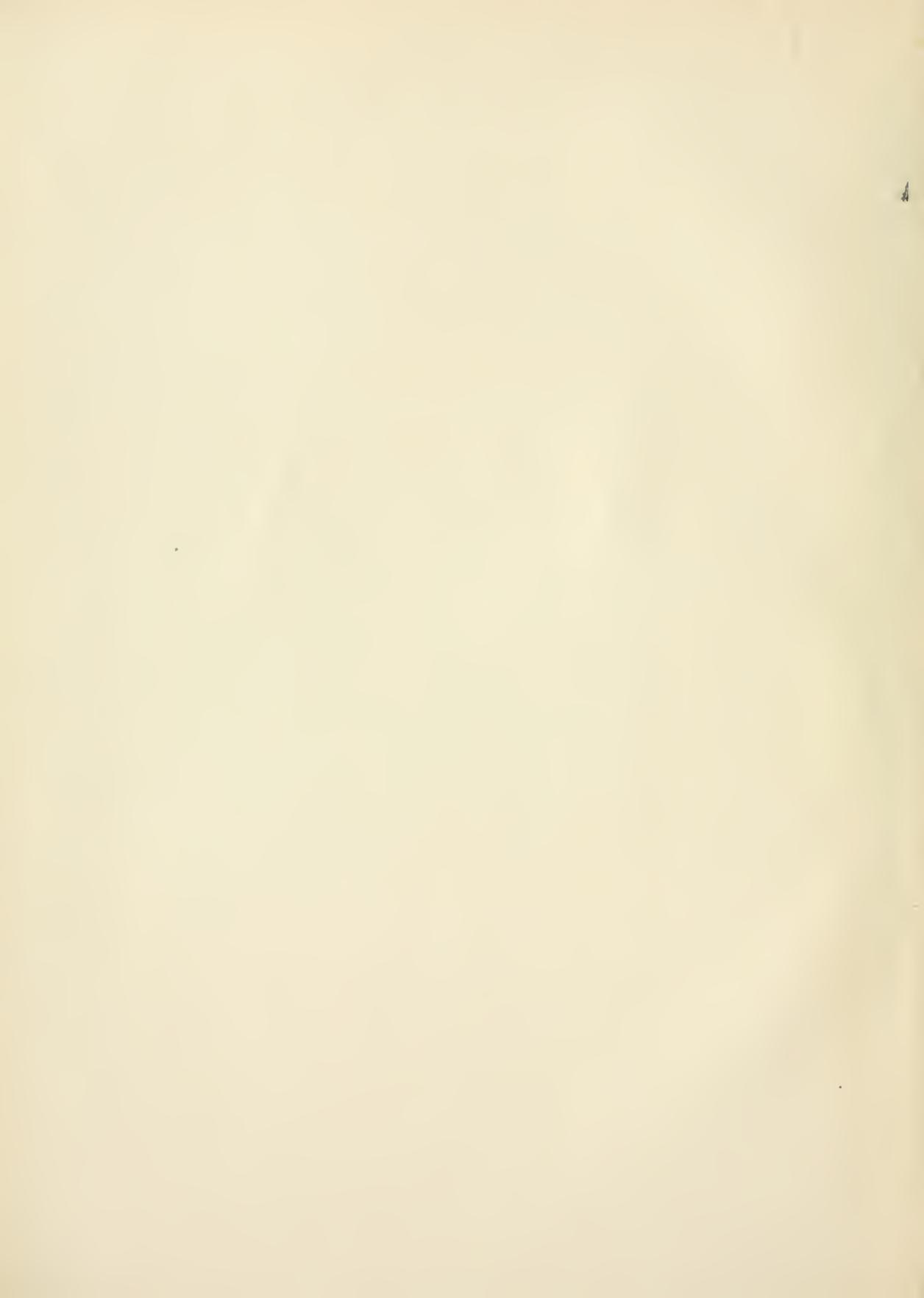
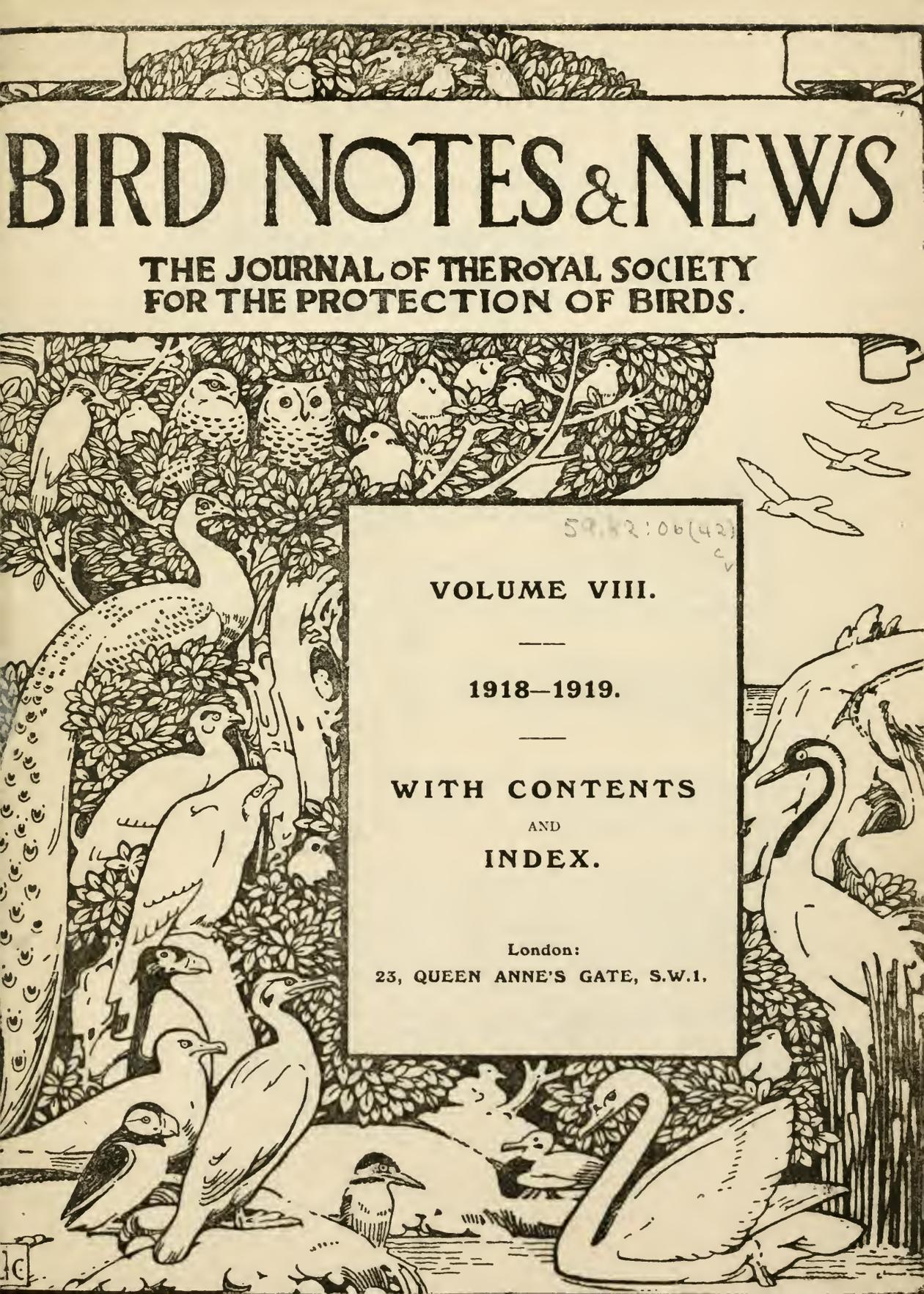


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BIRD NOTES & NEWS

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

59.42:06(42)
C.V.

VOLUME VIII.

1918—1919.

WITH CONTENTS
AND
INDEX.

London:
23, QUEEN ANNE'S GATE, S.W.1.



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The Royal Society for
the Protection of Birds.

FOUNDED
1889.

23, QUEEN ANNE'S GATE, LONDON, S.W.1.

Incorporated under Royal Charter, 1904.

ANY person interested in promoting the objects of the Society and willing to abide by the Regulations may be enrolled as follows:—

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Bird Notes & News

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

Vol. VIII.]

SPRING, 1918.

[No. 1.

The Feathered Food-Controller.

"THE millions of the insect world are upon us. . . . The Birds fight them for us."

"The greatest crop-protectors are the insectivorous birds."

These are the words of Dr. Hornaday, of New York, and Dr. Gordon Hewitt, of Canada, to whom the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds has awarded its Gold Medal in gratitude for their patriotic efforts in preserving the insect-eating migratory birds of the New World. They are at least equally true in Great Britain, whose conditions were well known to Dr. Hewitt when some years ago he urged the need for unbiassed scientific enquiry into the food of birds. Dr. Hewitt was then Professor of Economic Biology at Manchester University, and there is an old saying that what Manchester thinks to-day, England thinks to-morrow. Unless England can make up her mind to think with Dr. Hewitt as to the preservation of insectivorous birds, the gaunt figure of famine will be so many steps nearer to the people. It is the duty—it need hardly be said, of every member of the R.S.P.B., but of every thinking person, to speak strongly and to act vigorously in this matter now, if the nation's food-supplies are not to be handed over by folly and ignorance to the caterpillar.

It would be an admirable as well as a graceful corollary to the Migratory Bird Protection Treaty between Great Britain (on behalf of Canada) and the United States, if for this year at least every summer migrant to this country—all of them insectivorous—were to be fully protected; and with them every resident species belonging to any family represented by the migrants. Thus

might be secured to the country the food- and health-preserving work of Warblers and Swallows, Flycatchers and Chats, Wagtails and Pipits, and other charming birds.

Last autumn the complaint of insect-ridden crops came from every district. Letter after letter received by the Society told the tale of wireworm and grub, aphid and cabbage butterfly. Comments on the dearth of birds also came from every district. Few Robins, very few Thrushes, few Tits, no Long-tailed Tits, no Goldcrests, hardly any Hedge-Sparrows, and so on. It may be interesting to tabulate the plain facts of cause and effect.

1. Intensely cold winter. Birds, especially insect-eaters, decimated.
2. Board of Agriculture frantically calls upon all persons to kill birds, by means of "sparrow"-clubs, rook-shooting, poison, etc.
3. Great dearth of small birds.
4. Ministry of Food frantically calls upon all persons to grow vegetable food of all kinds. Thousands of acres of land brought into cultivation.
5. Plagues of insects. Vegetable crops of every sort—roots, greens, cereals, fruit, and grassland, devastated by grubs.

The question to-day is, Is this melancholy succession of disasters to be repeated in 1918. The winter has happily not been a full parallel to that of 1916-17, but it has

had its severe periods, particularly in the north, and it will be years before the birds recover their normal status. The hope of food-growers lies with such of the Thrushes and Warblers and other insectivorous species as have survived, with the crowd of birds which feed their young on insect-food; and with the summer migrants from overseas. Are these allies of ours to be at the mercy of the gun, snare, and trap of the ignorant, in order that crops may be riddled by weevils, bored into by worms, become the hatching-ground of grubs, be slimed by slug and snail, and have their life-juices sucked by aphides? Or are the people at large to be taught the simple facts in regard to the working of nature: taught that not every hole in turnip, not every bitten fruit, not every blighted bud, is the work of birds because birds are seen near them; but that wireworm and beetle, fly and caterpillar, of a thousand kinds are slaying the

plant unless they themselves are slain by the birds.

Man slays the insect-destroyers and then wonders at the result, said Edward Newman, the eminent naturalist, years ago. And man is still engaged on the same task and still puzzled by the same results. Still he energetically shoots his soldiers and his police, and still he groans in perplexity over the raids of the burglar and the devastation wrought by the enemy.

There is urgent need for every one who understands the value of birds to become a missionary to the less well-informed; and all readers of *Bird Notes and News* can assist in enlightening ignorance, helping the food-cultivator, preserving the birds, and saving the nation's food, by distributing the leaflet "Birds, Insects, and Crops," and by circulating the new "Bird Ally" postcards published by the Society.

Notes.

It is clearly useless to look to country magistrates to preserve the rarer birds of Britain. This spring, as on previous occasions, there has been a raid on Bitterns. The Bittern would undoubtedly breed again in many suitable places if nearly every bird that comes to England was not received with a charge of shot from the fool who "didn't know what it was" (but has it stuffed to commemorate his prowess) or the knave who knows very well the value of its skin. Last year the birds happily nested in a sanctuary well protected from these gentry. At least six have been reported shot within a few weeks. One was in a Cambridgeshire fen, where a "sportsman" seeing something unusual and thinking it was "perhaps an Owl" (!) duly shot it, and next proceeded to bring down what he imagined "a funny duck" but which turned out a Shag. At the instance of the R.S.P.B. he was prosecuted and the forfeiture of the specimen (duly stuffed) strongly urged by the Society. The Bench inflicted a fine of 15/- and allowed the offender to keep the bird. A second case was in Hampshire, where the Bench actually reduced the possible fine of £1 to 2/6 and again

allowed the law-breaker to retain his booty. Of what use County Council Orders to preserve these birds, if the magistrates of the same county flout their enactments? Of what use the Act of 1902, passed especially to ensure that those who destroy rare birds shall not profit on the transaction by retaining their spoils, if it is systematically ignored?

* * *

Here is another case. The Rev. T. F. Royds, B.D., writes to *Bird Notes and News* from Tushingham, Shropshire:

"A friend of mine found a dead Bittern hanging up in a farmhouse near here last week. The man who had shot it did not know what it was. What are you to do with such people? It would be interesting to know how many rare birds are shot in this kind of way and never recorded."

A further instance of Bittern-shooting in the same county has since been reported in the *Shooting Times*, another in Berkshire, and a third in a locality unnamed but apparently also Berks. "Something ought to be done to stop this ruthless slaughter."

says the Editor of the paper. But how, if offenders, when caught, are taught to think a live Bittern worth half-a-crown, while they know that a Bittern dead and stuffed has a considerably higher value ?

* * *

Professor Arthur Thomson said some wise things about birds in his delightful lecture at King's College (February 20th, 1918) on "Man and the Web of Life"; and among them was the comment that, while the extension of arable land has had a dismal effect on British fauna, wild creatures like the Bittern and the Badger are national treasures not to be sacrificed to ignorance or greed. As an illustration of man's unhappy destruction of bird-life, he instanced the plume-hunter who by raiding the Herons and Egrets have robbed half the world of a bird of the highest utility in the rice-fields of China and India, and elsewhere. The list of birds which did any serious injury, he remarked, is a very short one; while the vast majority are beneficial to man, besides being a joy for ever to the sight. In considering the increase, decrease, or elimination of forms of life, Professor Thomson pointed out, it is *not the first or the second consequence that counts, but the final consequence*. That is a truth which needs laying to heart by all our food-producing and food-controlling bodies, still more by the chatters in newspaper-correspondence-columns, who, suffering from what the *Daily Mirror* calls "suggestionitis," blindly propose to sweep insect-eating birds into the stew-pot and to commandeer lapwings' eggs for "food" supply.

* * *

Professor Hickson's lecture at University College (London), on March 18th, was no less illuminating. Dealing with "Birds and Insects in relation to Crops," he remarked that, calling to mind the damage done to food-crops by insect pests during the summer of 1917, it was probably no exaggeration to say that insects destroyed more of our home-grown food than the U-boats of the enemy destroyed of food from abroad.

* * *

Of the younger nature-students whose lives have been given for their country, a

few words must be said of Flight Sub-Lieut. Oliver Bernard Ellis, R.N., presumed killed after a fight with enemy aeroplanes over the German lines. In 1916, at the age of seventeen, he went from Bootham School into the Naval Air Service; but he has left behind him several volumes of a noteworthy ornithological diary which leave little doubt as to the place he might have taken among naturalists.

* * *

Among the many interesting and useful speeches at the Society's Annual Meeting, perhaps the happiest hit was made by the High Commissioner for Canada, Sir George Perley, in his comparison of the wireworm and other land-pests to the U-boats, and the birds—the greatest masters of aviation—to the aircraft which by attacking them defend our food-ships. Particularly happy is it when contrasted with Mr. Prothero's singularly unfortunate likening of the House-Sparrow to the submarine: either the Board of Agriculture has a wild and weird conception of the sparrow (as might sometimes be inferred) or else its President thinks that the U-boats spend a third of their time in protecting the British food-supply, as is admittedly done even by the House-Sparrow in the nesting season.

* * *

As this number of *Bird Notes and News* goes to press there is hope that the Board of Agriculture is at long last intending to issue some warning relative to the destruction of insect-eating birds, so disastrously stimulated by its attitude last year.

* * *

It would seem that some comment in these "Notes" on the cutting of woods was regarded as unfair to owners of woodland, whose trees were commandeered by Government for the national needs, and who sold them below their actual value and sadly to the detriment of their estates. Such sacrifices are compelled by war, especially in a country which had made no effort in pre-war days to provide its own timber supplies. A suggestive statement of the position—past, present, and futuro—is contained in the report of the Forestry Sub-Committee of the Reconstruction Committee issued this year.

The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds.

ANNUAL MEETING.

THE Annual Meeting of the Society, held on March 12th, at the Guildhall, Westminster, was made memorable by the presentation, at the hands of the Duchess of Portland, President, of the Gold Medal awarded to Dr. Hornaday, Director of the New York Zoological Park, and to Dr. C. Gordon Hewitt, of Ottawa, Dominion Entomologist and Consulting Zoologist, in recognition of their work in furthering the first International Bird-Protection treaty—that between Canada and the United States for the preservation of migratory birds. Dr. Hornaday was represented by Mr. W. H. Buckler, Special Attaché, American Embassy, in the absence from town of the American Ambassador; and Dr. Hewitt by Sir George Perley, High Commissioner for Canada.

The Treaty, *inter alia*, gives protection throughout the year to all migratory insectivorous birds.

The Duchess of Portland said that the need for bird protection was never more urgent than at present, particularly in view of the destruction of valuable insectivorous birds by so-called "sparrow-clubs." Major Courthope, M.P., speaking as a practical farmer, said his experience and observation had convinced him that the vast majority of birds did infinitely more good than harm; and he hoped the Society would gain the assistance of Chambers of Agriculture, Farmers' Clubs, and other bodies to which the farmer looked for guidance.

Other speakers included Brigadier-General Page Croft, M.P., Sir Thomas

Mackenzie, High Commissioner for New Zealand; General Ryan (Australian Imperial Forces); Mr. Montagu Sharpe, and Mr. J. R. B. Masefield.

Before the proceedings closed, Mr. Thorburn's picture "Behind the Lines in France," generously given by the artist, was put up for sale and was eventually bought by Mr. G. W. Hayes for £27 10s.

A full report of the meeting, which was largely attended, will be issued shortly with the Society's Annual Report.

COUNCIL MEETING.

The Council's quarterly meeting was held at the Guildhall, on January 25th, Mr. Montagu Sharpe, Chairman, presiding.

THE HON. SECRETARY'S REPORT stated that the Bird-Protection Order for Somerset, ensuring protection for all birds and eggs on the Society's sanctuary, Brean Down, had been renewed. Lectures had been given by Miss McCombie, B.A. (Kirby); Miss Farquhar (Wickham); Mr. Councillor Pearson (Lytham); Mr. Masefield (Stoke-on-Trent); Mr. A. Badland (Bradford); Mr. Vicars Webb (Bristol), and Mr. Frisby (Loughboro'). Twenty-seven Bird and Tree Festivals had been held. The Christmas-card had had a very large sale.

THE FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE presented the accounts for 1917. Owing to the death of Mr. William Watson, who acted both as Hon. Sec. and as Watcher for the Society in Ennerdale, and to the resignation of Mrs. Tunnard and Mrs. Hocking, three vacancies were created in the list of the Society's Hon. Secretaries.

The following Fellows and Members were elected :—

FELLOWS: Miss Julia Attwell (Bradford-on-Avon); Hon. Stephen Coleridge (London, S.W.); Mrs. Hutton (Haslemere).

MEMBERS: Herbert F. Acocks (Ashtead); Mrs. N. H. Arnison (Penrith); Miss Mary Benson (London, S.W.); Cyril Chitty (Ightham); Mrs. Cunningham Craig (Beaconsfield); Mrs. F. H. Delpratt (Bexhill); Cecil Dolley (London, S.W.); Frank De Grey (Lytham); Mrs. Hanbury (Penn); J. Hickson (Richmond); Douglas K. Hole (London, W.); Lady Lowry (Wickham); W. McCullum (Worcester); Miss Marriott (Nottingham); Miss M. G. Olsson (Redhill); Miss Frances Pitt (Bridgnorth); Mrs. Leyborne Popham (Greystoke); Mrs. Rodway (Trowbridge); Rev. A. L. Royds (Brereton, Cheshire); C. A. Russell, K.C. (Hartley Wintney); Frank W. Sutton, H.A.C.; Miss W. R. Titley (Sutton Coldfield); Miss K. M. Vialls (London, S.W.); Hugh Woodman (Weymouth).

Letters were read from Dr. Hornaday, New York, and Dr. Gordon Hewitt, Ottawa, in reply to the intimation that the Society's Gold Medal had been conferred upon them in gratitude for their services to the cause of Bird-Protection. Considerable discussion took place with regard to the scarcity of insectivorous birds and the necessity for

checking their further destruction; to the taking of eggs; and to the shooting of rare birds. It was agreed to offer special prizes in an Essay Competition for Boy Scouts.

Next meeting of the Council, April 12th.

BOY SCOUTS AND BIRD-STUDY.

The Boys Scouts' Association having accepted the Council's offer of prizes for bird-study, twelve prizes of one guinea each are offered to Scouts for the best papers on a selected species of wild bird. The papers will be grouped in three classes according to the ages of the competitors, and July 31st, 1918, is the day for sending in. Particulars appear in the *Headquarters Gazette* and *The Scout*.

BIRDS' EGGS FOR FOOD.

In order to allow of the collection of certain sea-birds' eggs for food, the protection of eggs of the Herring-Gull and Black-headed Gull, and of Puffin, Guillemot, and Razorbill has been suspended in certain counties until given dates. This does not authorise the taking of any eggs except those specified; and it is generally arranged that the collection shall be done by properly accredited persons.

Economic Ornithology.

THE well-known ornithologist and traveller Capt. William Beebe (Curator of Birds, New York Zoological Park), who has been on a visit to England from the Western Front, writes to the Press:

"Every slaughter of small birds at this critical time is directly in favour of the Boche by jeopardising British crops. . . . We in America are denying ourselves and straining every effort to send over an abundance of food. If it becomes known that an actual effort is being made in the British Isles to decrease the number of insect and weed-seed eating birds, it will indeed be disheartening to us."

In a letter to the Society from Ottawa, Dr. Gordon Hewitt writes:

"Never was Bird-Protection of greater national importance from an economic standpoint. We cannot increase crop production without increasing crop protection, and the greatest crop protectors are the insectivorous birds, and such predatory birds as Hawks and Owls, whose destruction of mice and other rodents means the saving of food supplies."

Mr. Oliver Pike, Lieut. R.F.C., in regretting

his absence from the Society's Annual Meeting, says :

"I wish a special point could be made regarding the many dangerous paragraphs and letters which are now appearing in the Press of the country recommending the wholesale destruction of Sparrows by school children and soldiers. Last year the same thing was done, with the result that thousands upon thousands of Warblers, Flycatchers, Hedge-sparrows, and other useful insect-eating birds were destroyed by the ignorant, and classed as 'sparrows.' We all know what it led to—the destruction in a wholesale manner of valuable food crops by insects; in some districts the half-grown plants of the Brassica family were completely wiped out. The indiscriminate destruction of the Sparrow in spring is doing real harm, for the young are fed almost entirely on insect food."

After the plague of antler-moth caterpillars in the north of England (including Cumberland) last year, the Board of Agriculture Inspectors observed that: "As regards the control of this caterpillar, the value that accrues from the presence of Rooks and Starlings cannot be over-estimated." The Cumberland War Agricultural Committee is now making an effort to exterminate the Rook by ordering owners and tenants of land and of shootings "to kill, or cause to be killed, the Rooks on all lands occupied by you," with the addendum that if this is not

done their own emissary may "enter into or upon such plantations and lands, and kill or take the same without further notice." Presuming this to apply, in spite of its grammar, to the birds and not to the plantations, it may be asked, Who is right, the Board's scientific Inspectors or its local vicegerent?

From many other letters received by the Society may be selected one which gives both sides of the question. A Kentish fruit-farmer writes :

"Some benefactor has sent me your excellent paper, marking comments on the caterpillar plague of last year—which wiped out almost my entire apple crop on a dozen acres. In former years I had groaned at the ravages of Blackbirds and Jays, which damaged all the finest fruit on that side of my land bordered by a wood. But while they slew their thousands and I wasted much time and powder scaring them, insect pests have slain their tens of thousands and seriously interfered with the growth of the trees. It seems to me that your best way of converting the agriculturist, especially fruit-growers, is by advertising some really cheap and effective means of scaring without killing."

This need was pointed out clearly in the useful pamphlet "Farm, Garden and Birds," written by practical men and published by the Society in 1912. Most scares in use are primitive in the extreme, and science has done nothing to assist the grower.

Bird-and-Tree Competitions.

A LARGE number of successful Bird and Tree Festivals have been held in the last three months: and entries have come in well for the 1918 Competition. This year, through the welcome co-operation of the authorities, Liverpool City joins in the Lancashire Competition.

As a considerable number of Schools are entering the Competition this year for the first time, and as Teams generally are young and often without the leadership of older boys and girls having experience of the work, a few hints to Cadets may help them in the new study.

Note-taking is invaluable. It makes observation definite and fixes it in the memory. Accuracy is the first point to be considered, and the record should be clear and simple. But each entry should mean something, some bit of knowledge newly acquired—something the Cadet has seen, not what he imagines or supposes; and not an obvious fact, such as a statement that a tree has leaves or that a bird has feathers, but the size and shape of those leaves, and the colour of those feathers. In taking note of a bird the *size* should be indicated: smaller than a Sparrow, about the size of a Sparrow, as big as a Thrush,

about as big as a Jackdaw, and so on. Its colours should be given as clearly as the Competitor has been able to see them; not merely that it is a red and white and black bird, but that its breast is red, its head and throat black, and the band on its wings white. Song and other notes should be attentively listened for; bird language is not a thing to overlook. Nests should be approached very cautiously, and care taken not to leave any track by which nest-robbers could find it.

In Tree papers, comparative size should be noticed; whitethorn, birch, and hawthorn are very different in height. An effort should be made to discover the flower and describe it as well as the nut or seed-box. The *character* of the tree should be especially observed—the features, that is, which make it different from other trees and enable it to be recognised.

Interest is often added if a Cadet can choose a Bird and Tree that have some natural connection, such as Goldfinch and Apple-tree, Goldcrest and Yew, Jay and Beech, Treecreeper and Oak, and so on. One of the Judges writes:

“It would be interesting to notice (1) the service rendered by the Tree to the Bird, in providing nesting-stuff, shelter, food-supplies; (2) the service of the Bird to the Tree, as destroyer of parasites and pests. There is room for most useful study here. The Apple-tree, for instance, is so beset with foes that only a percentage of the fruit comes to market perfectly sound and free from insect-attack; the grub of the sawfly preys on the Larch and is kept under by Tits and other small birds.”

School gardens give great opportunity for similar notes.

Another examiner of the Essays says: “There is too much reliance on book knowledge in some very good papers, and it is difficult to be certain how much the writers have learnt by heart instead of observed. But certainly many old wives’ fables must have come from books, which so often copy old writers and their glaring mistakes.”

On the other hand many boys and girls

make capital observations, and show a quick intelligence in noting such things as the use of horse-chestnuts for munitions, of herbs and flowers for making ointment for wounds, the lime-flower tea made by Belgians, etc. Records of kindness to and affection for birds, and of feeding them, are happily numerous and always interesting.

Drawings are a feature of many sets of Essays, and encouragement should be given to notebook sketches. In the case of Birds it is wiser to provide a good copy, as children cannot draw from nature so elusive a creature as a bird, though they can and do make excellent drawings of the site of a nest or a line of flight. Drawings, however, should never take the place of accurate description in the text.

Botanical terminology and scientific details of plumage are not desired; and so far as possible the essay should consist of the child’s own impressions and discoveries, but the help and guidance and sympathy of the Teacher is essential, especially in the early stages of work, and encouragement from parents and school managers is invaluable. Explanation of the parts and growth of a Tree and the structure and habits of Birds afford great help to youthful students both in making their notes and in the composition of Essays.

SCHOOL CHILDREN AND BIRDS.

“THE cruel and prolonged winter took heavy toll last year of birds which eat insects noxious to agriculture, and these have correspondingly increased. But it is to be feared that there is another cause for the decrease in the number of birds. Last spring a Government Department appealed to all to join in destroying sparrows. There is no doubt that the appeal was misunderstood or misapplied. Numbers of other birds are reported to have fallen victims to a senseless and indiscriminate slaughter, and village school children were often to blame. From this we may learn several lessons, to be applied in all schools, and especially in rural schools. First, the subject of Nature Study may find a practical object in teaching children to distinguish one kind of bird from another, by its appearance, its song, and its habits. Next we should teach which birds

are destructive and which should be encouraged to breed, so that if children must be taught to slaughter they should at least slay with some degree of sense. But the principal lesson, it seems to us, is that the business of slaughter is no part of a child's moral or intellectual education, and we should know by now that if a human being in a semi-cultured state, such as a child must be, once embarks on the business of killing, there is no knowing where the blood-lust will lead him."—*Times* (Educational Supplement), January 24th, 1918.

IN THE COURTS.

SHOOTING BITTERNS.—At *Cambridge*, on February 16th, Henry Edward Jennings, of Cambridge, commercial traveller, was convicted of shooting a Bittern, a scheduled bird protected all the year by the County Order. The Deputy Chief Constable said that in consequence of a communication from the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, he saw defendant, who admitted having shot the bird in Over Fen, but said he had not the faintest idea what it was when he killed it. He wrote about it to a sporting paper and had the bird set up. The taxidermist, called as witness, said it was a bird of no economic value but simply an interesting species which was trying to re-establish itself. Fined 15s.—At *Romsey*, on February 21st, William S. Lockyer, of Lee Manor Farm, was convicted of shooting a Bittern on January 6th. He said he saw it in a water-meadow and shot it without knowing what it was. He thought it was weak because it flew with both legs behind. Fined 2s. 6d., allowed to retain the bird for stuffing, and "warned" to be more careful in future. (It is to be hoped this nature-student will not come across a Heron flying, as its wont also is, with "both legs behind.")

CRUELTY TO DECOYS.—At *Bentley*, three Belgians were fined 15s. each for cruelty to Starlings, used as decoys. The Police Inspector stated that the severe weather and the indiscriminate slaughter of birds had seriously reduced their numbers, and that Starlings did an incalculable amount of good in destroying noxious grubs in old grasslands that were being ploughed.

Save the Food-crops.

Save our Bird Allies.

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C. GORDON HEWITT, D.Sc.

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Bird Notes & News

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

Vol. VIII.]

SUMMER, 1918.

[No. 2.]

Food Crops and the Protection of Birds.

THE following letter appeared in April in the *Times*, *Daily Telegraph*, and many other newspapers, and has been widely circulated among Agricultural Associations, War Agricultural Committees, Educational bodies, members of County Councils, and others :

"The serious diminution in the numbers of our resident insect-eating birds, which resulted from the severe winter of 1916-17, and also from the widespread destruction of birds and eggs in the summer of 1917, is a cause for grave anxiety at the present time.

"Plagues of insect-life of various kinds were reported in the summer and autumn from many districts, and but for the services of summer migrants would have proved alarmingly destructive to corn, grass, and green crops and to fruit. This year a similar and greater danger faces us. Under the most favourable conditions it must be some years before many of our small birds regain their normal status. The continual ploughing up of old grassland multiplies insect-pests; the increased crops afford them increased food and thus stimulate the hatching out of countless swarms.

"Owing to these circumstances the protection and preservation of insect-eating birds, and of those birds which destroy small vermin, is a matter of urgent necessity. If the country is to have a sufficiency of food crops, those crops must not merely be planted and tended; they must be guarded as far as possible from the perpetual menace of ravage and devastation by insects. Hand labour is wholly inadequate to the task, even if it were abundantly to be had.

"We therefore strongly urge that, in the interests of national food-supplies, this matter be taken up promptly by Agricultural

bodies, by Gardening and Allotment associations, and by elementary and secondary schools, with a view to checking the destruction of useful birds and their nests and eggs, and the preservation of insect-eating species, both resident and migratory.

"Difference of opinion exists as to the economic status of a few species; but all who have studied economic ornithology and entomology are agreed: (1) that the great majority of wild birds are beneficial to man; (2) that the insect-eating and vermin-eating species in particular are invaluable to him in field and gardens; (3) that children should not be permitted to take part in the destruction of birds and eggs even of species deemed injurious, since useful ones inevitably suffer also.

"BEDFORD; G. L. COURTHOPE, Major, M.P.; ARTHUR DENDY, F.R.S., Professor of Zoology in the University of London; F. W. GAMBLE, D.Sc., F.R.S., Professor of Zoology, University of Birmingham; J. STANLEY GARDINER, F.R.S., F.L.S., Professor of Zoology, University of Cambridge; S. F. HARMER, F.R.S., Keeper of Zoology, British Museum (Natural History); W. A. HERDMAN, D.Sc., LL.D., F.R.S., Professor of Zoology, University of Liverpool; SYDNEY F. HICKSON, D.Sc., F.R.S., Professor of Zoology, Victoria University of Manchester; H. H. JOHNSTON, G.C.M.G., D.Sc.; F. G. B. MEADE-WALDO, F.Z.S., M.B.O.U.; P. CHALMERS MITCHELL, F.R.S., Secretary, Zoological Society of London; ROBERT NEWSTEAD, M.Sc., F.R.S., Professor of Entomology, University of Liverpool; W. R. OGILVIE-GRANT, F.Z.S., M.B.O.U., Keeper of Ornithology, British Museum; MONTAGU SHARPE, D.L., Chairman of Council, Royal Society for the Protection of Birds; J. ARTHUR THOMSON, LL.D., Regius Professor of Natural History in the University of Aberdeen."

