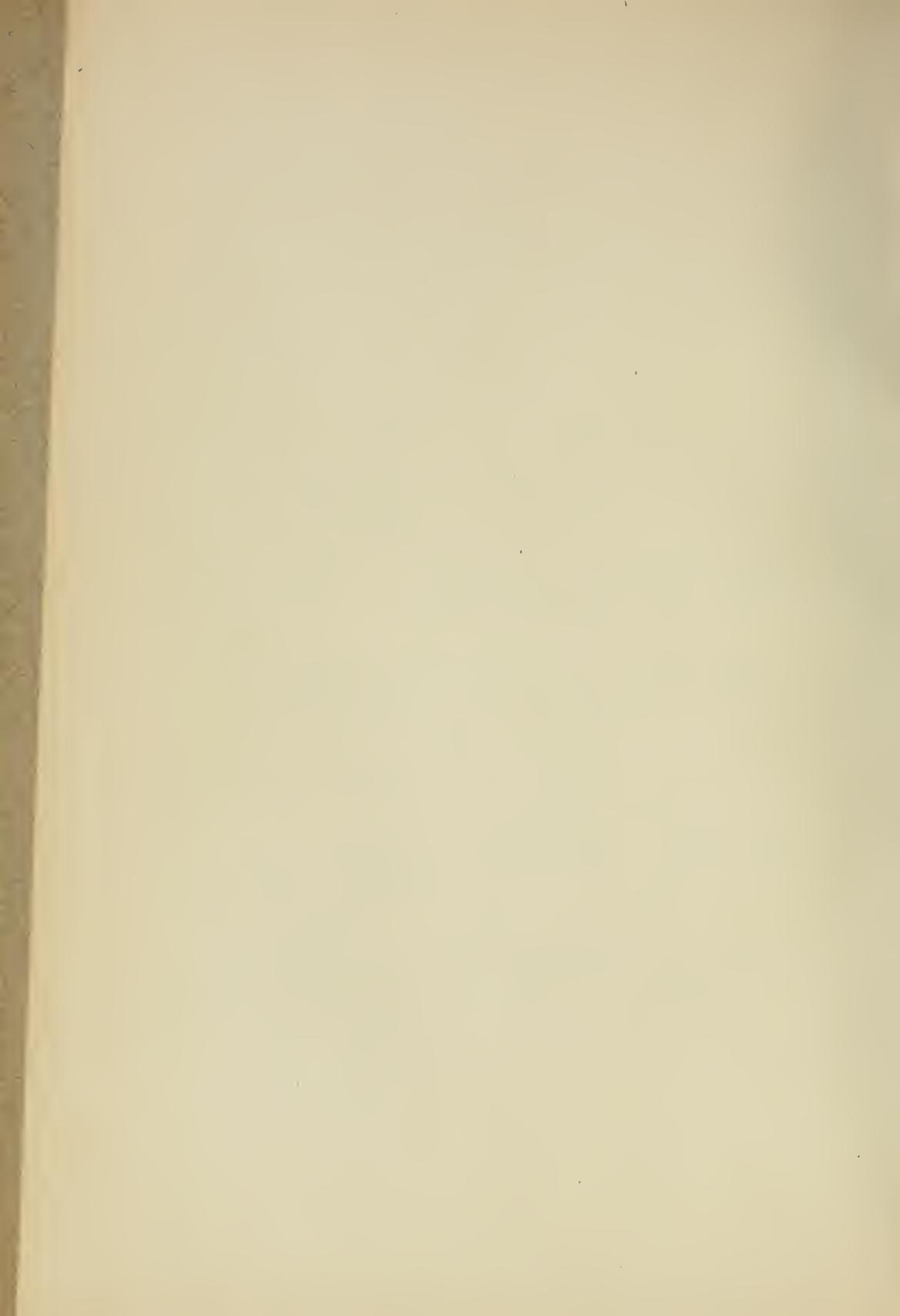
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