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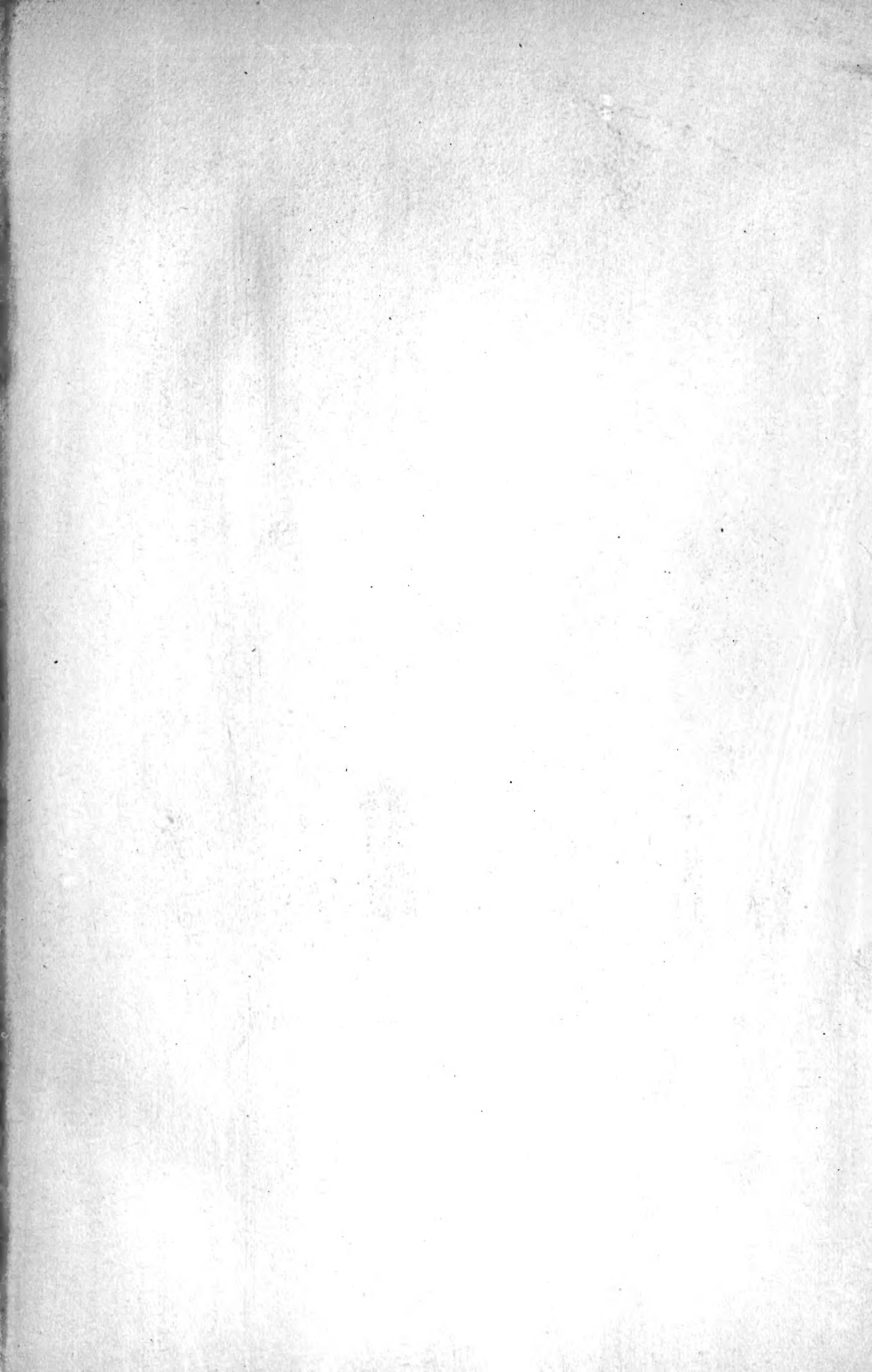


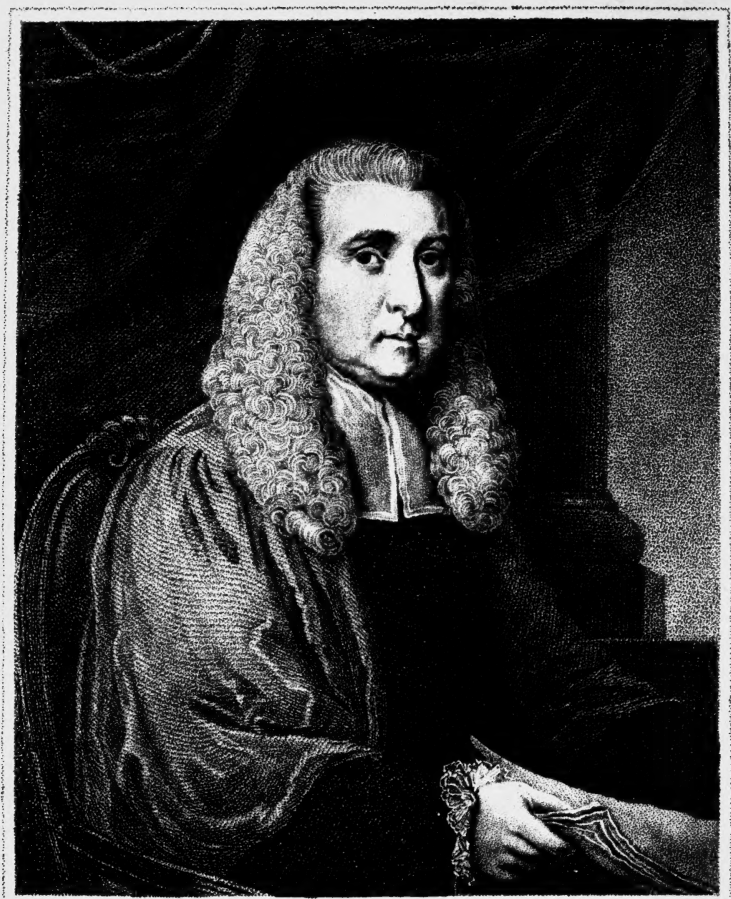


GILBERT WHITE'S  
SELBORNE

VOL. II







*Slater pinxit. 1770.*

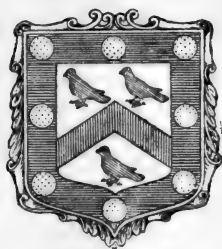
*C. Knight sculp. sit. 1795.*

THE HON.<sup>BLE</sup> DAINES BARRINGTON.



THE NATURAL HISTORY & ANTIQUITIES  
OF SELBORNE & A GARDEN KALENDAR  
BY THE REVEREND GILBERT WHITE M.A

EDITED BY R. BOWDLER SHARPE, LL.D., WITH AN  
INTRODUCTION TO THE GARDEN KALENDAR BY  
THE VERY REVEREND S. REYNOLDS HOLE, DEAN  
OF ROCHESTER, & NUMEROUS ILLUSTRATIONS BY  
J. G. KEULEMANS, HERBERT RAILTON, & EDMUND  
J. SULLIVAN. IN TWO VOLUMES. VOLUME TWO



LONDON: PUBLISHED BY S. T. FREEMANTLE  
IN PICCADILLY. ANNO DOMINI MDCCCC



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*Wryneck.*

*1/2 Life size.*



## LETTER I

TO THE HONOURABLE DAINES BARRINGTON

SELBORNE, June 30th, 1769.<sup>1</sup>

DEAR SIR,—When I was in town last month<sup>2</sup> I partly engaged that I would sometime do myself the honour to write to you on the subject of natural history; and I am the more ready to fulfil my promise, because I see you are a gentleman of great candour, and one that will make allowances; especially where the writer professes to be an *out-door naturalist*, one that takes his observations from the subject itself, and not from the writings of others.

*The following is a LIST of the SUMMER BIRDS OF PASSAGE which I have discovered in this neighbourhood, RANGED SOMEWHAT IN THE ORDER IN WHICH THEY APPEAR:—*

	RAII NOMINA.	USUALLY APPEARS ABOUT
1. Wryneck,	<i>Jynx, sive Torquilla.</i>	{ The middle of March: <sup>3</sup> harsh note. March 23: chirps till September. April 13.
2. Smallest willow-wren,	<i>Regulus non cristatus.</i> <sup>4</sup>	
3. Swallow,	<i>Hirundo domestica.</i>	

<sup>1</sup> Original date of letter July 6, 1769.—[R. B. S.]

<sup>2</sup> "In May" in the original MS.—[R. B. S.]

<sup>3</sup> Gilbert White in Letter XVI to Pennant speaks of the Wryneck as the earliest summer migrant, with the exception of the Chiff-chaff. My friend Mr. Meade Waldo tells me from his notes that, although a few Wrynecks are to be noticed in the south of England at the end of March, the arrival of the bulk of the species takes place in the middle of April. The latter is certainly the date when the Wryneck makes its appearance in the neighbourhood of London, and I cannot help thinking that Gilbert White may have mistaken the spring call-note of the Lesser Spotted Woodpecker (*Dendrocopus minor*) for that of the Wryneck. Any one hearing the note of this Woodpecker in winter could imagine that he was listening to the call of a Wryneck, did he not know that the latter bird was still away in its winter quarters, and that it would be impossible for it to be in England in December and January.—[R. B. S.]

<sup>4</sup> The Chiff-chaff (*Phylloscopus minor*). See vol. i. p. 79.—[R. B. S.]

## 2 NATURAL HISTORY OF SELBORNE

	RAII NOMINA.	USUALLY APPEARS ABOUT
4. Martin,	<i>Hirundo rustica.</i>	April 13.
5. Sand-martin,	<i>Hirundo riparia.</i>	Ditto.
6. Black-cap,	<i>Atricapilla.</i>	Ditto: a sweet wild note.
7. Nightingale,	<i>Luscinia.</i>	Beginning of April.
8. Cuckoo,	<i>Cuculus.</i>	Middle of April.
9. Middle willow-wren,	<i>Regulus non cristatus.</i> <sup>1</sup>	Ditto: a sweet plaintive note.
10. White-throat,	<i>Ficedula affinis.</i>	{ Ditto; mean note; sings on till September.
11. Red-start,	<i>Ruticilla.</i>	{ Middle of April: more agreeable song.
12. Stone-curlew,	<i>Ædicnemus.</i>	{ End of March: loud nocturnal whistle.
13. Turtle-dove,	<i>Turtur.</i>	
14. Grasshopper-lark,	{ <i>Alauda minima locustæ</i> <i>voce.</i> <sup>2</sup>	Middle April: a small sibilous note, till the end of July.
15. Swift,	<i>Hirundo apus.</i>	About April 27.
16. Less reed-sparrow,	{ <i>Passer arundinaceus</i> <i>minor.</i> <sup>3</sup>	A sweet polyglot, but hurrying: it has the notes of many birds.
17. Land-rail,	<i>Ortygometra.</i>	A loud harsh note, crex, crex.
18. Largest willow-wren,	<i>Regulus non cristatus.</i> <sup>4</sup>	{ <i>Cantat voce stridulâ locustæ</i> ; end of April, on the tops of high beeches.
19. Goatsucker, or fern- owl,	{ <i>Caprimulgus.</i>	{ Beginning of May: chatters by night with a singular noise.
20. Fly-catcher,	<i>Stoparola.</i>	{ May 12: a very mute bird; this is the latest summer bird of passage.

This assemblage of curious and amusing birds belongs to ten several genera of the *Linnæan* system: and are all of the *ordo* of *passeres* save the *jynx* and *cuculus*, which are *picæ*, and the *charadrius* (*ædicnemus*) and *rallus* (*ortygometra*), which are *grallæ*.

These birds, as they stand numerically, belong to the following *Linnæan* genera:—

1,	<i>Jynx.</i>	13, <i>Columba.</i>
2, 6, 7, 9, 10, 11, 16, 18,	<i>Motacilla.</i>	17, <i>Rallus.</i>
3, 4, 5, 15,	<i>Hirundo.</i>	19, <i>Caprimulgus.</i>
8,	<i>Cuculus.</i>	14, <i>Alauda.</i>
12,	<i>Charadrius.</i>	20, <i>Muscicapa.</i>

Most soft-billed birds live on insects, and not on grain and seeds; and therefore at the end of summer they retire:

<sup>1</sup> The Willow Warbler (*Phylloscopus trochilus*). See vol. i. p. 79.—[R. B. S.]

<sup>2</sup> The Grasshopper Warbler (*Locustella nævia*). See vol. i. p. 63.—[R. B. S.]

<sup>3</sup> The Sedge Warbler (*Acrocephalus phragmitis*). In the original MS. letter are additional remarks: "A perpetual songster night and day; it has the notes of several birds; and haunts about waters. This bird is totally omitted in the Brit. Zoology." Cf. vol. i. pp. 104–108.—[R. B. S.]

<sup>4</sup> The Wood Warbler (*Phylloscopus sibilator*). See vol. i. p. 79.—[R. B. S.]



but the following soft-billed birds, though insect-eaters, stay with us the year round :

RAII NOMINA.		
Red-breast, Wren,	<i>Rubecula.</i> <i>Passer troglodytes.</i>	} These frequent houses; and haunt out-buildings in the winter: eat spiders.
Hedge-sparrow,	<i>Curruca.</i>	
White-wagtail, Yellow-wagtail, Grey-wagtail,	<i>Motacilla alba.</i> <sup>1</sup> <i>Motacilla flava.</i> <sup>2</sup> <i>Motacilla cinerea.</i>	} Haunt sinks for crumbs and other sweepings. } These frequent shallow rivulets near the spring heads, where they never freeze: eat the aureliæ of <i>Phryganea</i> . The smallest birds that walk.
Wheat-ear,	<i>Ænanthe.</i> <sup>3</sup>	
Whin-chat, Stone-chatter,	<i>Ænanthe secunda.</i> <i>Ænanthe tertia.</i>	} Some of these are to be seen with us the winter through.
Golden-crowned wren,	<i>Regulus cristatus.</i>	
		} This is the smallest British bird: haunts the tops of tall trees; stays the winter through.

*A LIST of the WINTER BIRDS of PASSAGE round this neighbourhood ranged somewhat in the order in which they appear.*

RAII NOMINA.		
1. Ring-ousel,	<i>Merula torquata.</i> <sup>4</sup>	} This is a new migration, which I have lately discovered about <i>Michaelmas</i> week, and again about the 14th of <i>March</i> . About old <i>Michaelmas</i> .
2. Redwing,	<i>Turdus iliacus.</i>	
3. Fieldfare,	<i>Turdus pilaris.</i>	} Though a percher by day, roosts on the ground. Most frequent on downs. Appears about old <i>Michaelmas</i> .
4. Royston-crow,	<i>Cornix cinerea.</i>	
5. Woodcock,	<i>Scolopax.</i>	} Some snipes constantly breed with us.
6. Snipe,	<i>Gallinago minor.</i>	
7. Jack-snipe,	<i>Gallinago minima.</i>	} Seldom appears till late; not in such plenty as formerly. On some large waters.
8. Wood-pigeon,	<i>Ænas.</i> <sup>5</sup>	
9. Wild-swan,	<i>Cygnus ferus.</i>	
10. Wild-geese,	<i>Anser ferus.</i>	

<sup>1</sup> The Pied Wagtail (*Motacilla lugubris*) is our resident bird. The true *White* Wagtail (*M. alba*) is a summer migrant or occasional visitant.—[R. B. S.]

<sup>2</sup> The Yellow, or Ray's, Wagtail (*M. campestris*) does not spend the winter in Britain. See vol. i. p. 52.—[R. B. S.]

<sup>3</sup> Stonechats winter in England, but Wheatears and Whinchats do not do so. See vol. i. p. 52.—[R. B. S.]

<sup>4</sup> A migrant in spring and autumn. Hardly to be considered a *winter* bird of passage.—[R. B. S.]

<sup>5</sup> *Columba anas*, the Stock-Dove. See Letter IX, *infra*.—[R. B. S.]

## 4 NATURAL HISTORY OF SELBORNE

### RAII NOMINA.

<p>11. Wild-duck, 12. Pochard, 13. Wigeon, 14. Teal, breeds with us     in Wolmer Forest, }  15. Cross-beak, 16. Gross-bill, 17. Silk-tail, }</p>	<p><i>Anas torquata minor.</i> <i>Anas fera fusca.</i> <i>Penelope.</i> <i>Querquedula.</i><sup>1</sup>  <i>Coccothraustes.</i> <i>Loxia.</i> <i>Garrulus bohemicus.</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center;">}</p> <p style="text-align: center;">}</p>	<p>On our lakes and streams.<sup>2</sup></p> <p>These are only wanderers that appear occasionally and are not observant of any regular migration.</p>
---	--	---	---

These birds, as they stand numerically, belong to the following *Linnæan* genera :

1, 2, 3,	<i>Turdus.</i>	9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14,	<i>Anas.</i>
4,	<i>Corvus.</i>	15, 16,	<i>Loxia.</i>
5, 6, 7,	<i>Scolopax.</i>	17,	<i>Ampelis.</i>
8,	<i>Columba.</i>		

Birds that sing in the night are but few.

Nightingale,	<i>Luscinia.</i>	“ In shadiest covert hid.”—MILTON.
Woodlark,	<i>Alauda arborea.</i>	Suspended in mid air.
Less reed-sparrow,	<i>Passer arundinaceus minor.</i>	Among reeds and willows. <sup>3</sup>

I should now proceed to such birds as continue to sing after *Midsummer*, but, as they are rather numerous, they would exceed the bounds of this paper : besides, as this is now the season for remarking on that subject, I am willing to repeat my observations on some birds concerning the continuation of whose song I seem at present to have some doubt.

[I am, with  
the greatest esteem,  
y<sup>r</sup> most obedient  
and humble servant,  
GIL : WHITE.]

[If you favour me with an answer, please to direct at Selborne, near Alton.]

<sup>1</sup> See vol. i. p. 30, *note*. Teal still nest in Wolmer Forest. Cf. Mr. W. H. Hudson's article in *Longmans' Magazine* for August 1897.—[R. B. S.]

<sup>2</sup> In the original MS. Gilbert White adds the following: “Brent-goose, *Brenta*; Sea-pheasant, *Anas caudacuta*; Golden-eye, *Anas platyrhynchos*; Sheldrake, *Tadorna*; Dun scoter, *Anas niger*; with three or four more species of *Anates* which the Southampton fishermen call by the general name of *curs*.”—[R. B. S.]

<sup>3</sup> *Acrocephalus phragmitis*. See p. 2, note 3.—[R. B. S.]



*Haw-finch.*

*1/2 Life size.*



## LETTER II

### TO THE SAME

SELBORNE, *Nov. 2nd*,<sup>1</sup> 1769.

DEAR SIR,—When I did myself the honour to write to you about the end of last *June* on the subject of natural history, I sent you a list of the summer birds of passage which I have observed in this neighbourhood; and also a list of the winter-birds of passage: I mentioned besides those soft-billed birds that stay with us the winter through in the south of *England*, and those that are remarkable for singing in the night.

According to my proposal, I shall now proceed to such birds (singing birds strictly so called) as continue in full song till after *Midsummer*; and shall range them somewhat in the order in which they first begin to open as the spring advances.

#### RAII NOMINA.

1. Woodlark,	<i>Alauda arborea.</i>	{ In <i>January</i> , and continues to sing through all the summer and autumn.
2. Song-thrush,	{ <i>Turdus simpliciter dictus.</i>	In <i>February</i> and on to <i>August</i> ; re-assume their song in autumn.
3. Wren,		
4. Redbreast,	<i>Rubecula.</i>	All the year, hard frost excepted.
5. Hedge-sparrow	<i>Curruca.</i>	Ditto.
6. Yellowhammer	<i>Emberiza flava.</i>	Early in <i>February</i> to July 10th.
7. Skylark,	<i>Alauda vulgaris.</i>	{ Early in <i>February</i> , and on through July to <i>August</i> 21.
8. Swallow,	<i>Hirundo domestica.</i>	In <i>February</i> , and on to <i>October</i> .
9. Black-cap,	<i>Atricapilla.</i>	From <i>April</i> to <i>September</i> .
10. Titlark,	<i>Alauda pratorum.</i>	Beginning of <i>April</i> to July 13.
11. Blackbird,	<i>Merula vulgaris.</i>	From middle of <i>April</i> to July 16. <sup>2</sup>
12. Whitethroat,	<i>Ficedula affinis.</i>	{ Sometimes in <i>February</i> and March, and so on to July 23; re-assumes in autumn.
		In <i>April</i> , and on to July 23.