THE DESTRUCTION OF ROOKS.

A VERY large number of complaints have reached the Society from landowners and occupiers who have received letters from local War Agricultural Committees, ordering the destruction of the Rooks on their land, and threatening, if this was not done forthwith, to enter upon the premises and carry out the slaughter. The following letter was accordingly addressed by the Secretary of the Society to Sir Daniel Hall, K.C.B., Permanent Secretary of the Board of Agriculture, on May 8th :

"As this Society has numerous inquiries, and many complaints, from all over the country with regard to the destruction of Rooks, we shall be greatly obliged for definite information as to :—

(1) Whether a local War Agricultural Committee—county, town or village—has absolute right to demand the destruction of any rookery, and of Rooks perched in trees and feeding on land where there is no rookery, on any person's property; and, failing consent, absolute right to trespass upon such premises and shoot, or shoot at, all Rooks thereon.

(2) Whether the right of the local body is arbitrary, requiring no evidence as to a superabundance of Rooks, no evidence as to harm done by them in the district, and no opinion from a properly qualified person: having regard to the fact that this temporary local body may have no knowledge whatever of the economic position of any bird, or of economic ornithology and entomology in general.

(3) Whether, this being so, there is no right of appeal to some higher authority which will obtain proper evidence.

(4) Whether it is the desire of the Board of Agriculture that Rooks should be exterminated as far as possible, although (A) the Royal Commission on Wheat Supplies has recently stated (April 23rd) that 'a certain number of Rooks are beneficial'; (B) Professor Newstead in his report on 'The Food of some British Birds' published as a Supplement to the *Journal* of the Board, is of opinion that the Rook is, on the whole, 'decidedly beneficial'; and (c) Messrs. A. C. Cole and A. D. Imms, in reporting for the Board on the Antlermoth caterpillar plague (August, 1917), stated that as regards the control of this caterpillar, the value that accrues from the presence of Rooks and Starlings cannot be over-estimated."

The following reply, dated May 22nd, has been received from the Board :

"I am directed to refer to your letter of the 8th instant, and as to (1), (2) and (3) I am to enclose herewith for your information a copy of the Rookeries Order, 1917, together with the relative circular letter, and to say that the Board are confident that the County Agricultural Executive Committees will exercise their discretionary

powers judiciously. The Board will, however, be prepared to consider any specific cases brought to their notice of the alleged improper use of the powers conferred on the Committees by the Order. As to (4) I may observe that the Board are satisfied that an undue number of Rooks do injury to crops, but they have nowhere suggested total extermination."

The Order merely states that if a War Agricultural Executive Committee "are satisfied that the Rooks in any rookery are so numerous that they cause or are likely to cause injury to crops, the Committee may take such action as *in their opinion** may be necessary with a view to diminishing the numbers of such Rooks," etc. The issue of these mandates was not confined to County Committees; and the Board's confidence in the "opinion" of local bodies possessing no qualification for deciding on such a question, may not be shared by persons who have suffered under the demands and threats of district and village as well as county committees "to destroy the Rooks on the land occupied by you." Even the right of appeal (now first made known) to the Board of Agriculture itself would be more satisfactory if there were any sign that the Board possesses that expert knowledge of bird-life which has been so painfully absent from its sayings and doings on the subject since it started the anti-bird crusade for which field, allotment, and garden are paying to-day.

Coincidentally with the attack on Rooks, the Food Production Department published the information that "reports from several counties indicate that a considerable amount of damage is being done to corn crops by wireworms and leather-jackets." Heavy rolling is recommended and also double harrowing, since "harrowing exposes leather-jackets to the attacks of Rooks, Starlings, and Plovers, which devour the grubs greedily." *Sic!* Yet under cover of the vague and obvious truisms: "an undue number of Rooks do injury," "an excessive number would not seem to be desirable," the Board continued to incite to a general slaughter of the birds by its permission to local officials to invade private property and shoot all Rooks or "kill and diminish" them "in any other manner." In the latest

* The italics are ours.

edict on the subject it wisely takes occasion to add, not that an excessive number of Rooks are too many, but :

"The wholesale destruction of Rooks, however, is not advocated, having regard to the undoubted advantage which farmers derive from a limited number of the birds."

The Duke of Montrose writes to the *Times* (May 27th, 1918) from Buchanan Castle :

"The reports of partial failure of corn crops, due to attacks by wireworms, which continue to be received by the Food Production Department, and reproduced by you, have induced me to ask you to give publicity to the following experiments. These, I think, may suggest a remedy for the attacks of these pests.

"Last year I was approached by the Farmers' Union for the purpose of exterminating the Rooks on my estate. To this I would not agree, bearing in mind one instance which came to my knowledge where a rookery had been destroyed, with the result that on the land around it wireworm and other grubs had immediately become prevalent. I set to work, however, to destroy a certain number of Rooks at various dates and examined their gizzards, with the following results:—Of Rooks killed between April 1st and May 31st, 30 gizzards were examined: 20 contained worms and grubs alone; six gizzards only contained grains of oats, combined with other matter; one gizzard contained beetles and worms; and one gizzard horse manure and road grit. Owing to the cold and dry season, the ravages of wireworm in this district have been particularly severe; but the crops in the immediate neighbourhood of the rookery have remained immune. On one of the fields most injured by wireworm in this district I noticed several Rooks busy feeding. Had they been examined, I am confident that their gizzards would have contained worms and beetles, and not grains of corn.

"I suggest, therefore, that the lesson to be learnt is to employ moderation in the extermination of Rooks and other birds, and to check the inclination of the present day to destroy every bird that flies as an enemy of the Food Controller."

"A. M. D." writes from Sussex to the same journal (May 28th) :

"In this neighbourhood several fields of wheat have had to be ploughed up in consequence of the ravages of wireworms. I asked a shrewd old labourer what he thought was the cause of this, and his reply was as follows:—'In the old days, when we ploughed with horses, the Rooks had time to get the wireworms: now, with steam tackle, they plough one day and sow the next, and the birds have no chance to do their work of destroying these insect pests.'"

Mr. Francis Darwin writes from Arthington to the *Leeds Mercury*, under date June 5th, 1918 :

"We are having here a great number of caterpillars, and they are eating all the leaves on the trees and hedges. The Rooks are very busy eating them, but the destruction of these birds, in answer to a not very true complaint, has seriously diminished their number."

WOOD-PIGEONS AND CATERPILLARS.

The great caterpillar plague has afforded an opportunity to a bird even more abused than the Rook, and not usually credited with eating insects. Mr. R. de Uphauigh writes from Kent :

"In the House of Commons yesterday (June 7th), a question was asked with regard to the damage to oak woods in Kent and Sussex by caterpillars. Only this week I noticed that the oak trees in some of my woods were almost completely denuded of leaves by them, so out of curiosity I gave instructions for a Wood-Pigeon in one of those woods to be shot and its crop examined. It was found to be full of these caterpillars and nothing else."

Mr. H. M. Upcher, of Sheringham Hall, Norfolk, supports this statement, writing to the *Times* (June 14th) :

"Most of my oak trees are in the same denuded state, but, like him I have a friend in the Wood-Pigeons, as I have found the crops of some lately killed quite full of the horrid green caterpillars which were doing the mischief."

The Antler-moth caterpillar is stated to have reappeared in Yorkshire, Derbyshire and elsewhere in even greater strength than last year, not only destroying the pasturage but attacking trees and bushes and defoliating them. Drastic remedies, such as the paraffining and burning of fields, have not proved effectual. Farmers and gamekeepers at Skipton are emphatic as to the need of protecting the Gulls; it is a grazing district of great importance, birds are few, and caterpillars are denuding the moors and meadows.

"Shortage of fruit crops brought about to some extent by indiscriminate slaughter of pest-destroying birds, will in all probability," the Ministry of Food states, "necessitate the rationing of jam."—*Daily Telegraph*, June 12th.

The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds.

COUNCIL MEETING.

MR. MONTAGU SHARPE, Chairman, presided at the quarterly meeting of the Council, held at the Guildhall, Westminster, on April 12th, 1918.

The Hon. Secretary's Report expressed the Council's regret at the retirement from the Council of Dr. Drewitt, who has been a member of it since 1899. At the urgent request of the Council Dr. Drewitt consented to be co-opted for the present year, and he remains a member of the Watchers Committee. Mr. C. B. Alexander was also co-opted a member of the Council for 1918. Twelve lectures had been given, and Mr. Holme-Sumner was thanked for a slide-photograph of Lady Mount-Temple, founder of the first Anti-Plumage League. A number of County Council Orders had been issued, suspending protection of certain Gulls' eggs until June 1st, and of eggs of Guillemot, Puffin, and Razorbill until June 21st in order to legalise the taking of them for food. Eleven Bird and Tree festivals had been held.

The Finance and General Purposes Committee reported that Dr. Poole had consented to act as Hon. Secretary for Fylde District, and Miss J. D. W. Cameron as joint Hon. Secretary with Mr. Carey for Perth. The following Fellows and Members were elected :

FELLOWS : Lieut. T. L. Bradley (3rd Lancs. Fusiliers) ; Mrs. Clayton ; Frederick Dawson ; Right Rev. A. H. Mathew ; Frank Holme-Sumner ; Edward F. Turner.

MEMBERS : C. H. Athill, M.V.O., F.S.A. ; J. P. Bentley Anley ; Constantine W. Benson ; Miss Nellie Bradshaw ; Miss C. Bridson ; Mrs. H. T. Butler ; Major-General Carnegie, C.B. ; Capt. C. A. E. Chudleigh ; Miss A. Cranfield ; Miss Hilda Duret ; Mrs. Davies Evans ; A. Goode ; T. Douglas Groves ; E. H. Hare ; J. Rudge Harding ; Mrs. Cathcart Hannay ; Joseph W. Horton ; A. M. Jenour ; Miss H. M. Lillie ; Mrs. George Lyster ; J. F. Low ; Mrs. Muter ; Chas. W. Platt ; C. H. Ransome ; George T. Rope ; Hugh C. Malet Shore ; Arthur Spurling ; Mrs. A. S. Tatham ; Miss Shirley Thompson ; Rev. B. T. Verry ; Miss H. T. Vialls ; F. D. Welch, M.R.C.S., L.R.C.P. ; C. W. K. Wallis ; Mrs. Wood.

LIFE MEMBER : W. Denby Arton.

Mrs. Tailby was elected a Life Fellow of the Society, in recognition of the great services rendered by the late Captain T. M. J. Tailby ; and Lieut. George W. A. Tailby, 11th Hussars, was elected a Vice-President.

The Watchers Committee reported the arrangements made for 1918 for safeguarding the breeding-places of rare birds.

Among other matters considered was the scarcity of small birds and the action to be taken thereon ; letters from Viscount Buxton and Mr. Edwin Harvey with regard to the plume-trade in the Cape and Central Africa ; and the destruction of Penguins for their oil as " a development of Empire resources."

OBITUARY.

Sec. - Lieut. Cecil Christopher Baring, of the Royal West Kent Regiment, died in France on March 21st from wounds received the previous day ; and by his death a most promising naturalist is lost to this country. Second surviving son of the late Rev. F. H. Baring and grandson of a former Bishop of Durham, he was one of three gallant brothers who have fallen in the war. Cecil Baring first became connected with the R.S.P.B. when, as a Haileybury boy, he entered in the Public School Competitions, winning the Silver Medal in 1914. He afterwards became a Fellow and took great interest in the work. He had hoped that his last leave in England would extend long enough to allow him to attend the Society's Annual Meeting, and was full of pleasant anticipations of the study of fresh bird-life in his prospective new home in Hampshire. He died a fortnight after his return to the front. His ornithological work was always notable for its directness and accuracy, and the same frank sincerity in manner and speech gave charm to a fine character.

The Rev. J. G. Tuck writes of him :

" Cecil Baring introduced himself to me by letter some three years ago, and cycled over from Sudbury in his Easter holidays. Several things

he saw interested him much: two Tawny Owls' nests, each with three young, one in a nest-box near the house, and the other in the church tower; two Dabchicks' nests with three and five eggs respectively; a Snipe's nest with the full clutch of four eggs; a Stock-Dove in a box which allowed us to go up and look at her without leaving her nest; and a typical Nuthatch's nest in a box, made of the flakes of bark from a Scotch fir. At a later visit in summer a thriving colony of House-Martins on the old Rectory farmhouse, where these delightful little birds have nested for some fifty years past, gave him great pleasure. In the following spring we were able to follow up a Lesser Spotted Woodpecker, and to get a good view through field-glasses of the bird in the very act of making its strange jarring noise. Birds, butterflies, and flowers all had their own charm for him, and his notes from France printed in *Bird Notes and News* a few months ago (p. 90) testify to the keenness and accuracy of his observations. At Haileybury he gained a good scholarship at Hertford College, Oxford, but his military duties prevented him from going up to the University."

Mrs. John Thornely, of Esher, whose death occurred in May, quickly following upon that of her husband, was one of the oldest members of the Society, being enrolled fifteenth on the list, and had been Hon. Secretary for Esher since its earliest days. She became a Fellow in 1908. Mr. Thornely was a constant subscriber to the Watchers Fund. Both will be greatly missed.

HEATHER-BURNING IN CLOSE-TIME.

Last year, and again more insistently this year, complaints have reached the Society of the destruction of birds resulting from the extension of time for heather-burning. The attention of the Chairman of the Scottish Board of Agriculture was therefore drawn to a letter in the *Scotsman*, May 1st, 1918, which stated that Grouse, Lapwings and other birds were already sitting and, refusing to leave their eggs, were burnt to death on their nests. "Apart from the unnecessary cruelty entailed," the writer added, "there is also economic waste, for Grouse make a substantial addition to our national food-supply."

"It might also be added," urged the Society in its letter of protest, "that Lapwings' services to the farmers and to the nation, as consumers of wireworm, are even greater than those of Grouse as future food."

Sir Robert Wright replied:

"The question has been frequently before the Board, which has to give consideration not only to the points raised in your letter, but also to the representations made by farmers in the interests of their sheep stocks and to the still more important question at the present time, of the maintenance and possible increase of the food-supply of the country.

"In giving due consideration to these interests, I can assure you that the Board will not be forgetful of the representation you have made in your letter."

The Scottish Board of Agriculture can be relied upon to find that the interests of farmers and food-supply do not admit of the roasting alive of the most valuable of our birds and the destruction of their incubated eggs.

HOLIDAY TIME.

Shortly before Whitsuntide the R.S.P.B. wrote to the Board of Agriculture:

"The Society would be glad of authority to say that the Board does not authorise any general destruction of Birds, nor approve infringement of the general Close-time law. The Whitsuntide holiday is invariably a great time for bird-persecution; this year there is certain to be heavy destruction of insectivorous birds and their nests, consequent on the common understanding in country districts that the Government has 'ordered' the killing of small birds and payment for heads and eggs. The fact that the Board has disseminated widely instructions as to the destruction of certain species, and has not disseminated equally widely any warning or caution against the destruction of other birds, is not unnaturally read by villagers and children as a direction to kill any and all."

The reply received stated:

"The Board will arrange to include in their Weekly Service issued to the Press throughout the country a statement on the lines indicated in your letter."

THE CANADIAN-U.S. TREATY.

Dr. Hornaday writes to the R.S.P.B. from New York:

"The Bill to provide for carrying into effect the terms of the already complete treaty with Canada for the protection of all migratory birds passed the House [Congress] on June 6th, by a vote of 246 to 131.

"This action disposes for ever of all question as to the right of the Federal Government to take an active interest in protecting the birds of the nation.

"The Canadian half of the treaty, and its corresponding enabling Act, have been for several months in active operation."

Notes.

THE Right Rev. Arnold H. Mathew writes to the Society, from Walmer, May 12th :

"It may interest your readers to hear that a rare visitor to England has successfully brought off a nest of young in my garden this spring, viz., the Red-breasted Flycatcher (*Muscicarpa parva*). I have not previously heard of the nesting of this species in this country, and I think the specimens that have been shot by collectors have usually appeared at the end of summer.

"The bird is very like an undersized Robin, but the breast-feathers are of a much brighter orange-chestnut, and the outer tail-feathers are white tipped with black. The nest, which is said to be found usually in beech-trees, and to be placed on a branch against the trunk or in a hole, was in this instance at the end of the branch of a fir-tree, farthest from the trunk, and appeared to be an old nest relined and repaired. Unfortunately, after the young birds had flown, a strong wind blew the nest into the adjoining road, where it was destroyed before I could recover it."

This very Robin-like little Flycatcher is scarcely bigger than the Blue Tit, and its song is said by Dresser to resemble that of the Wood-Wren. Its young are not generally hatched until June, but there is no previous record for Great Britain.

* * *

Touching reference was made, at the December meeting of the Ligue Française pour la Protection des Oiseaux (reported in the April *Bulletin*) to the great loss sustained by the Society in the death of its founder and president, M. Magaud d'Aubusson. In the absence on military service of both Secretaries and Treasurer, the work of the Ligue had fallen mainly upon him and been prosecuted vigorously under the most difficult conditions. The R.S.P.B. will join in deploring the death of this eminent Bird-Protector; it is not many years since, on a brief stay in England, he paid it a friendly visit.

* * *

Strange new diseases have been cropping up of late; and others may be anticipated if all the suggestions of poison-drenches for fruit-trees, poison for Sparrows, poison and poison-virus for rats, are carried out. "There is every likelihood of a bad attack

of caterpillars on fruit trees this year," says Food Production Leaflet No. 32; most fruit-tree growers have realised this thoroughly by now; and "growers should keep a sharp look-out for them just as the buds are opening." Unfortunately, growers have not the eyes and beaks of birds, and cannot spend the days, as birds would do, in insect-hunting. But the Board of Agriculture puts its trust in arsenate of lead and nicotine, both deadly poisons. It is not well to eat gooseberries sprayed with lead-arsenate, nor to dine on vegetables grown under the drip of the bushes "until at least a month has elapsed," "nor must trees in full bloom be sprayed; otherwise Bees and other insects, useful in pollinating flowers may be killed."

* * *

Strychnine-flavoured wheat is evidently still favoured by local authorities, in spite of the prohibition of the Food Controller, for the Food Production Department has not withdrawn its abominable proposal to put down strychnine for House-sparrows. "Let farmers take some wheat to the chemist and ask him to treat it with a solution of strychnine sulphate. The rest is easy," wrote one of these worthies in a Derbyshire paper. Quite easy to destroy any number of useful birds; but not humane, not legal, and not wise. As regards rats, the Board of Agriculture has a good word for the services of "Owls, Hawks, Buzzards, Rooks, Crows, Ravens, Sea-Gulls, Stoats and Weasels"; but the use of bread, maize meal and oatmeal (let the Food Controller note) treated with strychnine, phosphorus, arsenic or barium carbonate is freely commended. Enteritis among human beings, it is acknowledged, has been caused by use of rat virus. Some persons may think that the use of "human food" flavoured by corrosive poison for killing a rat is almost as deplorable as the use of crusts and scraps to keep alive a Gull or a Rook, and more dangerous to the community.

* * *

The birds have been well avenged by the direful outcry as to insect pests on and in

and over the land, denuding the pastures, devastating oats and turnips, stripping the trees, ruining the fruit crops. Says the *Times* (June 17th):

"Bird-lovers, like Mr. W. H. Hudson, who in time past has written with such indignation of the wanton destruction of nests, may hear with sardonic pleasure of this reminder given by the caterpillar to man. There are whole districts in England where it would be quite dangerous just now for any well-meaning but short-sighted councillor to propose the killing of birds for the saving of crops."

Sparrow-clubs, checked by the Home Office, bird-poisoning, checked by the Food Controller, and Rook slaughter, checked

now by the Board of Agriculture, have, it may be hoped, had their day.

* * *

Mr. J. F. Stewart writes from Newcastle-on-Tyne:

"You may be interested to learn that I have persuaded Blue Tits to nest in the boxes I purchased of you, both at the front and back of my house situated in a street, and I think both hens are now laying. If you have any correspondent who can claim a similar record I should like to know."

The provision of nesting-boxes for these and other insect-eating birds becomes more and more a national service since the cutting down of the trees they might have nested in.

Birds in the War Area.

Observers on the Western Front continue to report on the apparent insensibility of birds to the thunderous din of guns and shells. Fleet-Surgeon C. Marsh Beadnell, R.N., in the interesting impressions of his visit to the trenches, published in the *Journal* of the Royal Naval Medical Service, writes:

"It is most extraordinary how indifferent the birds are to the noise of exploding shell. In the early mornings the whole wood is asparkle with the twitterings, songs and cries of the various species. A shell suddenly bursts with a loud report in the middle of the wood and you hear fragments crashing through the branches, but the music of the birds goes on without a moment's cessation. Neither do they mind the shrieking of our own shells which daily pass over their heads, nor the bursting of the enemy's anti-aeroplane shell high up in the air above them."

He names thirteen species which came under his notice, including Blue Tits which reared eleven young in a Strombus horn, and Nightingales singing all hours of the night, and adds:

"The Swallows would fly up and down the trenches all day long despite shot and shell. In one of the observation posts I visited there was a nest inside the officer's dug-out and the parent birds would fly in and out and even perch on the table while the officer was eating his meals. Captain C— saw a curious incident, to wit, a Swallow killed by the blast of a 4.9 in. howitzer. The bird was flying along about fifty yards in front of one of the guns as it was fired and was killed by the blast."

The Rev. Cyril Lomax writes in *The Vasculum* of the scarcity of nesting-sites owing to the destruction of houses and trees.

"In consequence, in villages where every house and tree is destroyed, only the wayside crucifix left standing, you find as many nests as possible packed in between the figure of Christ and the Cross. But if the Swallows try to build there, the Sparrows steal their nests, so the former trust men and become wonderfully tame. Numberless dug-outs, with entrance just about five or six feet high, have nests plastered to the beams overhead. The Swallows fly in and out quite fearlessly. Any man could put his hand into the nest, but I have never come across a single instance of the abuse of the Swallows' trust. In fact, in one case a big marquee was left standing in order that a Swallow, whose nest was on the pole inside, might finish rearing her brood."

In the *English Review* for March, 1918, Mr. H. Thoburn Clarke furnishes a number of strange instances of nests under fire, in ammunition wagons, in shell-shattered trees, on the lip of a parapet, in a "camouflage" tree-stump that had done duty as a telephone exchange, and so on; but, he adds, thousands must meet an untimely death, and in one wood he found hundreds of tiny songsters lying dead.

"It was at the height of the spring migration, and the night had been full of the sound of tired wings and the chirping of thousands of birds as they dropped into the trees to rest. A German strafe in the small hours had sent numerous high explosives into the wood, and numberless birds lay dead when morning dawned.

"The hosts of mice have brought in their train an army of Kestrels and the smaller birds of prey. The Sparrow-Hawks hunt the birds fiercely, but I have never seen the Kestrel attempt to secure a bird. These graceful little Hawks are always quartering the ground seeking mice, and are extremely fearless. The only time when they show any alarm is when the earth over which they are hovering goes up skywards in a sudden and unexpected manner; then the Kestrel departs in a hurry. At other times they sit on the posts of the wire entanglement and preen their feathers with an air of total disregard of shells and snipers."

"The ruined remains of moats surrounding some of the Belgian towns are happy hunting-grounds for the birds. Here one may find Blackcaps, Reed-, Garden- and many other Warblers, and various Tits building in little companies, utterly oblivious to the sound of guns. I heard of a Blackcap building in a shell-shattered tree, which was finally destroyed by another shell, but the Blackcap only moved a few feet away and made another nest in the next stump. I have found the same thing happen with other birds. They do not connect the sound of the gun or the explosion of the shell with the ruin of their home."

From a "War Area" nearer home (Kensington) Miss Estella Canziani writes of the behaviour of London Sparrows during an air-raid.

"One night last summer all our Sparrows began to chirp, and I woke, thinking an air-raid must be in progress. The dogs then howled, and I knew a raid was coming, although no warning had then been given. I went down for a young Pigeon, which I had picked up deserted and had brought up 'on the bottle,' so to speak. He is always nervous, and was in a state of tension, legs and feet quite rigid in my hand, and neck outstretched. I sat by the open window, waiting and listening. The Owls began to hoot, and the green Parrot that lives with the Pigeons in Kensington Gardens screamed. A cat sitting in the middle of my garden rushed into the bushes, and at the same moment a Sparrow fell into the room as if stunned. The other birds stopped chirping for a moment, and then behind the trees everything was illuminated as the first explosion occurred. A second or two after came the sound of distant guns.

"When the Sparrow recovered he flew on to the mantelpiece, where he slept for the rest of the night, flying straight out of the window at dawn when the other birds began to twitter. My Pigeon gradually relaxed, and before the sound of the aircraft had died away he cuddled down into my hand, and I knew that was the end of the raid, even though I could still hear the guns.

"The first time I saw an air-machine was in Rome the year before the war. It went over the Forum, where I was sketching, and everywhere the birds rose and flew towards it."

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Printed by WITHERBY & Co., 326, High Holborn, W.C.1., and published by the ROYAL SOCIETY FOR THE PROTECTION OF BIRDS, 23, Queen Anne's Gate, S.W.1.

Bird Notes & News

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

Vol. VIII.]

AUTUMN, 1918.

[No. 3.

Bird Protection in Canada.

"The protection of insectivorous birds is at all times a necessary measure in crop production. At the present time, when the production of food crops is not only a national but a world necessity, the protection of such birds should be regarded as a measure of national defence."—
Conservation of Wild Life in Canada.

A REVIEW of the *Conservation of Wild Life in Canada in 1917*, written by Dr. Gordon Hewitt and published by the Commission of Conservation, Ottawa, states that in spite of the pressing demands upon Parliament made by the War, the year was the most notable in the history of wild life conservation in that country. Not only were two most important Acts passed (Migratory Birds Convention Act and Northwest Game Act), but an interdepartmental Advisory Board on Wild Life Protection has been created. With regard especially to birds, this Board has taken steps to add to the wild life reserves a sanctuary at Point Pelee, the most southerly point of Canada, and one of the concentration points in the journeys north and south of migratory birds, as well as an ideal area for the encouragement of wild fowl. The Bonaventure Island cliffs, where thousands of sea-birds breed, and extensive areas in Alberta and Saskatchewan, withheld from settlement as not suitable for agriculture, are also being recommended as bird-reserves.

The Governments of Manitoba, Saskatchewan, and Alberta have established an absolute close season for Prairie Chickens (pinnated Grouse and Prairie Sharp-tailed Grouse), owing to the extraordinary decrease in their numbers, and the fact that almost complete extermination has befallen those of the western States.

On the general question, Dr. Hewitt adds :

"Throughout the country there has been a very marked awakening of public interest in the protec-

tion of our native birds, and the progress of the movement has been very encouraging. . . .

"I would strongly recommend local organisations and public bodies to adopt and carry out the following scheme as a first step. The absolute protection of birds in public parks and cemeteries in cities, towns and villages should be ensured by the co-operation of the local civic authorities. Bird-house competitions should be organised. The assistance of the local horticultural societies should be enlisted in the work of planting suitable fruit-bearing and other shrubs and trees attractive to birds, in the local sanctuaries. Prominent citizens should be encouraged to present bird fountains and baths. Each year, preferably in the spring, a local Bird Day should be instituted. On that day the schools would devote special attention to the subject of birds and bird-protection, and means could be taken to enlist the interest of the general public.

"By these and other means every section of the community should be called upon to take a personal interest in the protection and encouragement of birds in their district, and the work would express the community spirit. I cannot conceive of any practical measure that would have a greater effect in stimulating public interest in this subject, and the value of such work throughout Canada would be inestimable. . . .

"... Sufficient has, I hope, been said on previous occasions to emphasise the important part that these birds play in protecting our crops from destruction by their innumerable insect enemies. Never in the history of the world has the necessity of protecting our food crops been more urgent; never has the need of taking every means to protect and encourage these allies of ours had a greater claim to our consideration. Expressed in terms of wheat, the value of the field crops destroyed annually in Canada by insect pests is sufficient to feed our entire population for a year. We must, therefore, protect our greatest natural allies in crop production."

Economic Ornithology.

A CURIOUS paragraph in the *Journal* of the Board of Agriculture for July may probably be taken as a back-handed apology for the Board's blundering action with regard to bird-life. After commenting on the good deeds of parasitic flies and fungi in destroying injurious insects, the paragraph proceeds to say that "Birds are admittedly of great value, but it is most improbable that they alone would control any of the more serious insect pests of this country, and the same statement would apply equally to any other enemy, if the weather be excepted. . . . The above remarks must not be taken as disparaging the services of birds, which are incalculable, but rather as a plea for more balance in considering the subject. An ally is not less valuable because we recognise and allow for his shortcomings."

This from a Department which has done more to encourage bird destruction than "any other enemy, if the weather be excepted," and addressed to a farming public not notorious for failing to recognise the shortcomings of birds in cornfield or fruit-orchard, may cause a grim smile. It is, however, a sign of the times that the Board should at last acknowledge the services of birds to be incalculable. When it also realises that allowance for a friend's shortcomings need not involve shooting or poisoning him, and that an ally is less valuable when dead, nature-students will gratefully feel that its education is progressing.

BIRDS AND FOOD-CROPS.

Dr. F. D. Welch writes to the Society from Longfield, Kent :

"I should like to confirm the views of "A.M." from Sussex (as to horse ploughing and wireworm) from my own experience of two fields between here and Longfield village. Both of these were steam-ploughed, and both, although nominally corn, are mostly poppies and such weeds. On the other hand, a field between here and Fawkham Church, which is ploughed by horse labour has a good crop on it. As regards the caterpillar, we were overrun with the "Woolly Bear," but got them under by killing, and I believe a pair of Cuckoos assisted a good deal. They are, as is well known, large caterpillar eaters, and it is unfortunate that collectors take their eggs so much. Although we have not shot a single small bird on my land

for these last three years, the apples have set better last year and this than ever before, although the much-abused Blue Tit and Great Tit have been allowed to wander wherever they pleased. The soft fruit has also been a larger crop, especially gooseberries, although Greenfinches (sometimes said to be so destructive) have been undisturbed. You may remember my mentioning during the winter a hen Bullfinch which was frequently near and in a certain gooseberry bush. I said I would let you know the result. Well, the bush grew a good crop for its size; but the most interesting point was that it never got blight, whereas bushes thirty or forty yards away got it badly. I propose to remove the Bullfinch from my list of undesirable birds.

"As regards vegetables, we did well considering the bad spring weather, but where they have a Sparrow Club a friend planted beet-roots and nothing came up.

THE GOOSEBERRY CATERPILLAR.

Mr. W. McGuffog, well-known to horticulturists, writes in *Gardening*, July 13th, 1918 :

"Where gooseberry bushes are permanently wired in with netting to protect the fruit from birds it is only reasonable to expect that, when caterpillars attack the foliage, birds cannot assist in clearing them off. Where the bushes are exposed and only covered with nets during the season of ripe fruit there are certain birds which are of great service in destroying the larvæ of the saw-fly. One of these is the much-maligned Sparrow, which appears to be inordinately fond of the caterpillar, and on one occasion I watched a gang of Chaffinches busily engaged in destroying them. Some years ago I was told by Mr. Gilbert Anderson, the veteran gardener at Port Mary, in the Stewartry, and a well-known naturalist, that the Cuckoo was unequalled for destroying caterpillars upon gooseberry bushes. As Cuckoos in their season are very numerous in this district, a close but unobtrusive watch was kept upon them. As a result, Mr. Anderson's observations were confirmed—the Cuckoos feeding upon the larvæ with avidity."

WOODPECKERS AND COCOA.

Complaint having been made by cocoa-growers of Jamaica of damage done to the trees by the Woodpecker, the Government Entomologist, Mr. Archibald Ritchie, was authorised to investigate the matter, and his final report has just been issued by the Jamaica Agricultural Society. Although Jamaica is a well-wooded country, there is, it is pointed out, only one Woodpecker, *Centurus radiolatus*, and this does not belong to the American Sapsuckers but to species which, like the British Woodpeckers,

feed on insects that inhabit decayed or standing timber. It is therefore necessary, the report continues, to proceed with caution before permitting the birds to be destroyed, as they are of essential usefulness, while whatever harm they do may be guarded against. The conservation of the trees depends upon birds: the moisture of the land and its protection from denudation and erosion depends on the trees. Where the birds have taken to boring their nests in cocoa-trees (owing to the destruction of woodland to make way for cocoa plantations), it is suggested that artificial nesting-boxes might be distributed with good results: also that some restoration of the fruit and nut trees which supplied them with part of their food, might save the cocoa-pods from attack. Mr. Ritchie summarises the insect-food found in twenty-seven Woodpeckers. He adds:

"In Jamaica it should be our aim by lectures and by work in the schools along the lines of the Audubon Society of America and the various States Agricultural Colleges (Rural Extension Division) to create the right attitude of the agriculturist and the child—the agriculturist-to-be—towards birds. A 'Bird Day' as observed in the U.S.A. in the schools could be considered by the Department of Education. Our ally the United States of America has possibly the most

progressive agricultural system in the world. In that system we see advocated the use of the bird-table, the winter feeding of birds, the maintenance of bird sanatoriums, and the systematic erection of nesting-boxes."

BIRDS IN U.S.A.

The United States Food Controller, Mr. Hoover, appreciates the co-operation of birds in the conservation of food-crops. He writes in an American newspaper, the *People's Home Journal*:

"I hope the people of the United States realise how closely related to this whole question of food-saving is the question of the protection and encouragement of insectivorous and migratory birds."