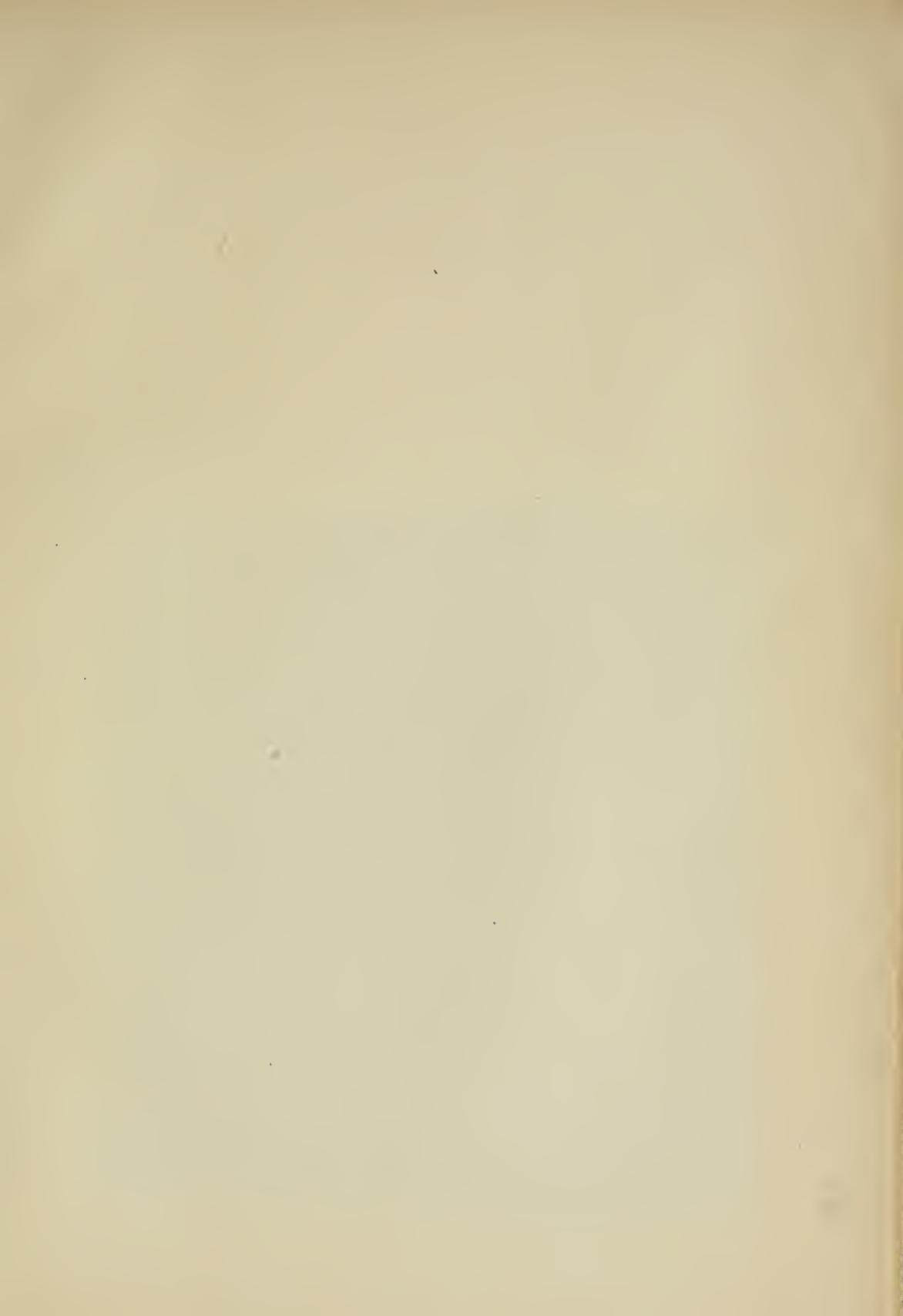
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