<sup>1</sup> Date of original letter Nov. 9th.—[R. B. S.]

<sup>2</sup> As Mr. Harting has pointed out [ed. Selborne p. 140], Gilbert White did not distinguish the Tree Pipit from the Meadow Pipit.—[R. B. S.]

## 6 NATURAL HISTORY OF SELBORNE

### RAII NOMINA.

- |                        |   |  |
|------------------------|---|--|
| 13. Goldfinch,         | <i>Carduelis.</i>   | } <i>April</i> , and through to <i>September</i><br>16.<br>On to <i>July</i> and <i>August</i> 2.  |
| 14. Greenfinch,        | <i>Chloris.</i>   |  |
| 15. Less reed-sparrow, | { <i>Passer arundinaceus</i><br><i>minor</i> . <sup>1</sup> | } <i>May</i> on to beginning of <i>July</i> .<br><br>Breeds and whistles on till <i>August</i> ;<br>re-assumes its note when they<br>begin to congregate in <i>October</i> ,<br>and again early before the flocks<br>separate. |
| 16. Common-linnet,     | <i>Linaria vulgaris.</i>                                    |  |

Birds that cease to be in full song, and are usually silent at or before *Midsummer* :

- |                         |   |  |
|-------------------------|---|--|
| 17. Middle willow-wren, | <i>Regulus non cristatus</i> . <sup>2</sup> | Middle of <i>June</i> : begins in <i>April</i> .   |
| 18. Redstart,           | <i>Ruticilla.</i>                           | Ditto : begins in <i>May</i> .   |
| 19. Chaffinch,          | <i>Fringilla.</i>                           | } Beginning of <i>June</i> : sings first in<br><i>February</i> .<br>Middle of <i>June</i> : sings first in<br><i>April</i> . |
| 20. Nightingale,        | <i>Luscinia.</i>                            |  |

Birds that sing for a short time, and very early in the spring :

- |                                   |                           |  |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------------|--|
| 21. Missel-bird,                  | <i>Turdus viscivorus.</i> | } <i>January</i> 2, 1770, in <i>February</i> . Is<br>called in <i>Hampshire</i> and <i>Sussex</i><br>the storm-cock, because its song<br>is supposed to forebode windy<br>wet weather : it is the largest<br>singing bird we have. |
| 22. Great titmouse, or<br>ox-eye. | { <i>Fringillago.</i>     |  |
|                                   |                           | } In <i>February</i> , <i>March</i> , <i>April</i> : re-<br>assumes for a short time in<br><i>September</i> .  |

Birds that have somewhat of a note or song, and yet are hardly to be called singing birds :

### RAII NOMINA.

- |                             |  |  |
|-----------------------------|--|--|
| 23. Golden-crowned<br>wren, | { <i>Regulus cristatus.</i>                                  | } Its note as minute as its person ;<br>frequents the tops of high oaks<br>and firs : the smallest <i>British</i><br>bird.   |
| 24. Marsh-titmouse,         | <i>Parus palustris.</i>                                      |  |
| 25. Small willow-wren,      | <i>Regulus non cristatus</i> . <sup>3</sup>                  | } Haunts great woods : two harsh<br>sharp notes.<br>Sings in <i>March</i> and on to <i>Sep-</i><br><i>tember</i> .<br><i>Cantat voce stridulâ locustæ</i> ;<br>from end of <i>April</i> to <i>August</i> .<br>Chirps all night, from the middle<br>of <i>April</i> to the end of <i>July</i> . |
| 26. Largest ditto,          | <i>Ditto</i> . <sup>4</sup>                                  |  |
| 27. Grasshopper-lark,       | { <i>Alauda minima voce</i><br><i>locustæ</i> . <sup>5</sup> | } All the breeding time ; from <i>May</i><br>to <i>September</i> .<br>From the end of <i>January</i> to <i>July</i> .  |
| 28. Martin,                 | <i>Hirundo agrestis.</i>                                     |  |
| 29. Bullfinch,              | <i>Pyrrhula.</i>   |  |
| 30. Bunting,                | <i>Emberiza alba.</i>  |  |

<sup>1</sup> See p. 2, note 3.—[R. B. S.]

<sup>2</sup> See p. 2, note 1.—[R. B. S.]

<sup>3</sup> See p. 1, note 4.—[R. B. S.]

<sup>4</sup> See p. 2, note 4.—[R. B. S.]

<sup>5</sup> See p. 2, note 2.—[R. B. S.]



*Bullfinch.*

*2/3 Life size.*





All singing birds, and those that have any pretensions to song, not only in *Britain*, but perhaps the world through, come under the *Linnæan ordo* of *Passeres*.

The above-mentioned birds, as they stand numerically, belong to the following *Linnæan* genera :

1, 7, 10, 27,	<i>Alauda.</i>	8, 28,	<i>Hirundo.</i>
2, 11, 21,	<i>Turdus.</i>	13, 16, 19,	<i>Fringilla.</i>
3, 4, 5, 9, 12, 15, 17, } 18, 20, 23, 25, 26, }	<i>Motacilla.</i>	22, 24,	<i>Parus.</i>
6, 30,	<i>Emberiza.</i>	14, 29,	<i>Loxia.</i>

Birds that sing as they fly are but few :

Skylark,	<i>Alauda vulgaris.</i>	Rising, suspended, and falling.
Titlark,	<i>Alauda pratensis.</i>	} In its descent; also sitting on trees, and walking on the ground.
Woodlark,	<i>Alauda arborea.</i>	
Blackbird,	<i>Merula.</i>	} Suspended; in hot summer nights all night long.
White-throat,	<i>Ficedula affinis.</i>	
Swallow,	<i>Hirundo domestica.</i>	} Sometimes from bush to bush.
Wren,	<i>Passer troglodytes.</i>	
		} Uses when singing on the wing odd jerks and gesticulations.
		} In soft sunny weather.
		} Sometimes from bush to bush.

Birds that breed most early in these parts :

Raven,	<i>Corvus.</i>	Hatches in <i>February</i> and <i>March</i> .
Song-thrush,	<i>Turdus.</i>	In <i>March</i> .
Blackbird,	<i>Merula.</i>	In <i>March</i> .
Rook,	<i>Cornix frugilega.</i>	Builds the beginning of <i>March</i> .
Woodlark,	<i>Alauda arborea.</i>	Hatches in <i>April</i> .
Ring-dove,	<i>Palumbus torquatus.</i>	Lays the beginning of <i>April</i> .

All birds that continue in full song till after *Midsummer* appear to me to breed more than once.

Most kinds of birds seem to me to be wild and shy somewhat in proportion to their bulk; I mean in this island, where they are much pursued and annoyed; but in *Ascension Island*, and many other desolate places, mariners have found fowls so unacquainted with an human figure, that they would stand still to be taken; as is the case with boobies, &c. As an example of what is advanced, I remark that the *golden-crested wren* (the smallest *British* bird) will stand unconcerned till you come within three or four yards of it, while the *bustard* (*otis*), the largest *British* land fowl, does not care to admit a person within so many furlongs.

## 8 NATURAL HISTORY OF SELBORNE

[I should now proceed to answer, as well as I am able, those queries which you put in y<sup>r</sup> obliging letter of July last; and to make some remarks on Mr. Forster's translation of Osbeck's voyage, which my brother left in my hands for the greatest part of the summer: but as these matters would greatly exceed the limits of this paper, they must be deferred till I have the satisfaction of writing to you again.

I am, with the greatest esteem,  
Your most obedient servant,

GIL : WHITE.]



*Oriel in the Wake and Corner of  
Gilbert White's Great Parlour*



*Wood Lark.*

*1/2 Life size.*



## LETTER III

TO THE SAME

SELBORNE, Jan. 15th, 1770.

DEAR SIR,—It was no small matter of satisfaction to me to find that you were not displeas'd with my little *methodus* of birds. If there was any merit in the sketch, it must be owing to its punctuality. For many months I carried a list in my pocket of the birds that were to be remark'd, and, as I rode or walk'd about my business, I not'd each day the continuance or omission of each bird's song; so that I am as sure of the certainty of my facts as a man can be of any transaction whatsoever.

I shall now proceed to answer the several queries which you put in your two obliging letters, in the best manner that I am able. Perhaps *Eastwick*, and its environs, where you heard so very few birds, is not a woodland country, and therefore not stock'd with such songsters. If you will cast your eye on my last letter, you will find that many species continue to warble after the beginning of *July*.

The titlark and yellowhammer breed late, the latter very late; and therefore it is no wonder that they protract their song: for I lay it down as a maxim in ornithology, that as long as there is any incubation going on there is music. As to the redbreast and wren, it is well known to the most incurious observer that they whistle the year round, hard frost excepted; especially the latter.

It was not in my power to procure you a black-cap, or a less reed-sparrow, or sedge-bird, alive. As the first is undoubtedly, and the last, as far as I can yet see, a summer bird of passage, they would require more nice and curious

management in a cage than I should be able to give them : they are both distinguished songsters. The note of the former has such a wild sweetness that it always brings to my mind those lines in a song in "*As You Like It.*"

"And tune his merry note  
Unto the *wild* bird's throat."—SHAKESPEARE.

The latter has a surprising variety of notes resembling the song of several other birds ; but then it has also an hurrying manner, not at all to its advantage : it is notwithstanding a delicate polyglot.

It is new to me that titlarks in cages sing in the night ; perhaps only caged birds do so. I once knew a tame red-breast in a cage that always sang as long as candles were in the room ; but in their wild state no one supposes they sing in the night.<sup>1</sup>

I should be almost ready to doubt the fact, that there are to be seen much fewer birds in *July* than in any former month, notwithstanding so many young are hatched daily. Sure I am that it is far otherwise with respect to the *swallow* tribe, which increases prodigiously as the summer advances : and I saw at the time mentioned, many hundreds of young wagtails on the banks of the *Cherwell*, which almost covered the meadows. If the matter appears as you say in the other species, may it not be owing to the dams being engaged in incubation, while the young are concealed by the leaves ?

Many times have I had the curiosity to open the stomachs of *woodcocks* and *snipes* ; but nothing ever occurred that helped to explain to me what their subsistence might be : all that I could ever find was a soft mucus, among which lay many pellucid small gravels.

I am, &c.

<sup>1</sup> Here occurs in the original MS. Letter XLI to Pennant, beginning "It is a matter of curious enquiry, &c.," which, it will be noticed, bears no date. It would seem, therefore, that Gilbert White took these paragraphs from his letter to Barrington and inserted them as a 'Pennant' Letter in his published work.—[R. B. S.]

## LETTER IV<sup>1</sup>

TO THE SAME

SELBORNE, *Feb. 19th, 1770.*

DEAR SIR,—Your observation that “the *cuckoo* does not deposit its egg indiscriminately in the nest of the first bird that comes in its way, but probably looks out a nurse in some degree congenerous, with whom to intrust its young,” is perfectly new to me; and struck me so forcibly, that I naturally fell into a train of thought that led me to consider whether the fact was so, and what reason there was for it. When I came to recollect and inquire, I could not find that any cuckoo had ever been seen in these parts, except in the nest of the *wagtail*, the *hedge-sparrow*, the *titlark*, the *white-throat*, and the *redbreast*, all soft-billed insectivorous birds. The excellent Mr. Willughby mentions the nest of the *palumbus* (*ring-dove*), and of the *fringilla* (*chaffinch*), birds that subsist on acorns and grains, and such hard food: but then he does not mention them as of his own knowledge; but says afterwards that he saw himself a *wagtail* feeding a cuckoo.<sup>2</sup> It appears hardly possible that a soft-billed bird should subsist on the same food with the hard-billed: for the former have thin membranaceous stomachs suited to their soft food; while the latter, the

<sup>1</sup> In the original MS. this forms the conclusion of the preceding letter.—[R. B. S.]

<sup>2</sup> In 1865 the number of European species which the Cuckoo had been known to victimise was given in the ‘Ibis’ as 52. The list of birds known to act as foster-parents in the Palæarctic Region is now 119. It is impossible to give details of all the facts that have been discovered concerning the economy of the Cuckoo since Gilbert White’s time in a foot-note, but the chapter on ‘Parasitic Birds’ in my ‘Wonders of the Bird-World’ may be consulted.—[R. B. S.]

granivorous tribe, have strong muscular gizzards, which, like mills, grind, by the help of small gravels and pebbles, what is swallowed. This proceeding of the cuckoo, of dropping its eggs as it were by chance, is such a monstrous outrage on maternal affection, one of the first great dictates of nature; and such a violence on instinct; that, had it only been related of a bird in the *Brazils*, or *Peru*, it would never have merited our belief. But yet, should it farther appear that this simple bird, when divested of that natural *στοργή* that seems to raise the kind in general above themselves, and inspire them with extraordinary degrees of cunning and address, may be still endued with a more enlarged faculty of discerning what species are suitable and congenerous nursing-mothers for its disregarded eggs and young, and may deposit them only under *their* care, this would be adding wonder to wonder, and instancing, in a fresh manner, that the methods of Providence are not subjected to any mode or rule, but astonish us in new lights, and in various and changeable appearances.

What was said by a very ancient and sublime writer concerning the defect of natural affection in the ostrich, may be well applied to the bird we are talking of:

*"She is hardened against her young ones, as though they were not her's :*

*"Because God hath deprived her of wisdom, neither hath he imparted to her understanding."*<sup>1</sup>

*Query.* Does each female cuckoo lay but one egg in a season, or does she drop several in different nests according as opportunity offers? [This matter might perhaps be determined by opening a female in the time of laying, and examining how many eggs were advancing towards maturity.]

I am, with the greatest  
respect, your obliged and  
most humble servant,  
GIL : WHITE.]

<sup>1</sup> Job xxxix. 16, 17.





[LETTER IV<sup>a</sup>

FYFIELD, near ANDOVER,  
Feb. 10, 1770.<sup>1</sup>

DEAR SIR,—I have had no leisure<sup>a</sup> as yet to answer your last friendly and communicative letter: nor shall I have any opportunity while I continue on my visit. My present business is to beg of you to write me word how long M<sup>r</sup>. Pennant may be supposed to stay in town; because the end of this month will be a very inconvenient time for me to undertake a journey to London. I have a great desire to have some conversation with a Gentleman that I have regularly corresponded with for some years;<sup>2</sup> and should propose to myself an additional pleasure from meeting you both together; but it will be difficult, I fear, for me to get to town at this season. Pray present my humble respects to M<sup>r</sup>. Pennant, and tell him I acknowledge that I am indebted to him for a very kind letter.

In a parcel (which lately went up to my Brother) I

<sup>1</sup> In the MS. this imperfect Letter follows Letter IV.—[R. B. S.]

<sup>2</sup> Cf. note to vol. i. p. 146.—[R. B. S.]

sent you a *caprimulgus*; supposing that it might be possible that you might be unacquainted with that.]

[The mildness of the season has induced the birds to sing early this side in the order following :<sup>1</sup>

Missel bird : . . . .	Jan : 2
Sky-lark : . . . .	a little, Jan : 21
Wood-lark : . . . .	Jan : 24
Titmouse great black : .	Jan : 24
Chaffinch : . . . .	Jan : 24
Black-bird : . . . .	Jan : 24
Thrush : . . . .	Jan : 24
Skylark : . . . .	Jan : 27, sings out.
White wagtail : . . . .	{ Jan : 28, sings a sort of a song, which I never observed before.
Nuthatch : . . . .	Feb : 1, chatters.
Hedge-sparrow : . . . .	Feb : 6, sings out.

Many buntings in these open fields.]

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<sup>1</sup> On the back of the preceding fragment this list appears.—[R. B. S.]

2/3 life size.

*Goldfinch.*





## LETTER V

TO THE SAME

SELBORNE, *April 12th, 1770.*

DEAR SIR,—[Your two kind Letters of Jan : 20 : and Feb : 5 : lie before me, and reproach me for not paying them that regard they deserve long before now.] I heard many birds of several species sing last year after *Midsummer* ; enough to prove that the summer solstice is not the period that puts a stop to the music of the woods. The yellow-hammer no doubt persists with more steadiness than any other ; but the woodlark, the wren, the redbreast, the swallow, the white-throat, the goldfinch, the common linnet, are all undoubted instances of the truth of what I advanced.

If this severe season does not interrupt the regularity of the summer migrations, the blackcap will be here in two or three days. I wish it was in my power to procure you one of those songsters ; but I am no birdcatcher, and so little used to birds in a cage, that I fear if I had one it would soon die for want of skill in feeding.<sup>1</sup>

Was your reed-sparrow, which you kept in a cage, the thick-billed reed-sparrow of the *Zoology*, p. 320 ; or was it the less reed-sparrow of *Ray*, the *sedge-bird* of Mr. *Pennant's* last publication, p. 16 ?<sup>2</sup>

As to the matter of long-billed birds growing fatter in moderate frosts, I have no doubt within myself what should be the reason. The thriving at those times appears to me

<sup>1</sup> In the original MS. a note is inserted about the occurrence of 'aberdavines' (a present-day name for Siskins, *Chrysomitris spinus*), but Gilbert White did not publish the note in his book, and afterwards found that the birds were Reed-Buntings (*Emberiza schænicus*). See Letter VIII.—[R. B. S.]

<sup>2</sup> See Letter XXV to Pennant (vol. i. p. 107).

to arise altogether from the gentle check which the cold throws upon insensible perspiration. The case is just the same with blackbirds, &c.; and farmers and warreners observe, the first, that their hogs fat more kindly at such times, and the latter that their rabbits are never in such good case as in a gentle frost. But when frosts are severe, and of long continuance, the case is soon altered; for then a want of food soon overbalances the repletion occasioned by a checked perspiration. I have observed, moreover, that some human constitutions are more inclined to plumpness in winter than in summer.

When birds come to suffer by severe frost, I find that the first that fail and die are the redwing-fieldfares,<sup>1</sup> and then the song-thrushes.

You wonder, with good reason, that the hedge-sparrows, &c., can be induced at all to sit on the egg of the cuckoo without being scandalized at the vast disproportionate size of the supposititious egg; but the brute creation, I suppose, have very little idea of size, colour, or number. For the common hen, I know, when the fury of incubation is on her, will sit on a single shapeless stone instead of a nest full of eggs that have been withdrawn: and, moreover, a hen-turkey, in the same circumstances, would sit on in the empty nest till she perished with hunger.

I think the matter might easily be determined whether a cuckoo lays one or two eggs, or more, in a season, by opening a female during the laying-time. If more than one was come down out of the ovary, and advanced to a good size, doubtless then she would that spring lay more than one.<sup>2</sup>

I will endeavour to get a hen, and to examine.

Your supposition that there may be some natural obstruction in singing birds while they are mute, and that

<sup>1</sup> So printed in the original edition. The paragraph should doubtless read "redwings, fieldfares." See note to Letter IX.—[R. B. S.]

<sup>2</sup> Dr. Rey, who has given particular attention to the life-history of the Cuckoo, believes that each female lays about twenty eggs in the course of a season, and these are laid on alternate days. Each female Cuckoo lays similar eggs throughout its life. See my 'Wonders of the Bird-World,' p. 316.—[R. B. S.]

when this is removed the song recommences, is new and bold; I wish you could discover some good grounds for this suspicion.

I was glad you were pleased with my specimen of the *caprimulgus*, or fern-owl; you were, I find, acquainted with the bird before.

When we meet I shall be glad to have some conversation with you concerning the proposal you make of my drawing up an account of the animals in this neighbourhood. Your partiality towards my small abilities persuades you, I fear, that I am able to do more than is in my power: for it is no small undertaking for a man unsupported and alone to begin a natural history from his own autopsy! Though there is endless room for observation in the field of nature, which is boundless, yet investigation (where a man endeavours to be sure of his facts) can make but slow progress: and all that one could collect in many years would go into a very narrow compass.

[The Collection of Taylor White Esqr is often mentioned as curious in birds, etc.: can't I be introduced when in town, and see this Museum of my namesake's?]

Some extracts from your ingenious "Investigations of the Difference between the Present Temperature of the Air in Italy," &c., have fallen in my way; and gave me great satisfaction: they have removed the objections that always arose in my mind whenever I came to the passages which you quote. Surely the judicious *Virgil*, when writing a didactic poem for the region of *Italy*, could never think of describing freezing rivers, unless such severity of weather pretty frequently occurred.