A handsome bird-fountain has been dedicated in the Los Angeles public park to "the little warriors of the air who are fighting for us," "who are protecting our wheat-crops for the boys in France, who are guarding the cotton crop which is used for surgical purposes and for gun wads, who save our forests from which we build our great ships and airplanes. The birds have been officially recognised by the United States Government for their valuable aid to horticulture and agriculture. This fountain is placed here as our personal recognition of their value."

The Plumage Trade.

BOCHE FASHIONS.

WHETHER the Board of Trade and D.O.R.A. have or have not successfully stayed the importation of plumage, efforts to push the sale have not ceased, and there is no doubt that after the War every means will be tried to revive the trade, on the pretext of assisting either French workers or Colonial interests or poverty-stricken natives by a harmless provision of moulted plumes from swamps in Darkest South America or of clipped feathers from Egret "farms" in Darkest India. It behoves every bird-lover, and especially every Hon. Secretary and member of the R.S.P.B. to remember and to remind others, that the plume-trade is essentially alien-born and Hun-inspired; that the "Osprey" is essentially a Boche production, obtained by the killing of parent-birds and young; and that the character of English trade and of Englishwomen will not be clean until the whole business of trading in the feathers and skins of wild birds slaughtered to serve foolish fashions is swept from the British market.

PENNSYLVANIA'S NEW LAW.

PENNSYLVANIA has stepped into the lead among all the States in the protection of birds. A recent change of the laws, says the *National Humane Review*, now makes it a crime to sell feathers of any wild birds whatsoever, without the permission of the President of the Board of Game Commissioners of Pennsylvania. Such permission will not be granted except in instances where the State itself will be benefited, as in sales to public museums or for educational purposes.

Under the former law, the President of the Board of Game Commissioners had the right to permit taxidermists to sell mounted specimens of birds, whether legally or accidentally killed in that State. There was also no law against the sale of feathers of foreign birds unless belonging to the same family as birds protected in the State.

There was a time, adds *Bird-Lore*, when Pennsylvania was a hotbed for the wholesale millinery interests of the country that had been driven out of New York State by the Audubon Law.

CHINESE PHEASANT "FARMS."

THE New York Zoological Society has lately investigated the statements and affidavits received from commercial agents of the plume-trade in China affirming the existence of farms for the breeding of Gold and Silver Pheasants for their plumage. The result is given in the Society's *Bulletin* for July, 1918. It is interesting and suggestive, in view of claims for similar "farms" for plumage-birds elsewhere. Not a single trace of such farms or of the breeding of birds under domestication can be discovered, and the reply of the French Consul at Mongtseu finally disposes of the story. The exportation of both live birds and skins is, he points out, strictly prohibited, and in Indo-China

even the peddling of the birds is forbidden, except for propagation.

"The French and Chinese authorities have acted very wisely in forbidding trade in the skins of Pheasants, for the sale of them has encouraged the natives to slaughter great quantities, and they would rapidly have annihilated these magnificent species of birds. This exportation was carried on chiefly by the people of Canton. I know that the Chinese Custom House officer seized, about three years ago, a case containing several thousand skins despatched to a merchant in Canton.

"Evidently, if the domestication and breeding of Pheasants had been an accomplished fact, the French and Chinese would not have prohibited the exportation of these birds, or their skins."

This is, therefore, another lie to nail on the counter, together with the "artificial," "moulted," and "farmed" Egret plumes.

The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds.

COUNCIL MEETING.

THE Council of the Society met on July 19th at the Guildhall, Westminster, Mr. Montagu Sharpe (Chairman) presiding.

The Hon. Secretary's report recorded the issue of three further Home Office Orders dealing with the taking of sea-birds' eggs, and of Orders for West Bromwich, Donegal, and Limerick. Four lectures had been given by the Rev. J. E. Kelsall and Mr. S. H. Dyer, and sixteen Bird and Tree Festivals held. The reply of the Research Department of the Privy Council to the Society's memorial was read, stating that the work contemplated would not exclude natural sciences, but that it would not extend to branches of science already provided for by the Board of Agriculture, the Medical Research Committee, or the Natural History Museum.

The Finance and General Purposes Committee reported a donation of £10 under the will of the late Mrs. Paterson, of Mid-Calder. The following Hon. Local Secretaries were appointed: Hemel Hempstead, Mrs. J. L. Hammond; Ennerdale, Mr. Hendry Watson; Liverpool, Mr. W. A. Edwards; West Surrey, Rev. W. A. Shaw; Warwick, Mr. T. O. Lloyd. The following Fellows and Members were elected:

FELLOWS: Mrs. Burrows; Miss Marie Corelli; Mr. T. B. Cartwright; Captain H. S. Gladstone;

Mrs. Grant; H. J. Green; Captain C. W. Janson (Coldstreams); Alfred J. King; Thos. O. Lloyd; Countess della Rochetta; A. L. Storks; Mrs. Holt-Thomas; A. B. Whiteside.

LIFE FELLOW: Mrs. Charles Hunter.

MEMBERS: Sir Frank Brown; Ernest A. Butcher; Miss Christie; C. Forster; Mrs. C. Forster; Dr. Gibson; Mrs. H. J. Green; Reginald E. Green; J. G. Green; G. F. Green; Kathleen M. Green; F. J. Harris; E. S. Harris; A. H. Harris; Miss B. Harris; A. D. Henderson; Donald Maclean; Hugh Maclean; St. John Marriott; Miss Grace Musgrave; Miss L. A. Northey; Rev. F. Sanderson; Miss F. M. de Sausmarez; John Wilkinson.

Letters from Dr. Hornaday and Dr. Gordon Hewitt were read with reference to the Migratory Birds' Convention; from Sir Robert Wright (Scottish Board of Agriculture), concerning heather-burning in Scotland; and from the Chief Constable of East Sussex respecting an advertisement for protected eggs. In this last case, it appeared that the paper containing the advertisement had at once stopped insertion, but that the advertiser had left the address given and his relatives refused to say where he had gone. The protection of birds from the economic standpoint; the firing from a sea-plane at the nesting birds on Bempton Cliff; the protection of the Chough, and of the birds at Spurn, were among a number of other questions discussed. The best thanks of the Council were voted to Mr. Thorburn for his offer to paint a picture for the Society's greeting-card for 1918-19.

BOY SCOUTS' COMPETITION.

PROBABLY normal times would have produced a heavier list of entries for the prizes offered by the R.S.P.B., through the *Scout and Headquarters Gazette*, for Essays on Birds by boy scouts; and the papers indicate that any real knowledge of birds and their ways is confined to the few, even among scouts. But a good number of papers came in from north and south, town and country, and many showed considerable promise. An excellent variety of species were dealt with. The principal awards are:

Ages 15 to 18.—Eric C. H. Mansfield, Lisbury Northumberland (Pheasant); Leonard Lee, Smethwick (Thrush); Kearsley W. Bowden, Disley (Bullfinch).

Ages 12 to 15.—E. C. Wilkinson, Sunderland (Blue-Tit); T. W. Davies, Llanidloes (Curlew and Lapwing); T. Whalan, Greystoke (Swallow).

Ages 8 to 12.—Edward Pickard, Barton-on-Humber (Partridge); Vivian Selby, Burnley (Jackdaw).

LEAFLET FUND.

MR. A. R. LEWIS, of Longfield, wrote to the Society in May last, offering to subscribe five guineas to the Society's special Leaflet Fund for the issue of "Birds, Insects and Crops," and similar literature, if nine other donors would give a like amount. The Society has been able to realise this kind offer by the generous help of the following donors: the Duchess of Portland, the Countess of Warwick, Lord Leverhulme, Mrs. Holt Thomas, Miss R. Chichester, Miss F. Cochrane, Mr. G. W. Hayes, Mr. A. R. Robinson, and Mr. Peveril Turnbull

Birds in the War Area.

IN EGYPT AND PALESTINE.

MR. C. L. BARRETT, of Melbourne, whose name is well-known to readers of *Bird Notes and News*, writes from Egypt, June 23th, 1918:

"*Bird Notes and News* has reached me from my home in Australia, and I have read it with great pleasure. I have always taken the keenest interest in the work of the R.S.P.B., and am proud of being an Honorary Member.

"When with my unit in Palestine, I was delighted to find birds fairly plentiful. The valleys around Jerusalem and Bethlehem, in early summer, were not only glorious with wild flowers, they were also tenanted by birds, Flycatchers, Warblers of several species, Larks and many more. Out in the hills near Jericho I saw large flocks of white Storks, and often Egyptian Vultures, soaring high in the blue. Riding over the plains from Gaza to Shellal, with my horse's nose almost brushing the barley that covered the land like a vast green carpet, I had the blithe notes of Crested Larks ringing all the time in my ears. Palestine is a land of Larks, little grey birds that sing on the ground as well as up in the air. At a place called Sheik Nuran, where we lived in 'bivvies,' I made acquaintance with scores of White Wagtails and also the lovely yellow-breasted species. They came to glean in the camel lines, and were as friendly as you like. I saw them again, in the Wady Ghuzze, tripping along the water's edge, as happy as children at the sea-side.

"Many species of birds are protected in this country, notably Kites, Buff-backed Herons, Hoopoes, Bee-eaters, Larks, Warblers and Wheat-

ears. In the maize and cotton fields one sees Herons feeding close to the peasants or perched on the broad backs of the buffaloes. In Giza Zoological Gardens there are, at the present time, two large colonies of these beautiful birds, nesting in banyan trees. Before the 'Buff-backs' were protected by law they were, I believe, the prey of the plume-hunters."

IN NORTHERN ITALY.

From Mr. H. Barringer come the following notes contained in the letters of a friend serving in Italy:

Brentilla, Dec. 1917. Freezing hard, but bright sunshine.

15th. Many Wrens, Great Tits, Jays, Buzzards, Grey Wagtails, and Kestrels seen; also a pair of Merlins mobbing a Buzzard.

17th. Great Tits, Stonechats, Buntings, Siskins, and also a Cuckoo which, although the weather was very cold, appeared to be catching insects.

20th. Snow fell and most of the birds disappeared, with exception of Robins, Tits and Wagtails.

24th. Fieldfares, Whinchats, Stonechats, Kestrels.

Ciano, January, 1918:

3rd. Little Owls, Buzzards, Jays, Magpies, Stonechats, Starlings, a Merlin.

26th. Bramble-finches, Larks, Mistle-Thrushes, Hawfinches, Waxwings.

Feb. Green Woodpeckers, Chaffinches, and in spite of the cold, Lizards and a Humming-bird Hawk-moth.

March. Birds as above, also Blackcaps and a Barn Owl. Weather cold, but a Camberwell Beauty, Fritillaries, and a Comma butterfly.

Notes.

THE U.S.A. National Academy of Sciences has awarded to Mr. Frank M. Chapman, of the American Museum of Zoology, the first Daniel Giraud Elliot Medal, to be bestowed annually on a naturalist of any country for pre-eminence in zoology or palæontology. Mr. Chapman is editor of *Bird-Lore*, and an Hon. Fellow of the R.S.P.B.

* * *

M. Adolphe Burdet (also an Hon. Fellow), whose visit to this country for the purpose of assisting the Society with the erection of bird-rests at the lighthouses, will be remembered, has been giving a series of 32 lectures to interned French in Switzerland, on birds necessary to agriculture. An interesting letter from him is quoted in the Bulletin of the Ligue Française pour la Protection des Oiseaux, in which he says that the greater number of his hearers, representing almost every district in France, were in sympathy with his views as to the need for Bird-Protection.

* * *

Lectures on Birds are greatly appreciated at British military camps and hospitals, as has been proved at the various lectures to soldiers in Hampshire given by the Rev. J. E. Kelsall. The R.S.P.B. lends lantern slides gratis to such lecturers; and also is prepared to lend a lecture with slides, "Birds on the Land," to Allotment Associations.

* * *

"Thus [by the kill-the-bird campaign] the way is being prepared for insect plagues and devastations to smother the land and to devour every green thing."—*Bird Notes and News*, Spring, 1917.

"Gardeners are much tormented this year, for not only is most of the fruit missing, but both trees and plants are smothered with vermin."—*Daily Telegraph*, July 11th, 1918.

* * *

"As it is so difficult to obtain food for birds in winter," writes C. W. Benson to the Society, "it is a good plan to collect beech-nuts. Last winter I fed the Chaffinches in this way, also a Brambling. When

the snow is thick, birds cannot find the nuts on the ground. If shelled and chopped up, they are eaten by Tits and Robins."

* * *

A correspondent of *Country Life* tells a curious story of a nest found inside a log of elm wood. The log was cut from the centre of the tree and was to all appearance solid, and selected as perfectly sound for use in connection with pile-driving. After the first blow or two of the pile-driver a piece flew off the side, revealing a cavity about 6-ins. in diameter, and in the cavity the remains of a bird's nest and six pale blue black-spotted eggs. It is supposed that the nest had been made in a small hollow, overgrown by the wood, and hidden for sixty or seventy years. Another correspondent of the same paper records the extraordinary find of a Flycatcher's nest containing five young Cuckoos almost fledged.

* * *

An interesting testimony to the increase of the Buzzard is given by a member of the Society, who writes:

"During a recent visit in Mid-Wales it gave me much pleasure to hear that the Buzzard has now re-established itself, not only in the district I was in, but in some of the adjoining counties, and it had become quite a common occurrence to see pairs of them every day on the surrounding hills. Their reappearance is attributable to the absence of the irresponsible gunner as well as the local gamekeeper."

Also the collector, perhaps the bird's greatest enemy. The breeding-season likewise furnished good news of Kites in Wales and Bitterns in Norfolk.

* * *

Mr. J. E. Harting has translated and publishes for the benefit of Red Cross funds, a charming apostrophe to the Pigeons of Paris written by M. Pierre Amédée Pichot. Like those of London, the Paris Pigeons have suffered much from curtailed rations; unlike them, they have been kept in terror and commotion by shot and shell; but M. Pichot looks to the time of the birds' return:

Quand, portant dans le bec la branche de Laurier,
Vous nous annoncez la fin de nos misères
Par un brin d'Olivier.

The many admirers of Miss Isa Postgate's bird-books will be glad to hear that she has a new book *Robin in Khaki: a book of birdeens*, appearing before Christmas. Like her Robin story, *My Bird Love* (G. Bell & Sons) it suggests itself as a Christmas gift.

* * *

The accomplished brush of Mr. Archibald Thorburn has again generously supplied a sympathetic subject for the R.S.P.B. Greeting card for Christmas and the New Year. It is entitled *Sursum Corda*, and the cards will be ready as early as possible in November. Mr. Trevor-Battye's touching verses written as an inset for last year's card, have been set to effective music by Miss S. Browning, with the title "His Star for Thee" (Novello & Co.), and should in this form have an extended popularity.

IN A CHESHIRE GARDEN.

The Rev. G. Egerton-Warburton reports the following curious incident occurring in the Warburton Rectory garden:

"I met with a Water-Rail one day last June under rather peculiar circumstances. In a part of the garden that had been neglected this spring, my brother and I were tidying up, and had been working about there for a considerable time. I had just cut round the edges of a small square bed in the lawn, in the middle of which a tree was planted, and had cut off the top of the long, weedy grass that had grown up in it, and my brother was following me with a fork to get out the grass roots and weeds. He had been forking in the bed for a minute or two, when, to his great astonishment, out jumped a Water-Rail; and the odd thing is that instead of making off at once it squatted down on the grass close by, and lay there long enough for

him to call me to see it, then it got up deliberately and ran off with long strides through an open gate.

"There are wet places in the old bed of the Mersey within a short distance, but we have never at any time seen or heard Water-Rails there. The part of the garden where it had hidden was as dry as possible; the bed round the tree is only three feet square, and the bole of the tree in it is nine inches in diameter. It seems extraordinary that the bird should have been able to hide in it at all, and yet more so that it should have lain quite still all the time I was working round it with the shears, and never move until it was actually driven out with a fork."

IN A GLOUCESTERSHIRE GARDEN.

Mr. H. D'Este East writes to the Society (July, 1918):

"A family of four young Great Tits, hatched out quite lately from a nesting-box in this garden, come on to our hands to take cut-up monkey nuts. They also come into the rooms, one even settling on my arm while we were at family prayers. One morning four were feeding on a shallow silver cup, which I was holding out of the window, while two more were perched on my arm waiting their chance of a bit of breakfast. Monkey nuts have a great fascination for nearly all the feathered tribe frequenting this garden. Of course, they like rolled oats and melted fat (in pre-War days) in cocoanut shells, with a small hole cut at the side. Great, Blue, and Coal Tits, Nuthatches, and Chaffinches are adepts at catching nuts when thrown into the air. Great and Blue Tits come into the bedroom, and on to my wife's hand; Nuthatches, Chaffinches, Robins, and Hedge-Sparrows on to the carpet and on the window-sills. A Hedge-Sparrow has come on our hands in the garden, but only when acting as foster-mother to a young Cuckoo. My wife can do wonders with them. When she says to the Nuthatch on the carpet, 'Now, Nutty, one, two three, catch,' he more often than not catches the nut before it falls to the floor."

Bird-and-Tree Challenge Shield Competition.

Essays from the Schools have, all things considered, come in very well, and they are now in the hands of the judges. The report will be sent to all competing Schools as soon as possible, and the main results will appear in the next number of *Bird Notes and News*.

At the celebration of "Arbor Day" in Philadelphia this year, the first tree of a new boulevard was planted by the Humane Education Society and Animal Rescue

League. It was stated that Pennsylvania originally planted 28,000,000 seedling trees in its forest reserve and now has 7,000,000 on hand to give to France after the war.

South Carolina is added to the list of American States having an officially appointed Bird Day, the Governor's proclamation stating it to be "especially important that we educate our children and protect our birds in order to foster our resources in time of war."

The Governor of the Province of Tarragona (says the Bulletin of the Society for the Protection of Animals and Plants of Catalunya, Barcelona) has issued a circular to the local authorities throughout the Province, reminding them that the Royal Decree of 1905 appoints a Tree Festival to be observed annually, in order to inculcate the value of trees and to encourage the planting of them. It may be hoped that the Festival will soon be made to embrace Birds, as is now the general rule in other countries.

Writing in the *Bulletin* of the French Bird-Protection Society on the great destruction of birds during the last two winters, not only by the cold, but by country people who took advantage of the tameness of the starving Thrushes and Robins to kill them, M. Louis Ternier adds :

" I will conclude with a consoling fact. Everywhere I have travelled in the country for some time past, all who are interested in birds tell me that the children destroy nests much less than of old. Bird-nesting seems no longer to absorb their interests. It is very certain that the teachers have contributed to this happy change. The necessity for protecting the birds ought to form part of the programme of all our schools."

PRISONERS AND CAPTIVES.

" A Country Parson " writes :

" One of my parishioners recently became possessed of a British wild bird in a cage, and I, knowing such proceedings to be as infectious as the Spanish influenza, decided to effect its release. In order to do this I sent an ' S.O.S. ' post card to the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, and received by return of post some leaflets and with them a book of ' promissory notes ' to the effect that the signatory would not keep a British wild bird in a cage and would try to persuade his or her friends not to do so either. I then went round my small parish and got almost every parishioner to sign one of them, with the result that the offender *under the pressure of public opinion* decided to release the bird.

Moral.—If in every parish some humanitarian would go round with one of these books of ' promissory notes ' (to be obtained *gratis* from the above-mentioned Society) the caging of wild birds industry could be quickly stamped out, since when there is no demand there will be no supply. To fight any one tyranny is to fight all, so that to fight this phase of the tyranny of humanity over the lower animal creation is to fight indirectly the tyranny of one nationality over another, the tyranny we are fighting in this war."

Greeting Card, 1918-19

Ready in November.

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Copies may also be had of " Behind the Lines " (Robin), painted by Mr. Thorburn ; verses by Mr. A. Trevor-Battye or Miss Isa Postgate ; and of " The Whitethroat's Song."

Save the Birds !

Save the Food-Crops !

" The best Crop Protector is the
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C. GORDON HEWITT, D.Sc.

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SERIES of 12, each with quotation as to value of Birds in Agriculture, from DR. CHALMERS MITCHELL, DR. GORDON HEWITT, DR. HORNADAY, SIR HARRY JOHNSTON, EDWARD NEWMAN, M. EDMOND PERRIER, and others.

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Royal Society for the Protection of Birds,
23, QUEEN ANNE'S GATE, S.W.1.

BIRD NOTES AND NEWS (issued quarterly) will be sent post free to any address for is. per annum, payable in advance ; single numbers, 3d.

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

Printed by WITHERBY & Co., 326, High Holborn, W.C.1, and published by the ROYAL SOCIETY FOR THE PROTECTION OF BIRDS, 23, Queen Anne's Gate, S.W.1.

Bird Notes & News

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

Vol. VIII.]

WINTER, 1918.

[No. 4.

The First Flying Corps.

BEFORE the traditional Dove of Peace definitely settles on the tree-tops of a world so long submerged in war, and while British gratitude to the three services of King and Country is still burning brightly, it is not too much to ask for some recognition of the war-work of the birds, that feathered Flying Corps which still transcends the marvels of aeroplane and airship, and but for the existence of which it is hardly probable man's thoughts would ever have conceived of aerial flight.

For the first time, it is pretty safe to say, in the history of London the Bird had a definite place in the pageant of the Lord Mayor's Show of 1918. A travelling Pigeon-loft was carried in the procession to remind the public of the splendid achievements of the Carrier-Pigeon, the most essential and most renowned of the battle's feathered soldiers. At the recent "Savoy Fair" also, in London, a cote of war Pigeons was exhibited by the Royal Air Force, and was inspected with special interest by the Duchess of Portland, as President both of the Fair and of the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds. The Homing Pigeon first became notable in war during the siege of Paris in 1870. At the beginning of the war in 1914 the British authorities took a characteristic course in dealing with these birds. They ordered the internment or destruction of all Pigeons along the coast. Thousands of lives of men depended upon the reversal of that edict, and upon the use instead of slaughter of the birds. The minesweepers, as the *Times* has pointed out, were the first to realise the existence of a means of communication possible where all others failed; and an emergency Pigeon service was established through private owners, by means of which

minesweepers were enabled to send information to shore of large minefields newly laid and other dangers of the sea. "Many a patrol-boat owed its continued existence to the Pigeons."

Not until March 1916 were the first English Pigeons sent over to the Western front; but with the first test of their value the demand flew over the length and breadth of the European battlefield, and Pigeon services were also established in Mesopotamia, Egypt, and Salonika; they were found to be not only important but of vital importance to the land forces, to the air forces, to the sailor; and the end of the war found the three sections of the Pigeon service—naval, military, and air force—a recognised part of British warfare.

Many stories have been told of these Pigeons: of the messages brought by them from Vaux Fort, from the battlefields of the Marne and from Arras and Verdun, and many another critical point. "The officer who commanded the first Tank Corps battalion stated that Pigeons had frequently saved the situation for him. Neither a gas cloud nor a heavy barrage of artillery fire deterred these messengers from bringing their despatches." In the first break in the German offensive in July last, in Champagne, the rapid communication made possible by "columbograms" was a deciding feature of the attack; the battle of Monchy was won through a flying message to the troops at the base; a counter-attack at Arras was smashed by the same means. In Macedonia the birds were described as an indispensable help to our forces.

The record of the British airman's debt to his feathered comrade is still more

striking; Pigeons taken out by aeroplanes and seaplanes bringing S.O.S. messages from machines in distress and saving many a life. One such instance is that of two R.A.F. officers compelled to descend about five miles from a rocky Scottish coast and in momentary danger of drowning through the heavy sea dashing their machine to pieces. The bird they released flew twenty-two miles to its loft in twenty-two minutes, and relief came in time to save the airmen who were clinging to the wreckage of their craft. In another case a large seaplane crashed; two Pigeons were fished out of their submerged cage; one was already dead, the other bedraggled and shivering with cold. The officer dried and warmed it, fastened the message to its leg and set it free. With some feeble dazed flopping of unsteady wings it started, pulled itself together, and sped away. The bird was exhausted with its effort, but the men were saved.

Wounds and death have to be faced by the war Pigeons as by the soldier. They have arrived with injured wings, with feet shot off, worn out and dying; but "instinct" has taken them home. Perhaps the most touching story is told by a Canadian, Flight-Commander R. Leckie, D.S.O., in a letter home, published by an American paper. After an engagement with hostile aircraft over the North Sea he came down, his seaplane riddled with shrapnel, over fifty miles from land, and then had to act as rescuer and host to the crew of an aeroplane, wrecked by engine failure. Six men were then adrift in a doomed machine, with no food and little water. The Commander had four pigeons; one was released at once, a second on the next day, a third on the third day. All failed to reach home, perishing over the waste of waters. The fourth, set free in a fog, hungry and thirsty, struggled over the fifty miles of sea without a landmark and without a rest. He could not reach his loft, but fluttered down in a coastguard station, and there fell dead from exhaustion. But his message was delivered, and six men were saved.

"In a glass case hung in the wardroom may be seen a pretty stuffed Pigeon, with a little plate bearing the inscription: 'A very gallant gentleman.'"

The brave explorer whose memory those words enshrine would not have grudged them to the little bird.

After the Pigeon, the Canary. Canaries have been employed in the trench, as in the coal-mine, to detect the presence of noxious gases. Birds are infinitely quicker than man to detect poisonous fumes and to suffer from them. Theirs is the post of danger to test if the air be safe for man. Says one writer of his company's bird:

"Many were the nights on which he was rudely disturbed from his slumbers, dumped unceremoniously into a sandbag, and carried through rain and snow up to the trenches. Here he would do his job underground, and as often as not reach the surface again a limp little form lying at the bottom of his cage. He never failed us, though. . . . Hats off to the Canaries! Theirs is a V.C. job every time."

How if the V.C. took the form of an order of release for every little bird choking in the evil atmosphere of the catcher's stifling box, the dealer's fetid shop, the darkened cage?

Pigeon and Canary represent the trained and drilled force, doing their part like the army horses and dogs, because man has given it them to do. There are other divisions of the service in the V.A.D., most conspicuous perhaps being the Gulls. The help rendered by them in indicating the presence of German mines and submarines has furnished exciting episodes in the war, as narrated by British sailors; and a French writer, M. Louis Rousseau, claims them (*Bulletin* of the S.F.P.O., June 1918) as "one of our most precious auxiliaries."

"They rendered great services before the war. Did they not cleanse our harbours and the outlots of our streams and rivers of garbage? They have at all times indicated to our fishermen the presence of shoals of fish, differing species pursuing the track of pilchards, herring, whiting, etc. . . . They have wished to follow our seamen and continue to aid their fishing. Our boats and their crews are mobilised and fish for mines and submarines. Their allies in times of peace have imitated them; they too are mobilised, they continue their intelligence, they serve in the war."

It is good to find Gulls circling about the Britannia of the seas who personifies *Punch's* tribute to the British Navy.

Equally valuable as allies have been the great land army of insect- and vermin-eating birds, clearing earth and air and plant of pests innumerable. Their part has been

that of the home workers, essential to the success of the campaign abroad.

Nor is it possible to ignore the unconscious ministry of the wild birds of the battlefields—the Nightingales and Warblers and Black-birds singing in wood and garden, the Skylarks rising up over the naked horror of “No Man’s Land” (as in the picture Mr. Thorburn has painted for the Society), the Swallows nesting in the dug-outs, “the Kestrels hovering by day, And the little Owls that

call by night,” the very Sparrows in the ruined walls; the strange birds and the familiar birds, heedless of thunder of gun and of shock and shell, and perishing, as they must have done, by myriads in the poisoned and shattered forests. For every moment of interest and relief afforded to many a man in the intolerable waiting hours; for every inspiring and inspiring vision of home that has risen on the wings and songs of birds—surely for this too we are debtors to the First Flying Corps.

Economic Ornithology.

In the *Journal* of the Board of Agriculture for September, 1918, Dr. W. E. Collinge publishes the result of “Some Recent Investigations on the Food of Certain Wild Birds.” Commenting on the woeful neglect of the study in this country, Dr. Collinge states that “on the one hand we have a rapidly decreasing number of insectivorous birds, and on the other hand a large increase of the few species that are known to be injurious.” The subject has, he observes, been treated largely in a casual and unscientific manner, and in his own former work he adopted the numerical method of estimating contents of crop and stomach, whereas the only method scientifically accurate is volumetric measurement (by bulk).

It is agreeable to find that, as usual, further investigation is generally speaking favourable to the birds. Dr. Collinge revises to a considerable extent his opinion of the Mistle-Thrush, which he now regards as on the whole beneficial in spite of depredations in the orchard: “the number of injurious insects and slugs that it destroys more than counterbalance the injuries it inflicts.” With regard to the Skylark the new analysis “no longer leaves us in doubt as to the true economic position it should occupy. The injuries it does by damaging seed corn and other crops are far outweighed by the benefits it confers in destroying injurious insects, . . . the bulk of its food consisting of weed seeds and injurious insects.”

[It is to be hoped the Board will consequently withdraw its leaflet in which Larks are dealt with as “Farm Vermin.”]

Dr. Collinge’s conclusions are as follows:

- “Of the nine species of birds treated—
- a. Two are distinctly injurious, viz., the House Sparrow and the Wood-Pigeon.
 - b. Two are too numerous, and consequently injurious, viz., Rook and Sparrow-Hawk
 - c. One is locally too numerous, viz., the Mistle-Thrush.
 - d. Four are highly beneficial, viz., Skylark, Green Woodpecker, Kestrel, and Lapwing.

“In the interests of agriculture it is very desirable that strong repressive measures be taken against the species mentioned in section

a, and for the time being all protection withheld from those mentioned in sections b and c; whilst every protection should be given to the four species mentioned in section d.”

It may be useful to add that no one of the species named in a, b, or c is protected by the Act at any time of the year against owners or tenants of land nor have they any protection under local Orders; the Mistle-Thrush has limited protection in four counties. The Kestrel has no mention in the Act, but is protected in the majority of counties by Orders. The Skylark, Woodpecker, and Lapwing are on the schedule of birds fully protected during the close-time. So far as the nine species are concerned, therefore, it appears the old Act does not go very far astray.

FOOD OF THE WOOD-PIGEON.

The same *Journal*, in its August number, devoted considerable space to details of the contents of the crop of a single Wood-Pigeon, showing the amount of grain and greenstuff eaten, and going on to “imagine what the sum total of damage would be” by hundreds of Pigeons. Whether or not Dr. Collinge would consider this one of the individual and partial investigations which he deprecates as hindering rather than helping, it meets with a rejoinder in the November *Journal* from a second investigator (Armstrong Colledge, Newcastle), who gives the contents of another Wood-Pigeon crop as consisting of 8,000 seeds of a troublesome weed. “It would seem therefore,” says the *Journal*, “that the bird may sometimes be of some agricultural use.”

OUR FRIEND THE OWL.

In the *Gleaner* (Jamaica) of September 28th, 1918, Mr. Archibald Ritchie, Government Entomologist, makes a forcible appeal for the protection of the Jamaica Owls as “among our most valuable natural allies in our ‘Food will win the war’ campaign.” Mr. Ritchie mentions that a short time ago a cultivator applied to him for a permit to kill Owls, on the ground that they were descending on his corn and destroying it. A similar plea was put up in an English village recently. Needless to say, in each case mice were taking the corn and the Owls were catching the mice.

The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds.

COUNCIL MEETINGS.

MEETINGS of the Council of the Society were held at the Guildhall, Westminster, on October 18th and December 6th, 1918.

The Hon. Secretary's Reports gave particulars of the awards in the Bird and Tree Challenge Shield Competitions and the Boy Scouts Competition; stated that lectures had been given by the Rev. J. E. Kelsall at Hospitals and Schools and to Boy Scouts; by Mr. W. Wailes Strang at Keswick; Mr. Masefield, Mr. Harford J. Lowe, Mr. Vicars Webb, Mr. H. C. Metcalfe, the Rev. B. T. Verry, and Miss E. Goodyear; and that a new Bird Protection Order had been issued for Tipperary. Votes of thanks were passed to Mr. Thorburn for again presenting the Society with a painting for its Christmas card, and to the Judges of Essays in the Competitions.

The Finance and General Purposes Committee reported that the late Lieut. C. C. Baring had bequeathed a gift of £5 to the Society, and that a legacy of £100, duty free, had been left to it by the late Captain Sydney Edward Brock, of Overton, Kirkliston, Mrs. Fuller Maitland had succeeded Mrs. Yorke Smith as Hon. Secretary for Sidmouth, and Miss Kathleen Tardif was appointed for Guernsey. The following Fellows and Members were elected:—

FELLOWS: Miss Alice M. Christian, Miss Agnes M. Christian, F. R. Davenport, Mrs. Hugh Fitton, Miss Gilbert, T. R. Gleghorn, Mrs. Johnston, Miss Violet Partington, F. J. S. Pollard.

MEMBERS: Mrs. Adamson, Mrs. W. R. Anderson, Colonel the Hon. J. Pleydell-Bouverie, Hon. Mrs. Pleydell-Bouverie, Lieut. A. B. Burrowes, Miss Butler, Miss F. E. Chambers, Mrs. A. W. Childs, Mrs. Chichester, R. Edward Coles, E. Harker Curtis, Mrs. Cuthbertson, Miss L. G. Davenport, Mrs. Gaskoin, P. F. Green, Mrs. Hearn, Mrs. Heseltine, Miss Leng, Miss Minnie Leng, S. Ll. Lloyd, Lady Lockyer, Captain H. L. Long, H. J. Massingham, Mrs. Massingham, Mrs. Morrison, E. Moxsom, Miss E. L. Record, Miss Cicely Riddock, Miss F. Stevenson, Miss J. B. Stothart, Hugh Boyd Watt, Miss Celia Wray.

LIFE MEMBER: Miss Violet E. Gordon.

Letters were read from Mr. W. P. Pyecraft and Mr. A. H. E. Mattingley (Australian

Ornithologists' Union) respecting the destruction of Penguins for the oil industry on Macquarie Island; and the Society's action was discussed. The present position with regard to the plumage question, the economic status of birds, and other matters were considered; and it was decided, *inter alia*, that efforts should be made for the better protection of the Green Plover.