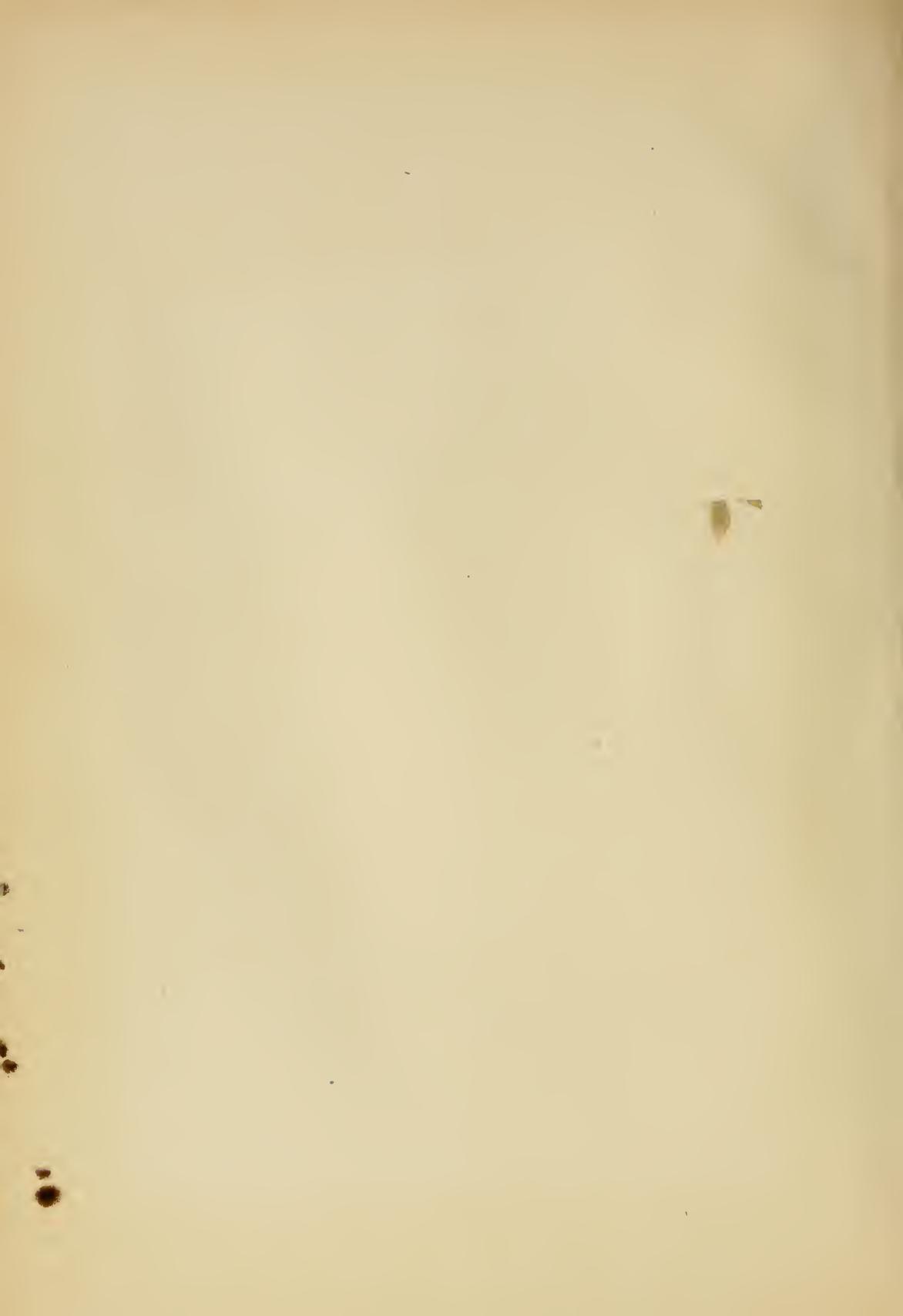
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