[I return Mr Forster's long laboured Defence; but have too much compassion for his unhappy circumstances to say much. I have only to observe, that he totally mistakes my meaning with respect to his being expected to have added Ray's *synonyms* of plants; I objected to his having put wrong english *names* to plants: and in the next place when I complained that he employed one of his sons to

assist in the translation; he, to justify himself, says his son translated the whole.

Be so kind as to let me know whether you propose to be in town in May, which is the month when I usually get to London. I could not manage to meet Mr. Pennant and it would be a fresh mortification if I should miss seeing you.

I conclude with great esteem  
Your obliged, and most humble servant,  
GIL : WHITE.]

*P.S.*—Swallows appear amidst snows and frost.



## LETTER VI<sup>1</sup>

TO THE SAME

SELBORNE, *May 21st, 1770.*

DEAR SIR,—The severity and turbulence of last month so interrupted the regular process of summer migration, that some of the birds do but just begin to show themselves, and others are apparently thinner than usual ; as the white-throat, the black-cap, the red-start, the fly-catcher. I well remember that after the very severe spring in the year 1739-40, summer birds of passage were very scarce. They came probably hither with a south-east wind, or when it blows between those points ; but in that unfavourable year the winds blowed the whole spring and summer through from the opposite quarters. And yet amidst all these disadvantages two swallows, as I mentioned in my last, appeared this year as early as the eleventh of *April* amidst frost and snow ; but they withdrew again for a time.

I am not pleased to find that some people seem so little satisfied with *Scopoli's* new publication ;<sup>2</sup> there is room to expect great things from the hands of that man, who is a good naturalist : and one would think that an history of the birds of so distant and southern a region as *Carniola* would be new and interesting. I could wish to see that work, and hope to get it sent down. Dr. Scopoli is *physician* to the wretches that work in the quicksilver mines of that district.

<sup>1</sup> This letter ends abruptly in the original MS. It is torn across, but seems to have had a P.S. at one time.—[R. B. S.]

<sup>2</sup> This work he calls his *Annus Primus Historico Naturalis*.—[G. W.]

When you talked of keeping a reed-sparrow, and giving it seeds, I could not help wondering; because the reed-sparrow which I mentioned to you (*Passer arundinaceus minor Raii*) is a soft-billed bird;<sup>1</sup> and most probably migrates hence before winter; whereas the bird you kept (*Passer torquatus Raii*) abides all the year, and is a thick-billed bird.<sup>2</sup> I question whether the latter be much of a songster; but in this matter I want to be better informed. The former has a variety of hurrying notes, and sings all night. Some part of the song of the former, I suspect, is attributed to the latter. We have plenty of the soft-billed sort; which Mr. Pennant had entirely left out of his "*British Zoology*," till I reminded him of his omission. See "*British Zoology*," last published, p. 16.<sup>3</sup>

I have somewhat to advance on the different manners in which different birds fly and walk; but as this is a subject that I have not enough considered, and is of such a nature as not to be contained in a small space, I shall say nothing further about it at present.<sup>4</sup>

No doubt the reason why the sex of birds in their first plumage is so difficult to be distinguished is, as you say, "because they are not to pair and discharge their parental functions till the ensuing spring." As colours seem to be the chief external sexual distinction in many birds, these colours do not take place till sexual attachments begin to obtain. And the case is the same in quadrupeds; among whom, in their younger days, the sexes differ but little; but, as they advance to maturity, horns and shaggy manes, beards and brawny necks, &c., &c., strongly discriminate the male from the female. We may instance still farther in our own species, where a beard and stronger features

<sup>1</sup> The Sedge Warbler (*Acrocephalus phragmitis*). See vol. i. pp. 104, 108.—[R. B. S.]

<sup>2</sup> The Black-headed or Reed Bunting (*Emberiza schœniclus*), called the Reed "Sparrow" to this day in many districts of England.—[R. B. S.]

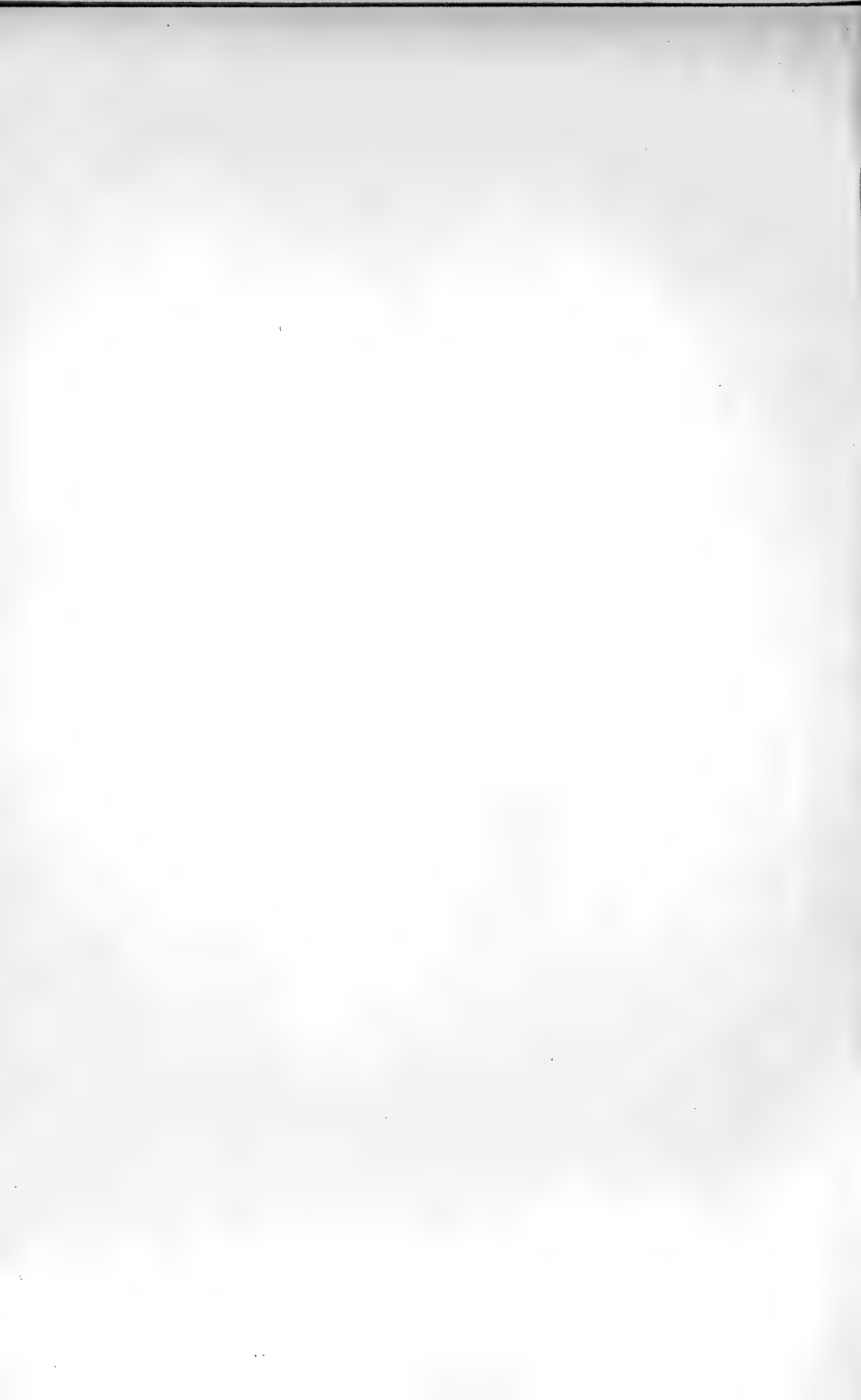
<sup>3</sup> See Letter XXV to Mr. Pennant.—[G. W.]

<sup>4</sup> See Letter XLII to Mr. Barrington.—[G. W.]



*Reed Bunting.*

• Life size.



are usually characteristic of the male sex : but this sexual diversity does not take place in earlier life ; for a beautiful youth shall be so like a beautiful girl that the difference shall not be discernible ;

“ Quem si puellarum insereres choro,  
 Mirè sagaces falleret hospites  
 Discrimen obscurum, solutis  
 Crinibus, ambiguoque vultu.”—HOR.



## LETTER VII

TO THE SAME

RINGMER, near LEWES, Oct. 8th, 1770.

DEAR SIR,—[A run of company at my own house, and a journey or two since, have prevented me from attending to the letters of my most agreeable correspondents.] I am glad to hear that *Kuckalm* is to furnish you with the birds of *Jamaica*; a sight of the *hirundines* of that hot and distant island would be a great entertainment to me.

[As I know you are a Gentleman of universal reading, I have a great favour to ask of you which yet I trust you will not deny me; and that is that you would please to furnish me with some anecdotes concerning the antiquities and civil history of Gibraltar. Some of the old greek geographers may perhaps mention how that spot was circumstanced in old times. So particular a situation must have been known to the Phœnicians, Greeks, Romans, and Saracens. The famous pillars of Hercules are supposed to have stood somewhere near where our garrison stands.]

The *Anni* of *Scopoli* are now in my possession; and I have read the *Annus Primus* with satisfaction; for though some parts of this work are exceptionable, and he may advance some mistaken observations; yet the ornithology of so distant a country as *Carniola* is very curious. Men that undertake only one district are much more likely to advance natural knowledge than those that grasp at more than they can possibly be acquainted with: every kingdom, every province, should have its own *monographer*.

The reason perhaps why he mentions nothing of *Ray's*

Ornithology may be the extreme poverty and distance of his country, into which the works of our great naturalist may have never yet found their way. You have doubts, I know, whether this Ornithology is genuine, and really the work of *Scopoli*; as to myself, I think I discover strong tokens of authenticity; the style corresponds with that of his *Entomology*; and his characters of his Ordines and Genera are many of them new, expressive, and masterly. He has ventured to alter some of the *Linnæan genera* with sufficient show of reason.

It might perhaps be mere accident that you saw so many swifts and no swallows at *Staines*; because, in my long observations of those birds, I never could discover the least degree of rivalry or hostility between the species.

[Till this summer I used to think that the swallow was the only bird that fed it's young on the wing; but now I am convinced that the house-martin does the same: but the feat is done with so quick and momentary a sleight that I don't wonder it escaped my observation. Scopoli says that the house-martin does not feed its young after they leave their nests: but he is mistaken.]

Ray remarks that birds of the *gallinæ order*, as cocks and hens, partridges, and pheasants, &c., are *pulveratrices*, such as dust themselves, using that method of cleansing their feathers, and ridding themselves of their vermin. As far as I can observe, many birds that dust themselves never wash; and I once thought that those birds that wash themselves would never dust; but here I find myself mistaken; for common house-sparrows are great *pulveratrices*, being frequently seen grovelling and wallowing in dusty roads; and yet they are great washers. Does not the skylark dust?

*Query.* Might not *Mahomet* and his followers take one method of purification from these *pulveratrices*? because I find from travellers of credit, that if a strict mussulman is journeying in a sandy desert where no water is to be found, at stated hours he strips off his clothes, and most scrupulously rubs his body over with sand or dust.

A countryman told me he had found a young *fern-owl*

in the nest of a small bird on the ground ; and that it was fed by the little bird. I went to see this extraordinary phenomenon, and found that it was a young cuckoo hatched in the nest of a titlark ; it was become vastly too big for its nest, appearing

. . . . . in tenui re  
Majores pennas nido extendisse . . .

and was very fierce and pugnacious, pursuing my finger, as I teased it, for many feet from the nest, and sparring and buffeting with its wings like a game-cock. The dupe of a dam appeared at a distance, hovering about with meat in its mouth, and expressing the greatest solicitude.

In *July* I saw several cuckoos skimming over a large pond ; and found, after some observation, that they were feeding on the *libellulæ*, or *dragon-flies* ; some of which they caught as they settled on the weeds, and some as they were on the wing. Notwithstanding what *Linnaeus* says, I cannot be induced to believe that they are birds of prey.

This district affords some birds that are hardly ever heard of at *Selborne*. In the first place considerable flocks of *cross-beaks* (*Loxia curvirostræ*) have appeared this summer in the pine-groves belonging to this house ; the *water-ousel* is said to haunt the mouth of the *Lewes* river, near *Newhaven* ; and the *Cornish chough* builds, I know, all along the chalky cliffs of the *Sussex* shore.

I was greatly pleased to see little parties of *ring-ousels* (my newly-discovered migraters) scattered, at intervals, all along the *Sussex* downs, from *Chichester* to *Lewes*. Let them come from whence they will, it looks very suspicious that they are cantoned along the coast in order to pass the channel when severe weather advances. They visit us again in *April*, as it should seem, in their return ; and are not to be found in the dead of winter. It is remarkable that they are very tame, and seem to have no manner of apprehensions of danger from a person with a gun. There are bustards on the wide downs near *Brighthelmstone*. No doubt you are acquainted with the *Sussex* downs ; the





*Young Cuckoo and Tit-lark.*

*½ Life size.*



prospects and rides round *Lewes* are most lovely ! [Mr. Ray mentions the South Downs more than once in his works, as the most engaging scenes he had ever met with.]

As I rode along near the coast I kept a very sharp look-out in the lanes and woods, hoping I might, at this time of the year, have discovered some of the summer short-winged birds of passage crowding towards the coast in order for their departure : but it was very extraordinary that I never saw a redstart, white-throat, black-cap, uncrested wren, flycatcher, &c. And I remember to have made the same remark in former years, as I usually come to this place annually about this time. The birds most common along the coast, at present, are the stone-chatters, winchats, buntings, linnets, some few wheat-ears, titlarks, &c. Swallows and house-martins abound yet, induced to prolong their stay by this soft, still, dry season.

A land tortoise, which has been kept for thirty years in a little walled court belonging to the house where I now am visiting, retires under ground about the middle of *November*, and comes forth again about the middle of *April*. When it first appears in the spring it discovers very little inclination towards food ; but in the height of summer grows voracious ; and then as the summer declines its appetite declines ; so that for the last six weeks in autumn it hardly eats at all. Milky plants, such as lettuces, dandelions, sowthistles, are its favourite dish. In a neighbouring village one was kept till by tradition it was supposed to be an hundred years old. An instance of vast longevity in such a poor reptile !

[I shall presume on being favoured with more of your pleasing communications, which I greatly value : and am, with the greatest regard,

Your obliged servant

GIL : WHITE.

On the 18th I go hence.]

## [LETTER VII

SELBORNE: Oct: 22, 1770.

DEAR SIR,—Tho' I have little or nothing to say, having lately written you a very long letter from a village near Lewes; yet I think myself bound to acknowledge the favour of two very agreeable epistles from Beckett, which I found last saturday evening on my return from Sussex.

You, who are an antiquarian, will inform me in yr next whether Thomas Becket, that famous and turbulent Arch Bishop of Canterbury had any thing to do with the place of yr nativity; and whether he has left any traces of his magnificence in buildings or charities, etc; for tho' the man was a bad subject, and an ungrateful prelate; yet his turn of mind seems to have been splendid and noble.

Swallows and house-martins appeared in Sussex and with us on to the 20<sup>th</sup> Octob<sup>r</sup>. and I saw on the downs for the first time (on the 18<sup>th</sup>) grey or Royston crows, which are winter birds of passage; and on the 20<sup>th</sup> red-wings: but I have heard of but one wood-cock.

Your observations and queries are too curious for me to pretend to answer in a hurry; if even I can at all: and I shall be jealous of forfeiting that honour which you do me in saying "that I am one of those few naturalists, who not only observe but think."

I am with the greatest regard,  
Y<sup>r</sup> most obliged, and Humble servant

GIL: WHITE.

*P.S.*—I directed my last  
letter to the Temple.]

## LETTER VIII<sup>1</sup>

TO THE SAME

SELBORNE, Dec. 20th, 1770.

DEAR SIR,—The birds that I took for *aberdavines* were reed-sparrows (*passeres torquati*).

There are doubtless many home internal migrations within this kingdom that want to be better understood: witness those vast flocks of hen chaffinches that appear with us in the winter without hardly any cocks among them. Now was there a due proportion of each sex, it should seem very improbable that any one district should produce such numbers of these little birds; and much more when only one-half of the species appears; therefore we may conclude that the *fringillæ cælebes*, for some good purposes, have a peculiar migration of their own in which the sexes part. Nor should it seem so wonderful that the intercourse of sexes in this species of bird should be interrupted in winter; since in many animals, and particularly in bucks and does, the sexes herd separately, except at the season when commerce is necessary for the continuance of the breed. For this matter of the chaffinches see "*Fauna Suecica*," p. 58, and "*Systema Naturæ*," p. 318. I see every winter vast flights of hen chaffinches, but none of cocks.<sup>2</sup>

Your method of accounting for the periodical motions of the *British* singing-birds, or birds of flight, is a very

<sup>1</sup> In the original letter occur the notes on the Whitethroat, Blackcap, Redstart, and Flycatcher, which are printed in Letter XL to Pennant. See vol. i. p. 173.—[R. B. S.]

<sup>2</sup> See notes to vol. i. pp. 51, 156.—[R. B. S.]

probable one ; since the matter of food is a great regulator of the actions and proceedings of the brute creation ; there is but one that can be set in competition with it, and that is love. But I cannot quite acquiesce with you in one circumstance when you advance that “when they have thus feasted, they again separate into small parties of five or six, and get the best fare they can within a certain district, having no inducement to go in quest of fresh-turned earth.” Now if you mean that the business of congregating is quite at an end from the conclusion of wheat sowing to the season of barley and oats, it is not the case with us ; for larks and chaffinches, and particularly linnets, flock and congregate as much in the very dead of winter as when the husbandman is busy with his ploughs and harrows.

Sure there can be no doubt but that woodcocks and fieldfares leave us in the spring, in order to cross the seas, and to retire to some districts more suitable to the purpose of breeding. That the former pair before they retire, and that the hens are forward with egg, I myself, when I was a sportsman, have often experienced. It cannot indeed be denied but that now and then we hear of a woodcock’s nest, or young birds, discovered in some part or other of this island ; but then they are all always mentioned as rarities, and somewhat out of the common course of things ; but as to redwings and fieldfares, no sportsman or naturalist has ever yet, that I could hear, pretended to have found the nest or young of those species in any part of these kingdoms. And I the more admire at this instance as extraordinary, since, to all appearance, the same food in summer as well as in winter might support them here which maintains their congeners, the blackbirds and thrushes, did they choose to stay the summer through. From hence it appears that it is not food alone which determines some species of birds with regard to their stay or departure. Fieldfares and redwings disappear sooner or later according as the warm weather comes on earlier or later. For I well remember, after that dread-



*Fringilla caelebs.*  
Chaffinch.

$\frac{2}{3}$  Life size





ful winter 1739-40, that cold north-east winds continued to blow on through *April* and *May*, and that these kind of birds (what few remained of them) did not depart as usual, but were seen lingering about till the beginning of *June*.

The best authority that we can have for the nidification of the birds above-mentioned in any district, is the testimony of faunists that have written professedly the natural history of particular countries. Now as to the fieldfare, *Linnæus*, in his "Fauna Suecica," says of it, that "*maximis in arboribus nidificat*;" and of the redwing he says, in the same place, that "*nidificat in mediis arbusculis, sive sepibus: ova sex cœruleo-viridia maculis nigris variis*." Hence we may be assured that fieldfares and redwings breed in *Sweden*. *Scopoli* says, in his "*Annus Primus*," of the woodcock, that "*nupta ad nos venit circà æquinocetium vernale*;" meaning in *Tirol*, of which he is a native. And afterwards he adds "*nidificat in paludibus alpinis: ova ponit 3-5*." It does not appear from *Kramer* that woodcocks breed at all in *Austria*; but he says "*Avis hæc septentrionalium provinciarum æstivo tempore incola est; ubi plerumque nidificat. Appropinquante hyeme australiores provincias petit; hinc circà plenilunium mensis Octobris plerumque Austriam transmigrat. Tunc rursùs circà plenilunium potissimum mensis Martii per Austriam matrimonio juncta ad septentrionales provincias redit*." For the whole passage (which I have abridged) see "*Elenchus*," &c. p. 351. This seems to be a full proof of the migration of woodcocks; though little is proved concerning the place of breeding.

[As yet I have by no means answered the whole of y<sup>r</sup> last letters: but neither time nor the limits of my paper will permit me to proceed any farther at present.