OBITUARY.

MEMBERS of the Society and others interested in the anti-plumage campaign will sympathise deeply with Mr. James Buckland in the loss of his wife, who died on December 3rd. In his devoted and passionate work on behalf of the protection of birds Mrs. Buckland was a zealous co-operator.

PENGUIN-OIL.

FOR many years the Society has called attention to this trade, and endeavoured to obtain repressive measures from the Governments of Tasmania and New Zealand. A fresh protest was raised in the *Illustrated London News* last February by Mr. Pyecraft. Macquarie Island has been leased for some twenty years by the Tasmanian Government to Mr. Joseph Hatch, representing a company in New Zealand trading in penguin-oil and sea-elephant oil. According to statements made by Mr. Hatch in a lecture at Melbourne on July 8th, 1918, some 1,500,000 year-old Royal Penguins are killed every year and boiled down in huge digestors solely for their oil. Mr. Hatch denied that anything more than "necessary cruelty" occurred, the birds being clubbed to death with heavy sticks; and he asserted that the Penguins remained as numerous as ever.

Thorough investigation by a competent authority is urgently called for in the interests both of science and of humanity. The R.S.P.B. cabled a request to the Acting Prime Minister of Australia to allow Mr. Mattingley to proceed to Macquarie, but Mr. Mattingley's war-time work in the Board of Trade was considered too important to allow of this.

The Plumage Trade.

BIRD NOTES FROM SOUTH AMERICA.

I. THE TRUTH ABOUT EGRET PLUMES.

FOR a good many years the plumage traders of Paris and Vienna and the plume exporters of Venezuela have advanced handsomely embroidered stories of Egret "farms" on the Orinoco. Quite recently the feather exporters of Ciudad Bolivar, Venezuela, framed up elaborate representations to the United States Treasury Department, intended to open the way for Egret plume exports to the States. Unfortunately, however, for their plans, the evidence was lacking in American flavour and versimilitude, and the U.S.A. ports remain tightly closed.

Meanwhile Lieut. Leo E. Miller, a trained zoological collector for the American Museum of Natural History, has spent six years in field work among the birds and mammals of South America; and before becoming a "bird man" in the U.S. Army he wrote a thrillingly interesting book *In the Wilds of South America*, which has just been published by Messrs. Scribner (New York, \$4.50). In this Lieut. Miller records, in a matter-of-fact way, certain interesting things about the gathering of Egret plumes in Venezuela, along the Orinoco in the region of the alleged Egret "farms." For example, on page 145 :

"The Arauca is a river of considerable size, and is said to be bordered by vast marshes and swamps, the home of countless Egrets and other water-birds. Hunting parties ascend during the nesting-season, and kill great numbers of the birds. The plumes are taken to Ciudad Bolivar and disposed of to the export dealers."

On the Upper Paraguay River, however, a new abomination in Egret slaughter is thus revealed by Mr. Miller (p. 222) :

"Egrets were present in such vast numbers that the trees were white with them; and when they flew their twinkling wings filled the air like snow-flakes. They were not molested in this locality, for the reason that their habitat is impenetrable. I later learned in another region that thousands of these birds are killed for their plumes, in a most atrocious manner. About the time the Egrets' feathers are at their best, which is also the time when the nests are filled with young birds, the annual floods have begun to recede, leaving small lakes and marshes teeming with imprisoned fish, such as we had seen *en route* to Rancho Palmiras. This is the season of harvest for the water-birds, and they repair daily to some favourite resort to gorge on the luckless fish. The plume hunters, taking advantage of this combination of circumstances, collect quantities of fish, poison them, and then scatter them over the birds' feeding grounds. Occasionally poisoned shrimps are used if the inundations extend beyond the usual time. This method is, of course, cheaper than shooting; the birds are not frightened away as they are by the loud reports of guns, and the success of such relentless persecution must be obvious. A whole colony could be exterminated in its feeding grounds even if the rookery is impregnable."

W. T. HORNADAY.

Birds in the War Area.

MR. J. W. WYLLIE writes from the Prisoners of War Camp, Wendover :—

"I am most interested in Mr. C. L. Barrett's letter in the Autumn Number of *Bird Notes and News* on the birds of Egypt and Palestine, which I compared with notes I had made on bird life when at Saffi, Morocco, in 1916. The Heron is not so well known there; I only saw a few when camping near the River Tensift, and these were very wild. I also saw several Golden Eagles and Vultures near the river. When riding in the country I often came across numbers of White Wagtails, Magpies, and crowds of tiny brown Owls, which sat on stones, bobbing up and down as we passed. Near the sea, Gulls were most plentiful, and Blue Rock Pigeons numerous around the cliffs and caves.

"One day at the old town of Eyere, on the road to Mogador, I saw a number of Flamingos hurrying along the wet sand. This place was

originally Portuguese, and I had never before seen so many Storks near a town. There must have been fifty or sixty. They were walking round the decayed old walls, or standing on one leg on the tumble-down towers, while others were flying overhead; and all the time while we were feeding with the Sheik of the town I heard the weird crack of their bills. The natives never harm them, as they are sacred birds; and it is splendid at each collection of rude mud huts one comes upon, to see one or more of these birds standing on the thatched roofs, tame, not afraid of the natives. When the locusts came I frequently met armies of Storks going out to meet them, and have seen Gulls fighting a swarm of locusts, and after battling with them for a time finally turn the swarm.

"And when the Swallows came to build under the *patio* and fly in and out among the supporting pillars I knew it was cold in England, and their arrival was like a message from home."

Notes.

A LIVERPOOL member of the Society writes that in an outer suburb of that city he twice saw an adult Swift on November 16th. No doubt it was detained by a late brood, but the date is an exceptionally late one.

* * *

Another interesting record comes from Newhaven, whence a correspondent writes (September 30th) that he "quite lately had the pleasure of seeing a Crested Tit (*P. cristatus*), the first I ever came across." The bird was also, he says, seen at Lewes. As the British-breeding Crested Tit seldom wanders from the Spey Valley and has never been recorded so far south as Sussex, those seen were probably migrants from the Continent.

* * *

Captain H. S. Gladstone has issued, through Bickers & Son, a handy little "Ornithologists' Field Note Book," containing a list of British Birds, such as an observer can slip in his pocket when going for a ramble, and with space to note those seen or heard.

* * *

"A Descriptive List of the Birds of Tasmania and adjacent Islands" has been compiled by Mr. Clive E. Lord, of the Tasmanian Field Naturalists' Club, and published in brief and convenient form. It comprises descriptions of 224 Tasmanian species, in addition to the two extinct species of Emu and also six introduced birds—Indian Turtle-dove, and British Skylark, Goldfinch, Tree-Sparrow, House-Sparrow, and Starling.

* * *

"With a view to the preservation of insectivorous birds, so eminently useful to agriculture for the suppression of ravages by pests, a law (No. 9 of 1912) was promulgated, prohibiting the destruction of those enumerated in a list given in the law. Circulars in many languages were distributed reiterating the list of the protected birds, and pointing out that it was forbidden to shoot, capture, transport, hawk, keep in confinement, expose for sale, sell, or purchase any of the birds mentioned In addition, coloured illustrations of most of the protected birds are being exhibited in public places."

* * *

Thus the Ministry of Agriculture of Egypt, by way of preface to a handbook on "The Principal Species of Birds Protected by Law in Egypt," published in Cairo in furtherance of the object. Twenty-six species are finely portrayed in colour (reproduced by the Survey of Egypt), with their English, French, Arabic, and scientific names, and with notes for purposes of identification supplied by Captain Flower and Mr. M. J. Nicoll, Director and Assistant Director of the Egyptian Zoological Service. It need only be said that the design and the execution of the publication are worthy of one another.

Mrs. Luther Holden kindly sends the R.S.P.B. the following extract from the letter of a young Englishman who has recently returned to Canada after a visit to this country:—

"It is a coincidence that the question of Bird Protection should have been discussed when I was in Ipswich, and then when I got back to Canada I should be placed in charge of the administration of the Migratory Birds Protection Treaty with the United States. If Mrs. Holden had access to some of the facts which I have now, she could make out a pretty strong case for Bird Protection in England, where the poor little creatures do not seem to be accorded the same consideration they do here and in the United States.

"It was felt of such consequence that the United States Congress and Parliament took time in the middle of this stupendous war to pass legislation to protect the insectivorous birds.

"Do you know that the insects in the U.S.A. do damage each year to the extent of £311,000,000, and the principal agency to prevent this is the bird. It is considered a war measure to save the crops and the trees from insect depredations by protecting the birds."

* * *

From Leicester Road Council School, Bedworth, which this year takes the Warwickshire Bird and Tree Challenge Shield, comes the following pleasant message, contained in one of the prize essays:

"Around this school are many trees which were planted by Cadets who have done well in Bird and Tree Competitions. The first to be planted was a sycamore, by Ernest Parsons. Ernest is now a soldier, and has four stripes. When he was in Mesopotamia he wrote to us and asked us about his tree, and wanted to know about the Shield."

It may be hoped that Sergt.-Major Parsons will soon see his tree again and join in congratulations to the Cadets of to-day.

* * *

Will the Women's Vote affect the Protection of Birdlife? Not, it may be said, immediately and at Elections. The rights of any other creature than man (and woman) are not likely to constitute a platform plank at present. Women, however, have now equal electoral influence, equal influence with their parliamentary representatives. Will they use it—

1. To drive the notorious plumage trade out of the country, as essentially a woman's question and a woman's disgrace.

2. To push forward and support legislation for the better protection of birds from cruelty of every description.

3. To insist upon the introduction into all schools of humane education, and of practical instruction concerning birds and their place in nature?

Bird-and-Tree Challenge Shield Competition.

CONSIDERING the difficulties of the times, the absence of Teachers in the army, and the withdrawal of many of the older boys and girls from school to help on the land, the Competition has kept up throughout the years of war with remarkable steadiness. Many teachers seem to have redoubled their efforts, and the younger children have represented their schools with anxious pride in order to "keep the flag flying." Nevertheless Teams have dropped out, and new ones have not come forward in numbers sufficient to recompense the loss fully in most counties. Next year the Society will hope, not merely a resumption of pre-war conditions, but for a rapid extension of the work all over the country. The extreme importance and value of a knowledge of bird-life and of trees, from the practical economic standpoint, has been conspicuously apparent in these years of stress, apart from the educative and stimulating effects of open-air Nature Study conducted on such lines as those laid down by the Society.

The Judges of the essays this year were: Mr. Montagu Sharpe (Chairman of Council), Miss Clifton, Mrs. Frederick Dawson, Mrs. Fuller-Maitland, Mr. G. A. Freeman, B.Sc., Mr. W. H. Hudson, Mr. Hastings Lees, Rev. W. A. Shaw, Rev. J. G. Tuck, and Miss Gardiner (Secretary).

INTER-COUNTY SHIELD.

The Inter-County Shield, the "blue ribbon" of the whole Competition, goes to Barton Stacey School, Hampshire, whose papers are charmingly written and full of admirable first-hand observation. Leicester Road School, Bedworth (Warwick) is an excellent second with fine, open-air, enthusiastic work, strong on the practical side and notably excellent in Tree studies. Necton (Norfolk) stands third.

COUNTY SHIELDS.

BUCKINGHAMSHIRE.—*Challenge Shield*: Ellesborough C. School. The essays from Bucks are, as usual, very fresh and pleasant in style, and the wonder is that more competition is not forthcoming

from a county so well placed for the study, and with, it must be supposed, many more schools qualified to take part than do so at present. The winning Team's attractive and excellent papers are closely contested by thoughtful and intelligent ones from Princes Risborough; and Pitstone and Haversham gain high commendation.

CUMBERLAND.—*Challenge Shield*: Cargo. The result here is something of a surprise. Four schools run each other pretty closely, but the winning Team write without notes and show real outdoor study. Buttermere would have been an easy first if drawings decided the question, and St. John's School, Keswick, if handwriting and composition and general information stood first; both these schools gain *Certificates*, and Nether Denton the *h.c.*

HAMPSHIRE.—*Challenge Shield*: Barton Stacey. With three years' sustained premiership in the county and the winning of the Inter-County Shield, Barton Stacey has to retire from the county lists next year as a "Champion" Team, eligible only for the inter-county. Ridge is second and very near the winners; the third place being shared by the admirably written and illustrated papers from the Holme School, Headley, and those from the R.C. School, Christchurch, both showing an appreciation of beauty unusual in children. Brighstone, I.W., also takes a *Certificate* and is strong in drawings; and Schools highly commended include Hale, Hinton Ampner, Brooke Hulverstone (I.W.), and Wickham.

LANCASHIRE.—*Challenge Shield*: Cartmel Fell. Lancashire keeps up its number of competing Teams and its standard of work with conspicuous success. No School stands pre-eminently at the top, but the all-round excellence, the keen outdoor observation, and the disuse of notes at the essay writing are extremely satisfactory characteristics. The winning Team is young, and writes in a manner no less graphic for its unpretending simplicity; and St. Stephen's, Preston, taking Second Prize, show what can be done by a town school that has the will to succeed. Atherton C.E. and Withnell U.M. are represented by the first-rate work expected of them. *Certificates* go also to Bamber Bridge Wesleyan, Brathay District C.E., Barton Newsham R.C., Brow Edge Council C., Buckhurst, Fins-thwaite, and High Wray; while some half-score others are *h.c.*, including several new competitors.

NORFOLK.—*Challenge Shield*: Necton. Norfolk is well to the fore this year, and the great amount of first-hand study to which the essays bear witness is again an admirable feature of almost all the work. The failings previously noted, of devoting excessive attention to nests and eggs, and to the dissection of buds, are rapidly disappearing, especially the former; and some of the best essays were written without notes. The Shield-winning papers exhibit a delightful enthusiasm and individuality. Postwick and Tittleshall are Second and Third with capital work. *Certificates* are won by Beechamwell,

St. Faith's, Heydon, Loddon Girls, Mattishall, Melton Constable and Briston, Sporle, and Wickmere; and a number of other Teams are *h.c.* or *c.*

NORTHAMPTONSHIRE.—*Challenge Shield*: D'Anvers Endowed School, Culworth. Here again the number of competing Teams keeps up well, though several of the previous leaders in the Competition are unfortunately missing. Much genuine, pleasant, and patient work is done by the winning School and by Middleton Cheney, Welton, Croughton, Cold Higham, Mears Ashby, Silverstone, and Watford, and by other Schools in a greater or less degree. The study is mainly at first-hand, but apt to be marred by lack of knowledge as to what to observe, and by a predominance of measurements and details which are only a poor (if painstaking) substitute for general description and for the love and feeling for nature which inspires the best papers.

SOMERSET.—*Challenge Shield*: Chillington. Somerset shows the effects of troubled times markedly in the decline of competition; but the work, if from younger hands, maintains the bright and animated style and quickness of observation which seem more characteristic of the county than is perseverance. Chillington takes the Shield for a second year with essays charming in matter and manner. Chedington, just over the Dorset border, shows a like alertness of mind; Winsham stands third; and special commendation is won by North Perrott, Norton Fitzwarren, Wambrook, and Brislington.

WARWICK.—*Challenge Shield*: Leicester Road, Bedworth. Warwickshire Teams in general evidently take interest and pleasure in the Competition, and pride in their independent observations, with the natural result of open-air and spontaneous work, marked also by a graceful sympathy. Bedworth has been already mentioned. Dosthill, first last year, well deserves the Second Prize by its zeal and energy; Mancetter's very young Team sustain the School's reputation. Ansley and Great Alne are awarded *Certificates*; and other schools mentioned are Kenilworth, Minworth, Rowington, Solihull (Girls), Studley and Temple Grafton.

OPEN CLASS.—This class includes essays from a dozen different counties, some of them good enough to prompt the wish that a County Shield could further inspire the young people and stimulate other schools to follow their example. Possibly this will come in time. The *First Prize* goes to Hinton Waldrist (Berks), which again sends admirable and sympathetic papers; and *Certificates* to Easton (Portland, Dorset), Felixstowe Ferry (Suffolk), Great Waldingfield (Suffolk), Greenlanes, Clontarf (Dublin), Slindon (Sussex); and the *h.c.* to Charney (Berks), Carrowbeg (Donegal), Gazeley (Suffolk), Norton Bradway (Derby), Totley (Derby).

Fuller reports have been forwarded to all the competing schools.

A number of Festivals took place at or about the time of the Christmas breaking-up of the schools, including those of Ellesborough, Bedworth, Dosthill and (County Shield) Barton Stacey.

Nesting-Boxes for Birds.

A correspondent who has some of the Society's nesting-boxes in his grounds, writes:

"I find that besides the use of the boxes for actual nesting purposes, all are used for roosting at nights, especially during the winter months. A Blue Tit and his mate bring up a family every year in a box opposite my dressing-room window, and last year I watched the family of eight fed with a parting worm apiece before being fledged. Another box quite near has a pair of Great Tits in it every night now, and in the morning they come out with their tails all curled round by the shape of the box; they are most amusing."

Another correspondent records Wrens roosting in a Tit box.

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BIRD NOTES AND NEWS (issued quarterly) will be sent post free to any address for 1s. per annum, payable in advance; single numbers, 3d.

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

Printed by WITHERBY & Co., 326, High Holborn, W.C.1., and published by the ROYAL SOCIETY FOR THE PROTECTION OF BIRDS, 23, Queen Anne's Gate, S.W.1.

Bird Notes & News

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

Vol. VIII.]

SPRING, 1919.

[No. 5.]

What the Birds Said.

[THE following article appeared in a leading French weekly paper, *L'Illustration*, just before the outbreak of War. It was sent to the R.S.P.B. by the Hon. Secretary of the Belgian section of the *Société Internationale pour la Protection de l'Oiseau* scarcely more than a fortnight before the invasion of Belgium. Since that time Belgians, French, and English have tasted captivity in German prisons; and the cells of Ruhleben, as shown in model at the Ruhleben Exhibition in London recently, must have reminded visitors strangely of cages. There were however several companions to share thought and speech in the German cells, and none were so small in proportion as the 7 in. by 4 in. boxes in which thousands of winged birds are confined in England.

The translation appears, in somewhat abbreviated form, by kind permission of *L'Illustration* and of the author, M. Henri Lavedan.]

YOU would never guess what happened to me the other day at the Jardin d'Acclimatation, where I had gone, for the second time, to the exhibition of birds, fishes, and insects. I was there quietly, when, just after entering, I discovered that the birds were *speaking!* For the world at large they were singing as usual, but for me they spoke; they employed words and phrases; and although their language was of a more lively rapidity than ours, I followed it easily. I will repeat to you what was said, first, because I cannot help myself, and secondly because I have no right to be silent as to what I have learned by favour and revelation.

I can hardly explain how clear and harmonious and intelligible was all that would appear to you confusion and tumult. And each voice possessed, besides its special note, the colour and manner corresponding to the bird and its plumage. Not only were there voices quick, sustained, or wavering; they were red, blue, yellow, white; voices speckled and voices crested; and while retaining the quality of song, they expressed things audible to the senses though

unpronounceable in ordinary language—the vocal shorthand of those excited feelings which flit across the spirit of the bird by thousands in a minute.

Those voices first stepping out from the ranks of sound were the most simple. They spoke in words of one or two syllables, words always the same, thrown out with imperious summons, with anger and regret, with sadness, voices to peck at and pierce your heart. Words such as Pity! Open! The Sky! Space! Leaves! Breeze! Flight! Then came more developed longings, desires, sighs, and memories. Oh! to cleave the air! to drink from the stream which murmurs and flows! to feel the damp moss and grip the bending branch! To balance on the blade of grass! To catch the butterfly! To flee away and hide! Sun! shade! fresh air!

After these I perceived others whose cries and songs further recalled past joys and unknown or lost happiness. Golden rays of sunlight! Freedom! Travel! Delicious food! Spoil for our beaks! Nest built by oneself! Sprays! Flakes of wool! Broken straws! Slumber, hidden in the forest tree! Liberty! Liberty! Then broke out invocations and litanies, to the cherubim, to the saints of winged creatures, to blessed St. Francis, to the Dove of the Ark, and to all that fly in Paradise: Help, Save us, Air, no more Cage!

All these cries and appeals, crossing and melting yet defined and distinct, were the orchestra of the innocent yet penalised birds, telling of their feverish desolation, their powerful though tiny rages, their invincible vaulting hopes; it was the poem of captivity, the lyric drama of the cage. And through it I received a sudden startling revelation of animated Nature and of our blind egotism. We thought that these birds did not know the sadness of their doom; because they

enlivened us we believed them gay and happy. We deceived ourselves. What we took for joyous songs were bravuras of revolt and canticles of lament. These twitters, these roulades, these trills, these pearly notes, were but a thousand signs of courage, the persistent illusion of coming deliverance. In singing, always singing, the captive birds were, I discovered, grieving, even dying of grief, while the more they sang the more we enjoyed and wrongly interpreted their melodies. Doubtless, to our dull and careless hearing, there is little difference between the song of the free and of the imprisoned bird. The same words, the same notes, the same movements can express feelings the most diverse to the ear that truly hears. I now know what the bird is singing in the little wired box, when others imagine his throat to be bursting with joy. Whatever his notes, to those who understand he moans, pleads, accuses, but never accepts his fate. The finest song is the more perfect

form of protest. To sing is the being of the bird, his only manner of expressing himself; if he can command but one poor tiny note he will use it indefinitely, to signify everything, as he perches on the stupid rounded stick which is not a bough.

Alas! the restless cage-bird. Lively and charming though he may be, he is a luckless creature whose distress we cannot gauge. Let us put ourselves in his place for a moment, in that narrow coop where his useless wings flutter, and thence let us view the wide world, the open window letting in waves of light and air, beyond which is the unbarred limitless sky, the great ocean in which the swallows sail and all the free birds flit and soar and glide. The caged bird will remain to the end of his cramped palpitating life in the coffin of wood and wire, alone, helpless, desolate. He sends out his little despairing spirit to the four corners of the earth, to the air, to the sky. He sings!

Mr. Roosevelt and English Birds.

THE late ex-President Theodore Roosevelt was, as is well known, an enthusiastic protector of wild life, although a prominent big-game hunter. He was especially interested in birds and their preservation, and during his presidency created fifty-three Federal bird sanctuaries and a great number of national game reserves. It will be remembered that during his visit to England a few years ago he visited the New Forest in company with Viscount (then Sir Edward) Grey, in order to become acquainted with the song-birds of England. In his autobiography he gives some of his impressions. He wrote:

"The bird that most impressed me was the Blackbird. I had already heard Nightingales in abundance near Lake Como, and had also listened to Larks, but I had never heard the Blackbird, the Song-Thrush, or the Blackcap Warbler, and I did not know what really beautiful singers they were. Blackbirds were very abundant, and they played a prominent part in that chorus which we heard throughout the day on every hand, though perhaps loudest the following morning at dawn. In its habits and manners the Blackbird strikingly resembles the American Robin, and indeed looks exactly like a Robin with a yellow bill and coal-black plumage. Its song has a general resemblance to that of our Robin, but many of the notes are

far more musical, more like those of our Wood-Thrush; and the highest possible praise for any song-bird is to liken its song to that of the Wood-Thrush or Hermit-Thrush.

"I certainly do not think that the Blackbird has received full justice in the books. I knew that he was a singer, but I really had no idea how fine a singer. . . It is a fine thing for England to have such an asset of the countryside, a bird so common, so much in evidence, so fearless and such a really beautiful singer."

Of the Blackcap Mr. Roosevelt wrote:

"The most musical singer we heard was the Blackcap. To my ear its song seemed more musical than that of the Nightingale. It was astonishingly powerful for so small a bird; in volume and continuity it does not come up to the songs of the Thrushes and of certain other birds, but in quality, as an isolated bit of melody, it can hardly be surpassed."

And of the Robin:

"Among the minor singers the Robin was noticeable. I was prepared to find him as friendly and attractive as he proved to be, but I had not realised how well he sang. It is not a loud song, but very musical and attractive."

In observing the birds of the Itchen valley in Hampshire, the ex-President was struck by the number of large wild birds to be seen—"such large birds as Coots, Waterhens, Grebes, Tufted Ducks, Pigeons, and Peewits."

Economic Ornithology.

BIRDS BENEFICIAL TO AGRICULTURE.

THE Trustees of the British Museum have decided that the time is opportune for stimulating interest in the benefits conferred by Birds on agriculture. They have accordingly given instructions for a small exhibit, in the Central Hall of the Natural History Museum, of a selection of birds which are useful to farmers and gardeners by destroying injurious insects or such animals as rats and mice. The exhibit will be explained in a valuable handbook, written and illustrated by the well-known naturalist and artist, Mr. F. W. Frohawk. It will appear from the facts set forth that it is hardly possible to exaggerate the beneficial results produced by certain birds, which thus "require protection and encouragement throughout the British Islands." It would be an admirable thing if every natural history museum in the country would follow the example of the British Museum.

PROS AND CONS.

By way of helping further in popularising knowledge, the R.S.P.B. are about to issue a small pocket-book, "An A B C of Inland Birds," giving in the shortest space possible such concise and wholly non-technical description of some fifty common birds as may enable the unlearned observer to recognise them readily; together with epitomised pros and cons of their economic services to man; and also their local and country names.

For the last year or two there has been more discussion than ever as to the food and the economic value of this bird and that bird, which shall we kill and which keep alive, which shall children be taught to destroy and which to preserve; which should the law protect and which ban. But the primary bed-rock question, which the law and the prophets alike have neglected, is, How many of these birds can the man in the street or in the field, or the child in the meadow or the lane, identify with certainty.

THE CATAPULT.

A movement is on foot in Jamaica to suppress the use of the catapult; and if no other practical method can be ensured it is proposed to prohibit

the importation into the island of the elastic used in making them, said not to be employed for any other purpose. "Everywhere throughout the world," as the *Jamaica Times* says, "the planter has to dread the harm done to his crops by insects, but in the tropics this is particularly the case. . . Mr. Ritchie, the Government Entomologist, as he goes from one Branch Agricultural Society to another lecturing, is doing good work by making clear to his audiences what folly it is to stand by and see the cultivators' friends thus slaughtered."

It is not well enough understood by police or public in Great Britain that the use of catapults throughout the close season is wholly illegal, and that no air-gun may be used without a gun licence.

VALUE OF THE MAGPIE.

The Right Rev. A. H. Mathew sends the following interesting note on the Magpie:

"This handsome bird, usually slain by all gamekeepers, is a great eater of coleoptera. I have seen a pet specimen, a very amusing talker, swallow five of the large purple garden beetles in succession, and after them some thirty or forty woodlice. The same bird is very partial to small snails, which it swallows whole, and it enjoys nothing better than a mouse."

Dr. Mathew adds a word for the Wood-Pigeon as a great devourer of the destructive small white slugs, which do such mischief in cabbage fields, etc., and of weed-seeds.

NATURAL HISTORY MUSEUM.

All who are interested in the preservation of animal life, and the work and influence of our great national museum to that end, will welcome the appointment of Dr. Sydney F. Harmor, F.R.S., as Director of the British Museum (Natural History), and of Mr. C. E. Fagan, I.S.O., the Assistant Secretary, as his *aide-de-camp*. Dr. Harmor has been Keeper of Zoology for the past ten years, and while his distinguished services to science have secured national recognition, his work for the protection of living creatures has won the gratitude of Bird Protectors.

The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds.

ANNUAL MEETING.

THE 28th Annual Meeting of the Society was held at the Guildhall, Westminster, on March 20th, 1919. The Duchess of Portland, who presided, was unanimously re-elected President; the Duchess of Somerset, in moving the resolution, strongly protested against the introduction of song-birds into west-end provision stores. The Annual Report and Statement of Accounts were adopted, on the motion of the President, seconded by Mr. Montagu Sharpe; and the Council and officers were re-elected. The following resolution was moved by Mrs. F. E. Lemon, in the unavoidable absence of the Marquess of Crewe, seconded by Mr. Meade-Waldo, and carried:

"That in the opinion of the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds it is desirable that a scheme for making Heligoland an Ornithological Observation Station and Bird Sanctuary under International control, should be adopted by the Peace Conference at Paris, and that a copy of this resolution be forwarded to the British Peace Delegation."

The slaughter of Penguins in the Antarctic, and the caging of wild birds were other subjects brought forward, the latter being dealt with by the President, Miss Clifton, and Miss Damer Dawson.

Letters of regret at inability to attend were read from Earl Curzon, K.G., Viscount Grey, K.G., Lord Desborough, Lord Methuen, and others.

A full report of the proceedings will as usual be issued with the Annual Report.

COUNCIL MEETING.

THE first Council meeting of the year was held on January 24th, 1919, at the Guildhall, Westminster, Mr. Montagu Sharpe, Chairman, presiding. There were also present: Mr. Bell, Miss Clifton, Dr. Drewitt, Miss Hall, Hon. Mrs. Henniker, Mr. F. E. Lemon (Hon. Sec.), Mrs. Lemon, and Miss Pollock, and the Secretary (Miss Gardiner).

The Hon. Secretary reported the death of Mr. Milnes Gaskell, a Vice-President of the Society, and it was agreed to place on the minutes a record of the great regret of the Council at the loss sustained by the cause. Nine lectures had been given since

December 10th, and twenty-four Bird-and-Tree Festivals held.

The Finance and General Purposes Committee presented the accounts for the year 1918. The following Fellows and Members were elected:—

FELLOWS: The Earl of Selborne, K.G., Colonel Bibby, MacIver Buchanan, Miss Mary H. F. Chapman, Miss Cruddas, Captain M. H. S. Goodliffe, J. M. Howell, W. R. Price.

MEMBERS: Mrs. Barnett, Alec M. Butcher, Miss O. M. Clay, Mrs. Clements, Robert Cruikshank, John Edmondson, Edward L. Gardner, Miss E. Glover, Dr. P. G. Griffith, Samuel Henry, Miss E. R. Hughes, Lewis Jones, John Mason, Mrs. Oldfield, Miss Podmore, Miss K. Spear-Smith, Ian Sykes-Maclean, Mrs. Curtis F. Thomson.

Correspondence with the Board of Trade and with Dr. Hornaday on the plumage question was read, also letters relating to the destruction of sea-birds off the coast. Dr. Hornaday again urged the employment of disabled soldiers and of women and girls in the making of embroidery for millinery, to replace feathers. Attention was drawn to an article in the *Bulletin* of the Ligue Française, regarding the steps to be taken for preventing another commercial invasion by Germany, and the need for providing everything in the way of nesting-boxes, baths for birds, food and food-stands, etc., that might formerly have been imported from Germany or Austria. Some discussion took place respecting the economic position of the Little Owl; and various other matters were considered.

OBITUARY.

THE death of the Right Hon. C. G. Milnes Gaskell, which took place on January 9th, has deprived the Society of a Vice-President who was a staunch and liberal supporter of the work. Joining the Society in 1898 as a Life Member, he gave for years an annual donation of £20 or £25 to the Watchers Fund, to which he was the largest contributor, and he took deep interest in its efforts for the protection of the rare birds of Britain. Mr. Milnes Gaskell, who was 76 years of age, was Chairman of the West Riding County Council.

In Mrs. Elinor C. L. Close, who died on March 6th, the cause of the Birds had a champion who will not readily be replaced, one who was instant and active in every danger that menaced them, whether it was the Egret hunted down for its plumes or the Penguin massacred for its oil. She joined the Society in 1893, and her last letter to it is dated from her sick-bed only a week before her death. Her interests were many and wide, but her sympathies were unchanging, and she never lacked the courage of her convictions.

BIRD-WATCHING IN 1918.

Most interesting reports from the Society's Watchers were presented at the meeting of the Watchers Committee on March 5th, and satisfactory accounts were given of the nesting of Ravens, Peregrines, Buzzards, Choughs, Skuas, Terns, Ringed and Kentish Plover, Norfolk Plover, Redshank, Gannets, Guillemots, Eider Ducks, Phalaropes, Great Northern Divers, and many other species. As in previous years the war did not appear, on the whole, to affect the birds adversely, several Watchers referring to the consequent absence of "troublesome human visitors" in the form of trippers. Little trouble was experienced with the troops, and where any occurred a letter to the Officer Commanding at once put a stop to it. Several of the Shetland Watchers were visited by the Senior Naval Officer, Admiral Greatorex, who not only rendered signal service to the Society in regard to possible damage by naval men, but who expressed his pleasure in the work done by the Society and his appreciation of the excellent service rendered by its Watchers. One attempt was made to lift a clutch of Bonxie's eggs, but the offender was caught and the eggs replaced.

At Dungeness, aeroplanes constantly flew low over the birds' nesting ground, but the birds were apparently undisturbed.

More serious were side-issues of the war. The collection of Gulls' eggs for human food gave an uneasy time in many breeding areas. At Dungeness great care was taken that other species should not be disturbed, but elsewhere results were less satisfactory, as the idea became prevalent that any and every egg might be taken. In another

district it was mentioned that the felling of trees had robbed certain birds of their nesting-places; and in the Shetlands particularly the shortage of men gave an exceptionally arduous time to those acting as Watchers, who, nevertheless, performed their task with admirable efficiency.

In two or three cases birds had trouble with their own kind. In Ennerdale the Buzzards drove off the Ravens from their old quarters, and the Ravens apparently could find no others to their liking; and in Anglesey the presence of Ravens had a disturbing effect on the Terns.

On Brean Down all the birds did well, and, apart from official correspondence, several letters have been received from visitors bearing testimony to the increase of all bird-life there since it has been a protected area under the care of the R.S.P.B. The nesting of Ravens in Cheddar Cliffs, after an interval of twelve years, is attributed to the protection they receive at Brean.

One loss deplored is that of the old White-tailed Eagle of North Roe, who after years of loneliness since the death of her mate, has disappeared, having probably died a natural death. She was the last of the Sea-Eagles of the Shetlands. The tame pair of Richardson's Skuas breeding on one of the islands continue to visit the Watcher's hut on their arrival, before beginning to nest, "and when their two young were hatched duly conducted them to the hut, to be introduced to their friend and guardian." Some of the Orkney wild Ducks seem to be developing a similar friendliness, for it is reported that some of the youngsters strayed up to the Watcher's house, and had to be restored to the loch!

The Orkney Phalaropes, Tintagel Choughs, and Dungeness Kentish Plover did particularly well; and in more than one area rare birds occurred which were previously unknown.

The bird-rests on St. Catherine's, the Caskets, and South Bishop Lighthouses continue to save valuable bird-life during the spring and autumn migrations, Wheat-ears, Flycatchers, Warblers, and other species crowding on to them during the nights and early mornings of their journeys.

Notes.

WHATEVER be the attitude towards undesirable human aliens, there is little doubt about that towards harmless and beautiful bird-foreigners. Among the trophies recently recorded are a Waxwing in Northumberland and a Roller in Hampshire. It is the more satisfactory to hear from Dr. Arnold H. Mathew that a rarer visitor, the Meadow-Bunting, nested last year in Kent. The eggs from three nests disappeared, but two nestlings were safely reared in a fourth.

* * *

Larger and therefore more conspicuous visitors, however, seldom have a chance of escaping the murderous collector; and the *Field* records the killing of a Spoonbill at Beaulieu last December, with the interesting and suggestive comment that thirteen Spoonbills have been previously recorded in Hampshire, of which eight were shot. In the other instances guns were possibly not at hand, for the feeling for the stranger in the land is still largely that of a correspondent in a current ornithological journal: "My attention was called to a peculiar bird. . . . I took my gun and went out . . . successfully stalked and killed it." As the Spoonbill is a scheduled bird protected all the year in Hampshire, it may be hoped the law will step in and hand over the "artistically preserved" specimen to a local museum, with a label recounting the manner in which it came there.

* * *

M. Henri Lavedan, whose sympathetic plea for the caged bird, appearing in this number, has all the vivid charm (even in translation) of his nation's eloquence, is not pre-eminently a Bird Protector. His interest is claimed even more by those other "caged birds," the child-sufferers from tuberculosis "enfermes dans les cages de plâtre et de bois," and by an excellent institution for their relief, "Les Petits Lits Blancs," of which Madame Lavedan is president. Perhaps some bird-lovers, grateful for M. Lavedan's appeal for the birds, may like to show their appreciation by helping this seaside home for little French children.

Reports from various districts show that many species of small birds had by no means recovered in numbers from the effects of two hard winters and the Board of Agriculture, when the winter of 1918-19 set in. Certain other species, notably Jays, have increased. Whether this is owing to the absence of gamekeepers or to an influx from the Continent seems uncertain, but the result is that while four years ago a demand went forth for the destruction of small birds, there is now from the same quarters an outcry against the Hawk and Crow tribes on the ground that they are responsible for the decrease in small birds!

* * *

The fine imposed upon the Auxiliary Army and Navy Stores in London for the illegal possession of twenty-three recently-taken Goldfinches, is suggestive. The birds were found by an R.S.P.C.A. inspector in a very terrified state, and the excuse made was that they were brought from Ireland, where they were not protected at the time (February). Legally this is no excuse at all, because they are protected all the year in London and therefore the possession of them newly caught is illegal all the year; on the ground of humanity it made the offence worse. It is not clear why the confiscation and release of the birds did not follow the conviction, for whether they remained at the Stores or went back to the dealer who supplied them it is obvious that these particular victims were no better for the magistrate's praiseworthy sentence. If west-end Stores thus call for a humane society's interference, what is likely to be the knowledge or the humanity of the dealer in the back-streets? The purchaser of pet Goldfinches rarely thinks of these things.

* * *

An interesting decision under the Jamaica bird-protection law of 1914 has been given by the Supreme Court of that country, in a case stated by the magistrate of Whit-horn, Westmoreland (B.W.I.). For unlawful taking and possession of Lapwing Pigeons, the offenders raised the plea that the birds were taken for domestication. It did not

avail, and fines of 25s. each and costs were inflicted.

* * *

Nearly two centuries after the birth of Gilbert White (he was born in July 1720) it is proposed to place a memorial window in Selborne Church. The subject is to be St. Francis of Assisi and the Birds. At the time when the centenary of White's

death was commemorated the erection of an imposing monument over his grave, or of a statue in the village, was suggested though happily abandoned, but the present project seems altogether desirable. Most of the money required has been already subscribed, but additional amounts, however small, will be gladly welcomed by Mr. J. Whitaker, Rainworth Lodge, Rainworth, Notts.

The Plumage Trade.

BIRD NOTES FROM SOUTH AMERICA.

II.—SLAUGHTER OF CONDORS.

THE last issue of *Bird Notes and News* contained some details of the destruction of Egrets in Venezuela, taken from Lieut. L. E. Miller's new work, *In the Wilds of South America*.

In his journey across southern South America, in the lake region of Western Argentina, Mr. Miller came upon the actual source of the supply of Condor quills that formerly met the demand of the London feather traders. This was at Mendoza, in the Andes, four hours by train from San Juan. (p. 422.)

"At Mendoza we met an Indian who claimed to be the champion Condor-hunter of all South America. During his ten years of collecting he had killed more than sixteen thousand of the magnificent birds. His record for one day was one hundred and fourteen. Naturally, they had

become greatly reduced in numbers, for the Condor lays but a single egg and it takes many months to rear the young. His method was to drive a burro to some lonely gorge among the bleak mountain-tops favoured by the birds, and then to kill the animal. He was very particular in stating that the burro had to be fat, a poor one would not do for bait. He then spread nets about the carcass, and when the Condors gathered about to feast he pulled a rope and ensnared them; on one occasion he trapped *sixty-seven* at one throw of the net. The prisoners were dispatched with a club and the long wing-feathers extracted to be exported to France to decorate women's hats.

"Formerly he had received about twenty pesos per bird. With his accumulated wealth he built a powder-mill: this promptly blew up, so he was again practically penniless. Of course there were still Condors in the mountains; in fact, he knew of a ledge where upwards of eight hundred congregated to spend the nights, but the price of feathers had gone down fifty per cent. on account of the war. He ended his speech in a very dramatic manner: 'What,' he said, 'me go out and slaughter such a wonderful, magnificent, and rare bird as the Condor *for ten pesos each*? No, *senor!* Not me.'"

W. T. HORNADAY.

Bird-and-Tree Challenge Shield Competition.

ALL Schools intending to compete are reminded that their entry-forms should have reached the R.S.P.B. by this time, and if delayed should be forwarded at once; otherwise they may be overlooked when the Competition papers are sent out. Entries have come in fairly well, but Buckinghamshire stands in some danger of losing its Shield if more Teams do not come forward.

All authorities are agreed that never was there a time so important as the present for the spread of a knowledge of Birds and their habits. Nothing helps this in so genuine and practical a fashion as the observation encouraged by Bird-and-Tree Day.

CHILDREN AND BIRDS.

Children, writes a correspondent to the Society, "are the natural enemies of birds. I wish to reconcile them, but this, during a long life spent in the country, I have found it impossible to do." The Bird-and-Tree Scheme has solved the "impossible." The bright enthusiastic boys and girls who not only study their birds and trees, but in some cases have also their school nature-diaries, their rambling and Bird Protection Clubs, their bird-tables made in school carpentry classes and supplied in winter from willing satchels: these are not the enemies of birds, "natural" or otherwise. But the lead

and the co-operation of more Teachers is urgently needed to foster the right spirit.

"My chief wish," continues the Society's correspondent, "is to lead the children away from the odious Prussianism of their attitude. Organised nest hunts are conducted by pretty nearly all country children, and torn nests and dead birds strew the footpaths." He urges a strengthening of the law and better publication of its provisions. But the Teacher can do infinitely more than laws, though the village police ought to have the knowledge (which few seem to possess, and fewer to act upon) that the stoning and catapulting of birds and nestlings is a punishable offence, which should be winked at no more than is thieving or gambling.

With the Teacher, the country police, and the Bird-and-Tree Scheme in friendly co-operation, the stigma that rests upon the British child might speedily be removed.

THE L.C.C. SCHOOLS.

At the monthly meeting of the Representative Managers of London County Council Elementary Schools, held at the County Hall, Spring Gardens, London, on March 24th, 1919, Mr. Charles Candler moved the following resolution:

"That the Representative Managers strongly deprecate the employment of school children as agents for the destruction, on alleged economic grounds, of wild birds and their eggs, believing that such employment degrades the children and injures the moral of the schools."

Mr. Candler dealt with the question from an educational standpoint only and did not touch upon the economic aspect. The matter appeared to be new to many of the members and excited a good deal of interest. The Chairman, Mr. A. P. Graves, said Mr. Candler had made a powerful appeal, and he hoped the motion would be carried unanimously. This was done, and it was ordered that copies of the resolution should be sent to the L.C.C. and the Board of Agriculture.

It is to be hoped that other School Managers will follow this example.

PEACE AND WAR.

The Head Teacher of a Lancashire School, who has safely returned from service in France, writes:

"While I have been abroad I have often thought of the happy days spent with the children in their Bird-and-Tree studies, and am more convinced than ever how wonderful and fascinating such studies can be. On the misty morning of March 21st, 1918, when the Germans launched their great offensive on the Western Front, I was in advance of our heavy batteries in that desolate waste in the neighbourhood of the

famous old Hindenburg line, south-east of Arras. I was forced to take cover in an old sunken road, as I was encircled by the enemy's bursting shells, some of which were gas shells. While waiting for the bombardment to quieten down, I was greatly surprised and interested to see a Skylark alight in the road two or three yards away from me, and calmly commence its morning dust-bath, just as I had watched these little friends of ours 'bathe' in the peaceful country lanes of England.

"What could have brought this sweet bird, the delight of our meadows, into such desolation on a morning like this? Amidst the incessant deafening crashes was it really unconscious of danger? Did it think itself safe from harm so long as man existed there? Or was it one of Nature's great lessons to man, then striving with frenzied fury to gain the mastery, to teach him where true happiness and contentment lie? . . .

"I have seen some of the horrors of war, and much destruction of the beautiful in nature. I wish the Society every success in its work, and pray that in the great scheme of Reconstruction and Improvement our nation will endeavour to preserve all that is lovely in the world, and so bring man nearer to the God who made it."

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

Printed by WITHEBY & Co., 326, High Holborn, W.C.1, and published by the ROYAL SOCIETY FOR THE PROTECTION OF BIRDS, 23, Queen Anne's Gate, S.W. .

Bird Notes & News

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

Vol. VIII.]

SUMMER, 1919.

[No. 6.

Reconstruction.

AMONG the many schemes for post-war reconstruction it must not be forgotten that nowhere is reconstruction more urgently called for than in the matter of Bird Protection. Reform was in the air long before the war. It had reached the point of a Departmental Committee for the preservation of British birds, and a Government Bill for the salvation of finely-plumaged birds of all nations. The war stopped both projects; and the crying need (in the latter case particularly) promises to become a scandal. Upon bird-lovers falls the task of demanding that neither movement shall be neglected or evaded or played with any longer; but resolute and strenuous action on the part of all nature-students, ornithologists, field-naturalists, sportsmen, and humanitarians, working together in a common cause, is needed to overcome existing apathy, indifference, and hopelessness.

For years anterior to 1914 it was known that the existing Acts were to be unified, involving more or less disintegration and reconstruction. The Act that emerges will depend, not upon this M.P. or that Society, but upon the earnestness and determination of every individual bird-lover in the Kingdom; and the sooner the resolution of each and all is formed as to what shall and what shall not be admitted in the new law the more ready they will be to guide the opinions of their representatives when the time comes.

Certain defects in the present Acts stand out conspicuously.

It is generally declared to be complicated and unintelligible. A law which is to bind educated and uneducated, adult and child, and to be administered in the main by country police and country justices, should be before all things simple, clear, and definite.

It is obviously incapable of preserving rare species and their eggs. In the future there must be no easy road for the collector to record his examination "in the flesh" of every

rare bird that tries to enter or breed in this country; for the egg-dealer to advertise openly for clutches of eggs of rare and useful birds; for the bird-stuffer to cover the slaughter of protected birds; for the private collector to boast the possession of protected eggs. Possession must rank with taking as an offence in the case of bird and egg alike.

Again, the Acts have notoriously proved insufficient to deal with the catching of birds and their confinement in the vilest little boxes ever invented for the imprisonment of wild winged creatures. The new Act must leave no possibility for the use of braced decoy-birds or of bird-lime; no possibility of the keeping of Lark, Chaffinch, or Linnet in a cell seven inches by four, or in perpetual darkness inside the black cloth of the "fancier" who has a bet or a prize to win at the public-house. It must be no longer possible for the loafing bird-catcher to sweep the country of its singing-birds, or for London Stores, with crowds of humane persons among their shareholders, to receive for sale terrified Goldfinches which have been sent over from Ireland in the hope of thereby getting behind the law protecting them in London. The unmeaning words "recently taken," which have probably franked more offences than the clause containing them has convicted, must disappear, with all other ambiguities; and the concession made to land-occupiers must cease to apply to the boy with a trap in the backyard, and the Cockney owner of a solitary pear-tree who bangs away all Sunday at the Thrushes and Tits which his neighbours have fed through the winter.

Yet again, the Acts and Orders, in all their combined wisdom and infinite variety, have utterly failed to reach or affect the mind of the ordinary agricultural worker and the country child; or even the country policeman. Hedge-row-hunting, with pulling of nests, smashing of eggs, and killing of nestlings proceeds as merrily in thousands of villages as if no law

whatever existed. Complaint of these things has never been more widespread or more bitter than this year; the increased turbulence of children, owing to lack of control and discipline during the absence of fathers and teachers, probably accounting in part, and the Board of Agriculture folly for another large part. The countryman, moreover, is no ornithologist; and it concerns him not at all to be told in a lengthy notice in the county paper that it is illegal to take a particular Bunting which he never heard of, or the eggs of a variety of Warbler which he didn't know existed.

In the case of both worker and child education is imperative. In order to protect birds they must know a little about them. Information regarding their characteristics and habits and ways must be circulated. Schoolchildren must be taught something of the world of life of which they themselves are a part, of the correlation and co-operation and unity of its members. Bird and Tree (Arbor Day) schemes, or their equivalent, must bring light and air into the whole elementary educational system. If it is true, as many teachers assert, that the time-table is already hopelessly overcrowded, then some study less essential must be thrown out, and opportunity afforded for the opening of children's eyes and ears, the humanising of their minds, and the sweetening of their souls.

The outlook may not appear too promising. Contradictions of war, calling forth magnificent idealism and self-sacrifice on the one hand, have on the other hand generated a certain reckless destructiveness, a callous selfishness,

a monstrous materialism that sees and understands nothing beyond the needs, desires, and intensive profits of to-day. Love for wild nature, the veriest inkling of its charm, is an anachronism in a world seeking first the assurance of a pound for every 15s. 6d.

In many cases the breeding-places of the birds are gone. Destruction of trees and woodlands, at the call sometimes of the trench, sometimes of blind and deaf officialism, sometimes of the motor-hog, has been succeeded by an outcry against the hedges where the hated wild children of the countryside have their homes. An aggressive utilitarianism proclaims that man lives by bread alone; beauty is to be valued only at its market price. Cinema and gramophone can supply all requisite art and music. The living charm, the gracious loveliness and wild harmony of meadow and wood, and lane and heath, of the Britain that has been defended in blood and anguish from the German Hun, may yet perish at the hands of blunderers at home unless her people resolve that it shall not be so.

Beyond the preservation of the birds of Great Britain come questions in which trade and humanity (hand in hand with science) are at grips; questions such as the spoliation of the world to suit the greed of feather-mongers, and the turning of Antarctic islands into a shambles to grease the palm of the trader in oil. On both these matters protests loud and stern have been raised for many years. It is time for action.

Economic Ornithology.

THE FOOD OF WILD BIRDS.

In the *Journal* of the Board of Agriculture for March, 1919, Dr. W. E. Collinge continues his "Investigations on the Food of Wild Birds," computed by the "volumetric" method. The species taken this time are the Jackdaw, Starling, Chaffinch, Yellowhammer, Great Tit, Blue Tit, Song Thrush, Fieldfare; and in giving his report and diagrams, the writer observes that definite standards are now proposed, but that in future investigations regarding the same species the question of the increase or decrease of the species must be borne in mind, since a bird becomes injurious when, as the result of a great increase in numbers, there is an insufficiency of its natural

food. This has happened, he says, in the case of the Starling, which has enormously increased during the past 15 or 16 years. Dr. Collinge holds, however, that even so the Starling is less injurious than the Rook, for whose sins it would appear to be largely answerable.

"Like the Rook, the Starling has gradually been forced to supplement its diet by cereals and fruit. . . If it were considerably reduced in numbers this species would economically prove a most useful and valuable bird, where at present it must be classed as an injurious one."

Dr. Collinge gives percentages of the foods of these two much-debated birds, showing the main injuries by the Rook to consist of 35 per cent. of cereals and 13 of potatoes and roots, as against 23 per cent. of injurious

insects (or 30 including slugs, snails, millipedes, and worms); and for the Starling, 20 per cent. cereals, 2 of roots, 15 of cultivated fruits, and 26 per cent. of injurious insects (or 42 including worms, slugs, millipedes, and snails). The food of Starling nestlings showed 89 per cent. of injurious insects.

The Chaffinch, on the other hand, is stated to have decreased of late years, and both this bird and the Yellow Bunting the writer regards as generally speaking beneficial. Of the Song Thrush, he says: "Fruitgrowers generally will be well advised and acting in their own interests if they leave this bird alone," while the Fieldfare "is a most valuable bird to the farmer and merits every protection during its stay in this country."

Of the Tits Dr. Collinge is a hearty champion.

"Were it not for the Tits and similar birds, the cultivation of fruit would long ago have proved unprofitable, owing to the innumerable insect pests that attack the majority of fruit trees, in spite of spraying and other artificial means of protection . . . As a destroyer of injurious insects the Great Tit must be reckoned as one of the most valuable we have . . . Whilst a hundred Tits in an orchard may commit an appreciable amount of damage to the fruit, it is extremely doubtful if there would have been any fruit to damage had it not been for their good services earlier in the season."

And of the Blue Tit he writes similarly:—

"All who foster or aid in its destruction are doing a serious injury both to themselves and fruit-growers in general."

Dealing with these birds in *Country Life*, Dr. Collinge tells a story of the kind familiar to those who have investigated complaints of the diet of birds. A correspondent wrote that he had shot dozens of Tits as "dreadful enemies" to fruits and peas, adding "it is astonishing how quickly they will destroy a crop of the latter." Three of the "dreadful enemies" were, by request, shot and forwarded, and their stomachs were found packed with caterpillars and green-fly, with no trace whatever of vegetable matter.

Dr. Collinge summarises his verdict as follows:—

"1. The Jackdaw, Yellow Bunting, Great Tit, Blue Tit, Song Thrush, and Fieldfare are distinctly beneficial.

"2. The Great Tit, Blue Tit, and Fieldfare are beneficial to such an extent that their protection is advisable.

"3. In spite of the injuries it commits, it would be unwise to recommend any repressive measures for the Chaffinch.

"4. The Starling has been allowed unduly to increase. At the present time it is far too numerous and the injuries it commits are far greater than the benefits it confers. Temporary repressive measures would no doubt help to restore a more normal population of this bird, with considerable benefit to both the farmer and the fruitgrower."

FINCHES AND FRUIT-TREE BUDS.

A long correspondence has taken place in the *New Statesman*, dealing in the first instance with the Bullfinch and its destruction by fruit-growers, but extending over a good deal more ground, and contributed to by, among others, Mr. H. J. Massingham, Mr. E. Pease, the Secretary of the R.S.P.B., Sir Sydney Olivier (late of the Board of Agriculture), and Mrs. Hamilton Leigh. With regard to the damage done by Finches, the main point raised is that abuse of the bird commonly arises when the buds and blossoms strew the ground, and little is said as to the actual result of this disbudding upon the crop. On this point Mr. Frank Buckton writes from Battle:—

"There are two orchards, close upon two acres, in the gardens of 'The Banks,' an estate near Robertsbridge. In spring, 1917, there was grand blossom on the apple and pear trees. Quantities of Chaffinches came; the ground was white with the blossom, flowers and buds pecked off by them. In the autumn a very good crop. No spraying or cleaning done to either of the orchards.

"In spring, 1918, grand blossom again. No Finches; only a fair number of Tits about. No flowers or buds pecked off. In the autumn an extremely poor crop, about $\frac{1}{4}$ lb. to every cwt. of 1917.

"What damage was caused by the birds' disbudding? If fruit-trees flower they generally set a hundred to a thousand more flowers than could ever develop into fruit under the very best of conditions. The trees are even helped if lightened of their overproduction of flowers. This applies to growth-buds too, as they overcrowd the trees and bushes with branches which only give additional work in thinning out at pruning-time. Should a fruit-tree flower extremely poorly, showing only a few flowers, the chances are that scarcely any of them will be touched by the searching birds.

"Even calculating the worst result which it is supposed might be inflicted by birds during late summer and early spring, it can only be a speculation, as the cause of the fall of developed flowers or young fruit might be due to many other causes affecting development before the actual ripening of the fruit was completed. For example, during the summer of 1918 fruit-trees set moderately well in many southern countries, but the tiny fruits dropped at the time they ought to have swelled.

"Does not the same apply to gooseberry bushes disbudded by birds? Almost every professional gardener has somehow got the idea that the Finches destroy them. But who has seen actual damage resulting thereby to the final crop?"

The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds.

COUNCIL MEETING.

THE Council held their quarterly meeting on April 11th, at the Guildhall, Westminster, Mr. Montagu Sharpe (Chairman) presiding.

The Hon. Secretary's Report alluded regretfully to the death of Mrs. Close, recorded the Annual Meeting of the Society, and stated that 21 lectures had been given and 14 Bird and Tree Festivals held. An amended Order for the West Riding of Yorkshire had been issued, protecting the Lapwing all the year and also its eggs.

The Finance and General Purposes Committee submitted the accounts for the first quarter of 1919, and dealt with the usual financial business. The following Fellows and Members were elected:—

FELLOWS: Mrs. Bibby, L. F. Crawshaw, Right Hon. Sir Rennell Rodd, P. S. F. Stubbs.

MEMBERS: Miss Banon, Miss M. K. Buchanan, Frank Burgess, Alfred T. Calvert, Thomas Colgate, Miss Colville, Miss Crosbie, Miss Damer Dawson, Captain J. C. Eales-White, Miss Elphinstone, Miss E. Elphinstone, A. H. Goldfinch, Miss F. Gundry, J. H. Mason, Colonel H. A. R. May, C.B., Mrs. May, John Tidy, R. Ll. Turner, Mrs. Baillie Weaver.

A sympathetic vote of thanks was passed to Miss Newmarch, on resigning, through ill-health, the Hon. Secretaryship for Branksome Park, Bournemouth, which she had held since 1903; and Miss L. G. Lockhart-Ross, Sefton Hall, was elected in her place.

The Watchers' Committee presented their Report, summarised in the Spring Number of *Bird Notes and News*, and circulated in full among subscribers to the Fund.

F.-M. Lord Methuen, G.C.B., G.C.V.O., to whom is so largely owing the amended Bird Protection law for Malta, and H.E. Sir Rennell Rodd, G.C.M.G., G.C.V.O., one of the Society's earliest sympathisers, were elected Vice-Presidents. The Standing Committees were elected for the year. Among the matters discussed were the necessity for prohibiting shooting from aircraft, the killing of rare birds, and the preservation of Heligoland as an observation station and bird sanctuary. With regard to Heligoland, a letter in support was read from Dr. Hornaday, of New York. A letter was received from the Secretary of the Ligue Française pour la Protection des Oiseaux, announcing that they proposed to confer

upon the Duchess of Portland, as President of the R.S.P.B., the Grand Medal of Isidore-Geoffroy-Saint-Hilaire, the highest honour at their disposal.

Next meeting of Council, July 18th.

OBITUARY.

THOUGH it was rarely indeed that the late Mr. H. A. Paynter, of Alnwick, was able to attend meetings of the R.S.P.B. or its Council, his work for the protection of birds was of the utmost value to the Society's cause and to naturalists in general. Honorary Secretary and Treasurer of the Farne Islands Association, and for practical purposes the Association in himself, Mr. Paynter ensured the preservation of the Terns (Roseate, Sandwich and Arctic), Eider Ducks, Razorbills, Puffins, Guillemots, Cormorants, and other sea-birds haunting this group of islands. But for vigilant watching, it is fairly certain that the most interesting of the Farne birds would long ago have disappeared into the maw of the collector.

Mr. Paynter was elected a Member of the Council in 1904, when its increased numbers permitted the addition of non-attending workers. He died at Yeovil on May 16th, in his 74th year.

Dr. Joseph Wigglesworth, a well-known ornithologist, one of whose latest papers on Bird-Protection is quoted on another page, met with his death under tragic circumstances on the cliffs near Porlock, on May 16th, when climbing to find a Peregrine's nest. He was President of the ornithological section of the Somerset Archæological and Natural History Society, and author of a book on the "Birds of St. Kilda," and of numerous papers.

WHITSUNTIDE HOLIDAYS.

Anticipating the high-water mark of "bird-nesting" and bird-destruction which is synonymous with the Whitsuntide holidays, the Society addressed a circular letter to Chief Constables, asking for the enforcement of Orders for protection of birds and eggs, and the cautioning of children. Courteous replies promising help were received. Letters begging a few straight words on the subject from preachers and teachers were also sent to religious and school weeklies.

THE DECREASE OF THE HERON.

Heron is of all birds perhaps those suffering most severely through the destruction of woodland; and the paper on "The Heronries of Somerset," contributed by the late Dr. Wiglesworth to the Proceedings of the Somerset Archæological and Natural History Society is not only melancholy in itself but suggestive of what is going on all over the country. Herons are rapidly becoming almost rare birds—in this respect resembling almost all the large birds of England—and to the persecution by fishing interests (especially fishing syndicates) has now to be added destruction of ancient nesting-sites. Of six heronries enumerated for Somerset, two became extinct through timber-cutting, though the trees inhabited were themselves not then touched; another has but one-fourth of its old numbers; and not more than 126 pairs of breeding birds remain in the county.

Dr. Wiglesworth adds:—

"There can be no question as to the main cause of this decrease. The predilection of the birds for fish is well known, so that the ban of the angler is upon them, and in fishing districts they get ruthlessly destroyed whenever opportunity offers. Indeed, were it not for the protection afforded them by the owners of several private estates, within the precincts of which they breed, the birds would probably ere this have become extinct in the county.

"That Herons feed largely upon fish, and at times, especially in drouthy seasons when the streams are low, may do considerable harm to fisheries, cannot be denied, but the damage that they do has been exaggerated. Even their liking for fish is not without its

advantages, as they consume useless and harmful fish, such as pike, equally with the trout upon which anglers set such store, and . . . prey largely upon eels.

"It would indeed be a lamentable thing if a too great devotion to the cult of fishing were to banish this interesting bird from our midst. It is the sole British resident representative of a beautiful family of birds widely spread over the surface of the globe, one which gives keen delight alike to the ornithologist and to the lover of nature generally, and if the bird were once lost it could hardly be re-established.

"But the birds have another danger to face besides the hostility of fishermen, and that is the destruction of their breeding grounds. Herons, although much attached to ancient breeding-places, are notoriously sensitive to disturbance; and the felling of trees, even if only in the neighbourhood of their quarters, often causes them to abandon a site altogether . . . However inevitable the tree-felling which is now actively in progress, and which is likely to continue on a large scale for some time to come, we must recognise the fact that this is bound to have an inimical effect on the birds.

"The number of suitable breeding-sites, affording the requisite security, is even now by no means unlimited, and such sites, under present conditions, will become more and more restricted.

"Birds may survive a good deal of slaughter if they are allowed to breed in security, but no bird can survive the destruction of its breeding-grounds. It is, therefore, all the more necessary that the available sanctuaries should be carefully preserved. More than ever is it the case that it is to the large landowners that we must look for the preservation of this stately and interesting bird to our county fauna."

Not in Somerset only, but to owners of heronries in every county of Great Britain, the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds urgently prefers Dr. Wiglesworth's plea.

The Plumage Trade.

Natural History, the organ of the American Museum of Natural History, publishes a striking account of the Herons, Terns, Roseate Spoonbills, and other species now protected on the Louisiana coast. Formerly "this State was the slaughter ground of the plume and wing hunters, but to-day Louisiana has under her protection more than 300,000 acres of land and salt marsh given over entirely as places of refuge for wild life." To guard this area from trade pirates a force of over a hundred men and eighteen patrol boats is employed. How well the birds respond to protection is shown by the fact that on Avery Island Mr. McIlhenny started a colony of the nearly extinct Snowy

Egrets, and now the birds return yearly and nest fearlessly within thirty feet of a railroad and a hundred yards of a factory. When the young have growing appetites, each parent makes six or eight trips a day to the fishpond.

"One bird watches continually at the nest, and when its mate returns with crop full of fish for the young birds, the two caress and coo with a great show of affection, throwing out their plumes like puffs of powder and erecting their crests and neck feathers."

It is just at this season, when the birds are tending their young and easiest of approach, that Herons and Egrets are killed to provide women with "ospreys" and to fill the pockets of the trade.

Notes.

THERE would appear to be hope for the Antarctic Penguins now slaughtered at the rate of a million and a half a year solely for boiling down for their oil. Their cause has been espoused with vigour and eloquence by Sir Douglas Mawson, and also, in the *Spectator* and *Times*, by Mr. Cherry-Garrard, who was Assistant-Zoologist to Scott's last expedition and was also a comrade in the *Discovery* Expedition of Dr. E. A. Wilson, who wrote about the Penguins in *Bird Notes and News* as long ago as 1905. Mr. Cherry-Garrard writes:—

“Will some humane Member of Parliament ask whether these killings are to stop for the future entirely, and, if not, what measure of protection the Commonwealth Government is prepared to give? The Penguin has won a little bit of affection from all of us because he is entirely lovable, and because he snaps his flippers at the worst conditions in the world. If we do not help him now we can never look him straight in the eyes again.”

A new problem is presented to Bird Protectors by the coming of civilian aviation. It is essential for the safety of man, bird, and beast that no shooting should be allowed from such aircraft. Otherwise irreparable raids may be made on bird colonies, especially on cliff-building birds and incoming migrants. The soul of the punt-gunner and the fool with a gun would pass readily into the flying bounder. General Sir Desmond Callaghan, who has condemned with vigour the ugly idea of big-game shooting from the secure elevation of the air-plane, writes to the Society:—

“You have indeed my full support as regards the suggestion that no civilian should be allowed to carry firearms in an aeroplane. We know the sense of sport that animates the seaside tripper on the shore—in an aeroplane he would be infinitely worse.”

National and International aviation laws should settle this matter quickly.

M. Louis Ternier has been elected President of the Ligue Française pour la Protection des Oiseaux, in succession to the late M. Magaud d'Aubusson. His presidential address, given in the March number of the Society's *Bulletin*, balances admirably the claims of the bird from the material and the æsthetic standpoints, and shows how the demand for protection is inspired alike by practical argument and by ennobling sentiment. “Birds,” like the landscape, are nature's works of art, and man should have no more right to destroy them wantonly than to destroy the works of art of man.”

The manner in which the wild birds of this country are guarded is illustrated by two cases reported in the papers. In a certain southern county, in April, a man out pigeon-shooting deliberately set a bait for a Peregrine Falcon; the bird flew down and was

winged, whereupon it bravely attacked its assailant and was beaten to death with a stick. The police, when informed, had no information to give nor suggestion to make. They merely proposed to ask the R.S.P.C.A. if they wanted to do anything! Yet the police are paid to carry out Bird Protection as well as other laws; and they are not relieved of that duty even as regards the cruel clauses with which alone the R.S.P.C.A. is concerned.

In the second case, the *North Wales Weekly News* recorded that a Llanrwst birdcatcher had, again in the close season, caught 58 Goldfinches in one day—which should have cost him £58 and the confiscation of his nets. Letters were sent from the R.S.P.B. to the police and to the newspaper, with the result that the offender was, on May 26th, convicted and fined £2. A man who bought two of the birds was fined £1; and at Conway subsequently a second purchaser was fined 10/-, while a third, who had released the birds on being told he had no right to them, was let off on paying costs.

It is cheering to learn that other public museums are supporting the work of the (British) Natural History Museum in educating the public upon the economic value of birds. Liverpool is one of these; and the various Liverpool Public Libraries also are about to exhibit permanently in the juvenile departments specimens of some familiar wild birds, calling special attention to their value to agriculture.

The *Journal* of the Board of Agriculture has changed the colour of its cover, but not, unfortunately, its tactics as regards wild birds. Even in an article on apple-aphides, Mr. Theobald, of Wye Agricultural College, writing much about dusting, spraying, etc., names as “natural enemies” of these pests only parasites, predaceous insects, and fungi. What about the invaluable Tit family, and other birds which stuff themselves and their nestlings with “blight”? Again, in the “down with the hedges” article, these are abused as “harbouring birds and vermin”; the authorities of the Board apparently remain wholly unconscious of the fact that hedges “harbour” mainly insect-eating birds which are of “incalculable” value (the Board's word) and do not “harbour” house-sparrows.

The Board, however, has sent a communiqué to the newspapers “denying the allegation that the department is conniving at, if not actually encouraging, the indiscriminate slaughter of all kinds of small birds. Such policy is likely to do far more harm than good in the interests of food production. The only instance in which the Board has advocated concerted action against any kind of small bird is in the case of the destructive house sparrow.” This declaration may raise a sardonic smile, but it is good to know that the Board is at least not proud of the havoc wrought

all over the country in its name. Two years of grub-riddled vegetation and caterpillar-dripping trees, with the irritation thus aroused over the shortage of birds, may have something to do with the disclaimer.