With regard to my Andalusian correspondence I am quite at a loss at present; and want y<sup>r</sup> friendly advice to direct me whether I may continue writing by the post to Gibraltar or not. Will not these misunderstandings between the two nations interrupt the mail which goes by Madrid down thro' the Southern provinces?

Hoping for a continuance of y<sup>r</sup> pleasing and communicative letters, and regretting that I cannot oftener enjoy y<sup>r</sup> conversation,

I remain with great esteem  
Y<sup>r</sup> obliged Servant  
GIL : WHITE.]

*P.S.*—There fell in the county of *Rutland*, in three weeks of this present very wet weather, seven inches and a half of rain, which is more than has fallen in any three weeks for these thirty years past in that part of the world. A mean quantity in that county for one year is twenty inches and a half. [My brother in Andalusia makes a very swift progress in discoveries.]



In Selborne Churchyard.

1758

## LETTER IX

TO THE SAME

FYFIELD, near ANDOVER, *Feb. 12th, 1771.*

DEAR SIR,—[As my last letter was full, and I had not room to finish what I proposed; I sit down now with an intention of advancing what I have farther to say on that occasion, and of answering your agreeable letter of Jan: the 3<sup>rd</sup>.] You are, I know, no great friend to migration; and the well-attested accounts from various parts of the kingdom seem to justify you in your suspicions, that at least many of the swallow kind do not leave us in the winter, but lay themselves up like insects and bats, in a torpid state, and slumber away the more uncomfortable months till the return of the sun and fine weather awakens them.

But then we must not, I think, deny migration in general; because migration certainly does subsist in some places, as my brother in *Andalusia* has fully informed me. Of the motions of these birds he has ocular demonstration, for many weeks together, both spring and fall; during which periods myriads of the swallow kind traverse the Straits from north to south, and from south to north, according to the season. And these vast migrations consist not only of *hirundines* but of *bee-birds*, *hoopoes*, *Oro pendolos*, or *golden thrushes*,<sup>1</sup> &c. &c., and also of many of our *soft-billed summer birds of passage*; and moreover of birds which never leave us, such as all the various sorts of hawks and kites. Old *Belon*, two hundred years ago,

<sup>1</sup> The Golden Oriole (*Oriolus galbula*) is called in Spain "*Oro pendola*." Cf. Irby, "*Orn. Gibraltar*," p. 125.—[R. B. S.]

gives a curious account of the incredible armies of hawks and kites which he saw in the spring-time traversing the *Thracian Bosphorus* from *Asia* to *Europe*. Besides the above-mentioned, he remarks that the procession is swelled by whole troops of eagles and vultures.

Now it is no wonder that birds residing in *Africa* should retreat before the sun as it advances, and retire to milder regions, and especially birds of prey, whose blood being heated with hot animal food, are more impatient of a sultry climate; but then I cannot help wondering why kites and hawks, and such hardy birds as are known to defy all the severity of *England*, and even of *Sweden* and all north *Europe*, should want to migrate from the south of *Europe*, and be dissatisfied with the winters of *Andalusia*.

It does not appear to me that much stress may be laid on the difficulty and hazard that birds must run in their migrations, by reason of vast oceans, cross winds, &c.; because, if we reflect, a bird may travel from *England* to the Equator without launching out and exposing itself to boundless seas, and that by crossing the water at *Dover*, and again at *Gibraltar*. And I with the more confidence advance this obvious remark, because my brother has always found that some of his birds, and particularly the swallow kind, are very sparing of their pains in crossing the *Mediterranean*; for when arrived at *Gibraltar* they do not

. . . . " Rang'd in figure wedge their way,  
 . . . . . And set forth  
 Their airy caravan high over seas  
 Flying, and over lands with mutual wing  
 Easing their flight : " . . . . —MILTON.

but scout and hurry along in little detached parties of six or seven in a company; and sweeping low, just over the surface of the land and water, direct their course to the opposite continent at the narrowest passage they can find. They usually slope across the bay to the south-west, and so pass over opposite to *Tangier*, which, it seems, is the narrowest space.

1/3 Life size.

*Hood-cock.*





In former letters we have considered whether it was probable that woodcocks in moonshiny nights cross the *German* ocean from *Scandinavia*. As a proof that birds of less speed may pass that sea, considerable as it is, I shall relate the following incident, which, though mentioned to have happened so many years ago, was strictly matter of fact:—As some people were shooting in the parish of *Trotton*, in the county of *Sussex*, they killed a duck in that dreadful winter, 1708–9, with a silver collar about its neck,<sup>1</sup> on which were engraven the arms of the king of *Denmark*. This anecdote the rector of *Trotton* at that time has often told to a near relation of mine; and, to the best of my remembrance, the collar was in the possession of the rector.

At present I do not know anybody near the sea-side that will take the trouble to remark at what time of the moon woodcocks first come; if I lived near the sea myself I would soon tell you more of the matter. One thing I used to observe when I was a sportsman, that there were times in which woodcocks were so sluggish and sleepy that they would drop again when flushed just before the spaniels, nay, just at the muzzle of a gun that had been fired at them; whether this strange laziness was the effect of a recent fatiguing journey I shall not presume to say.

Nightingales not only never reach *Northumberland* and *Scotland*, but also, as I have been always told, *Devonshire* and *Cornwall*. In those last two counties we cannot attribute the failure of them to the want of warmth; the defect in the west is rather a presumptive argument that these birds come over to us from the continent at the narrowest passage, and do not stroll so far westward.

Let me hear from your own observation whether skylarks do not dust. I think they do; and if they do, whether they wash also.

The *alauda pratensis* of *Ray*<sup>2</sup> was the poor dupe that

<sup>1</sup> I have read a like anecdote of a swan.—[G. W.]

<sup>2</sup> The Meadow Pipit (*Anthus pratensis*).—[R. B. S.]

was educating the booby of a cuckoo mentioned in my letter of *October* last.

Your letter came too late for me to procure a ring-ousel for Mr. *Tunstal* during their autumnal visit; but I will endeavour to get him one when they call on us again in *April*. I am glad that you and that gentleman saw my *Andalusian* birds; I hope they answered your expectation. *Royston*, or grey crows, are winter birds that come much about the same time with the woodcock; they, like the fieldfare and redwing, have no apparent reason for migration; for as they fare in the winter like their congeners, so might they in all appearance in the summer. Was not *Tenant*, when a boy, mistaken? did he not find a missel-thrush's nest, and take it for the nest of a fieldfare?<sup>1</sup>

The stock-dove,<sup>2</sup> or wood-pigeon, *anas Raii*, is the last winter bird of passage which appears with us; it is not seen till towards the end of *November*: about twenty years ago they abounded in the district of *Selborne*; and strings of them were seen morning and evening that reached a mile or more; but since the beechen woods have been greatly thinned they are much decreased in number. The ring-dove, *palumbus Raii*, stays with us the whole year, and breeds several times through the summer.

Before I received your letter of *October* last I had just remarked in my journal that the trees were unusually green. This uncommon verdure lasted on late into *November*; and may be accounted for from a late spring, a cool and moist summer; but more particularly from vast armies of chafers, or tree-beetles, which, in many places, reduced whole woods to a leafless naked state. These trees shot again at *Midsummer*, and then retained their foliage till very late in the year.

<sup>1</sup> See note to vol. i. p. 111.—[R. B. S.]

<sup>2</sup> See note to vol. i. p. 183. The Stock-Dove breeds plentifully in the neighbourhood of *Selborne* at the present day. There was a nest in an old beech-tree at *The Wakes* this summer (1900): it was pointed out to me by Mr. Paxton Parkin. Mr. W. H. Hudson also tells me that many nest around the old Manor House at *Newton Valence*.—[R. B. S.]



[In obedience to y<sup>r</sup> repeated injunctions I have begun to throw my thoughts into a little order, that I may reduce them into the form of an *annus historico-naturalis* comprizing the nat. history of my native place. As I never dreamed 'til very lately of composing any thing of this sort for the public inspection, I enter on this business with great diffidence, suspecting that my observations will be deemed too minute and trifling. However, if I ever finish it I shall submit it to y<sup>r</sup> better judgement.]

My musical friend, at whose house I am now visiting, has tried all the owls that are his near neighbours with a pitch-pipe set at concert pitch, and finds they all hoot in B flat. He will examine the nightingales next spring.

[Smelts are caught in the bay of Gibraltar, and at the back of the rock all the summer : several Catalans subsist by taking y<sup>m</sup>.

Pray what is the import of *malm* in the Swedish tongue ?

My thanks are due for y<sup>r</sup> reference with regard to the ancient Carteia ; and for y<sup>r</sup> enquiries after M<sup>r</sup>. More, the Gent : who touched at Gibr. in order to ascertain the plants of that rock.

When does M<sup>r</sup> Pennant come to town ; and when do y<sup>r</sup> concerns call you out of town ? I make these enquiries on interested motives, because it would be a singular satisfaction to me to meet you both together. This frost much exceeds the last. Martin's therm<sup>r</sup> abroad is down at 12 : 10 : and on the 12<sup>th</sup> of Feb : even at 6 : just at day break. My Thames-street Bro<sup>r</sup> (who is here) joins in respects.

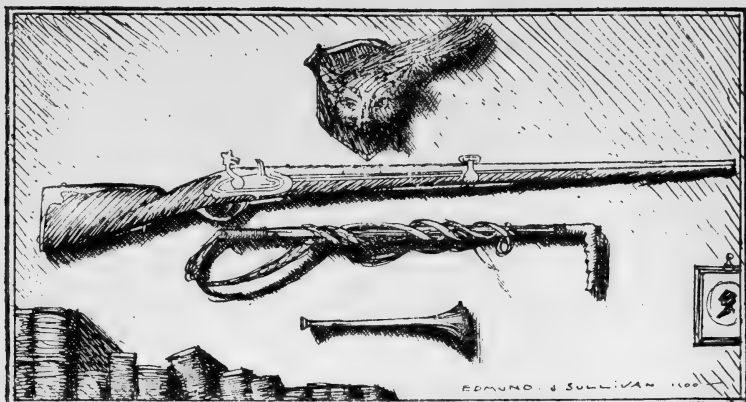
I am with the greatest respect

Y<sup>r</sup> obliged servant,

Gil : White.

I shall return home in a few days.

Redwings begin to perish : they are the first that suffer by severe weather.]



## LETTER X<sup>1</sup>

TO THE SAME

SELBORNE, *Aug. 1st, 1771.*

DEAR SIR,—From what follows, it will appear that neither owls nor cuckoos, keep to one note. A friend remarks that many (most) of his owls hoot in B flat; but that one went almost half a note below A. The pipe he tried their notes by was a common half-crown pitch-pipe, such as masters use for tuning of harpsichords; it was the common *London* pitch.

A neighbour of mine, who is said to have a nice ear, remarks that the owls about this village hoot in three different keys, in G flat, or F sharp, in B flat and A flat. He heard two hooting to each other, the one in A flat, and the other in B flat. *Query*: Do these different notes proceed from different species, or only from various individuals? The same person finds upon trial that the note of the cuckoo (of which we have but one species) varies in different individuals; for, about *Selborne* wood, he found they were mostly in D: he heard two sing together, the one in D, the other in D sharp, who made a disagreeable

<sup>1</sup> This letter is not in the British Museum MSS.—[R. B. S.]

concert : he afterwards heard one in D sharp, and about *Wolmer forest* some in C. As to nightingales, he says that their notes are so short, and their transitions so rapid, that he cannot well ascertain their key. Perhaps in a cage, and in a room, their notes may be more distinguishable. This person has tried to settle the notes of a swift, and of several other small birds, but cannot bring them to any criterion.

As I have often remarked that redwings are some of the first birds that suffer with us in severe weather, it is no wonder at all that they retreat from *Scandinavian* winters : and much more the *ordo* of *grallæ*, who, all to a bird, forsake the northern parts of *Europe* at the approach of winter. "*Grallæ tanquam conjuratæ unanimiter in fugam se conjiciunt ; ne earum unicam quidem inter nos habitantem invenire possimus ; ut enim æstate in australibus degere nequeunt ob defectum lumbricorum, terramque siccam ; ita nec in frigidis ob eandem causam,*" says *Ekmarck* the *Swede*, in his ingenious little treatise called "*Migrations Avium,*" which by all means you ought to read while your thoughts run on the subject of migration. See "*Amœnitates Academicæ,*" vol. iv., p. 565.

Birds may be so circumstanced as to be obliged to migrate in one country, and not in another : but the *grallæ* (which procure their food from marshy and boggy grounds), must in winter forsake the more northerly parts of *Europe*, or perish for want of food.

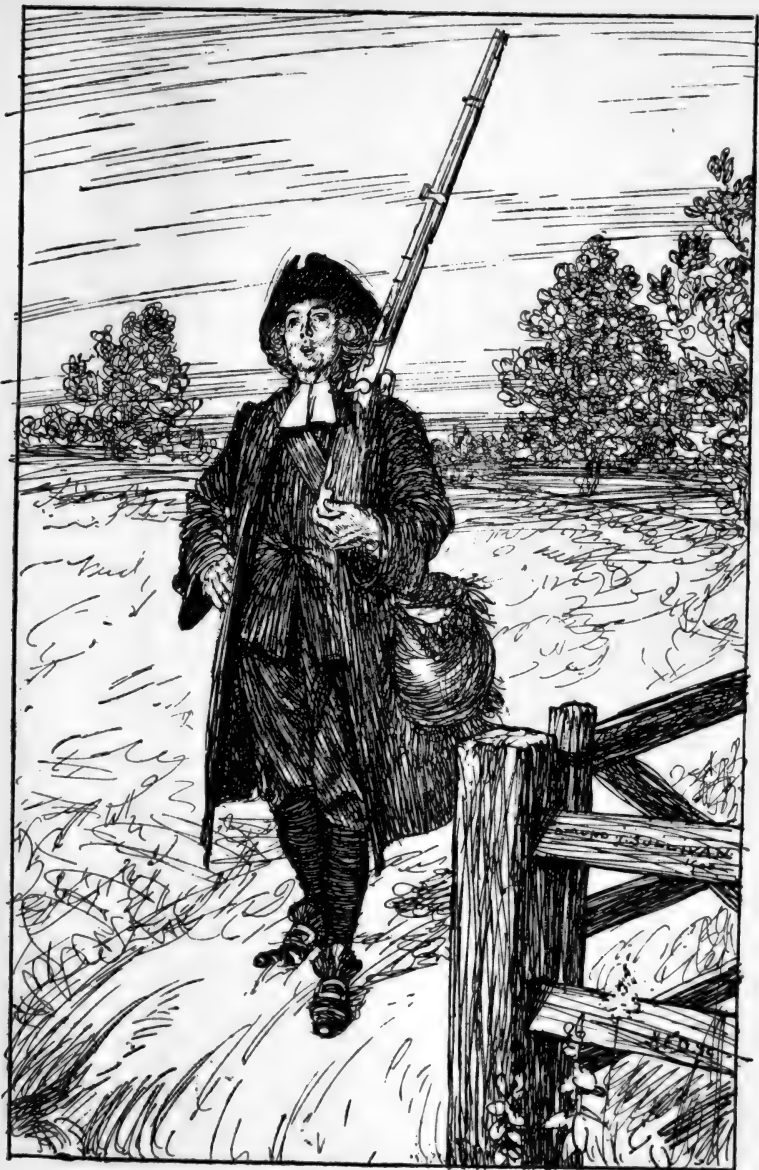
I am glad you are making inquiries from *Linnaeus* concerning the woodcock : it is expected of him that he should be able to account for the motions and manner of life of the animals of his own *Fauna*.

*Faunists*, as you observe, are too apt to acquiesce in bare descriptions, and a few synonyms : the reason is plain ; because all that may be done at home in a man's study, but the investigation of the life and conversation of animals is a concern of much more trouble and difficulty, and is not to be attained but by the active and inquisitive, and by those that reside much in the country.

Foreign systematics are, I observe, much too vague in their specific differences; which are almost universally constituted by one or two particular marks, the rest of the description running in general terms. But our countryman, the excellent Mr. *Ray*, is the only describer that conveys some precise idea in every term or word, maintaining his superiority over his followers and imitators in spite of the advantage of fresh discoveries and modern information.

At this distance of years it is not in my power to recollect at what period woodcocks used to be sluggish or alert when I was a sportsman: but, upon my mentioning this circumstance to a friend, he thinks he has observed them to be remarkably listless against snowy foul weather; if this should be the case, then the inaptitude for flying arises only from an eagerness for food; as sheep are observed to be very intent on grazing against stormy wet evenings.

I am, &c. &c.



"WHEN I WAS A SPORTSMAN"



## LETTER XI

TO THE SAME

SELBORNE, *Feb. 8th, 1772.*

DEAR SIR,—When I ride about in the winter, and see such prodigious flocks of various kinds of birds, I cannot help admiring at these congregations, and wishing that it was in my power to account for those appearances almost peculiar to the season. The two great motives which regulate the proceedings of the brute creation are love and hunger; the former incites animals to perpetuate their kind; the latter induces them to preserve individuals: whether either of these should seem to be the ruling passion in the matter of congregating is to be considered. As to love, that is out of the question at a time of the year when that soft passion is not indulged: besides, during the amorous season, such a jealousy prevails between the male birds that they can hardly bear to be together in the same hedge or field. Most of the singing and elation of spirits of that time seem to me to be the effect of rivalry and emulation: and it is to this spirit of jealousy that I chiefly attribute the equal dispersion of birds in the spring over the face of the country.

Now as to the business of food: as these animals are actuated by instinct to hunt for necessary food, they should not, one would suppose, crowd together in pursuit of sustenance at a time when it is most likely to fail; yet such associations do take place in hard weather chiefly, and thicken as the severity increases. As some kind of self-interest and self-defence is no doubt the motive for the proceeding, may it not arise from the helplessness of their

state in such rigorous seasons; as men crowd together, when under great calamities, though they know not why? Perhaps approximation may dispel some degree of cold; and a crowd may make each individual appear safer from the ravages of birds of prey and other dangers.

If I admire when I see how much congenerous birds love to congregate, I am the more struck when I see incongruous ones in such strict amity. If we do not much wonder to see a flock of rooks usually attended by a train of daws, yet it is strange that the former should so frequently have a flight of starlings for their satellites. Is it because rooks have a more discerning scent than their attendants, and can lead them to spots more productive of food? Anatomists say that rooks, by reason of two large nerves which run down between the eyes into the upper mandible, have a more delicate feeling in their beaks than other round-billed birds, and can grope for their meat when out of sight.<sup>1</sup> Perhaps, then, their associates attend them on the motive of interest, as greyhounds wait on the motions of their finders; and as lions are said to do on the yelpings of jackalls. Lapwings and starlings sometimes associate.

<sup>1</sup> The nerves here referred to are a pair which run down on either side of the beak. They are known as the orbito-nasal nerves. The orbito-nasal is a branch of the V or trigeminal nerve. It is really not more developed in the Rook than in the majority of other birds.—[W. P. P.]





*Common Starling.*

*1/2 Life size.*



## LETTER XII<sup>1</sup>

TO THE SAME

March 9th, 1772.

DEAR SIR,—As a gentleman<sup>2</sup> and myself were walking on the fourth of last *November* round the sea-banks at *Newhaven*, near the mouth of the *Lewes* river, in pursuit of natural knowledge, we were surprised to see three house-swallows gliding very swiftly by us. That morning was rather chilly, with the wind at north-west; but the tenor of the weather for some time before had been delicate, and the noons remarkably warm. From this incident, and from repeated accounts which I meet with, I am more and more induced to believe that many of the swallow kind do not depart from this island, but lay themselves up in holes and caverns; and do, insect-like and bat-like, come forth at mild times, and then retire again to their *latebræ*.<sup>3</sup> Nor make I the least doubt but that, if I lived at *Newhaven*, *Seaford*, *Brighthelmstone*, or any of those towns near the chalk cliffs of the *Sussex* coast, by proper observations I should see swallows stirring at periods of the winter when the noons were soft and inviting, and the sun warm and invigorating. And I am the more of this opinion from what I have remarked during some of our late springs, that

<sup>1</sup> In the MS. Letters this is a continuation of the foregoing one.—[R. B. S.]

<sup>2</sup> “My Brother of Thames Street,” in the MS.—[R. B. S.]