* * *

Is it now too much to ask the Board to issue as many and as explicit leaflets to encourage the preservation of useful birds as they have issued to promote destruction of "sparrows"? To set about the education of country folk in the habits and utility of the small warblers and finches which have been killed by the thousand in answer to injunctions to destroy "sparrows," unfledged young, and eggs? To demand rules in the "sparrow" clubs they have multiplied, providing that the receiver of heads and eggs shall be persons competent to identify and with a desire to limit the species represented, and that fines for killing insect-eating birds shall be at least equal to the awards for destroying house sparrows? If the Board does none of these things, such inspired paragraphs are mere empty apologies. It may not be creditable to an official department to make such a mistake as that persisted in formerly by the Board. It is creditable to either individual or department frankly to acknowledge a mistake and strive to rectify it.

* * *

It is pleasant to know that our Allies, the Belgians, are losing no time, after regaining their country, in taking up work for the protection of birds. A new anti-plumage league is to be started forthwith, to take the place of that formerly conducted by the late

Madame van Hoorde. It will have the sympathy and good wishes of all English workers. The ornithologists are also again to the fore, resuming publication of *Le Gerfaul*, edited by M. Marcel de Contreras. The Ornithological Society of the Centre of Belgium (which it represents) lost in the war its secretary, who fell while leading his men, and its treasurer, who was murdered by the Germans at Louvain.

* * *

Another publication re-appearing after the war is the *Revista do Museu Paulista* (Santo Paulo, Brazil), the tenth volume being issued after a lapse of four years. In size and interest it well fills the inevitable gap, and includes a paper on a forgotten naturalist, Diogo de Toledo Lara E. Ordonhes, with fragments of his work on the birds of Brazil. The present Director of the Museum is M. Affonso d'E. Taunay.

* * *

The National Association of Audubon Societies of the United States proposes to erect a Bird Fountain as a Nature-lovers' memorial to Theodore Roosevelt. It is intended that this should be a notable work of art, and it will probably be placed in Washington, D.C.

* * *

One of the best ways of preventing nest-destruction is by interesting children in bird families, and few boys and girls could read Captain Oliver Pike's new book, *Birdland's Little People* (R.T.S.), without gaining in knowledge and sympathy. It is also very attractively got up.

Bird and Tree (Arbor Day) in the Schools.

If all the schools which have entered send in essays, as it is hoped they will do, there should be a further improvement in the Competition this year. Some long-absent teachers have happily returned from military duties which seem only to have whetted their love for the country and their interest in Bird and Tree work, need for which has been so strikingly proved. Festivals in connexion with last year's Competition continue to be held, and Barton Stacey, winner of the Inter-County and Hampshire Shields, had a highly successful gathering on June 18th, in the Vicarage garden, the speakers including Sir William Portal, Bart., Vice Chairman of the County Council, and Mr. D. T. Cowan, Director of Education for the county, both eminently sympathetic with nature study. Barton Stacey will not be eligible for the Hampshire Shield this year, but as a "Champion School" can try again for the Inter-County.

BIRD DAY IN NEW SOUTH WALES.

"Education in New South Wales," says the *Journal of Education*, "gives a front place to nature study. The Gould League of Bird Lovers, with branches in many communities and a desire to have them in all, seeks to protect the innoxious birds, to secure uniformity in the naming of birds, and to promote friendship and love towards them. A Bird-Life Supplement to the *Education Gazette* publishes the awards of

prizes to children for essays on birds, along with specimens of the successful compositions . . . It is all well done. Nature is counsel and inspiration." A practical turn is given to the Tree study in one school by the children undertaking to bring twice a week during the dry season, two bottles of water to keep alive the school cedar, pepper, fig and gum trees.

BIRD DAY IN OHIO.

Associated with Bird Day in Toledo, the Museum of Art maintains a Bird Club for children, which has 20,000 members, each of whom signs a pledge-card to protect wild birds. On the Museum staff is an instructor in nature study. The Mayor of Toledo this spring issued a special proclamation declaring the parks and boulevards of Toledo to be permanent bird sanctuaries, and appointing the "boys and girls of Toledo as guardians of the birds, to work with the City administration for their protection." Welcoming the support of the various associations of nature lovers in the city and of the Boy and Girl Scouts, the Mayor adds:—

"It constitutes a penal offence to shoot or in any way molest a useful bird. Bird-fountains will be erected in the public parks by the Welfare Division. Birds are not only beautiful, but they serve a useful purpose in eating the insects that destroy our crops, trees and flowers."

PROTECTION OF WILD BIRDS.

A Blue Book has just been issued (June 18th, 1919) and may be obtained from H.M. Stationery Office, price 1s. 9d., containing the minutes of evidence taken before the Departmental Committee on the Protection of Wild Birds. There are also extensive appendices. The meetings were held in 1913 and 1914, and the witnesses included representatives of County Councils, the Police, the R.S.P.C.A., and R.S.P.B., agriculturists, fruit-growers, bird-fanciers, bird-catchers, and others.

IN THE COURTS.

"RECENTLY TAKEN."—The case against the Army and Navy Auxiliary Stores of offering for sale "recently taken" Goldfinches which had been caught in Ireland, was before the King's Bench Division on May 12th, when the actual defendant, Charles Harris, a Bethnal Green bird-dealer, appealed against the decision of the Old Street Magistrate. The result was a further advance in the definition of the words "recently taken." The birds were caught in Tipperary on or about December 3rd, and sent up to defendant on January 15th, by whom they were placed for exhibition and sale with the Stores. For the appellant it was urged that the Magistrate ought not to have taken anything into consideration except the dates when the birds were caught and when found in Harris's possession, whereas he had regard to the length of the journey from Tipperary and the necessity of waiting until they were in fit condition to send. For the respondent it was pointed out that the purpose of the Act was to protect the birds and that the decision was right even if the reasons given were wrong.

Mr. Justice Darling said there were more puzzles in the Act than anyone had ever seen, and to construe it according to the proper use the English language was impossible, but in view of previous judgments he held that the Magistrate's decision was right, and dismissed the appeal. Mr. Justice Avory and Mr. Justice Salter concurred, the latter expressing the opinion that "recently taken" meant any bird taken so recently as not to have had time to become tame.

BIRDCATCHER'S CRUELTY.—At Stone (Staffs.), on May 27th, George Fenn, a well-known birdcatcher of Isleham. Cambs., was fined 40s. and £3 costs for cruelty to wild birds. Mr. J. W. Harris, a member of the Bench, who was opposed to wild birds being kept in captivity, sent a postal order for 11s. to the Defendant, in response to an advertisement of "mixed aviaries," and received one blackbird, two bluetits, seven linnets, and six greenfinches in a box only 3½ in. deep. Three of the birds were dead on arrival. They had been 22 hours on the journey, and the only food in the box was hemp seed. Two robins were sent without food, and died soon after arrival. Defendant was stated to be caretaker of a Baptist Chapel and provided testimonials as to his character. The prosecution was conducted by the R.S.P.C.A.

WAR AGRICULTURAL COMMITTEES AND ROOKS.—In the Court of Appeal, on June 4th, Mrs. Hedley-Stewart, a landowner, of Woodhill, near Otterburn, Northumberland, appealed against a judgment of Mr. Justice Salter at the Assizes. Plaintiff claimed damages for trespass, in that her land had been entered and a large number of Rooks shot and their nests destroyed.

The Defendants were two neighbouring landowners, the Hon. Ivo Byng and Mr. Howard Pease, and the Secretary of the Northumberland War Agricultural Committee, who, acting under the Rookeries Order of D.O.R.A., conducted the shooting party.

It was stated that the two first-named had some years ago the shooting rights over the property, and that complaint had been made of the Rooks destroying game eggs.

Plaintiff pleaded that they acted *ultra vires* and maliciously. It appeared that the Committee could show no minute authorising the alleged trespass, and the recollection of their witnesses was very vague, but the Court accepted Mr. Justice Salter's judgment that they were persons whose veracity could be relied on. To the objection that the Order gave no power to destroy nests, Lord Justice Bankes said that the Committee might take action to diminish the number of Rooks, and the destruction of nests was one of the most effective ways; the entire extermination of a rookery was, in his knowledge, next door to impossible, and the Order did not require any limitation as to the number of birds destroyed. The appeal was therefore dismissed.

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23, QUEEN ANNE'S GATE, S.W.1.

BIRD NOTES AND NEWS (issued quarterly) will be sent post free to any address for 1s. per annum, payable in advance; single numbers, 3d.

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

Printed by VACHER & SONS, LTD., Westminster House, S.W.1—70466—and published by the ROYAL SOCIETY FOR THE PROTECTION OF BIRDS, 23, Queen Anne's Gate, S.W.1.

Bird Notes & News

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

Vol. VIII.]

AUTUMN, 1919.

[No. 7.

Heligoland.

ALTHOUGH seemingly abandoned to Germany by the Versailles Conference, Heligoland and its birds are not yet given over to destruction by bird students and bird lovers. The scheme commended to the Prime Minister and other British delegates by the Annual Meeting of the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, and to the United States representatives by Dr. Hornaday, is finding increased support the more widely it is known and discussed. No proposal as to its future can make a more general appeal, says the Bulletin of the Massachusetts Audubon Society, "than that for making Heligoland an ornithological observation station and bird sanctuary under international control." It would, says *Land and Water* (August 21st), "be a pleasant incident of the peace, and not without a touch of dramatic irony, if this most secret and forbidding fortress could be turned into a haven of rest for migrating birds."

This would be in truth but a reversion to the state of things that existed before British folly allowed the rock to bristle with German guns; save that the League of Nations would safeguard alike the peace of peoples and the safety of birds.

President Wilson is stated to have objected to "dictate" to Germany anything further than the reduction of the fort. The one and desirable alternative is to take the place out of German hands. Left to them there would be but a continuance of present conditions, when thousands upon thousands of weak and weary birds which seek to rest for a night upon the island are trapped and netted by the inhabitants.

An attractive development of the scheme is brought forward by a correspondent who had not heard of the Society's appeal, but who writes to urge that Heligoland be converted into a Bird Sanctuary in memory of British Merchant Seamen who lost their lives in the war through German brutality.

"If your Society and kindred societies were given a mandate to make the place a Bird Sanctuary for ever, and if every passing ship were to salute it, and the Germans be made to dip their colours in memory of their victims, the moral lesson might be profitable."

Mr. Havelock Wilson is stated to approve of the proposal.

Perhaps the best summary of the case for the birds is furnished by Mr. G. A. B. Dewar, who writes (*Observer*, August 3rd, 1919):—

"At two seasons of the year Heligoland is one of the most interesting spots on the earth, for it lies on the route of vast numbers, really myriads, of birds and moths—and occasionally butterflies—during their mysterious and tremendous migrations from continent to continent, from clime to clime. The most fascinating book on migration, touched throughout with the radium of genius, was written on "The Birds of Heligoland" (*i.e.*, the migrants passing over Heligoland) by Gätke. The Russians and Germans have done more than any other people, old or new world, to examine and illustrate the marvellous and fascinating problem of bird migration. Gätke, especially, gave up his life to watching and recording bird and insect phenomena at Heligoland. His theories are disputable, but they are profound and daring, and informed by a curious beauty of thought and expression. I advise no one to press for the destruction of Heligoland—the greatest of migration observatories—and equally I advise no one to make light of such records and hypotheses as Gätke put together and advanced, for thereby they will show only ignorance and folly. Heligoland is invaluable to science, and it is quite possible that if ultimately we succeed in solving the hard problem of bird migration—particularly what guides the travellers and what upholds them during their sublime journeys—we shall be able to solve, at the same time, certain great, baffling human mysteries.

"In short, Heligoland is grandly worth while."

"It is among the best places in the world for observing migrant birds," writes Mr. Beach Thomas in the *Daily Mail*, "and it is apparently useless for all other purposes."

From both scientific and humanitarian points of view, it will be little short of a scandal should so great an opportunity, so unique a sanctuary, be lost.

Notes.

At the time when British Bird Protection laws are being considered with a view to amendment, it is interesting to find Ohio's attractive bird magazine, *Blue Bird*, publishing a history of Bird Preservation in the United States. It appears that the first protective law was passed by New York in 1791, but this was for game birds only. Massachusetts showed a fine Puritan spirit when in 1818 she forbade "the wanton destruction at improper times" of "birds which are useful and profitable to the citizens either as articles of food or instruments in the hands of Providence to destroy many noxious insects, grubs, and caterpillars." But it was New Jersey which first sought actual legal protection for "small and harmless birds," and her law included only some twenty common birds and their eggs. Not until 1877 were sea-birds and birds of fine plumage specifically protected, Florida leading the way in order to save the remnant of her murdered Egrets.

* * *

Naturalists familiar through Mr. J. H. Gurney's work on "The Gannet," or Mr. H. K. Job's "Wild Wings," with the ornithological importance of Bird Rock and neighbouring isles in the Gulf of St. Lawrence, will rejoice that at last the Magdalen Islands, together with Percè Rock and Bonaventure Island, have been made Bird Sanctuaries by the Canadian Government. Their vast colonies of Gannets, Auks, Puffins, and other sea-birds are thus saved from the eggers and the "sportsmen" who have seriously threatened them. Ten years ago the R.S.P.B. approached the High Commissioner of Canada on this subject; but the Canadian Government has grown much more active of late.

* * *

Mr. Ludlow Griscom's "War Impressions of French Bird Life," recorded in *Natural History* (Journal of the American Museum of Natural History) are in entire agreement with English observers as regards the persistence of wild birds in the war zone. In a half-ruined village, constantly bombed, shelled, and gassed, he found Swallows flying up and down the street, House-Sparrows on the roofs, while "in the gardens of the old château was a mountain-ash tree laden with fruit. Here by the light of the setting sun, with the air pulsating with sound,

three beautiful Bullfinches were peacefully feeding on the crimson berries, heedless of three Fokkers which droned directly overhead. Unperturbed and unhurried they finished their meal." The wren sang in naked rafters in the morning, after a night of artillery fire. A Robin sang from a bush amid bursting shells, retiring down among the roots, as quiet as a mouse, with each concussion, then working its way upward cautiously till the next shell screamed.

* * *

There is ground for fear that the return of the gamekeeper means renewed persecution of those birds which the majority of gamekeepers wage war upon—the Owls and Kestrels, the Jays and Magpies, the Mistle-Thrushes and Woodpeckers. Our larger birds have had some chance to re-establish themselves during the past four years. Is it not time, suggests one writer, to penalise severely the killing of birds that benefit agriculture; at least of any creature that destroys rats?

* * *

Woodpeckers should be keenly protected as friends of the forester, and, together with Nuthatches and Wrynecks and Tree-creepers, should be encouraged in all woodlands by the provision of nesting-boxes. Similarly, intelligent gardeners will cultivate the presence of Tits, Flycatchers, and other species by providing nesting-boxes, and by food supplies in winter. The R.S.P.B. continues to supply the best of all boxes, the "Tree-hole," with its ingenious borings to reproduce the actual borings of the bird; and, by preventing the dumping of German boxes, hopes still to ensure "British homes for British birds."

* * *

"The great secret of having a garden well stocked with birds lies in the provision of attractive nesting-places," writes Mr. E. E. Pettitt in *Land and Water* (August 28th, 1919). "Amongst our feathered friends there is close searching and much competition for suitable holes, so it is nearly a matter of certainty that well-placed boxes will be occupied. In the winter months tits and wrens use them to sleep in, and seek shelter in them from the weather at its worst. With a little provision and care we can make of most gardens veritable unenclosed aviaries."

How to make the garden a home is further indicated by Mr. G. L. Searight, writing to *Bird Notes and News* from Gloucestershire:—

With a little encouragement it is wonderful how quickly wild birds make themselves thoroughly at home in even very small gardens.

Some few years ago nesting-boxes were fixed at heights varying from 8 to 15 feet in a row of pollarded poplars, covered with ivy, also in a birch tree; the higher boxes are for Starlings, the lower for Tits. These have been regularly occupied each spring; the Starlings have stuck to the same box for four years; the Tits change about, possibly on account of being annoyed by House-Sparrows. In addition to these, Hedge-Sparrows, Robins and Thrushes have successfully reared two broods each this year, and the

number of useful birds reared would have been greater if they were not molested by House-Sparrows, who succeeded in driving away the House Martins some years ago. One of the greatest delights in the garden is a large flower pot saucer, kept constantly full of fresh water all the year round, where the birds bathe and drink from dawn to dusk.

At this time of the year (July) the garden is full of young birds being fed in the most fearless manner by their parents, who bring their youngsters up quite close to the tea table for bread crumbs. The Tits and Starlings take their young off to country fields as soon as they can fly, but they will return in the autumn and remain with us till next winter. A half coconut hung up will ensure constant visits of Tits. The Robins, Blackbirds, Hedge-Sparrows and Thrushes remain the whole year on most friendly terms.

Economic Ornithology.

BIRDS IN THE GARDEN.

The great importance of the two main subjects dealt with in the present number of *Bird Notes and News* has the result inevitably of crowding out much interesting matter, including letters from various correspondents dealing with the question of birds and fruit. One writer, an officer in the Army, writes of the constant killing of birds—all birds—in cherry orchards while the fruit is ripening. "I walked to one tree which had a net over it, and found myself standing on four dead Song-Thrushes. I did not want any cherries." That is one point of view. Another correspondent asks the Society's approval in killing "some thousands of birds" (species not named) because they attack his fruit. He wants more cherries.

A Somersetshire fruitgrower says that netting placed over gooseberry bushes resulted in the leaves being all devoured by caterpillars and the berries spoilt, while the bushes outside were full of fine fruit. From a Midland County comes a protest against the use of poisonous washes, recommended in gardening journals, in place of the natural insect-killer, the bird.

BIRDS *v.* POISON-SPRAYS.

"My own small garden is well filled with fruit trees and bush fruits. No poisonous washes have ever been or ever will be used on them. The birds keep them clean for me. I have never found a caterpillar in my gooseberries, and they bear heavy crops every year.

"All day and every day in this dry season (June, 1919) the parent birds are hunting busily the insect food to satisfy the demands of their babies. Are they

likely to take it from trees poisoned with arsenate of lead and other horrors?

"*But*, the birds must be cultivated and encouraged; above all, looked after and fed in winter, and nesting-boxes must be provided that they may nest in your own garden. People who write about the scarcity of birds, and leave it at that, cannot expect birds to appear in their garden just at the moment they require them. It must be made a home for them.

"But they will take the fruit? Of course they will if it is not protected when ripe. Even so, said Professor Owen, 'it is the wages of my Choir.'"

THE LITTLE OWL.

Dr. W. E. Collinge (The University, St. Andrews) is asking for specimens of the Little Owl with a view to the examination of its food by "volumetric analysis." There is no doubt that some careful inquiry of the kind is needed, owing to the rapid spread and increase of the species of late years, and the fact that if it is as mischievous as is generally supposed, its misdeeds will tell heavily against our British Owls in the estimation of farmer, keeper, and the public generally. Dr. Collinge believes the bird is being maligned, that less than a fifth of its food consists of poultry and game chicks, and that it is a potent factor in the destruction of the short-tailed Field Mouse. It is very desirable to settle the matter—so far as the complicated question of a bird's food can ever be settled by laboratory analysis—and to ascertain its toll, not only of game and poultry, but of the useful and charming Warblers and other hedgerow birds, of which it is thought to destroy large numbers.

The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds.

COUNCIL MEETING.

THE Council held their quarterly meeting on July 18th, at the Guildhall, Westminster, Mr. Montagu Sharpe, Chairman, presiding.

The Hon. Secretary's Report deplored the death of Mr. H. A. Paynter, a member of the Council; recorded the issue of a Bird Protection Order for Exeter; and stated that twelve Bird and Tree Festivals and two lectures had been held, that a letter respecting the protection of the Lapwing had been sent to County Councils, and respecting destruction of birds in the holiday season to Chief Constables.

The Finance and General Purposes Committee, in presenting the accounts, announced that a donation of £300 to the Watchers' Fund had been received from Miss C. V. Hall, as co-executor of the late Mrs. E. Phillips; also a bequest of £10, duty free, from the late Miss F. E. Lines, of Handsworth, Birmingham. Miss Strang, of Henley-in-Arden, had become Hon. Secretary for the Society for that district, and Mr. T. W. L. Bradley for Nottinghamshire. The following Fellows and Members were elected:—

FELLOWS: Countess-Dowager of Crawford, C. Berncy-Brown, Apsley Cherry-Garrard, Charles H. Combe, Mrs. d'Estè East, Miss Embleton, A. J. Grant, Miss C. A. L. Jones, L. Lister-Kaye, F. M. Lord Methuen, G.C.B., C. A. Russell, K.C., Mrs. E. Tennent, Cecil W. Willey.

LIFE FELLOW: Dr. G. Parker Bidder.

AFFILIATED: Somerset Archæological and Natural History Society (Northern Branch).

MEMBERS: Edward Brown, W. M. Crook, Miss Irene Dyson, Miss Pearl Dyson, Willard Eliot, Miss Evans, Lionel L. Fletcher, Miss S. E. Fowler, Miss M. Bellairs Gaskoin, H. Gilham, Mrs. Gittings, C. H. Grinling, Miss Dorothy M. N. Harris, Miss Marion C. Huddleston, Kenneth E. Ling, Joshua C. Manly, L. G. Matthews, Miss E. Mease, R. H. Northey, F. R. D. Onslow, Dr. Arthur F. Seacombe, Miss B. Staples, Miss Taylor, Charles D. Twopeny, Stanley Udale, William Welsh, James M. Widdup, Herbert Woods, Marcus Woodward.

LIFE MEMBERS: Hugh Guthrie Attlee, Lady Ernest St. Maur, Sir Henry W. A. Ripley, Bart.

Considerable discussion took place with regard to the Plumage Trade and the deputation to Sir Auckland Geddes; and also as to correspondence with the Board of Trade concerning advertisements of a trader dealing in feathers, the importation of which is at present prohibited. The reply from the Imports Restrictions Department was considered wholly unsatisfactory.

Consideration was also given to reports of the destruction of Owls at Putney and of Owls and Kestrels in Berkshire, and other matters. In the former case, a paragraph had appeared in the newspapers stating that two Owls had been shot in the grounds of the Royal Hospital for Incurables at Putney "in consequence of their raid upon young chickens." Not only are Owls protected all the year in Surrey (as in most counties), but this offence occurred in the height of the close season. A letter had been addressed to the Secretary of the Institution, pointing out that this was a bad breach of the law and showed deplorable ignorance as to the utility of the birds, who were undoubtedly after the rats which had taken the chicks. The Secretary wrote in reply that the offender was a young man, a newly demobilised son of the gardener, and that he had been severely reprimanded, and it was hoped the Society would take no action. It was ultimately decided, in view of the character of the institution, not to prosecute in the case.

OBITUARY.

The Society, and the humane cause in general, have lost by the death of Miss Florence Ethel Minns, of Winchester, a friend who added to deepest sincerity of heart, intellectual vigour, untiring energy, and a ready pen. Keenly interested in every side of the R.S.P.B. work, she frequently supported it in the Press, and one of her last acts before the sudden illness which caused her premature death, was to give an address at the Barton Stacey Bird and Tree Inter-County Festival. Miss Minns, who was the only daughter of the late Rev. G. W. Minns, F.S.A., died on July 20th.

BIRD AND TREE (ARBOR DAY) COMPETITION.

The Essays sent in for competition are now in the hands of the Society's Judges, and the results will be made known to the Schools as soon as possible.

Teachers will note with interest that the Home Office Bird Protection Committee propose to place "Bird Day" on the programme of all schools throughout the country. (See Supplement issued with this number of BIRD NOTES AND NEWS.)

The Plumage Trade.

DEPUTATION TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF TRADE.

THE importation of feathers into the United Kingdom was prohibited by order of the Board of Trade on February 23rd, 1917, after repeated protests and appeals from the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds against the continuance of such imports at a time when no tonnage could with sense or justice be spared for the carriage of useless luxuries.

In order to urge the desirability of continuing this prohibition in respect of all plumage of wild birds, a deputation from the Society interviewed Sir Auckland Geddes, K.C.B., President of the Board of Trade, on July 25th, 1919. The deputation was introduced by Major-General Page Croft, M.P. (Member of the Council), and included also the Duchess of Portland (President), Mr. Montagu Sharpe (Chairman), Mr. Frank E. Lemon (Hon. Secretary), Mr. Meade-Waldo (Chairman, Watchers' Committee), Mrs. F. E. Lemon (Hon. Secretary, Watchers' Committee), and Miss L. Gardiner (Secretary).

Sir Auckland Geddes was accompanied by Mr. W. C. Bridgeman, M.P. (Parliamentary Secretary), Mr. H. Fountain, C.B. (Commerce and Industry Dept.), and Mr. E. R. Eddison (Private Secretary). Unfortunately only a very short time could be given by the President, as the coal crisis was then at its height, and his presence at a meeting of miners urgent.

General Page Croft, in explaining the exact position of affairs, observed that the House of Commons had shown itself overwhelmingly in favour of the principle of prohibition. There was no need to labour that point, as it had been abundantly proved. The Bill, which he himself introduced in 1913, was, as a matter of fact, taken over by the Government and steered in the House of Commons by Mr. Hobhouse. The second reading was carried by 297 votes to 15; it passed the Committee stage, but just as the Report stage was entered the war broke out and everything collapsed. The importation of feathers was now prohibited, but the Society feared that the trade, which they considered a pernicious one, might be built up again under the supposition that nothing permanent was going to be done to stop it. They therefore urged most strongly

that the President would give an undertaking that these feathers should be kept on the list of prohibited imports until there was a chance of legislation being again introduced. He hoped the Government would introduce it, but if not every effort would be made to do so early next year by means of a Private Member's Bill. There was a very real national reason for such action apart from the views of the Society; it was almost criminal in the present state of the finances of this country to import inessential luxuries and encourage extravagant expenditure. The objection did not apply to ostrich feathers, as ostrich farming was an imperial industry. [Sir Auckland Geddes: The restrictions are off ostrich feathers now.] India and other British Dominions, as well as the United States of America, had obtained legislation on the subject, and much of that legislation was rendered ineffective by want of co-operation at this end.

Mr. Lemon emphasised the argument with regard to the British Colonies. Nearly all the British Dominions, Colonies and Protectorates had laws prohibiting export of plumage of their wild birds. Lord Harcourt, just before finishing his work at the Colonial Office, was dealing with every Colony, and the position unvaryingly and inevitably was that to make prohibition of export effectual they must have the stronger power of prohibition of import. The Dutch Colonies, again, had said: You have it all in your own hands; prohibit import and all you want will be obtained. The humanitarian point of view, relating to the destruction of birds in the breeding season, and the economic point, dealing with the value of the birds as pest-destroyers, were also powerful factors in the matter. With regard to the question of industry, the letter of Sir Charles Hobhouse in the *Observer* had fairly answered that point. The Society were anxious not only that legislation should be continued, but that it should be effective; cases had been before them in which it appeared that the feathers had come over and were sold, yet a report of the facts to the Board of Trade had not resulted in any action.

Mr. Sharpe handed in a Memorial signed by eminent and representative men, begging

Sir Auckland to look through the signatures and trusting that the question would meet with his sympathy.

Sir Auckland Geddes, in reply, said the subject was no new one to him; he had taken great interest in it for many years. He would assure the deputation that so long as these restrictions were possible, the Board would take very good care that such restrictions on feathers whose importation was objectionable would be retained. Without being able to give any definite promise he hoped they would get legislation, not within this calendar year, but possibly at the beginning of next.

The Duchess of Portland having thanked the President for receiving them, the Deputation withdrew.

MEMORIAL TO THE GOVERNMENT.

The following is the text of the Memorial addressed to the Prime Minister and to the President of the Board of Trade on behalf of the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds and of the signatories, and presented by Mr. Montagu Sharpe on the occasion of the deputation from the Society to Sir Auckland Geddes:—

Before the war many millions of wild birds' skins were annually imported into England for the plume trade.

Unless immediate action is taken some of the handsomest birds of the world will be exterminated in the near future.

The horrors and barbarities of this traffic have been constantly exposed by distinguished men in every walk of life. It is known, for instance, that wounded birds are used as decoys; and that the shoulder-tufts of the Egret are frequently torn from the living bird, which, of necessity, is slain during the breeding season, so that the young are left to starve in thousands.

It has been shown that the loss to retail trader and worker which would follow upon the suppression of this traffic would be negligible. So rapid, indeed, is the process of destruction now going on that the trade will be brought to an end automatically and at no distant date. The increase of substitute decorations, consequent upon the prohibition of the plume trade, would not only prevent individual hardship, but, as investigations indicate, would actually increase openings for labour.

We are of opinion that the survival of a traffic provocative of so much evil cannot in any way be justified. Such vandalism is comparable only with that which finds satisfaction in destroying a cathedral or any other work of art.

Australia and the United States have prohibited both the import and the export of such feathers; furthermore, the export of wild bird plumage from British India and most of the Crown Colonies has been forbidden.

We desire to prevent the slaughter of *all* birds for the sake of the plumassier. We therefore demand that a Bill prohibiting the importation of wild birds' skins and feathers, similar to that which passed its second reading in 1914, be brought before the House of Commons immediately such action is possible. The Bill of 1914 was a Government measure, was introduced by the Right Hon. Charles E. Hobhouse on February 13th, and read a second time on March 8th by 297 votes to 15.

The signatures appended were those of:

The Duke of Rutland, K.G., the Marquess of Aberdeen and Temair, K.T., G.C.M.G., G.C.V.O., the Marquess of Crewe, K.G., F.S.A., the Earl of Durham, K.G., G.C.V.O., the Earl of Eldon, D.L., Lord Lilford, Lord Lambourne, C.V.O., the Earl of Lonsdale, D.L., Earl Loreburn, G.C.M.G., Lord Montagu of Beaulieu, C.S.I., Lord Tennyson, G.C.M.G., Lord Henry Cavendish-Bentinck.

The Bishop of Hereford, the Dean of St. Paul's (Dr. Inge), the Dean of Exeter (Very Rev. H. R. Gamble), the Dean of Manchester (Bishop Weldon, D.D.).

The Right Hon. F. D. Acland, M.P., William Archer, Sir Godfrey Baring, Ernest Bell, Max Beerholm, Arnold Bennett, Sir Frank Benson, Lawrence Binyon, Wilfred Scawen Blunt, Robert Bridges, M.B., D.Litt. (Poet Laureate), H. N. Brailsford, Frank Brangwyn, A.R.A., President R.B.A., Ivor Brown, A. H. Bullen, Lieut.-Colonel Allan Burgoyne, F.R.G.S., Noel Buxton, Edward Carpenter, Cecil Chapman, J.P., the Rev. John Clifford, D.D., B.Sc., G. K. Chesterton, Arthur Clutton-Brock, the Right Hon. J. R. Clynes, M.P., the Hon. Sir John Cockburn, K.C.M.G., Joseph Conrad, Sir Martin Conway, F.S.A., F.R.G.S., W. L. Courtney (Editor of *Fortnightly Review*), Brig.-General H. Page Croft, C.M.G., M.P.

W. H. Davies, Professor Dendy, D.Sc., F.R.S., F.Z.S. (London University), J. Lowes Dickinson, Austin Dobson, LL.D., Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, Kt., James Douglas (Editor of *The Star*), John Drinkwater, W. L. H. Duckworth, M.D., D.Sc.

Jacob Epstein, A. W. Evans (Editor of *Everyman*), C. E. Fagan, Secretary, British Museum (Natural History), the Rev. Archibald Fleming, D.D., Sir Johnston Forbes-Robertson, Kt.

John Galsworthy, Professor F. W. Gamble, D.Sc., F.R.S., J. L. Garvin (Editor of *The Observer*), Sir Patrick Geddes (University Hall, Edinburgh), Edmund Gosse, C.B., LL.D.

Alfred C. Haddon, D.Sc., F.R.S., F.R.G.S., Sir Rider Haggard, Kt., J.P., J. L. Hammond, Thomas Hardy, O.M., S. F. Harmer, D.Sc., Director, British Museum (Natural History), Martin Harvey, F.R.S.L., Carl Hentschel, C.C., Maurice Hewlett, Robert S. Hichens, Professor Sydney F. Hickson, F.R.S. (Manchester University), the Right Hon. Sir Charles E. Hobhouse, Bart., J.P., Ralph Hodgson, J. M. Hogge, M.P., Lawrence Housman, W. H. Hudson, F.Z.S.

Professor L. P. Jacks (Editor of *Hibbert's Journal*), Sir Thomas Graham Jackson, Bart., R.A., Jerome K. Jerome, Augustus John, Sir Harry Johnston, K.C.B., D.Sc., G.C.M.G.

Professor Arthur Keith, F.R.S., LL.D., F.R.C.S., Sir George Kekewich, K.C.B., Commander Kenworthy, R.N., M.P., George Lansbury (Editor of *The Daily Herald*), Frank E. Lemon, J.P., Hon. Secretary Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, Rev. J. Scott Lidgett, D.D. (Joint Editor *Contemporary Review*), Sir Oliver Lodge, F.R.S., D.Sc. (Birmingham University), C. J. Longman, Robert Lynd, the Rev. the Hon. Edward Lyttelton, D.D., Major the Hon. Neville Lytton, O.B.E.

J. Ramsay Macdonald, Walter de la Mare, G. A. Macmillan, Charles Marriott, John Masefield, H. W. Massingham (Editor of *The Nation*), Right Hon. Sir Herbert Maxwell, Bart., F.R.S., D.C.L., T. Sturge Moore, Sir L. Chiozza Money, Professor John Munro (Bristol University), Professor Gilbert Murray, LL.D., D.Litt., F.R.S.L., J. Middleton Murray (Editor of *The Athenaeum*).

Vaughan Nash, C.B. (Development Commission), Henry W. Nevinson, Sir Henry Newbolt, Kt., D. Litt., Professor Robert Newstead, M.Sc., F.R.S. (Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine), W. R. Ogilvie-Grant, F.Z.S., Professor C. W. C. Oman, LL.D., F.S.A., the Rev. W. E. Orchard, D.D., Major S. W. Orpen, K.B.E.