<sup>3</sup> Gilbert White here pronounced in a less guarded manner than usual in favour of the theory of the hibernation of swallows. See note to vol. i. p. 162.—[R. B. S.]

though some swallows did make their appearance about the usual time, *viz.*, the thirteenth or fourteenth of *April*, yet meeting with an harsh reception, and blustering cold north-east winds, they immediately withdrew, absconding for several days, till the weather gave them better encouragement.



*from Fisher's Buildings*

## LETTER XIII<sup>1</sup>

TO THE SAME

*April 12th, 1772.*

DEAR SIR,—While I was in *Sussex* last autumn my residence was at the village near *Lewes*, from whence I had formerly the pleasure of writing to you. On the first of *November* I remarked that the old tortoise, formerly mentioned, began first to dig the ground in order to the forming its hybernaculum, which it had fixed on just beside a great tuft of hepaticas. It scrapes out the ground with its fore-feet, and throws it up over its back with its hind; but the motion of its legs is ridiculously slow, little exceeding the hour-hand of a clock; and suitable to the composure of an animal said to be a whole month in performing one feat of copulation. Nothing can be more assiduous than this creature night and day in scooping the earth, and forcing its great body into the cavity; but, as the noons of that season proved unusually warm and sunny, it was continually interrupted, and called forth by the heat in the middle of the day; and though I continued there till the thirteenth of *November*, yet the work remained unfinished. Harsher weather, and frosty mornings, would have quickened its operations. No part of its behaviour ever struck me more than the extreme timidity it always expresses with regard to rain; for though it has a shell that would secure it against the wheel of a loaded cart, yet does it discover as much solicitude about rain as a lady dressed in all her best attire, shuffling away on the first sprinklings, and running its head up in a corner. If

<sup>1</sup> This is also a continuation of Letter XI in the original MS.—[R. B. S.]

attended to, it becomes an excellent weather-glass ; for as sure as it walks elate, and as it were on tiptoe, feeding with great earnestness in a morning, so sure will it rain before night. It is totally a diurnal animal, and never pretends to stir after it becomes dark. The tortoise, like other reptiles, has an arbitrary stomach as well as lungs ; and can refrain from eating as well as breathing for a great part of the year. When first awakened it eats nothing ; nor again in the autumn before it retires : through the height of the summer it feeds voraciously, devouring all the food that comes in its way. I was much taken with its sagacity in discerning those that do it kind offices : for, as soon as the good old lady comes in sight who has waited on it for more than thirty years, it hobbles towards its benefactress with awkward alacrity ; but remains inattentive to strangers. Thus not only "*the ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib*,"<sup>1</sup> but the most abject reptile and torpid of beings distinguishes the hand that feeds it, and is touched with the feelings of gratitude !

[I am, with the greatest respect  
Your most obliged, and Humble servant

Gil : White.

Please to direct to me at the Rev<sup>d</sup> : Mr. White's at Fyfield near Andover. Pray when do you set-out on yr circuit ; and when is it that Mr. Banks is expected to sail ?]

*P.S.*—In about three days after I left Sussex the tortoise retired into the ground under the hepatica.

<sup>1</sup> Isaiah i. 3.

## LETTER XIV

TO THE SAME

SELBORNE, *March 26th, 1773.*

DEAR SIR,—The more I reflect on the *στοργή* of animals, the more I am astonished at its effects. Nor is the violence of this affection more wonderful than the shortness of its duration. Thus every hen is in her turn the virago of the yard, in proportion to the helplessness of her brood; and will fly in the face of a dog or a sow in defence of those chickens, which in a few weeks she will drive before her with relentless cruelty.

This affection sublimates the passions, quickens the invention, and sharpens the sagacity of the brute creation. Thus an hen, just become a mother, is no longer that placid bird she used to be, but with feathers standing on end, wings hovering, and clocking note, she runs about like one possessed. Dams will throw themselves in the way of the greatest danger in order to avert it from their progeny. Thus a partridge will tumble along before a sportsman in order to draw away the dogs from her helpless covey. In the time of nidification the most feeble birds will assault the most rapacious. All the hirundines of a village are up in arms at the sight of an hawk, whom they will persecute till he leaves that district. A very exact observer<sup>1</sup> has often remarked that a pair of ravens nesting in the rock of *Gibraltar* would suffer no vulture or eagle to rest near their station, but would drive them from the hill with an amazing fury; even the blue thrush<sup>2</sup> at the

<sup>1</sup> His brother John. See vol. i. pp. 119-165.—[R. B. S.]

<sup>2</sup> *Monticola cyanea*.—[R. B. S.]

season of breeding would dart out from the clefts of the rocks to chase away the kestrel, or the sparrow-hawk. If you stand near the nest of a bird that has young, she will not be induced to betray them by an inadvertent fondness, but will wait about at a distance with meat in her mouth for an hour together.

Should I farther corroborate what I have advanced above by some anecdotes which I probably may have mentioned before in conversation, yet you will, I trust, pardon the repetition for the sake of the illustration.

The flycatcher of the Zoology (the *stoparola* of Ray),<sup>1</sup> builds every year in the vines that grow on the walls of my house. A pair of these little birds had one year inadvertently placed their nest on a naked bough, perhaps in a shady time, not being aware of the inconvenience that followed. But an hot sunny season coming on before the brood was half-fledged, the reflection of the wall became insupportable, and must inevitably have destroyed the tender young, had not affection suggested an expedient, and prompted the parent-birds to hover over the nest all the hotter hours, while with wings expanded, and mouths gaping for breath, they screened off the heat from their suffering offspring.

A farther instance I once saw of notable sagacity in a willow-wren, which had built in a bank in my fields. This bird a friend and myself had observed as she sat in her nest; but were particularly careful not to disturb her, though we saw she eyed us with some degree of jealousy. Some days after as we passed that way we were desirous of remarking how this brood went on; but no nest could be found, till I happened to take up a large bundle of long green moss, as it were, carelessly thrown over the nest in order to dodge the eye of any impertinent intruder.

A still more remarkable mixture of sagacity and instinct occurred to me one day as my people were pulling off the lining of an hotbed, in order to add some fresh dung. From out of the side of this bed leaped an animal with

<sup>1</sup> *Muscicapa grisola*. See vol. i. p. 174.—[R. B. S.]





*Spotted Flycatcher.*

*3/4* life size.



great agility that made a most grotesque figure ; nor was it without great difficulty that it could be taken ; when it proved to be a large white-bellied field-mouse with three or four young clinging to her teats by their mouths and feet. It was amazing that the desultory and rapid motions of this dam should not oblige her litter to quit their hold, especially when it appeared that they were so young as to be both naked and blind !

To these instances of tender attachment, many more of which might be daily discovered by those that are studious of nature, may be opposed that rage of affection, that monstrous perversion of the *στοργή*, which induces some females of the brute creation to devour their young because their owners have handled them too freely, or removed them from place to place ! Swine, and sometimes the more gentle race of dogs and cats, are guilty of this horrid and preposterous murder. When I hear now and then of an abandoned mother that destroys her offspring, I am not so much amazed ; since reason perverted, and the bad passions let loose, are capable of any enormity ; but why the parental feelings of brutes, that usually flow in one most uniform tenor, should sometimes be so extravagantly diverted, I leave to abler philosophers than myself to determine.

I am, with the greatest esteem  
Your most obedient Servant,  
Gil : White.

## LETTER XV<sup>1</sup>

TO THE SAME

SELBORNE, *July 8th*, 1773.

DEAR SIR,—Some young men went down lately to a pond on the verge of *Wolmer-Forest* to hunt flappers, or young wild-ducks, many of which they caught, and, among the rest, some very minute yet well-fledged wild-fowls alive, which upon examination I found to be teals.<sup>2</sup> I did not know till then that teals ever bred in the south of *England*, and was much pleased with the discovery: this I look upon as a great stroke in natural history.<sup>3</sup>

We have had, ever since I can remember, a pair of white owls<sup>4</sup> that constantly breed under the eaves of this church. As I have paid good attention to the manner of life of these birds during their season of breeding, which lasts the summer through, the following remarks may not perhaps be unacceptable:—About an hour before sunset (for then the mice begin to run) they sally forth in quest of prey, and hunt all round the hedges of meadows and small enclosures for them, which seem to be their only food. In this irregular country we can stand on an eminence and see them beat the fields over like a setting-dog, and often drop down in the grass or corn. I have minuted

<sup>1</sup> This letter in the original MS. commences with the observations on the White-throat, Redstart, Black-cap, and Flycatcher, which, in the published work, the author transferred to Letter XL to Pennant. See vol. i. p. 173.—[R. B. S.]

<sup>2</sup> See note to vol. i. p. 30.—[R. B. S.]

<sup>3</sup> On the nesting of the Teal in Wolmer Forest at the present day, see a very interesting article by Mr. W. H. Hudson in *Longmans' Magazine* for August 1897, pp. 342-353.—[R. B. S.]

<sup>4</sup> *Strix flammea*.—[R. B. S.]



*White Owl.*

*1/3 Life size.*



these birds with my watch for an hour together, and have found that they return to their nest, the one or the other of them, about once in five minutes; reflecting at the same time on the adroitness that every animal is possessed of as far as regards the well-being of itself and offspring. But a piece of address, which they show when they return loaded, should not, I think, be passed over in silence.—As they take their prey with their claws, so they carry it in their claws to their nest; but, as the feet are necessary in their ascent under the tiles, they constantly perch first on the roof of the chancel, and shift the mouse from their claws to their bill, that their feet may be at liberty to take hold of the plate on the wall as they are rising under the eaves.

White owls seem not (but in this I am not positive) to hoot at all; all that clamorous hooting appears to me to come from the wood kinds. The white owl does indeed snore and hiss in a tremendous manner; and these menaces well answer the intention of intimidating; for I have known a whole village up in arms on such an occasion, imagining the churchyard to be full of goblins and spectres. White owls also often scream horribly as they fly along; from this screaming probably arose the common people's imaginary species of *screech-owl*, which they superstitiously think attends the windows of dying persons. The plumage of the remiges of the wings of every species of owl that I have yet examined is remarkably soft and pliant. Perhaps it may be necessary that the wings of these birds should not make much resistance or rushing, that they may be enabled to steal through the air unheard upon a nimble and watchful quarry.

While I am talking of owls, it may not be improper to mention what I was told by a gentleman of the county of *Wilts*. As they were grubbing a vast hollow pollard-ash that had been the mansion of owls for centuries, he discovered at the bottom a mass of matter that at first he could not account for. After some examination he found that it was a congeries of the bones of mice (and perhaps

of birds and bats) that had been heaping together for ages, being cast up in pellets out of the crops of many generations of inhabitants. For owls cast up the bones, fur, and feathers, of what they devour, after the manner of hawks. He believes, he told me, that there were bushels of this kind of substance.

When brown owls hoot their throats swell as big as an hen's egg. I have known an owl of this species live a full year without any water. Perhaps the case may be the same with all birds of prey. When owls fly they stretch out their legs behind them as a balance to their large heavy heads, for as most nocturnal birds have large eyes and ears they must have large heads to contain them. Large eyes I presume are necessary to collect every ray of light, and large concave ears to command the smallest degree of sound or noise.<sup>1</sup>

[I am, with the greatest respect,  
Your most obliged, and  
humble servant  
Gil : White.

We have had a sad cold, black  
summer solstice, but not  
a very wet one.]

It will be proper to premise here that the sixteenth, eighteenth, twentieth, and twenty-first letters have been published already in the "Philosophical Transactions"; but as nicer observation has furnished several corrections and additions, it is hoped that the republication of them will not give offence; especially as these sheets would be very imperfect without them, and as they will be new to many readers who had no opportunity of seeing them when they made their first appearance.

The *hirundines* are a most inoffensive, harmless, entertaining, social, and useful tribe of birds; they touch no

<sup>1</sup> Professor Bell gives several instances of the occurrence of both the Long-eared Owl (*Asio otus*) and the Short-eared Owl (*Asio accipitrinus*) in the neighbourhood of Selborne. The former would doubtless breed there in suitable places, as it does at Avington. A nest of the Brown or Tawny Owl (*Syrnium aluco*), containing two young birds, was found this year (1900) in an old tree at The Wakes by Mr. Paxton Parkin.—[R. B. S.]



fruit in our gardens; delight, all except one species, in attaching themselves to our houses; amuse us with their migrations, songs, and marvellous agility; and clear our outlets from the annoyances of gnats and other troublesome insects. Some districts in the south seas, near *Guiaquil*,<sup>1</sup> are desolated, it seems, by the infinite swarms of venomous mosquitoes, which fill the air, and render those coasts insupportable. It would be worth inquiring whether any species of hirundines is found in those regions.<sup>2</sup> Whoever contemplates the myriads of insects that sport in the sunbeams of a summer evening in this country, will soon be convinced to what a degree our atmosphere would be choked with them was it not for the friendly interposition of the swallow-tribe.

Many species of birds have their peculiar *lice*; but the *hirundines* alone seem to be annoyed with *dipterous* insects, which infest every species, and are so large, in proportion to themselves, that they must be extremely irksome and injurious to them. These are the *hippoboscæ hirundinis*, with narrow subulated wings, abounding in every nest; and are hatched by the warmth of the bird's own body during incubation, and crawl about under its feathers.

A *species* of them is familiar to horsemen in the south of *England* under the name of *forest-fly*;<sup>3</sup> and to some of

<sup>1</sup> "See *Ulloa's Travels*."—[G. W.]

<sup>2</sup> There are several species of Swallows found in Ecuador, some of them being resident in the country. *Atticora melano leuca* is not unlike our own House-Martin in appearance.—[R. B. S.]

<sup>3</sup> The flies here mentioned constitute with some others a group no less remarkable for the strangeness of their appearance than for their method of development. They are all gnats, flat, with long powerful legs, which enable them to run with great speed. They are mostly parasitic upon birds or mammals. The species known from its abundance in the New Forest as the forest-fly (*Hippobosca equina*), which infects horses and oxen, and a second kind, *Ornithomyia avicularia*, occurring, as its name indicates, on birds of almost all kinds, possess a pair of fully developed wings like all typical flies; but in another kind, *Stenopteryx hirundinis*, which is found on Swallows and about their nests, the wings are narrow and sickle-like, and scarcely fitted for flight. Again a fourth species, the so-called deer-tick (*Lipoptena cervi*), is provided with wings upon issuing from the pupa case, but subsequently drops them after finally settling upon its host. Lastly, the so-called

*side-fly*, from its running sideways like a crab. It creeps under the tails, and about the groins, of horses, which, at their first coming out of the north, are rendered half frantic by the tickling sensation; while our own breed little regards them.

The curious *Reaumur* discovered the large eggs, or rather *pupæ*, of these flies as big as the flies themselves, which he hatched in his own bosom. Any person that will take the trouble to examine the old nests of either species of swallows may find in them the black shining cases or skins of the *pupæ* of these insects; but for other particulars, too long for this place, we refer the reader to '*L'Histoire d'Insectes*' of that admirable entomologist. Tom. iv., pl. ii.

sheep-tick is wingless from its birth. We thus get in the family a series of forms starting with the fully winged forest-fly, and leading through the swallow-tick, with its reduced wings, and the deer-tick which has the strange faculty of dropping these organs, to the sheep-tick, which has entirely lost them. Touching their development, it is remarkable that only a single young one is produced at a time, and this, instead of being laid in the egg or larval stage, remains within the mother, nourished at her expense by means analogous to those which obtain in the higher mammals, and when born has either already passed into the pupa stage or immediately assumes that condition.—[R. I. P.]

## LETTER XVI

TO THE SAME

SELBORNE, *Nov. 20th, 1773.*

DEAR SIR,—In obedience to your injunctions I sit down to give you some account of the house-martin, or martlet; and if my monography of this little domestic and familiar bird should happen to meet with your approbation, I may probably soon extend my inquiries to the rest of the *British hirundines*—the swallow, the swift, and the bank-martin.

A few house-martins begin to appear about the 16th of *April*; usually some few days later than the swallow. For some time after they appear the hirundines in general pay no attention to the business of nidification, but play and sport about, either to recruit from the fatigue of their journey, if they do migrate at all, or else that their blood may recover its true tone and texture after it has been so long benumbed by the severities of winter. About the middle of *May*, if the weather be fine, the martin begins to think in earnest of providing a mansion for its family. The crust or shell of this nest seems to be formed of such dirt or loam as comes most readily to hand, and is tempered and wrought together with little bits of broken straws to render it tough and tenacious. As this bird often builds against a perpendicular wall without any projecting ledge under, it requires its utmost efforts to get the first foundation firmly fixed, so that it may safely carry the superstructure. On this occasion the bird not only clings with its claws, but partly supports itself by strongly inclining its tail against the wall, making that a fulcrum; and thus steadied, it works and plasters the materials into the face of the brick or stone.

But then, that this work may not, while it is soft and green, pull itself down by its own weight, the provident architect has prudence and forbearance enough not to advance her work too fast ; but by building only in the morning, and by dedicating the rest of the day to food and amusement, gives it sufficient time to dry and harden. About half an inch seems to be a sufficient layer for a day. Thus careful workmen, when they build mud-walls (informed at first perhaps by this little bird), raise but a moderate layer at a time, and then desist, lest the work should become top-heavy, and so be ruined by its own weight. By this method in about ten or twelve days is formed an hemispheric nest with a small aperture towards the top, strong, compact, and warm ; and perfectly fitted for all the purposes for which it was intended. But then nothing is more common than for the house-sparrow, as soon as the shell is finished, to seize on it as its own, to eject the owner, and to line it after its own manner.

After so much labour is bestowed in erecting a mansion, as Nature seldom works in vain, martins will breed on for several years together in the same nest, where it happens to be well-sheltered and secure from the injuries of weather. The shell or crust of the nest is a sort of rustic-work full of knobs and protuberances on the outside ; nor is the inside of those that I have examined smoothed with any exactness at all ; but is rendered soft and warm, and fit for incubation, by a lining of small straws, grasses, and feathers, and sometimes by a bed of moss interwoven with wool. In this nest they tread, or engender, frequently during the time of building ; and the hen lays from three to five white eggs.

At first when the young are hatched, and are in a naked and helpless condition, the parent birds, with tender assiduity, carry out what comes away from their young. Was it not for this affectionate cleanliness the nestlings would soon be burnt up, and destroyed in so deep and hollow a nest, by their own caustic excrement. In the quadruped creation the same neat precaution is made use of ; particularly among dogs and cats, where the dams

lick away what proceeds from their young. But in birds there seems to be a particular provision, that the dung of nestlings is enveloped in a tough kind of jelly, and therefore is the easier conveyed off without soiling or daubing. Yet, as nature is cleanly in all her ways, the young perform this office for themselves in a little time by thrusting their tails out at the aperture of their nest. As the young of small birds presently arrive at their ἡλικία, or full growth, they soon become impatient of confinement, and sit all day with their heads out at the orifice, where the dams, by clinging to the nest, supply them with food from morning to night. For a time the young are fed on the wing by their parents; but the feat is done by so quick and almost imperceptible a flight that a person must have attended very exactly to their motions before he would be able to perceive it.<sup>1</sup> As soon as the young are able to shift for themselves, the dams immediately turn their thoughts to the business of a second brood; while the first flight, shaken off and rejected by their nurses, congregate in great flocks, and are the birds that are seen clustering and hovering on sunny mornings and evenings round towers and steeples, and on the roofs of churches and houses. These congregatings usually begin to take place about the first week in *August*; and therefore we may conclude that by that time the first flight is pretty well over. The young of this species do not quit their abodes altogether; but the more forward birds get abroad some days before the rest. These approaching the eaves of buildings, and playing about before them, make people think that several old ones attend one nest. They are often capricious in fixing on a nesting-place, beginning many edifices, and leaving them unfinished; but when once a nest is completed in a sheltered place, it serves for several seasons. Those which breed in a ready-finished house get the start in hatching of those that build new by ten days or a fortnight. These industrious artificers are at their labours in the long days before four in the morning.

<sup>1</sup> See vol. i. p. 132.—[R. B. S.]

When they fix their materials they plaster them on with their chins, moving their heads with a quick vibratory motion. They dip and wash as they fly sometimes in very hot weather, but not so frequently as swallows. It has been observed that martins usually build to a north-east or north-west aspect, that the heat of the sun may not crack and destroy their nests; but instances are also remembered where they bred for many years in vast abundance in a hot stifled inn-yard against a wall facing to the south.

Birds in general are wise in their choice of situation; but in this neighbourhood every summer is seen a strong proof to the contrary at an house without eaves in an exposed district, where some martins build year by year in the corners of the windows. But, as the corners of these windows (which face to the south-east and south-west) are too shallow, the nests are washed down every hard rain; and yet these birds drudge on to no purpose from summer to summer, without changing their aspect or house. It is a piteous sight to see them labouring when half their nest is washed away and bringing dirt . . . "*generis lapsi sarcire ruinas.*" Thus is instinct a most wonderful unequal faculty; in some instances so much above reason, in other respects so far below it! Martins love to frequent towns, especially if there are great lakes and rivers at hand; nay they even affect the close air of *London*. And I have not only seen them nesting in the *Borough*, but even in the *Strand* and *Fleet Street*; but then it was obvious from the dinginess of their aspect that their feathers partook of the filth of that sooty atmosphere. Martins are by far the least agile of the four species; their wings and tails are short, and therefore they are not capable of such surprising turns and quick and glancing evolutions as the swallow. Accordingly they make use of a placid easy motion in a middle region of the air, seldom mounting to any great height, and never sweeping long together over the surface of the ground or water. They do not wander far for food, but affect sheltered districts, over some lake, or under some hanging wood, or in some hollow vale, especially in windy weather. They

breed the latest of all the swallow kind : in 1772 they had nestlings on to *October* 21st, and are never without unfledged young as late as *Michaelmas*.

As the summer declines the congregating flocks increase in numbers daily by the constant accession of the second broods ; till at last they swarm in myriads upon myriads round the villages on the *Thames*, darkening the face of the sky as they frequent the aits of that river, where they roost. They retire, the bulk of them I mean, in vast flocks together about the beginning of *October* ; but have appeared of late years in a considerable flight in this neighbourhood, for one day or two, as late as *November* the 3rd and 6th, after they were supposed to have been gone for more than a fortnight. They therefore withdraw with us the latest of any species. Unless these birds are very short-lived indeed, or unless they do not return to the district where they are bred, they must undergo vast devastations somehow, and somewhere ; for the birds that return yearly bear no manner of proportion to the birds that retire.

House-martins are distinguished from their congeners by having their legs covered with soft downy feathers down to their toes. They are no songsters ; but twitter in a pretty inward soft manner in their nests. During the time of breeding they are often greatly molested with fleas.

I am, &c.



## LETTER XVII<sup>1</sup>

TO THE SAME

RINGMER, near LEWES, Dec. 9th, 1773.

DEAR SIR,—I received your last favour just as I was setting out for this place; and am pleased to find that my monography met with your approbation. My remarks are the result of many years observation; and are I trust true in the whole, though I do not pretend to say that they are perfectly void of mistake, or that a more nice observer might not make many additions, since subjects of this kind are inexhaustible.

If you think my letter worthy the notice of your respectable society, you are at liberty to lay it before them; and they will consider it, I hope, as it was intended; as an humble attempt to promote a more minute inquiry into natural history; into the life and conversation of animals. Perhaps, hereafter, I may be induced to take the house-swallow under consideration; and from that proceed to the rest of the *British hiryndines*.

<sup>1</sup> This letter is not among the MS. ones in the British Museum.—[R. B. S.]



Though I have now travelled the *Sussex-downs*<sup>1</sup> upwards of thirty years, yet I still investigate that chain of majestic mountains with fresh admiration year by year; and I think I see new beauties every time I traverse it. This range, which runs from *Chichester* eastward as far as *East-Bourn*, is about sixty miles in length, and is called *The South Downs*, properly speaking, only round *Lewes*. As you pass along you command a noble view of the wild, or weald, on one hand, and the broad downs and sea on the other. Mr. *Ray* used to visit a family<sup>2</sup> just at the foot of these hills, and was so ravished with the prospect from *Plumpton-plain*, near *Lewes*, that he mentions those scapes in his "Wisdom of God in the Works of the Creation" with the utmost satisfaction, and thinks them equal to anything he had seen in the finest parts of *Europe*.

For my own part, I think there is somewhat peculiarly sweet and amusing in the shapely figured aspect of chalk-hills in preference to those of stone, which are rugged, broken, abrupt, and shapeless.

Perhaps I may be singular in my opinion, and not so happy as to convey to you the same idea; but I never contemplate these mountains without thinking I perceive somewhat analogous to growth in their gentle swellings and smooth fungus-like protuberances, their fluted sides, and regular hollows and slopes, that carry at once the air of vegetative dilation and expansion . . . .

. . . . . Or was there ever a time when these immense masses of calcareous matter were thrown into fermentation by some adventitious moisture; were raised and leavened into such shapes by some plastic power; and so made to swell and heave their broad backs into the sky so much above the less animated clay of the wild below?

By what I can guess from the admeasurements of

<sup>1</sup> A work has recently been published by Mr. W. H. Hudson on the Sussex Downs, in which many interesting passages will be found dealing with Gilbert White and his visits.—[R. B. S.]

<sup>2</sup> Mr. *Courthope* of *Danny*.—[G. W.]

the hills that have been taken round my house, I should suppose that these hills surmount the wild at an average at about the rate of five hundred feet.

One thing is very remarkable as to the sheep : from the westward till you get to the river *Adur* all the flocks have horns, and smooth white faces, and white legs, and a hornless sheep is rarely to be seen ; but as soon as you pass that river eastward, and mount *Beeding-hill*, all the flocks at once become hornless, or as they call them, poll-sheep ; and have, moreover, black faces with a white tuft of wool on their foreheads, and speckled and spotted legs, so that you would think that the flocks of *Laban* were pasturing on one side of the stream, and the variegated breed of his son-in-law *Jacob* were cantoned along on the other. And this diversity holds good respectively on each side from the valley of *Bramber* and *Beeding* to the eastward, and westward all the whole length of the downs. If you talk with the shepherds on this subject, they tell you that the case has been so from time immemorial ; and smile at your simplicity if you ask them whether the situation of these two different breeds might not be reversed ? However, an intelligent friend of mine near *Chichester* is determined to try the experiment ; and has this autumn, at the hazard of being laughed at, introduced a parcel of black-faced hornless rams among his horned western ewes. The black-faced poll sheep have the shortest legs and the finest wool.

As I had hardly ever before travelled these downs at so late a season of the year, I was determined to keep as sharp a look-out as possible so near the southern coast, with respect to the summer short-winged birds of passage. We make great inquiries concerning the withdrawing of the swallow-kind, without examining enough into the causes why this *tribe* is never to be seen in winter ; for, *entre nous*, the disappearing of the latter is more marvellous than that of the former, and much more unaccountable. The *hirundines*, if they please, are certainly capable of migration, and yet no doubt are often found in a torpid





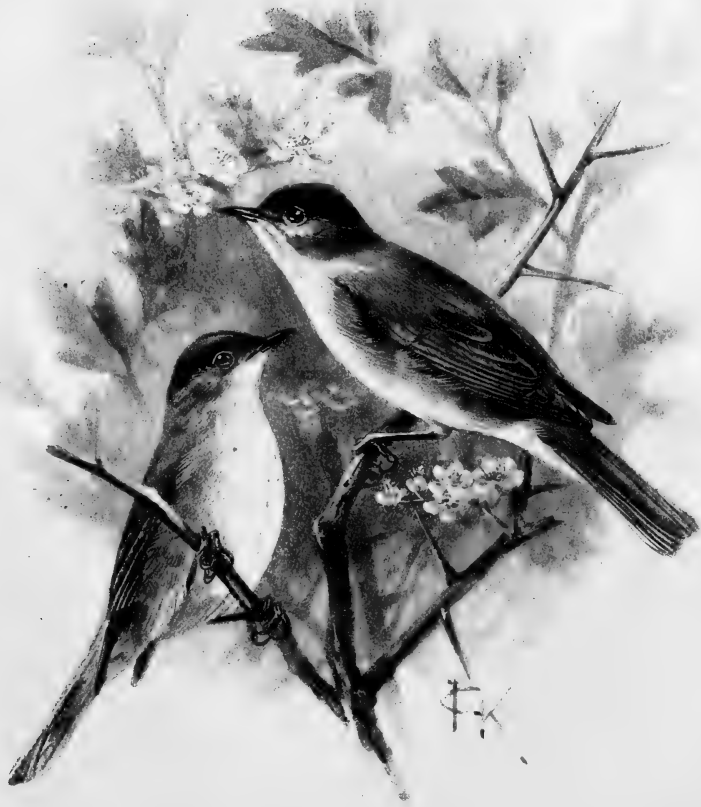
*Blackcap Warbler.*

*1/2 Life size.*

state; but redstarts, nightingales, white-throats, &c. &c., are very ill provided for long flights, having never been once found, nor ever heard of, in a torpid state, and yet can never be supposed, in such times, from year to year to desert and hide the eyes of the curious and inquisitive from day to day discern the other small birds that are known to abide our winters. In the winter, I saw nothing like a summer bird of *Sylvia*, and, what is more strange, not one wheat-ear, though they abound so in the autumn as to be reckoned a perquisite to the shepherds that take them. Notwithstanding many are to be seen to my knowledge all the winter through in many parts of the south of *England*.<sup>2</sup> The most intelligent shepherds tell me that some few of these birds appear on the downs in *March*, and then withdraw to breed probably in warrens and stone-quarters; now and then a nest is ploughed up in a fallow on the downs under a furrow, but it is thought a rarity. At the time of wheat-harvest they begin to be taken in great numbers; are sent for sale in vast quantities to *Wrightthelmsstone* and *Tunbridge*; and appear at the tables of all the gentry that entertain with any degree of elegance. About *Michaelmas* they retire and are seen no more till *March*. Though these birds are, when in season, in great plenty on the south downs round *Leaves*, yet at *East Burn*, which is the eastern extremity of those downs, they abound much more. One thing is very remarkable, that though in the height of the season so many hundred of dozens are taken, yet they never are seen to flock; and it is a rare thing to see more than three or four at a time; so that there must be a perpetual fitting and constant progressive succession. It does not appear that any wheat-ears are taken to the

<sup>1</sup> Redstarts (*Ruticilla phoenicurus*), Black-caps (*Sylvia atricapilla*), and White-throats (*Sylvia sylvia*) go to North, Eastern, and Equatorial Africa to winter, the last-named species reaching as far as Cape Colony. The Black-cap has also been found in Senegambia, and Lord Delamere has recently found it wintering on the Athi River in the interior of British East Africa. The Nightingale (*Daulias luscinia*) certainly goes as far as the forests of West Africa in winter, as Captain Shelley procured a specimen on the Gold Coast.--[R. B. S.]

<sup>2</sup> See note, vol. 1. p. 52.--[R. B. S.]



*Blackcap Warbler.*

*1/2 Life size.*

state ; but redstarts, nightingales, white-throats, black-caps,<sup>1</sup> &c. &c., are very ill provided for long flights ; have never been once found, as I ever heard of, in a torpid state, and yet can never be supposed, in such troops, from year to year to dodge and elude the eyes of the curious and inquisitive, which from day to day discern the other small birds that are known to abide our winters. But, notwithstanding all my care, I saw nothing like a summer bird of passage ; and, what is more strange, not one wheat-ear, though they abound so in the autumn as to be a considerable perquisite to the shepherds that take them ; and though many are to be seen to my knowledge all the winter through in many parts of the south of *England*.<sup>2</sup> The most intelligent shepherds tell me that some few of these birds appear on the downs in *March*, and then withdraw to breed probably in warrens and stone-quarries ; now and then a nest is ploughed up in a fallow on the downs under a furrow, but it is thought a rarity. At the time of wheat-harvest they begin to be taken in great numbers ; are sent for sale in vast quantities to *Brighthelmstone* and *Tunbridge* ; and appear at the tables of all the gentry that entertain with any degree of elegance. About *Michaelmas* they retire and are seen no more till *March*. Though these birds are, when in season, in great plenty on the south downs round *Lewes*, yet at *East-Bourn*, which is the eastern extremity of those downs, they abound much more. One thing is very remarkable, that though in the height of the season so many hundred of dozens are taken, yet they never are seen to flock ; and it is a rare thing to see more than three or four at a time ; so that there must be a perpetual flitting and constant progressive succession. It does not appear that any wheat-ears are taken to the

<sup>1</sup> Redstarts (*Ruticilla phæniceus*), Black-caps (*Sylvia atricapilla*), and White-throats (*Sylvia sylvia*) go to North, Eastern, and Equatorial Africa to winter, the last-named species reaching as far as Cape Colony. The Black-cap has also been found in Senegambia, and Lord Delamere has recently found it wintering on the Athi River in the interior of British East Africa. The Nightingale (*Daulias luscinia*) certainly goes as far as the forests of West Africa in winter, as Captain Shelley procured a specimen on the Gold Coast.—[R. B. S.]

<sup>2</sup> See note, vol. i. p. 52.—[R. B. S.]

westward of *Houghton-bridge*, which stands on the river *Arun*.

I did not fail to look particularly after my new migration of *ring-ousels*; and to take notice whether they continued on the downs to this season of the year; as I had formerly remarked them in the month of *October* all the way from *Chichester* to *Lewes* wherever there were any shrubs and covert: but not one bird of this sort came within my observation. I only saw a few *larks* and *whinchats*, some *rooks*, and several *kites* and *buzzards*.

About *Midsummer* a flight of *cross-bills* comes to the pine-groves about this house, but never makes any long stay.

The old tortoise, that I have mentioned in a former letter, still continues in this garden; and retired under ground about the twentieth of *November*, and came out again for one day on the thirtieth: it lies now buried in a wet swampy border under a wall facing to the south, and is enveloped at present in mud and mire!

Here is a large rookery round this house, the inhabitants of which seem to get their livelihood very easily; for they spend the greatest part of the day on their nest-trees when the weather is mild. These rooks retire every evening all the winter from this rookery, where they only call by the way, as they are going to roost in deep woods: at the dawn of day they always revisit their nest-trees, and are preceded a few minutes by a flight of daws, that act, as it were, as their harbingers.

I am, &c.



## LETTER XVIII

TO THE SAME

SELBORNE, Jan. 29<sup>th</sup>, 1774.

DEAR SIR,—The house-swallow, or chimney-swallow, is undoubtedly the first comer of all the *British hirundines*; and appears in general on or about the thirteenth of *April*, as I have remarked from many years observation. Not but now and then a straggler is seen much earlier: and, in particular, when I was a boy I observed a swallow for a whole day together on a sunny warm *Shrove Tuesday*; which day could not fall out later than the middle of *March*, and often happened early in *February*.

It is worth remarking that these birds are seen first about lakes and mill-ponds; and it is also very particular, that if these early visitors happen to find frost and snow, as was the case of the two dreadful springs of 1770 and 1771, they immediately withdraw for a time. A circumstance this much more in favour of hiding than migration; since it is much more probable that a bird should retire to its hybernaculum just at hand, than return for a week or two to warmer latitudes.<sup>1</sup>

The swallow, though called the chimney-swallow, by no means builds altogether in chimneys, but often within barns and outhouses against the rafters; and so she did in *Virgil's* time:

. . . . . "Antè  
Garrula quàm tignis nidos suspendat hirundo."

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<sup>1</sup> See vol. i. pp. 100, 102.—[R. B. S.]

In *Sweden* she builds in barns, and is called *ladu swala*, the barn swallow. Besides, in the warmer parts of *Europe* there are no chimneys to houses, except they are *English-built*: in these countries she constructs her nest in porches, and gateways, and galleries, and open halls.

Here and there a bird may affect some odd, peculiar place; as we have known a swallow build down the shaft of an old well, through which chalk had been formerly drawn up for the purpose of manure: but in general with us this *hirundo* breeds in chimneys; and loves to haunt those stacks where there is a constant fire, no doubt for the sake of warmth. Not that it can subsist in the immediate shaft where there is a fire; but prefers one adjoining to that of the kitchen, and disregards the perpetual smoke of that funnel, as I have often observed with some degree of wonder.

Five or six or more feet down the chimney does this little bird begin to form her nest about the middle of *May*, which consists, like that of the house-martin, of a crust or shell composed of dirt or mud, mixed with short pieces of straw to render it tough and permanent; with this difference, that whereas the shell of the martin is nearly hemispheric, that of the swallow is open at the top, and like half a deep dish: this nest is lined with fine grasses, and feathers, which are often collected as they float in the air.

Wonderful is the address which this adroit bird shows all day long in ascending and descending with security through so narrow a pass. When hovering over the mouth of the funnel, the vibrations of her wings acting on the confined air occasion a rumbling like thunder. It is not improbable that the dam submits to this inconvenient situation so low in the shaft, in order to secure her broods from rapacious birds, and particularly from owls, which frequently fall down chimneys, perhaps in attempting to get at these nestlings.

The swallow lays from four to six white eggs, dotted with red specks; and brings out her first brood about the last week in *June*, or the first week in *July*. The pro-

gressive method by which the young are introduced into life is very amusing: first, they emerge from the shaft with difficulty enough, and often fall down into the rooms below: for a day or so they are fed on the chimney-top, and then are conducted to the dead leafless bough of some tree, where, sitting in a row, they are attended with great assiduity, and may then be called *perchers*. In a day or two more they become *flyers*, but are still unable to take their own food; therefore they play about near the place where the dams are hawking for flies; and, when a mouthful is collected, at a certain signal given, the dam and the nestling advance, rising towards each other, and meeting at an angle; the young one all the while uttering such a little quick note of gratitude and complacency, that a person must have paid very little regard to the wonders of Nature that has not often remarked this feat.

The dam betakes herself immediately to the business of a second brood as soon as she is disengaged from her first, which at once associates with the first broods of *house-martins*, and with them congregates, clustering on sunny roofs, towers, and trees. This *hirundo* brings out her second brood towards the middle and end of *August*.

All the summer long is the swallow a most instructive pattern of unwearied industry and affection; for, from morning to night, while there is a family to be supported, she spends the whole day in skimming close to the ground, and exerting the most sudden turns and quick evolutions. Avenues, and long walks under hedges, and pasture-fields, and mown meadows where cattle graze, are her delight, especially if there are trees interspersed; because in such spots insects most abound. When a fly is taken a smart snap from her bill is heard, resembling the noise at the shutting of a watch-case; but the motion of the mandibles are too quick for the eye.

The swallow, probably the male bird, is the *excubitor* to house-martins and other little birds, announcing the approach of birds of prey. For as soon as a hawk appears, with a shrill alarming note he calls all the swallows and

martins about him, who pursue in a body, and buffet and strike their enemy till they have driven him from the village, darting down from above on his back, and rising in a perpendicular line in perfect security. This bird also will sound the alarm, and strike at cats when they climb on the roofs of houses, or otherwise approach the nests. Each species of *hirundo* drinks as it flies along, sipping the surface of the water; but the swallow alone, in general, *washes* on the wing, by dropping into a pool for many times together: in very hot weather house-martins and bank-martins dip and wash a little.

The swallow is a delicate songster, and in soft sunny weather sings both perching and flying; on trees in a kind of concert, and on chimney-tops: is also a bold flyer, ranging to distant downs and commons even in windy weather, which the other species seem much to dislike; nay, even frequenting exposed sea-port towns, and making little excursions over the salt water. Horsemen on wide downs are often closely attended by a little party of swallows for miles together, which plays before and behind them, sweeping around them, and collecting all the skulking insects that are roused by the trampling of the horses' feet: when the wind blows hard, without this expedient, they are often forced to settle to pick up their lurking prey.

This species feeds much on little *coleoptera*, as well as on gnats and flies; and often settles on dug ground, or paths, for gravels to grind and digest its food. Before they depart, for some weeks, to a bird, they forsake houses and chimneys, and roost in trees; and usually withdraw about the beginning of *October*, though some few stragglers may appear on at times till the first week in *November*.

Some few pairs haunt the new and open streets of *London* next the fields, but do not enter, like the house-martin, the close and crowded parts of the city.

Both male and female are distinguished from their congeners by the length and forkedness of their tails. They are undoubtedly the most nimble of all the species: and when the male pursues the female in amorous chase,

they then go beyond their usual speed, and exert a rapidity almost too quick for the eye to follow.

After this circumstantial detail of the life and discerning *στοργή* of the swallow, I shall add, for your further amusement, an anecdote or two not much in favour of her sagacity :—

A certain swallow built for two years together on the handles of a pair of garden-shears that were stuck up against the boards in an out-house, and therefore must have her nest spoiled whenever that implement was wanted; and, what is stranger still, another bird of the same species built its nest on the wings and body of an owl that happened by accident to hang dead and dry from the rafter of a barn. This owl, with the nest on its wings, and with eggs in the nest, was brought as a curiosity worthy the most elegant private museum in *Great Britain*. The owner, struck with the oddity of the sight, furnished the bringer with a large shell, or conch, desiring him to fix it just where the owl hung: the person did as he was ordered, and the following year a pair, probably the same pair, built their nest in the conch, and laid their eggs.