His Honour Judge Parry, Bernard Partridge (Principal Cartoonist, *Punch*), Major H. Hesketh Prichard, F.R.G.S., W. P. Pyecraft, A.L.S., F.Z.S. (British Museum, Natural History).

Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch, Kt., J.P., C.A.

The Rev. Canon Rawnsley, D. D., Vernon H. Rendall, Briton Riviere, R.A., Hon. Bertrand Russell, F.R.S.

T. J. Cobden Sanderson, Owen Seaman (Editor of *Punch*), Martin Secker, Edmund Selous, Rev. J. H. Shakespeare, Secretary Baptist Union of Great Britain and Ireland, Charles Shannon, A.R.A., Montagu Sharpe, Chairman Middlesex Sessions, Chairman of Council of Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, George Bernard Shaw, Professor W. J. Sollas, D.Sc., LL.D., F.R.S., J. C. Squire, Alderman Sir Richard Stapley, Kt., J.P., J. St. Loe Strachey (Editor of *The Spectator*).

Archibald Thorburn, H. M. Tomlinson, R. G. Trevelyan.

T. Fisher Unwin.

Father Bernard Vaughan, S.J.

Emery Walker, F.S.A., H. G. Wells, Walter Winans, Francis Brett Young, Israel Zangwill.

The list might have been indefinitely extended had time permitted. Letters expressing complete sympathy were received from the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Archbishop of York, Dr. Davidson adding that he had written direct to the President of the Board of Trade to express his entire sympathy with the deputation, and that he "wholeheartedly approves of the Society's action." The Bishop of Hereford commented: "The destruction of these beautiful birds is a shocking example of the selfish ruthlessness of industrial society, and not less of the deep vulgarity of the fashionable world." Dr. Fleming wrote a vigorous note on the subject in *St. Columba's Magazine* (August, 1919). Father Bernard Vaughan expressed his pleasure that his name

should be used in any way to help the preservation of bird life. Dr. Scott Lidgett wished the Society success in its efforts.

The initiation and promotion of the memorial owed much to the energy of Mr. H. J. Massingham.

WHY THE GOVERNMENT BILL WAS LOST.

A considerable correspondence on the trade appeared in the *Observer* in July, in the course of which the following significant letter was contributed by the Right Hon. Sir Charles Hobhouse, who had charge of the Government Bill of 1914:—

"A Trader' assures you 'that the Plumage Bill of 1914 was only disposed of eventually by the overwhelming mass of rebutting evidence which the committee was able to supply to those Members of Parliament who opposed the Bill.' This statement is wholly inaccurate; the Plumage Bill of 1914 was carried on its second reading, I think, unanimously, but at all events by an immense majority in the House of Commons. It was carried through Committee with, I think, only one important amendment. It was opposed in that Committee by London Members of Parliament who were alarmed as to the effect upon their seats likely to be produced by the adverse votes of aliens whose sweated industry would have been displaced had the Bill become law. The opposition to the Bill was engineered by a section of the London Chamber of Commerce whose active Members were either immediately, or only one generation remote from, alien Jews.

"The London East End Members above alluded to threatened violent opposition to the Bill on Report and third reading. The troubles on the Continent loomed large, time would have been wanted to prosecute the Bill successfully. Under these conditions with much other useful legislation, it had to be withdrawn.

"I am perfectly willing to put at the disposal of those interested in preventing the continued slaughter and extinction of harmless and beautiful creatures the evidence I accumulated in the course of Committee proceedings in the House of Commons. This would, I am certain, convince the public and the present House of Commons that it is more than ever necessary and just to carry the Bill in the form in which it successfully passed through Committee in the late House of Commons."

CITY FIRM'S TESTIMONY.

One of the partners in a large and well-known business firm in the City of London has addressed the following letter to the Prime Minister and the President of the Board of Trade:—

"I understand that you have received a strong appeal to re-introduce a Bill to prevent the cruel destruction of many beautiful birds.

"May I add my small voice to the others? As my firm has been for more than 50 years closely in touch with the export trade to South Africa and has constantly bought from the fancy feather houses in the City, and knows full well that many of these houses urge that such a Bill would be fatal to their business and throw thousands out of employment, I should like to tell you that my view is entirely the opposite.

"There is not the slightest necessity for any of these decorations to be used, and the hands who are now employed upon this brutal and callous department of the fancy trade would very soon be employed on flowers and imitation items if such articles as aigrettes, etc., were forbidden. The great popularity of ostrich feathers, in which there is no cruelty, shows that the fashion can easily be worked, and if our Government will only take a strong stand like the American Government, it would do endless good and save much cruelty, and do no harm to any but the brutal and the thoughtless."

"A REMUNERATIVE TRADE."

In the course of the correspondence in the *Observer*, Mr. Hamel Smith, claiming twenty years' knowledge of the trade, wrote in its defence, bringing up the story of Egret "farms," and invoking the sympathy of those who "do not want to see a remunerative trade go to France or Germany, which latter country will grab at it." To this the Secretary of the R.S.P.B. replied:—

"There is one point in Mr. Hamel Smith's letter which must go straight to the heart of every Englishman.

"We may ignore all the earlier part of his composition. I, too, have known the plumage trade for twenty years, and am familiar with its apologetics, its ingenious inventions which parade as facts, its appeals for the understanding and sympathy of a nation which understands very well and is consequently anxious to remove this blot from our commerce; its mild allusions to a cruelty which "should not be," but is; and its bird-farms which have wandered from Spain to India, and from Venezuela to the dim isles of the future—which have been, and are, and might be, but are known to no mortal man, and will never exist until the killing of wild birds ceases to pay because there are not enough left to kill.

"All this is a twice—a hundred-times—told tale. There is one, and only one, solid defence for the trade; there is money in it. Not labour's money; there could scarcely be less of that in proportion to the profits; but pure profiteering out of the natural beauty and life of the world. And when Mr. Smith hints his fear that the profits may go to Berlin he hits the nail.

"If this sacking of the forest cathedrals of the world, this pillaging of nature's jewels, must go on, let us, Sir, by all means leave the business to the one nation worthy of its methods—to the Germans of Louvain, of Ypres, and of Rheims.

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Royal Society for the Protection of Birds,
23, QUEEN ANNE'S GATE, S.W.1.

BIRD NOTES AND NEWS (issued quarterly) will be sent post free to any address for 1s. 6d. per annum, payable in advance; single numbers, 4d.

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

Printed by VACHER & SONS, LTD., Westminster House, S.W.1—72646—and published by the ROYAL SOCIETY FOR THE PROTECTION OF BIRDS, 23, Queen Anne's Gate, S.W.1.

Bird Notes & News

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

Vol. VIII.]

WINTER, 1919.

[No. 8.

The New Plumage Bill.

A BILL for the suppression of the Plumage Trade has again been drafted by the Government and its introduction promised. Is this Bill to become an Act of Parliament, or is it to remain a pious promise only? or, when introduced, is it to dribble away into a futile mockery of itself under the opposition of vested interests? The answer lies entirely with those who wish for such legislation and on the amount of steady and united pressure brought to bear upon the Government from all sides. If these efforts are not a match for the efforts employed by a moneyed trade, and by all its ramifications in and out of the House, the cause of the Birds will be lost, and the present hideous slaughter will continue as long as the supplies of birds make it profitable to serve the gods of greed and vanity.

It will be remembered that export of skins and feathers of wild birds has been prohibited by India, by Australia, and by nearly every British colony; that a Bill to prohibit importation into Great Britain was passed by the House of Lords in 1908; that private Bills have been blocked persistently, but that the only one permitted to test the opinion of the House by a First Reading showed an immense majority in its favour; that the Government Bill of 1914, after securing a still greater majority, dragged on and on through committee—and was allowed to drag on and on—until the war clouds burst. [Whether a Bill which any Government sincerely desired to pass would be permitted to linger on from February to August, at the dictation of a handful of wholly unimportant obstructionists, when the voice of the country had plainly demanded it, is another matter. It is at least a useful warning and food for thought.] It has also to be remembered that for two and a half years after the outbreak of war the scandal existed of utterly useless and utterly undesirable luxury articles being allowed place in ships that could not bring in sufficient foodstuffs to the nation.

On July 26th, 1919, as reported in the Autumn Number of *Bird Notes and News*, a deputation from the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, headed by the Duchess of Portland, waited upon the President of the Board of Trade, to ask that restrictions imposed by D.O.R.A. in 1917 upon the importation of plumage should be continued until legislation such as Parliament had approved could be introduced to make the temporary measure final.

The reply of Sir Auckland Geddes was:—

“I can assure the Deputation that so long as these restrictions are possible the Board will take very good care that such restrictions on feathers whose importation is objectionable will be retained.”

Little more than a month after this promise was given all restrictions were removed and a traffic described by a member of the present Government as “an utterly indefensible traffic” was again resumed. [Lord Sankey’s judgment as to the legality of the Board of Trade proclamations would necessarily have had the same effect.]

The inevitable enquiry from the Society as to why the undertaking made to them had so speedily been set at naught, brought the following answer from the President of the Board:—

“It was not found possible to continue the restrictions in view of the decision of the Government to abolish the whole system of restriction on imports. . . . A Bill is in draft to deal with this matter, but in view of the pressure of Parliamentary business it is not possible to say when it will be introduced.”

Questions in the House from General Page Croft and Colonel Yate have elicited similar replies.

The Bill has, however, been drafted. It remains for all who are opposed to the senseless and barbarous destruction of bird life to resolve that a corresponding pressure shall make of this Bill an essential part of “Parliamentary business.” It remains for them to prove that righteous

indignation can defeat this traffic, even though the wealthiest of aliens or the most profiteering of traders be its wire-pullers; to prove that not for ever is the spirit of humanity and the decency of civilisation to be played with, baulked, insulted, and tricked in order that these, and such as these, may strip the world of beautiful and precious wild life, and make of the living heirlooms of the ages a dead witness to the disgrace of British commerce and the shame of British women.

Determination and unity of action can wash out the commercial shambles, and release the nation from the Hunnish burden it has long striven to be rid of; but no means or opportunity must be lost of impressing and instructing the Parliamentary representatives of the people as to the seriousness of the demand, and of earnestly supporting the present Government in that concern which Sir Auckland Geddes has expressed, both to the Society and publicly in the House of Commons, and which he assures us the Government feels, "for the preservation of beautiful bird life."

A general Committee is being formed in connection with the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, with the object of ensuring the early introduction of the Bill next session, together with facilities for passing it through the House without stultifying amendments, enfeebling concessions, or wanton delay by the inordinate discussion of frivolous objections.

It is felt that many men and women unable to serve on an executive body will be willing to give the influence of their names, their active help where possible, or financial assistance. The Society asks that all friends of the movement will communicate with the Secretary of the R.S.P.B., 23, Queen Anne's Gate, S.W.1. Among those who have already consented to join the Committee are:—

The Bishop of Hereford (Dr. Hensley Henson), the Dean of St. Paul's (Dr. Inge) Rev. Dr. Clifford, Rev. Dr. Fleming, Rev. Dr. Orchard, Rev. Dr. Scott Lidgett, Rev. J. H. Shakespeare, Rev. Bernard Vaughan, S.J., Lady Feodora Gleichen, the Countess of Warwick, Hon. Lady Barrington, Lady Hume-Williams, Right Hon. F. D. Aeland, M.P., Mr. William Archer, Mr. Lawrence Binyon, Mr. W. S. Blunt, Mr. W. L. Courtney, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, Mr. John Drinkwater, Mr. John Galsworthy, Mr. Thomas Hardy, O.M., Mr. J. L. Hammond, Right Hon. Sir Charles Hobhouse, Mr. Lawrence Housman, Sir Thomas Jackson, R.A., Mr. Jerome K.

Jerome, Sir H. H. Johnston, G.C.M.G., Professor Arthur Keith, F.R.S., LL.D., Sir Godfrey Lagdon, G.C.M.G., Mr. Walter de la Mare, Mr. G. A. Macmillan, Sir L. Chiozza-Money, Professor Gilbert Murray, D.Litt., Sir Henry Newbolt, D.Litt., Mr. Bernard Partridge, Major H. Hesketh Pritchard, Mr. W. P. Pycraft, F.Z.S., Mr. Briton Riviere, R.A., Mr. Vernon Rendall, Sir Owen Seaman, Mr. J. C. Squire, Mr. Archibald Thorburn, Mr. H. G. Wells, Miss Cicely Hamilton, and many others, new names being added daily. Vice-Presidents of the Society are *ex-officio* members.

As undoubtedly opposition will be speedily to the fore, all who wish to judge for themselves, by looking into the past history of the trade and examining the arguments by which it has been defended as well as the verdict given against it by scientific men, will do well to read the publications, old and new, issued by the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds.

All interested are also asked to write to their Members of Parliament, urging them to press for the early introduction of the Bill, and to support it in the House. It is pleasant to add that the first woman M.P., Lady Astor, writes to the Society that she will certainly support the measure. Lord Astor (then Mr. Waldorf Astor) was one of those who voted for the 1914 Bill.

THE GERMAN BADGE OF CRUELTY.

Under this title a leaflet has been issued by the Canadian Government, and it is hoped that copies will be available for distribution in Great Britain.

"In the Canadian War Trophies Exhibition is a headdress which belonged to Prince Joachim, the Kaiser's youngest son. This headdress is topped with a huge bunch of 'aigrette' plumes.

"What could be more suitable for a German princeling's hat than this badge of cruelty? What woman in Canada wishes to follow his style and flaunt similar plumes before the eyes of many who know the story of the Egret? . . .

"Fortunately it is now contrary to law to import the plumage of these birds into Canada. Severe penalties are provided for buying, selling, or having in possession any portion of the birds. It is hoped that in this instance civilisation will triumph over barbarism, and that the German badge of cruelty will disappear from our midst."

What about Great Britain and British women?

Notes.

"A Practical Handbook of British Birds," edited by Mr. H. F. Witherby, M.B.E., M.B.O.U., and now being issued serially in 18 parts by Messrs. Witherby & Co., is, as might be expected, ornithology fully up to date, with trinomials, differentiation of species and allied or sub-species, and minute details of plumage, measurements, size, and structure, and of eggs and young. Obviously, it appeals mainly to those to whom a bird in the hand is worth many in the bush, but the brief "field characters" (mostly by the editor) are admirable as far as they go. The occasional plates, coloured and black-and-white, are by Mr. Grönvold, and there are also diagrams in the text.

* * *

The Bombay Humanitarian League have now an official organ, *The Indian Humanitarian*, published in English and in Gujarati, and directed against cruelties in the slaughter-house, in vivisection, in religious ceremonies, and in fashions of dress. The first number contains a portrait of Mr. Labhshanker Laxmidas, one of the pioneers of the movement in India and an untiring worker for birds and beasts. For some years Mr. Laxmidas has been an honorary secretary in India for the R.S.P.B., and he visited England for the special purpose of studying its methods of humanitarian work.

* * *

During the past year, reports the National Association of Audubon Societies, bird-plumage to the value of \$150,000 has been seized by Customs Officials of New York City, including 150 plumes of the Goura or Crowned Pigeon. An attempt made to smuggle the skins of Gulls from Maine into Canada, for millinery, has, it is believed, been frustrated by the Canadian authorities.

* * *

Colonel H. A. R. May makes an admirable suggestion on the subject of War Memorials which every member of the Society would be glad, and might help, to see adopted in village churchyards and elsewhere. Struck, as many persons have been, by the useless and often unattractive form of War Memorials for which large sums of money are raised, he proposes

that in the case of such monuments to British chivalry and courage, it might be possible to erect something that would, if tended and cared for, be a benefit to birds as well as an artistic memorial to the fallen—in the form of a bird-fountain or bird-house, ornamental and useful, and with due provision of cenotaph or column for inscribed names.

* * *

With reference to the feeding of birds in winter, which is so necessary and pleasurable a duty in hard weather, Major-General Carnegie writes:—

"The coconut for Tits is usually hung the open end uppermost, in the position of a cup. Consequently, when rain falls it is filled with water. The proper plan is to saw off both ends of the nut very close to the top and bottom, and hang it up in a horizontal position, like a slung barrel. The birds can then get at the kernel from either end, and no water will lodge in the shell."

This is, of course, the position shown in the Society's leaflet "Remember the Birds."

* * *

It is early days to talk of nesting boxes, but more than one instance is recorded by correspondents of double nests, built in and on these, last season. One correspondent tells of a Great Tit family inside a box, with a blackbird's nest on the top; also of a Blue Tit established within another box, and a Robin setting up house without. A second writer writes of a Blue Tit rearing a family inside a box, while a Blackbird built on the lid. In the latter case the box was hung low on the wall of the house.

* * *

A correspondent in East Sussex, a naturalist of long experience, writes to chronicle the presence of a White's Thrush, seen on his own land: "I had so good a view that there was no mistake about the species, as so often happens when only a momentary glance is obtained." This species was first recorded for England at Christchurch, Hampshire, where one was shot by Lord Malmesbury in 1828, and was named in honour of Gilbert White. It is considerably larger than the Throstle, being 12 in. in length, and the boldly mottled plumage also distinguishes it.

The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds.

COUNCIL MEETING.

THE Council met at the Guildhall, Westminster, on October 17th, 1919, Mr. Montagu Sharpe, Chairman, presiding. There were also present: Mr. H. G. Alexander, Mr. Bell, Miss Clifton, Dr. Drewitt, Hon. Mrs. Henniker, Mr. W. H. Hudson, Mr. F. E. Lemon (Hon. Sec.), Mrs. Lemon, Miss Pollock, Miss Gardiner (Secretary), and, on leave from Egypt, Mr. J. L. Bonhote.

The Hon. Secretary reported the deputation from the Society to the President of the Board of Trade, on the Plumage question, and the issue of the Report of the Departmental Committee on Bird Protection: both of which matters were dealt with in the Autumn Number of *Bird Notes and News*. In response to the Society's letter urging fuller protection for the Lapwing, the following counties had obtained Orders protecting the bird all the year and also prohibiting entirely the taking of its eggs: Berkshire, Bucks, Cornwall, Northampton, Surrey, and Carmarthen (all dated August 30th), and Warwick (August 17th). There was a prospect of further Orders of similar character. Hampshire had amended its Order so as to protect the bird all the year, the eggs being protected after April 30th (August 28th). Orders had also been issued for West Sussex (renewal for five years from September 25th), Queen's County and Kerry. Reports on the Bird and Tree Competition were received. A hearty vote of thanks was passed to Mr. Archibald Thorburn for having again given the Society one of his charming bird-pictures—a Ringed Plover and young—for its greeting-card, 1919-20.

The Finance and General Purposes Committee presented the quarterly accounts, and it was announced that a donation of £100 had been received to assist the anti-plumage campaign. Mr. W. Kennedy had resigned the Hon. Secretaryship for Haileybury, on finally retiring from the College. Mr. Kennedy is one of the oldest friends of the Society, becoming an Hon. Secretary in 1894, and he gave invaluable help when the lecture scheme was started. Mr. William Watson had become Hon. Secretary for the Chard District of Somerset. The following Fellows and Members were elected:—

FELLOWS: T. L. Bradley, Mrs. T. L. Bradley, G. C. Clayton, Mrs. Donisthorpe, W. J. Fieldhouse, C.B.E.,

Miss Agnes Nix, Dr. Amelia le Pelley, Mrs. Slade-Baker, Mrs. Waite, Professor Ernest Warren (Natal Museum).

MEMBERS: Admiral Lewis Bayly, Mrs. E. Blandy, Miss F. Costain, Mrs. C. W. Catt, R. C. Dunn, Mrs. Ellsworth-Turner, H. D. Fairrie, Mrs. R. B. Glen, Miss W. B. Godfrey, Miss Thora James, T. C. Jeffrey, Mrs. Arnold Jones, Miss A. F. S. Kentish, Miss Lilian Macara, Miss F. Maddern, John S. Masterman, Sir Raymond Menendez, Clifton Mitchell, Miss Morey, Mrs. R. Nelson, Robert B. Oxley, Miss Orvida de Pass, Ven. John Perham, Miss Robinson, Miss Constance Ryves, Miss Elsie Stevens, H. B. Turney, P. Vernon-Dodd, M.D., W. Strang-Watkins, William Watson, Captain T. A. Neill Watson, M.D., M.C., C. B. Whelan, Miss E. M. Whelan, Miss Marion Wilson.

LIFE MEMBERS: Dan Cave, Mrs. Rose-Innes.

In the course of discussion on the Home Office Committee's Report on the Bird Protection laws, a letter was read from Sir George Kekewich, criticising the composition of the schedules suggested, and commenting on the clauses dealing with bird-catching. A letter had been received from the Society for the Protection of Animals and Plants of Catalonia, strongly urging that steps should be taken to bring the subject of International Protection for Birds before the League of Nations. It was agreed that every effort should be made to forward the matter as soon as the League was well established; and the question was referred to the Watchers' Committee.

Discussion took place with regard to the possible use of the cinema for propagandist work: to the vague programme of a recently started society for dealing with "agricultural and other pests": and to the protection of birds in certain areas.

The Council met again on December 19th to receive the statement of accounts for October and November, and to discuss various special questions, including the prospective Plumage Bill, and a much-needed measure to prohibit the sale of Plovers' eggs at the time when the taking of them is prohibited. It was reported that Glamorgan had obtained an Order (November 20th, 1919) fully protecting both the Lapwing and its eggs; also that eleven lectures had been given. The following additional Fellows and Members were elected:—

FELLOWS: Hon. Lady Barrington, Miss Chawner, A. Townsend Cobbold, Andrews Crompton, Mrs. Drabble, Mrs. Patrick Hadow, Miss M. Maud Herbert, Mrs. Russell Naylor, Colonel Pinkham, M.P., Maurice

R. Portal, D.S.O., Miss B. E. Rawlings, Miss A. F. Smith, Lieut.-Colonel R. C. Swan, Dr. A. Barry Sykes.

MEMBERS: Alfred Chas. Adams, Miss Barber, Mrs. Rathbone Bolton, Eric J. Brown, Miss Chilton, Mrs. Hamilton, Rev. John Heaton, Miss M. Horton, G. R. Jackman, Miss A. F. Kindermann, Charles Osenton, Miss E. L. Seaver, Miss Lucy I. Simpson, Archer Vassall, M.A., J. B. Wallis, R. G. Warder, John Wilcock, W. B. Wilson.

"FIGHT FOR THE BIRDS" FUND.

In order to canvass Members of Parliament and voters on behalf of the promised Government Bill to prohibit the importation of wild birds' plumage, and to provide propagandist literature, a special "Fight for the Birds" Fund has been opened by the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds. It started with a donation of £100 from a giver who wishes to remain anonymous, and who has since generously doubled the amount; and various other donations have been received, which will be duly announced. Although the Bill is as yet only in draft, it may be said that it will in no way interfere with the trade in ostrich feathers or with the legitimate importation of birdskins for scientific purposes.

THE PENGUINS OF MACQUARIE.

The long-continued efforts of the Society on behalf of the persecuted Penguins of Macquarie Island have at last borne the fruit desired. It is announced that the Government of Tasmania has refused to renew the lease of the island to Mr. Joseph Hatch and his oil company, which for years has been massacring the birds at the rate of a million and a half a year for the sole purpose of boiling them down for their oil. It may be remembered that as long ago as 1905 a resolution carried at the International Ornithological Congress, at the instigation of the Society, was cabled to the Tasmanian Government protesting against the business; but unhappily the lease was later on renewed. Letters of remonstrance and appeal have since been addressed by the R.S.P.B. to the New Zealand and Tasmanian Governments, and to the Prime Minister of the Commonwealth. The subject was again brought forward last March at the Annual Meeting of the R.S.P.B.; Mr. Mattingley, the Society's representative in Australia, offered his services to go over and investigate the facts; Mr. Pyecraft ventilated the matter in the Press; Mr. H. G. Wells made it the subject of a powerful passage in *The Undying Fire*; Sir Douglas Mawson spoke strongly upon it before the Zoological Society of London; Mr. Cherry-Garrard roused

public opinion through *The Times* and the *Speciator*. At last the hideous slaughter is brought to an end.

"We venture to hope," says *The Times* (December 29th, 1919), "that a further step will be taken, and that means will be found to make Macquarie Island an inviolable sanctuary for Antarctic life."

BIRD PROTECTION IN EGYPT.

A strongly-written foreword on the need for protection of Birds in Egypt, from the pen of Major Stanley Flower, Director of the Zoological Service in connection with the Ministry of Public Works, prefaces a valuable and painfully interesting pamphlet on "Bird Liming in Lower Egypt," just published by the Government Press at Cairo. The writer is Mr. J. Lewis Bonhote, F.L.S. (a member of the Council of the R.S.P.B. before Egypt secured his services), who gives his personal knowledge of this abominable practice which, though illegal, is still profitably carried on and involves the destruction with extreme cruelty of immense quantities of charming and useful small birds. It is largely due to F.-M. Lord Kitchener that the protection law exists, and it has resulted, Major Flower states, "in a most gratifying increase in the numbers of many species of useful and beautiful birds, especially the Rufous Warbler, the Hoopoe, and the Buff-backed Heron." It is to be hoped that the efforts of the Director and Mr. Bonhote will effectually convict the local authorities of their folly and inhumanity and save the migratory birds "which would otherwise benefit the whole of their country." England will be able to speak more freely still when bird-liming and the use of decoy-birds are prohibited in this country.

OBITUARY.

Mr. James Bigwood, a Vice-President of the Society since 1896, whose death has to be recorded, will be gratefully remembered for his work in Parliament when in charge of the Bill, now the Act, of 1896, giving County Councils power to protect birds beyond the close-time period. The Bill had a somewhat stormy career, and underwent considerable changes after its first introduction, framed by Mr. Montagu Sharpe, in 1895; when finally in sight of port it would have been wrecked by Irish opposition but for Mr. Bigwood's proposition that Ireland be omitted from its operation. Mr. Bigwood also introduced, in

1899 and 1900, Mr. Sharpe's Bill for protecting all birds with exempted County "black lists."

Mr. Frederick Webb Headley, M.A., whose works on *The Structure and Life of Birds* and on *Flight* have taken their place among standard works on ornithology, and who was a friend of long standing of the R.S.P.B., died at Epsom, on November 25th, at the age of 63. Mr. Headley was for 40 years assistant Master at Haileybury College, and to him the College very largely owes its pre-eminence in natural history. He had retired before the war, but rejoined the staff to free a younger man.

One of the most devoted and zealous of the Society's workers, Mr. John Carey, passed away on November 17th. Gentle and unassuming in disposition, Mr. Carey was a passionate lover of nature and a devoted friend of birds and animals; and as Hon. Secretary, first for Stirling and subsequently for Perth, he had for over 15 years been very successful, by the force of his own deep feeling, in gaining sympathy and support for the Society. He was the author of one of its pamphlets, *Birdcatching and Bird-Caging*, and never missed an opportunity to forward the cause.

Bird and Tree Challenge Shield Competition.

THERE are signs of after-war revival in the Competition this year, although in some counties entries were still lamentably small: teachers who had been absent on Service having hardly settled down to their old work, and, as more than one of them writes, children showing a noticeable slackness since the Armistice—thinking, like many of their elders, that peace should mean play. The general unrest has its effect even in village schools, making confinement and desk-work tiresome; but nothing should help to overcome this better than the active and engrossing outdoor work of Bird and Tree watching. The recommendation of the Departmental Committee that a Bird-day should be appointed for all schools should also have a stimulating effect. Such a general celebration, say, on St. Valentine's Day, might well be a culminating point for the Bird and Tree studies of the year.

The case for the Bird and Tree scheme can hardly be put better than is done in a circular letter sent to Norfolk Schools this autumn by the Secretary of the Norfolk Education Committee (Mr. T. A. Cox). He writes:—

"The Education Act, 1918, desires that a new spirit should animate the teaching—a spirit of inquiry leading to self effort on the part of each and every child. What a child finds out for himself that he knows and is interested in. . . ."

"The test of the success of the work of the school is not so much what the child has learnt when it leaves as whether what he has learnt has created a thirst for knowledge and desire to continue to acquire it.

"I know no subject of study connected with elementary school work which, taken up in the right spirit, is so capable of creating interest, stimulating curiosity, quickening the perception, and storing the mind with first-hand knowledge of the living things around them, thereby teaching how knowledge should

be acquired, facts learnt and records arranged and classified, as the study of Birds and Trees required by the Bird and Tree Scheme.

"It has the additional advantages of being pursued in the open air under the healthiest conditions; of being associated with school forms of expression—drawing, painting, composition, etc.; and of stimulating and quickening the general interest of the child resulting in increased keenness and intelligence in the acquisition of other subjects of school study. Under this Scheme the teacher assumes his true function of director, stimulator and referee in cases of doubt and difficulty.

"Teachers are too apt to look upon the Bird and Tree Scheme as a 'Competition' in which owing to their special school difficulties they feel they would be handicapped compared with other schools. May I ask you to brush this 'Competition' idea aside, and to regard the Bird and Tree Scheme as an educational factor of the greatest value, capable of giving enjoyment to the children in its pursuit, and possible of development in the future to an extent we may not at the moment realise."

INTER-COUNTY SHIELD.

The final contest for the highest award of the year, the Inter-County Shield, lay between Newburgh (Lancashire) and Necton (Norfolk), and it goes to Newburgh, which has on two previous occasions won its County Shield, and now sends papers of genuine excellence, showing capital observation and real practical knowledge, written moreover without notes and in a good clear style. The Necton essays are also from memory, long, enthusiastic, and intelligent, and well deserve the second place. The third place is taken by the Holme School, Headley (Hants).

"TAILBY" OWL PRIZES.

The essays on owls sent in among the Bird and Tree papers and eligible for special prizes,

are particularly good this year and the two winning ones would have rejoiced the late Captain Tailby, who instituted these awards. By a coincidence they come from the two schools first in the general competition; they are both by girls, and both admirable pieces of work, almost entirely from personal observation. The first prize goes to Margaret Barton's spirited and thoughtful account of the Barn Owl, and the second to a lively and interesting paper on the Brown Owl by Joyce Nelson (Necton). Third place is taken by George Stacey (Hinton Waldrist).

The judges in the whole competition were: Mr. Montagu Sharpe, Miss Clifton, Mrs. Frederick Dawson, Mr. G. A. Freeman, Mr. W. H. Hudson, Mr. J. R. B. Masefield, Rev. W. A. Shaw, Rev. J. G. Tuck, and Miss Gardiner (Secretary).

COUNTY CHALLENGE SHIELDS.

LANCASHIRE.

EACH of the several counties competing for County Shields has a more or less distinctive character apparent in the great majority of its papers. Lancashire, in addition to winning the "super-Shield" is perhaps the most satisfactory of counties this year. The number of competing teams keeps up well and they represent schools of varying sizes and localities, in large towns as well as country villages. The work done is keen and enthusiastic, showing a great deal of sound original observation, and in many cases the essays have been written without the aid of note books. The selection of birds is also particularly varied, including a good number of species outside the customary common birds, such as Sandpiper, Curlew, Dipper, Garden and Sedge Warblers, Sparrowhawk, Grey and Yellow Wagtails, Golderest, and Treecreeper. It is noteworthy that one boy studied the Sparrowhawk through watching it over the docks at Preston.

NORFOLK.

In Norfolk, again, the ability to write first-rate essays without notes is a capital feature; and there are many admirable sets of papers besides those, beautifully written and illustrated, which deservedly win the Shield for Necton. A curious example of the confusion of bird names which adds to the difficulties of legislation is the evidently common use in the county of the name "tom-tit" for the Wren.

BUCKS—CUMBERLAND.

In Bucks a small school, Pitstone, comes very near to carrying off the trophy, which goes again to intelligent and excellent papers from Ellesborough. In this county and in Cumberland the whole of the work is conspicuously fresh, spontaneous, and attractive; the pleasure evidenced in the study increasing surprise in the smallness of competition. Cumberland has some additional entries, as well as steady advance among older competitors, and the Shield is thoroughly merited by St. John's Girls' School, Keswick.

HANTS—SOMERSET.

Limited contest is apt to produce inferior work for want of strong and sufficient emulation to rouse the young people into doing their very best. In Hampshire, however, where the falling-off in numbers is as disappointing as it is unaccountable, the papers are as excellent as ever. The Shield is well won by admirable and observant essays from the Holme School, Headley (where the bird papers include Nightjar and Red-backed Shrike), and a formidable new competitor, the Boscombe Girls' School, takes Second Prize. A fluent and pretty style of writing characterises many of the papers from Hants and Somerset, as though the southern air favoured ease of composition. All the Somerset essays have a natural childish grace, and indicate nice feeling, but lack thoroughness and intimate a tendency to be too readily satisfied. Winsham and Chillington lead the way, and among birds studied are Green and Spotted Woodpeckers, Kingfisher, and Willow-Warbler.

NORTHANTS.

Northants and Warwickshire, the former especially, reveal less of general character in the work than do most counties. In Northants there is steady industry and a genuinely painstaking spirit, combined with entire absence of pretence, which promises well for advance and has already effected a noteworthy improvement since the competition was started. The numbers are well maintained. Middleton, Cheney, an old and vigorous competitor, wins the Shield with sound work.

WARWICK.

In Warwick the contest is a close one, Great Alne, Bedworth, Dosthill, Mancetter, and Anasley all sending in good papers, and each of these schools possessing individual character and points of superiority over the rest; the first-named wins by well-thought-out and careful essays.

OPEN CLASS.

The Open Class has never been stronger, and it can but be regretted that some of the capital papers had not the chance of winning a County Shield. Not a single team among them has been content with book or trivial work, and the amount of zealous study is pleasant to meet with. The keen and original observation of the Totley boys gains first place, but there are charming essays from Berks, Suffolk, Sussex, and other counties, and also from Ireland.

In some cases remarkably good drawings, both outline and brushwork, are added. Special mention must be made of the highly artistic work from Bedworth, the Boscombe Girls', Necton, Beechamwell, Headley, Anasley and Great Alne.