The owl and the conch make a strange grotesque appearance, and are not the least curious specimens in that wonderful collection of art and nature.<sup>1</sup>

Thus is instinct in animals, taken the least out of its way, an undistinguishing, limited faculty, and blind to every circumstance that does not immediately respect self-preservation, or lead at once to the propagation or support of their species.

I am, with all respect, &c. &c.

<sup>1</sup> Sir Ashton Lever's "Museum."—[G. W.]

## LETTER XIX

TO THE SAME

SELBORNE, Feb. 14<sup>th</sup>, 1774.

DEAR SIR,—I received your favour of the eighth, and am pleased to find that you read my little history of the swallow with your usual candour; nor was I the less pleased to find that you made objections where you saw reason.

As to the quotations, it is difficult to say precisely which species of *hirundo* *Virgil* might intend in the lines in question, since the ancients did not attend to specific differences like modern naturalists: yet somewhat may be gathered, enough to incline me to suppose that in the two passages quoted the poet had his eye on the swallow.

In the first place the epithet *garrula* suits the *swallow* well, who is a great songster, and not the *martin*, which is rather a mute bird; and when it sings is so inward as scarce to be heard. Besides, if *tignum* in that place signifies a *rafter* rather than a *beam*, as it seems to me to do, then I think it must be the *swallow* that is alluded to, and not the *martin*, since the former does frequently build *within the roof* against the *rafters*; while the latter always, as far as I have been able to observe, builds *without the roof* against the eaves and cornices.

As to the *simile*, too much stress must not be laid on it; yet the epithet *nigra* speaks plainly in favour of the swallow, whose back and wings are very black; while the rump of the martin is milk-white, its back and wings blue, and all its under part white as snow. Nor can the clumsy motions (comparatively clumsy) of the martin well represent



*Redwing.*

*1/2 Life size.*





the sudden and artful evolutions and quick turns which *Juturna* gave to her brother's chariot, so as to elude the eager pursuit of the enraged *Æneas*. The verb *sonat* also seems to imply a bird that is somewhat loquacious.

We have had a very wet autumn and winter, so as to raise the springs to a pitch beyond anything since 1764, which was a remarkable year for floods and high waters. The land-springs which we call *lavants*, break out much on the downs of *Sussex*, *Hampshire*, and *Wiltshire*. The country people say when the *lavants* rise corn will always be dear; meaning that when the earth is so glutted with water as to send forth springs on the downs and uplands, that the corn-vales must be drowned; and so it has proved for these ten or eleven years past. For land-springs have never obtained more since the memory of man than during that period; nor has there been known a greater scarcity of all sorts of grain, considering the great improvements of modern husbandry. Such a run of wet seasons a century or two ago would, I am persuaded, have occasioned a famine. Therefore pamphlets and newspaper-letters, that talk of combinations, tend to inflame and mislead; since we must not expect plenty till Providence sends us more favourable seasons.

The wheat of last year, all round this district, and in the county of *Rutland*, and elsewhere, yields remarkably bad; and our wheat on the ground, by the continual late sudden vicissitudes from fierce frost to pouring rains, looks poorly; and the turnips rot very fast. I am, &c.

## LETTER XX

TO THE SAME

SELBORNE, *Feb. 26th, 1774.*

DEAR SIR,—The sand-martin, or bank-martin, is by much the least of any of the *British hirundines*, and, as far as we have ever seen, the smallest known hirundo, though *Brisson* asserts that there is one much smaller, and that is the *hirundo esculenta*.

But it is much to be regretted that it is scarce possible for any observer to be so full and exact as he could wish in reciting the circumstances attending the life and conversation of this little bird, since it is *fera naturâ*, at least in this part of the kingdom, disclaiming all domestic attachments, and haunting wilds heaths and commons where there are large lakes; while the other species, especially the swallow and house-martin, are remarkably gentle and domesticated, and never seem to think themselves safe but under the protection of man.

Here are in this parish, in the sand-pits and banks of the lakes of *Woolmer-forest*, several colonies of these birds, and yet they are never seen in the village; nor do they at all frequent the cottages that are scattered about in that wild district. The only instance I ever remember where this species haunts any building is at the town of *Bishop's Waltham*, in this county, where many sand-martins nestle and breed in the scaffold-holes of the back-wall of *William of Wykeham's* stables; but then this wall stands in a very sequestered and retired enclosure, and faces upon a large and beautiful lake. And indeed this species seems so to delight in large waters, that no instance occurs of their

abounding but near vast pools or rivers ; and in particular it has been remarked that they swarm in the banks of the *Thames* in some places below *London-bridge*.

It is curious to observe with what different degrees of architectonic skill Providence has endowed birds of the same genus, and so nearly correspondent in their general mode of life ! for while the swallow and the house-martin discover the greatest address in raising and securely fixing crusts or shells of loam as cunabula for their young, the bank-martin terebrates a round and regular hole in the sand or earth, which is serpentine, horizontal, and about two feet deep. At the inner end of this burrow does this bird deposit, in a good degree of safety, her rude nest, consisting of fine grasses and feathers, usually goose-feathers, very inartificially laid together.

Perseverance will accomplish anything ; though at first one would be disinclined to believe that this weak bird, with her soft and tender bill and claws, should ever be able to bore the stubborn sand-bank without entirely disabling herself ; yet with these feeble instruments have I seen a pair of them make great despatch, and could remark how much they had scooped that day by the fresh sand which ran down the bank, and was of a different colour from that which lay loose and bleached in the sun.

In what space of time these little artists are able to mine and finish these cavities I have never been able to discover, for reasons given above ; but it would be a matter worthy of observation, where it falls in the way of any naturalist to make his remarks. This I have often taken notice of, that several holes of different depths are left unfinished at the end of summer. To imagine that these beginnings were intentionally made in order to be in the greater forwardness for next spring is allowing perhaps too much foresight and *rerum prudentia* to a simple bird. May not the cause of these *latebræ* being left unfinished arise from their meeting in those places with strata too harsh, hard, and solid for their purpose, which they relinquish, and go to a fresh spot that works more freely ? Or may they

not in other places fall in with a soil as much too loose and mouldering, liable to flounder, and threatening to overwhelm them and their labours ?

One thing is remarkable—that, after some years, the old holes are forsaken and new ones bored ; perhaps because the old habitations grow foul and fetid from long use, or because they may so abound with fleas as to become untenable. This species of swallow moreover is strangely annoyed with fleas ; and we have seen fleas, bed-fleas (*pulex irritans*), swarming at the mouths of these holes, like bees on the stools of their hives.<sup>1</sup>

The following circumstance should by no means be omitted—that these birds do *not* make use of their caverns by way of hybernacula, as might be expected ; since banks so perforated have been dug out with care in the winter, when nothing was found but empty nests.

The sand-martin arrives much about the same time with the swallow, and lays, as she does, from four to six white eggs. But as this species is *cryptogame*, carrying on the business of nidification, incubation, and the support of its young in the dark, it would not be so easy to ascertain the time of breeding, were it not for the coming forth of the broods, which appear much about the time, or rather somewhat earlier than those of the swallow. The nestlings are supported in common like those of their congeners, with gnats and other small insects ; and sometimes they are fed with *libellulæ* (dragon flies) almost as long as themselves. In the last week in *June* we have seen a row of these sitting on a rail near a great pool as *perchers*, and so young and helpless, as easily to be taken by hand ; but whether the dams ever feed them on the wing, as swallows and house-martins do, we have never yet been able to determine ; nor do we know whether they pursue and attack birds of prey.

When they happen to breed near hedges and enclosures, they are dispossessed of their breeding-holes by

<sup>1</sup> See vol. i. p. 129.—[R. B. S.]

the house-sparrow, which is on the same account a fell adversary to house-martins.

These *hirundines* are no songsters, but rather mute, making only a little harsh noise when a person approaches their nests. They seem not to be of a sociable turn, never with us congregating with their congeners in the autumn. Undoubtedly, they breed a second time, like the house-martin and swallow, and withdraw about *Michaelmas*.

Though in some particular districts they may happen to abound, yet in the whole, in the south of *England* at least, is this much the rarest species. For there are few towns or large villages but what abound with house-martins; few churches, towers, or steeples, but what are haunted by some swifts; scarce a hamlet or single cottage-chimney that has not it's swallow; while the bank-martins, scattered here and there, live a sequestered life among some abrupt sand-hills, and in the banks of some few rivers.

These birds have a peculiar manner of flying; flitting about with odd jerks, and vacillations, not unlike the motions of a butterfly. Doubtless the flight of all *hirundines* is influenced by, and adapted to, the peculiar sort of insects which furnish their food. Hence it would be worth inquiry to examine what particular genus of insects affords the principal food of each respective species of swallow.

Notwithstanding what has been advanced above, some few sand-martins, I see, haunt the skirts of *London*, frequenting the dirty pools in *Saint George's-Fields*, and about *Whitechapel*. The question is where these build, since there are no banks or bold shores in that neighbourhood; perhaps they nestle in the scaffold-holes of some old or new deserted building. They dip and wash as they fly sometimes, like the house-martin and swallow.

Sand-martins differ from their congeners in the diminutiveness of their size, and in their colour, which is

what is usually called a mouse-colour. Near *Valencia*, in *Spain*, they are taken, says *Willughby*, and sold in the markets for the table; and are called by the country people, probably from their desultory jerking manner of flight, *Papilion de Montagna*.



*Spire of the Tower.*

## LETTER XXI

TO THE SAME

SELBORNE, *Sept. 28, 1774.*

DEAR SIR,—As the *swift* or *black-martin* is the largest of the *British hirundines*, so it is undoubtedly the latest comer. For I remember but one instance of it's appearing before the last week in *April*; and in some of our late frosty, harsh springs, it has not been seen till the beginning of *May*. This species usually arrives in pairs.

The swift, like the sand-martin, is very defective in architecture, making no crust, or shell, for it's nest; but forming it of dry grasses and feathers, very rudely and inartificially put together. With all my attention to these birds, I have never been able once to discover one in the act of collecting or carrying in materials: so that I have suspected (since their nests are exactly the same) that they sometimes usurp upon the house-sparrows, and expel them, as sparrows do the house and sand-martin; well remembering that I have seen them squabbling together at the entrance of their holes; and the sparrows up in arms, and much disconcerted at these intruders. And yet I am assured, by a nice observer in such matters, that they do collect feathers for their nests in *Andalusia*, and that he has shot them with such materials in their mouths.

Swifts, like sand-martins, carry on the business of nidification quite in the dark, in crannies of castles, and towers, and steeples, and upon the tops of the walls of churches under the roof; and therefore cannot be so narrowly watched as those species that build more openly: but, from what I could ever observe, they begin nesting about the

middle of *May*; and I have remarked, from eggs taken, that they have sat hard by the ninth of *June*. In general they haunt tall buildings, churches, and steeples, and breed only in such: yet in this village some pairs frequent the lowest and meanest cottages, and educate their young under those thatched roofs. We remember but one instance where they breed out of buildings, and that is in the sides of a deep chalk-pit near the town of *Odiham*, in this county, where we have seen many pairs entering the crevices, and skimming and squeaking round the precipices.

As I have regarded these amusive birds with no small attention, if I should advance something new and peculiar with respect to them, and different from all other birds, I might perhaps be credited; especially as my assertion is the result of many years exact observation. The fact that I would advance is, that swifts *tread*, or copulate, on the wing: and I would wish any nice observer, that is startled at this supposition, to use his own eyes, and I think he will soon be convinced.<sup>1</sup> In another *class* of animals, *viz.*, the *insect*, nothing is so common as to see the different species of many genera in conjunction as they fly. The swift is almost continually on the wing; and as it never settles on the ground, on trees, or roofs, would seldom find opportunity for amorous rites, was it not enabled to indulge them in the air. If any person would watch these birds of a fine morning in *May*, as they are sailing round at a great height from the ground, he would see, every now and then, one drop on the back of another, and both of them sink down together for many fathoms with a loud piercing shriek. This I take to be the juncture when the business of generation is carrying on.

As the swift eats, drinks, collects materials for it's nest, and, as it seems, propagates on the wing, it appears to live more in the air than any other bird, and to perform all functions there save those of sleeping and incubation.

<sup>1</sup> See vol. i. p. 101.—[R. B. S.]





*Swift  
Sandmartin.*

*1/2* Life size.



This *hirundo*<sup>1</sup> differs widely from it's congeners in laying invariably but *two*<sup>2</sup> eggs at a time, which are milk-white, long, and peaked at the small end; whereas the other species lay at each brood from *four* to *six*. It is a most alert bird, rising very early, and retiring to roost very late; and is on the wing in the height of summer at least sixteen hours. In the longest days it does not withdraw to rest till a quarter before nine in the evening, being the latest of all day birds. Just before they retire whole groups of them assemble high in the air, and squeak, and shoot about with wonderful rapidity. But this bird is never so much alive as in sultry thundry weather, when it expresses great alacrity, and calls forth all it's powers. In hot mornings, several, getting together in little parties, dash round the steeples and churches, squeaking as they go in a very clamorous manner: these, by nice observers, are supposed to be males serenading their sitting hens; and not without reason, since they seldom squeak till they come close to the walls or eaves, and since those within utter at the same time a little inward note of complacency.

When the hen has sat hard all day, she rushes forth just as it is almost dark, and stretches and relieves her weary limbs, and snatches a scanty meal for a few minutes, and then returns to her duty of incubation. Swifts, when wantonly and cruelly shot while they have young, discover a little lump of insects in their mouths, which they pouch and hold under their tongue. In general they feed in a much higher district than the other species; a proof that gnats and other insects do also abound to a considerable height in the air: they also range to vast distances; since loco-motion is no labour to them who are endowed with

<sup>1</sup> The Swift was classed by Linnæus and the older authors as a Swallow (*Hirundo*). It is now known, however, to belong to a totally different Order of Birds, viz. the *Cypseliformes*. The Swifts are of world-wide distribution like the Swallows, but they differ in many points of anatomical structure, notably in the proportions of the wing-bones, and also in many external characters likewise.—[R. B. S.]

<sup>2</sup> Mr. Harting (ed. "Selborne," p. 203, *note*) points out that three eggs are sometimes laid. He has himself found that number in a nest.

such wonderful powers of wing. Their powers seem to be in proportion to their leavers; and their wings are longer in proportion than those of almost any other bird. When they mute, or ease themselves in flight, they raise their wings, and make them meet over their backs.

At some certain times in the summer I had remarked that swifts were hawking very low for hours together over pools and streams; and could not help inquiring into the object of their pursuit that induced them to descend so much below their usual range. After some trouble I found that they were taking *phryganeæ*, *ephemeræ*, and *libellulæ* (cadew-flies, may-flies, and dragon-flies), that were just emerged out of their aurelia state. I then no longer wondered that they should be so willing to stoop for a prey that afforded them such plentiful and succulent nourishment.

They bring out their young about the middle or latter end of *July*: but as these never become perchers, nor, that ever I could discern, are fed on the wing by their dams, the coming forth of the young is not so notorious as in the other species.

On the thirtieth of last *June* I untiled the eaves of a house where many pairs build, and found in each nest only *two* squab, naked *pulli*: on the eighth of *July* I repeated the same inquiry, and found that they had made very little progress towards a fledged state, but were still naked and helpless. From whence we may conclude that birds whose way of life keeps them perpetually on the wing would not be able to quit their nest till the end of the month. Swallows and martins, that have numerous families, are continually feeding them every two or three minutes; while swifts, that have but two young to maintain, are much at their leisure, and do not attend on their nests for hours together.

Sometimes they pursue and strike at hawks that come in their way; but not with that vehemence and fury that swallows express on the same occasion. They are out all day long in wet days, feeding about, and disregarding

still rain : from whence two things may be gathered ; first, that many insects abide high in the air, even in rain ; and next, that the feathers of these birds must be well preened to resist so much wet. Windy, and particularly windy weather with heavy showers, they dislike ; and on such days withdraw, and are scarce ever seen.

There is a circumstance respecting the *colour* of swifts, which seems not to be unworthy our attention. When they arrive in the spring they are all over of a glossy, dark soot-colour, except their chins, which are white ; but, by being all day long in the sun and air, they become quite weather-beaten and bleached before they depart, and yet they return glossy again in the spring. Now, if they pursue the sun into lower latitudes, as some suppose, in order to enjoy a perpetual summer, why do they not return bleached ? Do they not rather perhaps retire to rest for a season, and at that juncture moult and change their feathers, since all other birds are known to moult soon after the season of breeding ? <sup>1</sup>

Swifts are very anomalous in many particulars, dissenting from all their congeners not only in the number of their young, but in breeding but *once* in a summer ; whereas all the other *British hirundines* breed invariably *twice*. It is past all doubt that swifts can breed but once, since they withdraw in a short time after the flight of their young, and some time before their congeners bring out their second broods. We may here remark that, as swifts breed but *once* in a summer, and only *two* at a time, and the other *hirundines twice*, the latter, who lay from four to six eggs, increase at an average five times as fast as the former.

But in nothing are swifts more singular than in their early retreat. They retire, as to the main body of them, by the tenth of *August*, and sometimes a few days sooner :

<sup>1</sup> Although the fact is not generally known, even at this day, there can be no doubt that Gilbert White was perfectly right in his surmise that Swifts moult *after* they leave this country. Mr. Hartert, our greatest authority on the order of Swifts, tells me that he has examined moulting specimens of the common Swift killed in the winter home of the species.—[R. B. S.]

and every straggler invariably withdraws by the twentieth, while their congeners, all of them, stay till the beginning of *October*; many of them all through that month and some occasionally to the beginning of *November*. This early retreat is mysterious and wonderful, since that time is often the sweetest season in the year. But, what is more extraordinary, they begin to retire still earlier in the most southerly parts of *Andalusia*, where they can be in no ways influenced by any defect of heat, or, as one might suppose, defect of food. Are they regulated in their motions with us by a failure of food, or by a propensity to moulting, or by a disposition to rest after so rapid a life, or by what? This is one of those incidents in natural history that not only baffles our searches, but almost eludes our guesses!

These hirundines never perch on trees or roofs, and so never congregate with their congeners. They are fearless while haunting their nesting places, and are not to be scared with a gun; and are often beaten down with poles and cudgels as they stoop to go under the eaves. Swifts are much infested with those pests to the genus called *hippoboscæ hirundinis*; and often wriggle and scratch themselves, in their flight, to get rid of that clinging annoyance.<sup>1</sup>

Swifts are no songsters, and have only one harsh screaming note; yet there are ears to which it is not displeasing, from an agreeable association of ideas, since that note never occurs but in the most lovely summer weather.

They never can settle on the ground but through accident; and when down, can hardly rise, on account of the shortness of their legs and the length of their wings: neither can they walk, but only crawl; but they have a strong grasp with their feet, by which they cling to walls. Their bodies being flat they can enter a very narrow crevice; and where they cannot pass on their bellies they will turn up edgewise.

<sup>1</sup> On the 8th of August 1893, Mr. Walter Burton brought me a young Swift which he had captured on the window-sill of his house at Hanwell. It was apparently nearly driven mad by the worry of the parasites, and had been observed previously flying up and down in front of the house, screaming in great distress.—[R. B. S.]

The particular formation of the foot discriminates the swift from all the *British hirundines*; and indeed from all other known birds, the *hirundo melba*, or great white-bellied swift of *Gibraltar*, excepted; for it is so disposed as to carry "*omnes quatuor digitos anticos*"—all it's four toes forward; besides, the least toe, which should be the back-toe, consists of one bone alone, and the other three only of two apiece. A construction most rare and peculiar, but nicely adapted to the purposes in which their feet are employed. This, and some peculiarities attending the nostrils and under mandible, have induced a discerning<sup>1</sup> naturalist to suppose that this *species* might constitute a genus *per se*.<sup>2</sup>

In *London* a party of swifts frequents the *Tower*, playing and feeding over the river just below the bridge: others haunt some of the churches of the *Borough*, next the fields; but do not venture, like the *house-martin*, into the close crowded part of the town.