The favourite birds of the year are the Thrush, Blue Tit, Moorhen, and Chaffinch; the favourite trees Horse-Chestnut and Sycamore. There are about 30 essays on the Thrush to one on even such ordinary species as Yellowhammer or Whitethroat; and few of them are good.

The following are the principal awards. Fuller reports have been sent to all schools that entered.

BUCKINGHAMSHIRE.—*Challenge Shield*—Ellesborough C. School (2nd year); *Certificate of Excellence*—Pitstone C. *Highly Commended*—Cuddington C.E.; Haversham C.

CUMBERLAND.—*Challenge Shield*—St. John's Girls, Keswick. *Certificates*—Buttermere V.; Cargo; Nether Denton C. *Highly Commended*—Seaton Camerton V.

HAMPSHIRE.—*Challenge Shield*—The Holme School, Headley. *Second Prize*—Boscombe Girls' School. *Certificates*—Hinton Ampner; Privett; Ridge; *Highly Commended*—St. John's Girls, Boscombe; Brooke C.E., I.W.; Wickham.

LANCASHIRE.—*Challenge Shield*—Newburgh C.E. *Second Prize*—Finsthwaite C.E. *Third Prize*—Withnell United Methodist. *Certificates*—Bolton-le-Sands R.C.; Brathay District C.E.; Buckhurst (Walmisley); Cartmel Fell C.E.; Goosnargh Whitechapel; High Wray; St. Stephen's, Preston. *Highly Commended*—Blawith P.; Grassendale (Victoria School); Mawdesley R.C.; Sablesbury (St. Leonard's); Staveley-in-Cartmel; Brow Edge C.; Latham Park (Ormskirk); Parbold Douglas; Scarisbrick Township.

NORFOLK.—*Challenge Shield*—Necton (2nd year). *Second Prize*—St. Faith's. *Third Prize*—Postwick. *Certificates*—Beechamwell, Loddon Girls, Sporle. *Highly Commended*—Burnham Deepdale, Horstead, Ketteringham, Long Stratton, Marham, Mattishall, Melton Constable and Briston, Thompson, Toftwood.

NORTHAMPTONSHIRE.—*Challenge Shield*—Middleton Cheney. *Second Prize*—All Saints' Boys, Wellingborough. *Third Prize*—Welton C.E. *Certificates*—Culworth, Harlestone, Mears Ashby, Sudborough, Polebrooke, Watford, Wellingborough (All Saints' Girls). *Highly Commended*—Croughton, Flore, Maidford, Silverstone, Overstone, Badby.

SOMERSET.—*Challenge Shield*—Winsham P. *Certificate*—Chillington C. *Highly Commended*—Chedington, Norton Fitzwarren, North Perrott, Wambrook.

WARWICKSHIRE.—*Challenge Shield*—Great Alne C. *Second Prize*—Mancetter C.E. *Certificates*—Ansley C.; Leicester Road C., Bedworth; Dosthill C.; Solihull Girls. *Highly Commended*—Copston Magna; Minworth; Rowington; Temple Grafton.

OPEN CLASS.—*First Prize*—Totley C.E. (Derbyshire). *Certificates*—Hinton Waldrist (Berkshire); Greenlanes School, Clontarf (Dublin); Great Waldingfield (West Suffolk); Girls' Hospital School, Lakenham (Norfolk); Slindon (Sussex). *Highly Commended*—Bouverie-Pusey School, Charney (Berks.); Felixstowe Ferry (Suffolk).

IN THE COURTS.

CRUELTY TO DECOY BIRDS.—At *Dartford*, on December 5th, James Whybrow, of Hythe Street, Dartford, was fined £3 on two summonses of cruelty in bird-catching and of taking Goldfinches at Lullingstone. Three decoy-birds were tethered to the nets by means of braces which made the skin raw, and some Goldfinches were in very small cages. Two of the captured birds had since died. Defendant, who described himself as a fancier and exhibitor, said he was trying to catch Redpoles, and the Goldfinches were only being taken out, in the way customary to fanciers, to "steady" them for a coming show; he had received many a 5s. a day by "taking out" Goldfinches.

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Printed by VACHER & SONS, LTD., Westminster House, S.W.1—75298—and published by the ROYAL SOCIETY FOR THE PROTECTION OF BIRDS, 23, Queen Anne's Gate, S.W.1.

THE BIRD PROTECTION LAWS.

REPORT OF THE DEPARTMENTAL COMMITTEE.

THE summer (1919) number of *Bird Notes and News* suggested the main lines which might be followed in the coming reconstruction of the Wild Birds Protection Acts. Since its publication the Departmental Committee on the Protection of Birds have issued their Report and Minutes of Evidence.

As long ago as 1903 the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds asked for the appointment of such a Committee to inquire into the working of the existing Acts. Frequent expressions of opinion by judges and magistrates as to the unintelligibility of the law, continued assertions that it is a dead letter, and the excuse thus given for disregard of its provisions, made such an inquiry imperative if Great Britain is to keep pace with other countries in such legislation, and to conserve the principal, and invaluable, part of the wild life remaining to her. In the words of the Society's Report for 1913:—

"It has long been felt that the effect of the present Acts, and the County Council Orders obtained under them, is not wholly satisfactory, owing partly to weaknesses in the provisions of the Acts, partly to very numerous defects and obscurities in their phraseology, and very largely to the complications which have arisen in the working of six interdependent Acts. Added to this is the varied and occasionally erratic procedure of local councils, and, above all, the fact that the law has not been enforced in any general or habitual manner and has failed to protect the rare birds of the country."

The Committee was appointed by the Home Secretary (Mr. McKenna) in November, 1913, and consisted of the following members: The Hon. E. S. Montagu, M.P. (Chairman), Lord Lucas, Parliamentary Secretary, and later President of the Board of Agriculture (who was killed in France while on active service); Mr. Frank Elliott, of the Home Office (now Assistant Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis); Mr. E. G. B. Meade-Waldo, Mr. W. R. Ogilvie-Grant, Mr. (now Captain) Hugh S. Gladstone, and Dr. Eagle Clarke (Royal Scottish Museum), with Mr. Harold R. Scott as Secretary.

THE BLUE BOOK.

The Committee held fourteen meetings in 1913-14 for hearing evidence from the Board of Customs and Excise, representatives of County

Councils (Norfolk, Cheshire, Worcestershire, Carmarthen), Chief Constables (Lancashire, Berkshire, East Suffolk), the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (Chairman and Hon. Secretary), Irish Society for the Protection of Birds (Mr. G. C. May), Central Chamber of Agriculture (Mr. Rouse Boughton Orlebar), Society for the Promotion of Nature Reserves (Hon. N. C. Rothschild), Irish Game Protection Association, the R.S.P.C.A. (Mr. Polhill), Association of County Councils in Scotland (Mr. W. Berry, Prof. Arthur Thomson), Fishery Boards, fruitgrowers (two), birdcatchers (three), bird-fanciers (two), taxidermists (three), and others, including Sir Herbert Maxwell, Mr. R. M. Barrington, and Mr. J. R. B. Masefield.

The most interesting portion of the Blue Book containing the Minutes of Evidence, however, is contained in the appendices framed by Mr. Scott, showing the legislation of other countries and giving particulars of the ambiguities and complications that have checked the operation of the British law and foiled many of the intentions of those who framed it. These details, it may be said, include numerous objections and difficulties brought to the notice of the Home Office by the R.S.P.B., whose experience both of the needs of the case and of the working of the Acts is necessarily greater than that of any other body, since it has for over a quarter of a century specialised on the subject, is unceasingly occupied with the question, and deals with a mass of correspondence that represents opinion on every aspect of it.

THE REPORT.

The taking of evidence was completed and the Report drafted before the war, and the work was concluded in two or three sittings held this year, the Committee stating that they have not thought it necessary to make a fresh inquiry into the changes brought about by abnormal conditions, since to a large extent the changes will probably be of temporary duration.

The Report itself occupies 44 pages of a White Paper issued on August 19th. It

consists of (1) an historical review of Bird Protection law in Great Britain (a fuller history of which appears in Vol. IV. of *Bird Notes and News*); (2) a digest of the present laws with chapters on the offences and penalties, and on the enforcement and administration of the Acts; (3) results of the present law; (4) the proposed new law; (5) international law. It is a document of importance not only to those immediately interested in the preservation of wild birds, but to the country at large; and while many members of the Society will no doubt obtain the Report (Cmd. 189) from the Stationery Office or through a bookseller, others may be glad to have a classified summary of the main recommendations, and to compare them with the provisions of the present Acts and with the amendments suggested in the last number of this journal.

THE PRESENT LAW.

The present Acts number eight; while cruelty to birds, and the use of poisoned food are dealt with under the Cruelty to Animals Act. They establish a close-time from March 1st to August 1st for all birds, subject to the right of owners and occupiers of land and persons authorised by them, to destroy on such land any but scheduled species. Certain birds are scheduled by the Act of 1880 and 1881; others may be added by County or Borough Councils. These councils may also vary the close-time, protect specified birds beyond the close-time throughout the county, or all birds in particular places; protect specified eggs throughout a county or all eggs in particular places for a stated period; exempt a county or part of a county from the Acts in respect of any bird or of all birds. Orders have been obtained in all counties in England and Wales except Monmouth and Radnor, and every county in Scotland except Bute, Elgin, and Linlithgow. As a general rule they do not follow any settled plan; they are very long, and must be long if they are to furnish any considerable additional protection beyond the meagre Act of 1880. Public advertisement is required only for Orders under the amending Acts and not for the principal Act, and such advertisement is usually incomprehensible to the general public.

In Ireland there is no power to make Orders for County Boroughs (which are not included in administrative county areas) or to protect birds beyond close-time. In many counties

the close-time for certain birds has therefore been extended to December.

"We fear," says the Report, "that few persons are likely to take steps to master the somewhat complicated provisions of the Acts and Orders, or to commit to memory the long lists of names of birds and parishes contained in the Orders relating to their districts; and as long as the law remains as varied and as difficult to understand as at present, it can hardly be expected to secure any satisfactory degree of observance."

This is the admitted state of things.

"The present law is generally declared to be complicated and unintelligible. A law which is to bind educated and uneducated, adult and child, and to be administered in the main by country police and country justices, should be before all things simple, clear and definite."—(*Bird Notes and News*.)

FORM OF LEGISLATION.

The Committee had the choice of two methods of procedure: either to adopt a new form of legislation, or to consolidate and amend the present Acts. Either each species of bird must be protected according to its merits, or according to the common idea of its merits; or all birds must be protected, with specific exceptions.

The latter method is at first sight by far the simplest and most obvious. It is probably the only method by which rare birds, especially rare visitors, can be adequately protected. The man with the gun will always "not know" he has shot a rare bird if the illegality depends upon the shooting of that particular species. It was the plan proposed in a tentative Bill submitted to the Committee by Mr. Montagu Sharpe, Chairman of the R.S.P.B., and of Bills which have been introduced by Mr. Bigwood. Mr. Sharpe's Bill provides all-the-year protection for all birds except those on a black list, with power to owners and occupiers to take or kill outside close-time, and power to local authorities to alter close-time and to add to or remove birds on the black list. The whole difficulty in regard to such a proposition lies in the drawing up of the black list and in difficulties with owners' and occupiers' rights. The popular idea is that the black list would be extremely short, and would merely outlaw the house-sparrow and one or two other abundant species. Owing, however, to general ignorance of bird life and its economic value, contentions on this point would perhaps be unending. The proceedings of "sparrow" clubs have clearly shown what would follow upon the

listing even of the sparrow. Examination of the evidence heard by the Committee reveals the remarkable fact that no fewer than 42 species were named as birds which need not, or should not, be protected.

Popular ignorance stands in the way of simple legislation; just as popular ignorance makes complicated legislation useless. The plan of fundamental attractiveness and simplicity is therefore rejected as a counsel of perfection, and the Committee decided on modification on the old lines.

THE COMMITTEE'S PROPOSALS.

It may be said at once that the Report is consequently not an exciting or revolutionary document. The Committee show extreme care in the examination of detail, and anxiety to be fair to every portion of the community; but they have no bold reformation to suggest, no drastic remedy for admitted evils. They set to work to mend, not to supersede.

The recommendations propose, in the first place, the setting up of two Schedules in the place of one. The general close-time is to be from March 1st to September 1st; owners and occupiers are still to have power to kill or take birds on their land in close-time except those named in these Schedules. Birds on List A are to be absolutely protected during close-time only, those on List B during the whole year.

Schedule A :—

Arctic or Richardson's Skua, Black-throated Diver, Black-tailed Godwit, Capercaillie, Dotterel, Duck (all species), Eared Grebe, Fork-tailed Petrel, Goldfinch, Great-crested Grebe, Great Skua, Greenshank, Grey Lag-goose, Hobby, Kestrel, Kingfisher, Marsh Warbler, Merlin, Nightjar, Nightingale, Peregrine Falcon, Pied Flycatcher, Quail, Raven, Red-necked Phalarope, Red-throated Diver, Ringed Plover, Ruff and Reeve, Siskin, Slavonian Grebe, Snipe, Stone-curlew, Swan, Terns (all species), Water-rail, Whimbrel, Woodlark, Woodpeckers (all species), and Wryneck.

Schedule B :—

Avocet, Baillon's Crake, Bearded Reedling or Bearded Titmouse, Bittern, Bustard, Buzzard, Chough, Crested Titmouse, Dartford Warbler, Golden Eagle, Golden Oriole, Harriers (all species), Honey Buzzard, Hoopoe, Kentish Plover, Kite, Long-eared Owl, Osprey, Pallas Sand Grouse, Sea Eagle, Short-eared Owl, Spoonbill, St. Kilda Wren, Tawny Owl, and the White or Barn Owl.

Power is to be given to vary close-time, to add to or take from Schedules, and to exempt "certain destructive birds" from all protection. The protection of areas is continued, with an amendment to protect all birds "with specified exceptions" in the whole or part of an area.

NESTS AND EGGS.

Eggs and nests of scheduled birds are also to be protected, and it is recommended that uniform protection of bird, nest, and eggs should be maintained by the central authority. This is a new and most welcome feature in English legislation, which frequently protects the bird without the eggs and the eggs without the bird. Landowners alone are to have the right to take Lapwings' eggs, and only until the 15th of April.

THE SCHEDULES.

Unfortunately this proposed amendment of the law continues to call for ornithological knowledge which is not in the possession of police or public, who would still be required to discriminate between closely-related species and to recognise birds they have never heard of. The scheduled lists evidently and admittedly need extension. Schedule B includes hardly any birds but those of interest to the ornithologist on account of their rarity, and leaves the great mass of useful species unprotected for six months in the year.

ORNITHOLOGICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE.

At present County Bird Protection Orders are issued by the Secretary of State (in Ireland, Lord Lieutenant) on the application of the County (or Borough) Council. The Report recommends that "for the purpose of advising the central authorities an Ornithological Advisory Committee be at once set up in London," to collect and classify information, to afford information and advice, to investigate the food of birds, and to direct educational work. It is suggested tentatively that this Committee consist of members appointed by the Home Office, the Scottish Office, the Irish Government, the Departments of Agriculture and Fisheries for the three Kingdoms, and the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, with power to co-opt other members. This body the Report regards as an indispensable preliminary to the scientific administration of the law.

It is recommended that the new Bill be drafted by the advice of this Committee.

The local authority would remain the County or Borough Council. After recommending the arranging of counties in ornithological groups, the opinion is expressed that in cases where, through the inertia of the local authority, no order or a totally inadequate order is applied for, there should be a power in the central

authority on its own initiative to issue a suitable order or to modify an existing order.

BIRD SANCTUARIES.

The Committee have taken several leaves from the Society's book, and possibly these are the suggestions which will have most undivided support from the public. The provision of watchers for protected areas, the erection of bird-rests at lighthouses, the establishment of Bird Day in Schools, are three things in which the initiative has been taken and the spadework done by the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, who have for years successfully carried out all three movements. It is fairly certain that but for the enterprise and work of the Society none of these things would have had a place on the Committee's programme.

It is recommended that power to create sanctuaries should be made use of as far as possible by the central and local authorities, but stress is laid on the importance of regular watching.

"Watchers are practically essential if an area is to be in fact as well as in name a sanctuary for wild life."

The subject of Nature Reserves has, it is confessed, scarcely been touched in this country except by private individuals and societies at their own expense.

It is further advised that there should be complete protection for all birds and nests in all Royal Forests, with a provision allowing keepers and other authorised persons to kill or take particular birds and to take their eggs for approved purposes. This covers the New Forest, where want of adequate protection has been a good deal commented on in the past.

RARE BIRDS AND COLLECTORS.

"The present law is obviously incapable of preserving rare species and their eggs: In the future there must be no easy road for the collector to record his examination 'in the flesh' of every rare bird that tries to enter or breed in this country; for the egg-dealer to advertise openly for clutches of eggs of rare and useful birds; for the bird-stuffer to cover the slaughter of protected birds. Possession must rank with taking in the case of bird and egg alike."—(Bird Notes and News.)

There are no specific clauses in the Report concerning the collector beyond those dealing with taxidermists and with sale and possession, and the attempt to limit his operations by

protecting certain birds and eggs throughout the kingdom.

"It should be made quite clear in any future law that the possession by a taxidermist, for whatever purpose, of any bird, egg, or nest illegally taken is illegal."

At present the taxidermist is supposed technically not to "possess" the bird he holds, and naturally he does not give away his customers. The suggestion made by Mr. Lemon, on behalf of the R.S.P.B., that taxidermists should be required to keep a register of birds and eggs brought to them, and that such register should be open to inspection by authorised persons, is regarded as a useful precaution and one which would assist in carrying out the law; but, adds the Report, "we feel that taxidermists generally would resent very strongly any proposal to give the police powers to inspect their registers." Who, then, should be the "authorised persons," and, without inspection, what the value of registers?

It is proposed that possession or offer for sale of protected nest or egg be constituted an offence.

BIRDCATCHING.

"The Acts have notoriously proved insufficient to deal with the catching of birds and their confinement in the vilest little boxes ever invented for the imprisonment of wild winged creatures."—(Bird Notes and News.)

The Committee in their comments deal in an oddly tender fashion with the birdcatcher. The trade is "of great antiquity," and they "have no desire to see it interfered with, provided proper safeguards are established." It "enables working-men to earn an honest livelihood." Much no doubt depends upon what is considered an "honest livelihood." The man who takes a Pheasant commits a crime; the man who takes a hundred Skylarks (far more useful birds to the community) is an honest worker!

"In the case of professional birdcatchers we were told, and we readily believe it, that the trade was unattended with cruelty."

On this point the Committee might well consult, beside the catcher, the magistrates, police, and R.S.P.C.A., and the records of convictions against professionals. They might then believe less readily. The trade, it is admitted, is very large.

"We were told that an average week's catch by one man would be 6 dozen, while catches of 18 dozen a week and 5—7 dozen a day by professionals were mentioned."

It is also admitted that "the mortality is undoubtedly very high, and the matter calls for extreme vigilance on the part of the police and the R.S.P.C.A." On the other hand, the principal reason, or excuse, for this depletion of the nation's birds, is given in the supposed benefit derived by the farmer from the removal of destructive birds. How often, the public will naturally inquire, does the catch consist of House-Sparrows, and how often of Goldfinches, Skylarks, Linnets, and Chaffinches? And what would be the effect if economic knowledge prompted the farmer, and if the catcher were not allowed to sell the birds?

The recommendations (which might wisely have been given without the comments) are:—

Birdcatchers to take out a 5s. licence, and convictions to be entered on the licence;

Use of braced birds, of maimed or blinded decoy-birds, and of bird-lime to be prohibited;

Killing and taking of all birds in any public place, highway, byway, common or waste land to be prohibited all the year;

Written permission to be required from owners or occupiers;

Birds, nests, and eggs to be protected on Sundays throughout the country;

The law to provide for the liberation of birds illegally taken as soon as the species has been established;

Power of forfeiture in respect of bird or egg, and of net, trap, and decoy-bird, to be maintained and automatically to follow on conviction; this power to be extended to any gun or other instrument used in killing or taking birds, and to nest or skin or plumage of any bird illegally killed.

BIRD SHOPS.

The principal recommendations under this head are limited to "regular and careful inspection" of shops and places where birds are kept, and a 5s. licence for dealers. No recommendation is made as to the size of cages. In order to establish the decision in *Flower v. Watts*, it is recommended that the clause as to possession run:—

"It should be prohibited on and after the 15th day of close-time for any bird, or absolutely in the case of birds protected all the year round, to expose or offer for sale or have in control or possession any wild bird killed contrary to the Act or Order thereunder, or any live bird the killing or taking of which is at that time prohibited in the place where such bird is exposed or offered for sale, etc."

IMPORTED BIRDS.

By way of dealing with the difficulty as to imported birds it is proposed to place on the importer the onus of proof that the bird was taken or killed abroad, or, preferably, to do away with this clause in the 1881 Act altogether

and make the prohibition on sale or exposure for sale during close-time absolute, covering both British and imported birds. This would make illegal the sale of birds kept in cold storage, and the appearance in poulterers' shops in close-time of Plover and Ruffs in breeding plumage.

OFFENCES OLD AND NEW.

The use of the pole-trap and of hooks for catching birds is prohibited by the Acts of 1904 and 1908 respectively. "This prohibition should certainly be maintained."

The use of mechanically propelled boats or vehicles for the purpose of taking or killing wild birds should be prohibited. The use of aircraft for the same purpose should also be banned, the Report stating that already considerable destruction has resulted.

The Committee do not propose to interfere with shore-nets used for taking Plover, Waders, and Barnacle Geese, provided the close-time be strictly enforced, but the "effect on birds accidentally taken and the numbers so taken should be carefully watched."

THE PLUMAGE TRADE.

Although the vast majority of plumage employed is imported, the Committee deal with the subject; and the inclusion of skins and plumage in the illegal possession clause should be of some avail in saving Kittiwakes and other birds of our own coasts. For birds not scheduled by the Act, however, the difficulty would remain, unless the powers of local authorities be extended as far out to sea as those of the Imperial authority.

The Committee regret that the Government Bill of 1914 was not then placed on the Statute Book, and trust it will be re-introduced and passed at the earliest opportunity. They express a further hope that the proposal for an International Conference will be revived as soon as conditions permit, and that an earnest effort will be made to secure a satisfactory Convention on the lines suggested by the Colonial Committee (appointed by Lord Crewe) in 1912.

OTHER RECOMMENDATIONS.

"In the case of both worker and child education is imperative. In order to protect birds they must know a little about them. Information regarding their characteristics and habits must be circulated. . . . Bird and Tree (Arbor Day) schemes or their equivalent must bring light and

air into the whole elementary school system."
—(*Bird Notes and News.*)

It is recommended that the Advisory Committee extend and direct education work by means of popular leaflets, magazine and newspaper articles, lectures, etc., similar to the work of the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, "which has undoubtedly been productive of very useful results."

"Every encouragement should be given by the Board of Education to efforts in this direction. . . ."

"We should be glad to see a 'Bird Day,' devoted to lectures, become a regular feature of the programme of every school in this country.

LIGHTHOUSES.

"It is well known that the brilliant lights of the lighthouses round the coasts which birds pass in their migration have a great attraction for birds, which fly rapidly down the beams and dash themselves to death against the windows. . . . We understand that at a number of British lighthouses perches have been provided by Trinity House and have proved very effective."

Here the Committee make a mistake in fact. The whole inquiry and correspondence with M. Thijsse, the Dutch inventor of such perches, was originated and carried on by the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, and the perches were provided solely on the Society's initiative and at its expense, by permission of Trinity House.

"We recommend that immediate steps be taken to provide suitable perches on all lighthouses on and around the coast of the United Kingdom."

INTRODUCTION OF ALIENS.

The liberation of foreign birds should only be undertaken on the approval of the Advisory Committee. The reasons advanced are the danger of upsetting the balance of bird life and of confusing the ornithological record, and possibly injury to the reputation of British birds, the Little Owl being given as an instance.

LICENCES.

The Committee consider a provision for granting licences indispensable, in order to allow suitable persons over 18 years of age to take birds or eggs for scientific investigation, State-aided or recognised museums, falconry, etc., such licence to be given only by the central authority and on the advice of the Ornithological Advisory Committee.

ENFORCEMENT OF THE LAW.

"It should be laid down clearly in the new law that it is the duty of the police to enforce

the law for the protection of birds." It is recommended that they be given powers of search, of detention, and of seizure, and in the case of offences of cruelty (as in the pole-trap) of entry upon private land without permission.

Notice of Orders should be given for the three weeks preceding close-time and should be required to state briefly, in addition to the terms of the Order, the main provisions of the Acts. Posters should be circulated as widely as possible, including exhibition at police and coastguard stations, railway stations, parish councils, elementary and secondary schools. Notice by advertisement in newspapers would not, in the Committee's opinion, be necessary.

PENALTIES.

It is not proposed to increase the penalty for a first offence, which is at present a reprimand and payment of costs; but for subsequent offences it would be raised from 5s. to £1 for non-scheduled species; to £5 for birds or eggs in Schedule A, and £10 for birds or eggs in Schedule B; for any other offence under the Act, 40s.; further convictions, £5; with costs in every case.

It is recommended that a person giving information which results in a conviction should be entitled to a reward.

INTERNATIONAL PROTECTION.

Finally, it is recommended that the International Convention of 1902 be adopted, and the necessary amendments in the law incorporated in the new Act; and that (reversing past policy) the country should be represented officially and take its part in international conferences on the subject of the protection of birds.

It will be seen that the drafting of the Report has involved a great amount of time and labour, for which the Committee and their Secretary deserve all thanks from bird lovers and the public in general. The suggestions mark a considerable advance upon present legislation; but the subject is a complex one, and much discussion will probably be evoked before the new law comes into being. The Society will be glad to receive the considered opinions and criticisms of its Fellows and Members.

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VIII.

No. 1.

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

Spring Number, 1918.

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23, QUEEN ANNE'S GATE, LONDON, S.W. 1.



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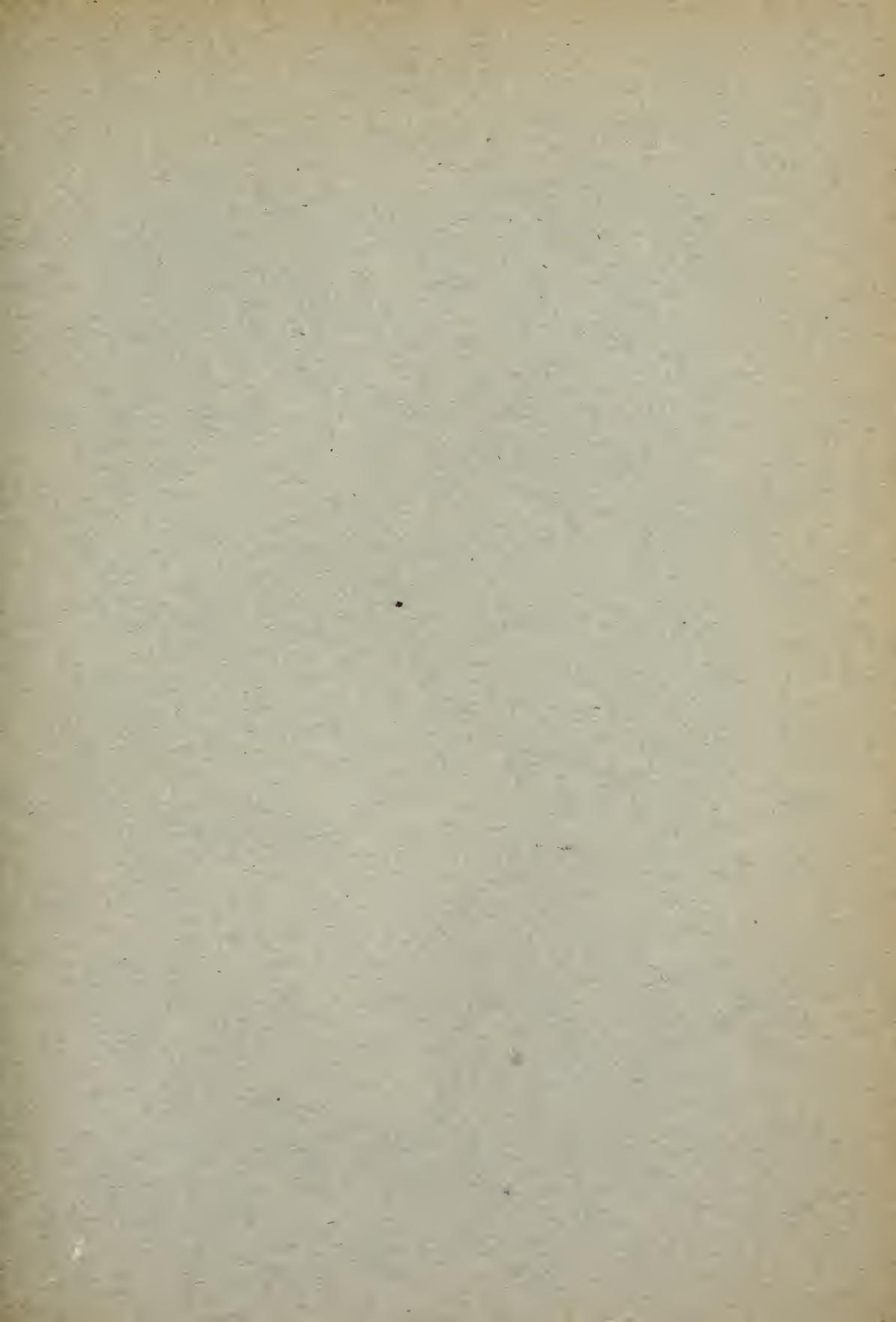
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FELLOW, by subscribing an annual sum of not less than One guinea (£1 1s.), or by compounding for life by a donation of Twenty guineas (£21).

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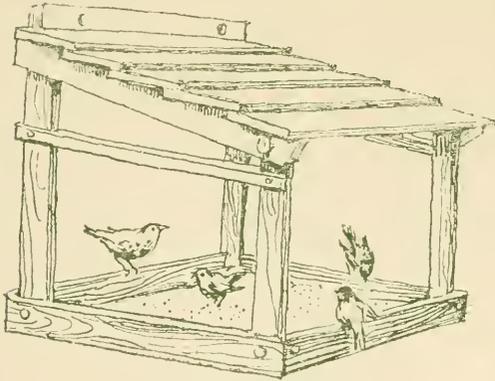
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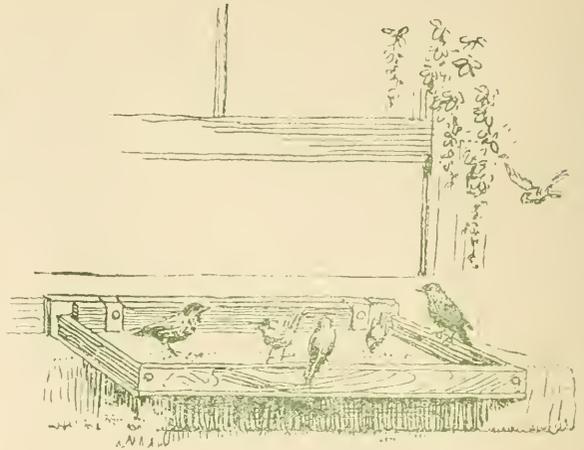
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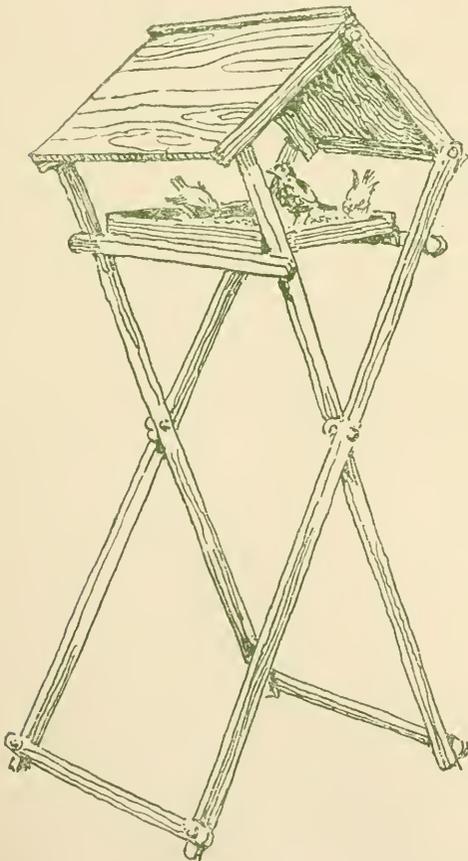
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Throughout the summer the Birds are keeping down blight, gobbling up grubs, boring for wireworms, destroying countless weed-seeds. When the ground is frozen so that their beaks cannot pierce it, or snow covered so that they cannot find the seeds, shall we let them starve under our very windows?

Save at least all food that would otherwise be wasted. Bread and bird-seeds are always good; but kitchen scraps—bacon, bits of fat and suet, cheese, remains of porridge, baked potato skins, etc.—are all acceptable. Barley-meal made into a pudding with hot water is good on a cold day, so is hemp-seed.

Do not place food on the ground. Have a tray that can be cleaned and replenished; a stand for the garden; a "lunch counter" for the window; a "Hanger-on" for small scraps; an "Aye, Ready" hopper for seed. Take a collection for the birds after each meal.

Different birds need different food. All require water.

* See separate paper.

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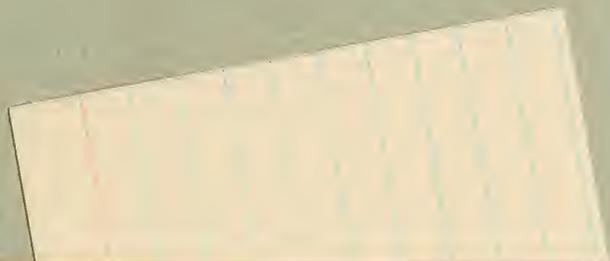
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