The *Swedes* have bestowed a very pertinent name on this swallow, calling it *ring swala*, from the perpetual *rings* or circles that it takes round the scene of it's nidification.

Swifts feed on *coleoptera*, or small beetles with hard cases over their wings, as well as on the softer insects; but it does not appear how they can procure gravel to grind their food, as swallows do, since they never settle on the ground. Young ones, overrun with *hippoboscæ*, are sometimes found, under their nests, fallen to the ground; the number of vermin rendering their abode insupportable any longer. They frequent in this village several abject cottages; yet a succession still haunts the same unlikely roofs: a good proof this that the same birds return to the same spots. As they must stoop very low to get up under these humble eaves, cats lie in wait, and sometimes catch them on the wing.

<sup>1</sup> John Antony Scopoli, of Carniola, M.D.—[G. W.]

<sup>2</sup> Scopoli made a genus, *Apus*, for the Swifts, but as this is practically the same name as *Apos*, proposed by him previously for a genus of Crustacea, the name to be used for the Swifts is *Cypselus* of Illiger.—[R. B. S.]

On the 5th of *July*, 1775, I again untiled part of a roof over the nest of a swift. The dam sat in the nest; but so strongly was she affected by natural *στοργή* for her brood, which she supposed to be in danger, that, regardless of her own safety, she would not stir, but lay sullenly by them, permitting herself to be taken in hand. The squab young we brought down and placed on the grass-plot, where they tumbled about, and were as helpless as a new-born child. While we contemplated their naked bodies, their unwieldy disproportioned abdomina, and their heads, too heavy for their necks to support, we could not but wonder when we reflected that these shiftless beings in a little more than a fortnight would be able to dash through the air almost with the inconceivable swiftness of a meteor; and perhaps in their emigration, must traverse vast continents and oceans as distant as the equator. So soon does Nature advance small birds to their *ἡλικία*, or state of perfection; while the progressive growth of men and large quadrupeds is slow and tedious!

I am, &c.





Henry Barn.

## LETTER XXII

TO THE SAME

SELBORNE, Sept. 13, 1774.

DEAR SIR,—By means of a straight cottage-chimney I had an opportunity this summer of remarking, at my leisure, how swallows ascend and descend through the shaft : but my pleasure in contemplating the address with which this feat was performed to a considerable depth in the chimney was somewhat interrupted by apprehensions lest my eyes might undergo the same fate with those of *Tobit*.<sup>1</sup>

Perhaps it may be some amusement to you to hear at what times the different species of hirundines arrived this spring in three very distant counties of this kingdom.

<sup>1</sup> “The same night also I returned from the burial and slept by the wall of my courtyard, being polluted, and my face was uncovered.—

“And I knew not that there were sparrows (swallows?) in the wall, and mine eyes being open, the sparrows muted warm dung into mine eyes, and a whiteness came into mine eyes; and I went to the physicians, but they helped me not.”—TOBIT ii. 10.

The Greek word is *στρουθια*, pl. of *στρουθιον*, dimin. of *στρουθος*; commonly translated a sparrow, but taken also to mean any small bird. Bochart and the Latin Vulgate take them to be hirundines, which the Arabs held as a genus of sparrows, and called the “Sparrow of Paradise”—“Ghusfoor Aljinnut.”—[W. J.]

My friend the late Governor H. T. Ussher, alluding to the dislike of the natives of the Gold Coast to any molestation of their swallows, says (*Ibis*, 1874, p. 62) that the birds were considered to be “God’s Children.”—[R. B. S.]

With us the swallow was seen first on *April* the 4th, the swift on *April* the 24th, the bank-martin on *April* the 12th, and the house-martin not till *April* the 30th. At *South Zele, Devonshire*, swallows did not arrive till *April* the 25th; swifts in plenty on *May* the 1st and house-martins not till the middle of *May*. At *Blackburn, in Lancashire*, swifts were seen *April* the 28th, swallows *April* the 29th, house-martins *May* the 1st. Do these different dates, in such distant districts, prove anything for or against migration?

A farmer, near *Weyhill*, fallows his land with two teams of asses; one of which works till noon, and the other in the afternoon. When these animals have done their work, they are penned all night, like sheep, on the fallow. In the winter they are confined and foddered in a yard, and make plenty of dung.

*Linncæus* says that hawks "*paciscuntur inducias cum avibus, quamdiu cuculus cuculat:*" but it appears to me, that during that period, many little birds are taken and destroyed by birds of prey, as may be seen by their feathers left in lanes and under hedges.

The *missel-thrush* is, while breeding, fierce and pugnacious, driving such birds as approach its nest, with great fury to a distance. The *Welch* call it *pen y llwyn*, the head or master of the coppice. He suffers no magpie, jay, or blackbird, to enter the garden where he haunts; and is, for the time, a good guard to the new-sown legumens. In general, he is very successful in the defence of his family: but once I observed in my garden, that several magpies came determined to storm the nest of a missel-thrush: the dams defended their mansion with great vigour, and fought resolutely *pro aris et focis*; but numbers at last prevailed, they tore the nest to pieces, and swallowed the young alive.

In the season of nidification the wildest birds are comparatively tame. Thus the *ring-dove* breeds in my fields, though they are continually frequented;<sup>1</sup> and the missel-

<sup>1</sup> What would the author have thought if he could have seen the Wood-Pigeons in the London parks at the present day. There they are tame enough, but not so friendly as in the Champs Élysées in Paris, where recently (June 1900)



*Red-backed Shrike.  
Great Grey Shrike.*

*2/3 Life size.*



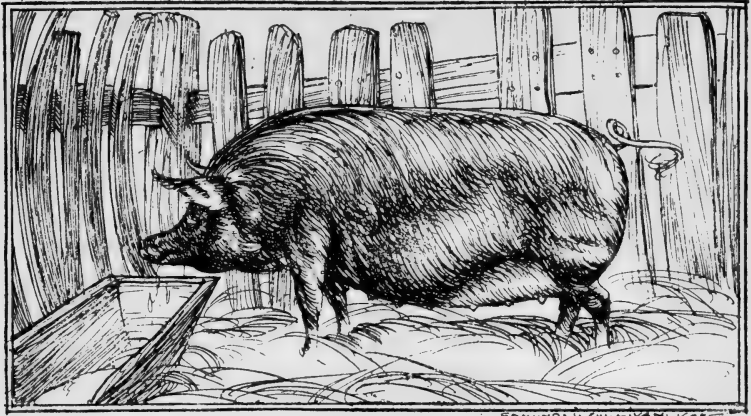
thrush, though most shy and wild in the autumn and winter, builds in my garden close to a walk where people are passing all day long.

Wall-fruit abounds with me this year ; but my grapes, that used to be forward and good, are at present backward beyond all precedent : and this is not the worst of the story ; for the same ungenial weather, the same black cold solstice, has injured the more necessary fruits of the earth, and discoloured and blighted our wheat. The crop of hops promises to be very large.

Frequent returns of deafness incommode me sadly, and half disqualify me for a naturalist ; for, when those fits are upon me, I lose all the pleasing notices and little intimations arising from rural sounds ; and *May* is to me as silent and mute with respect to the notes of birds, &c., as *August*. My eyesight is, thank God, quick and good ; but with respect to the other sense, I am, at times, disabled :

“And Wisdom at one entrance quite shut out.”

I actually saw a Wood-Pigeon sitting on the arm of a workman and taking food from his hand. The same man fed the Sparrows in the Tuileries Gardens, and the little birds took food from his fingers.—[R. B. S.]



## LETTER XXIII

TO THE SAME

SELBORNE, *June 8, 1775.*

DEAR SIR,—On *September* the 21st, 1741, being then on a visit, and intent on field-diversions, I rose before daybreak : when I came into the enclosures, I found the stubbles and clover-grounds matted all over with a thick coat of cobweb, in the meshes of which a copious and heavy dew hung so plentifully that the whole face of the country seemed, as it were, covered with two or three setting nets draw one over another. When the dogs attempted to hunt, their eyes were so blinded and hood-winked that they could not proceed, but were obliged to lie down and scrape the incumbrances from their faces with their forefeet, so that, finding my sport interrupted, I returned home musing in my mind on the oddness of the occurrence.

As the morning advanced the sun became bright and warm, and the day turned out one of those most lovely ones which no season but the autumn produces ; cloudless, calm, serene, and worthy of the South of *France* itself.

About nine an appearance very unusual began to demand our attention, a shower of cobwebs falling from

very elevated regions, and continuing, without any interruption, till the close of the day. These webs were not single filmy threads, floating in the air in all directions, but perfect flakes or rags; some near an inch broad, and five or six long, which fell with a degree of velocity that showed they were considerably heavier than the atmosphere.

On every side as the observer turned his eyes might he behold a continual succession of fresh flakes falling into his sight, and twinkling like stars as they turned their sides towards the sun.

How far this wonderful shower extended would be difficult to say; but we know that it reached *Bradley*, *Selborne*, and *Alresford*, three places which lie in a sort of a triangle, the shortest of whose sides is about eight miles in extent.

At the second of those places there was a gentleman (for whose veracity and intelligent turn we have the greatest veneration) who observed it the moment he got abroad; but concluded that, as soon as he came upon the hill above his house, where he took his morning rides, he should be higher than this meteor, which he imagined might have been blown, like *Thistle-down* from the common above: but, to his great astonishment, when he rode to the most elevated part of the down, 300 feet above his fields, he found the webs in appearance still as much above him as before; still descending into sight in a constant succession, and twinkling in the sun, so as to draw the attention of the most incurious.

Neither before nor after was any such fall observed; but on this day the flakes hung in the trees and hedges so thick, that a diligent person sent out might have gathered baskets full.

The remark that I shall make on these cobweb-like appearances, called *gossamer*,<sup>1</sup> is, that, strange and super-

<sup>1</sup> Many people suppose that the peculiar habit here referred to by White is practised by one particular species, the so-called "Gossamer Spider." This, however, is a mistake, for the young of Spiders of very many different kinds

stitious as the notions about them were formerly, nobody in these days doubts but that they are the real production of small spiders, which swarm in the fields in fine weather in autumn, and have a power of shooting out webs from their tails so as to render themselves buoyant, and lighter than air. But why these apterous insects should *that day* take such a wonderful aërial excursino, and why their webs should at once become so gross and material as to be considerably more weighty than air, and to descend with precipitation, is a matter beyond my skill. If I might be allowed to hazard a supposition, I should imagine that those filmy threads, when first shot, might be entangled in the rising dew, and so drawn up, spiders and all, by a brisk evaporation, into the regions where clouds are formed: and if the spiders have a power of coiling and thickening their webs in the air, as Dr. *Lister* says they have [see his Letters to Mr. *Ray*], then, when they were become heavier than the air, they must fall.

Every day in fine weather, in autumn chiefly, do I see those spiders shooting out their webs and mounting aloft: they will go off from your finger, if you will take them into your hand. Last summer one alighted on my book as I was reading in the parlour; and, running to the top of the page, and shooting out a web, took it's departure from thence. But what I most wondered at was, that it went off with considerable velocity in a place where no air was stirring; and I am sure that I did not assist it with my breath. So that these little crawlers seem to have, while mounting, some loco-motive power without the use of wings, and to move in the air faster than the air itself.<sup>1</sup>

possess the instinct to throw out silken threads upon which they may rise to great altitudes and float for miles, blown before the wind, and such threads have been met with many hundred miles from land; and no doubt it is largely due to this unique means of dispersal that many genera of Spiders are cosmopolitan in their distribution, and have succeeded in making their way to the most isolated oceanic islets.—[R. I. P.]

<sup>1</sup> I reproduce the following comment by Sir Wm. Jardine (ed. "Selborne," p. 186, *note*):—"Every sportsman must have noticed the appearance indicated in the preceding letter. *Lister*, as above referred to, has some very good observa-



tions in his Latin letter to Rayth ; and at later periods it has been noticed and commented upon by various observers and entomologists. Blackwall, in a paper in the Transactions of the Linnæan Society, observed that it was principally young and immature spiders that undertook the excursions, and thinks that they are borne upwards by an ascending current of rarefied air acting on their slender lines. He does not agree with those who think that the flight is influenced by electricity. Mr. John Murray, in his "Researches in Natural History," records several experiments ; and on one occasion the thread was discharged to the ceiling of a room above eight feet high. On another occasion a spider darted its thread perfectly horizontal, and in length fully ten feet, and the angle of vision being particularly favourable, we observed an extraordinary *aura*, or atmosphere, round the thread, which we cannot doubt was "electric." Mr. Murray afterwards explains various phenomena, and arrives at the conclusion that electricity is much connected with them ; he found that when a conductor was brought near one of the floccular balls they are considerably deflected from the perpendicular, and that when a stick of incited sealing-wax was brought near the thread of suspension it seemed to be repelled. Mr. Murray quotes Selborne, last paragraph of Letter XXIII, in regard to the spider shooting out a thread in a calm atmosphere, and observes, "This phenomenon it has been our fortune frequently to observe," and he arrives at the conclusion that the electric or non-electric state of the atmosphere is intimately connected with the shooting of the thread and the ascent of the spider. We have often seen hundreds of acres covered with this gossamer web sparkling with the morning dew, and the little creatures must have been exceedingly numerous, many being seen, and we regret never having attempted any computation, but no doubt this autumn will give opportunity to any resident in the country, and getting out of doors early. Starck says that twenty or thirty are often found upon a single stubble, and that he collected in half-an-hour two thousand, and could easily have got twice as many had he wished it."—[R. B. S.]

## LETTER XXIV<sup>1</sup>

TO THE SAME

SELBORNE, *Aug. 15, 1775.*

DEAR SIR,—There is a wonderful spirit of sociality in the brute creation, independent of sexual attachment: the congregating of gregarious birds in the winter is a remarkable instance.

Many horses, though quiet with company, will not stay one minute in a field by themselves; the strongest fences cannot restrain them. My neighbour's horse will not only not stay by himself abroad, but he will not bear to be left alone in a strange stable without discovering the utmost impatience, and endeavouring to break the rack and manger with his fore feet. He has been known to leap out at a stable-window, through which dung was thrown, after company; and yet in other respects is remarkably quiet. Oxen and cows will not fatten by themselves; but will neglect the finest pasture that is not recommended by society. It would be needless to instance in sheep, which constantly flock together.

But this propensity seems not to be confined to animals of the same species; for we know a doe, still alive, that was brought up from a little fawn with a dairy of cows; with them it goes a-field, and with them it returns to the yard. The dogs of the house take no notice of this deer, being used to her; but, if strange dogs come by, a chase ensues; while the master smiles to see his favourite securely

<sup>1</sup> This letter was published by Barrington in his "Miscellanies," and he states that he had received it from his "often-mentioned correspondent, the Rev. Mr. White of Selborne, in Hampshire."—[R. B. S.]

leading her pursuers over hedge, or gate, or stile, till she returns to the cows, who, with fierce lowings and menacing horns, drive the assailants quite out of the pasture.

Even great disparity of kind and size does not always prevent social advances and mutual fellowship. For a very intelligent and observant person has assured me that, in the former part of his life, keeping but one horse, he happened also on a time to have but one solitary hen. These two incongruous animals spent much of their time together in a lonely orchard, where they saw no creature but each other. By degrees an apparent regard began to take place between these two sequestered individuals. The fowl would approach the quadruped with notes of complacency, rubbing herself gently against his legs: while the horse would look down with satisfaction, and move with the greatest caution and circumspection, lest he should trample on his diminutive companion. Thus, by mutual good offices, each seemed to console the vacant hours of the other: so that *Milton*, when he puts the following sentiment into the mouth of *Adam*, seems to be somewhat mistaken:

“ Much less can *bird* with *beast*, or fish with fowl,  
So well converse, nor with the ox the ape.”

I am, &c.

## LETTER XXV

TO THE SAME

SELBORNE, Oct. 2, 1775.

DEAR SIR,—We have two gangs or hordes of gypsies which infest the south and west of *England*, and come round in their circuit two or three times in the year. One of these tribes calls itself by the noble name of *Stanley*, of which I have nothing particular to say; but the other is distinguished by an appellative somewhat remarkable—As far as their harsh gibberish can be understood, they seem to say that the name of their clan is *Curleople*: now the termination of this word is apparently *Grecian*: and as *Mezeray* and the gravest historians all agree that these vagrants did certainly migrate from *Egypt* and the East, two or three centuries ago, and so spread by degrees over *Europe*, may not this family-name, a little corrupted, be the very name they brought with them from the *Levant*? It would be matter of some curiosity, could one meet with an intelligent person among them, to inquire whether, in their jargon, they still retain any *Greek* words: the *Greek* radicals will appear in hand, foot, head, water, earth, &c. It is possible that amidst their cant and corrupted dialect many mutilated remains of their native language might still be discovered.

With regard to those peculiar people, the gypsies, one thing is very remarkable, and especially as they came from warmer climates; and that is, that while other beggars lodge in barns, stables, and cow-houses, these sturdy savages seem to pride themselves in braving the severities of winter, and in living *sub dio* the whole year round. Last



*We have two gangs or hordes of gypsies which infest  
the south & west of England.*



*September* was as wet a month as ever was known; and yet during those deluges did a young gypsy-girl lie-in in the midst of one of our hop-gardens, on the cold ground, with nothing over her but a piece of a blanket extended on a few hazel-rods bent hoop-fashion, and stuck into the earth at each end, in circumstances too trying for a cow in the same condition: yet within this garden there was a large hop-kiln, into the chambers of which she might have retired, had she thought shelter an object worthy her attention.

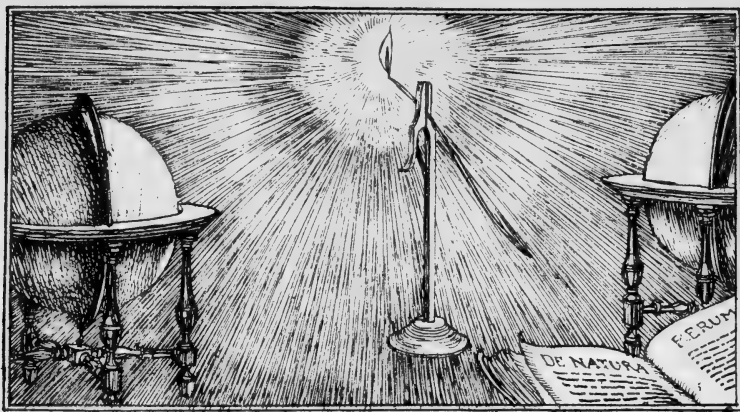
*Europe* itself, it seems, cannot set bounds to the roving of these vagabonds; for Mr. *Bell*, in his return from *Peking*, met a gang of these people on the confines of *Tartary*, who were endeavouring to penetrate those deserts, and try their fortune in *China*.<sup>1</sup>

Gypsies are called in *French*, *Bohemiens*; in *Italian* and modern *Greek*, *Zingani*.<sup>2</sup>

I am, &c.

<sup>1</sup> See *Bell's Travels in China*.

<sup>2</sup> The following interesting note is given by Mr. William Jardine (ed. "*Selborne*," p. 190):—"Borrow in his "*Zincali*" observes, "Bearing the same analogy to the Sanscrit tongue as the Indian dialects, we find the Rommany or the speech of Roma or Zincali as they style themselves, known in England and Spain as Gypsies or Gitanos. This speech, wherever it is spoken, is in all principal points one and the same, though more or less corrupted by foreign words, picked up in the various countries to which those who use it have penetrated. One remarkable feature must not be passed over without notice, namely, the very considerable number of Slavonic words, which are to be found imbedded within it, whether it be spoken in Spain or Germany, in England or Italy; from which circumstance we are led to the conclusion, that these people in their way from the East travelled in one large compact body, and that their route lay through some region where the Slavonian language or a dialect thereof was spoken. This region, I have no hesitation in asserting to have been Bulgaria, where they probably tarried for a considerable period, as Nomade herdsmen, and where numbers of them are still found at the present day. Besides the many Slavonian words in the Gypsy tongue, another curious feature attracts the attention of the philologist; an equal or still greater quantity of terms from the modern Greek; indeed we have full warrant for assuming that at one period the Spanish section, if not the rest of the Gypsy nation, understood the Greek language well, and that besides their own Indian dialect they occasionally used it for considerably upwards of a century subsequent to their arrival, as amongst the Gitanos there were individuals to whom it was intelligible so late as the year 1540."—[R. B. S.]



## LETTER XXVI

TO THE SAME

SELBORNE, *Nov. 1, 1775.*

DEAR SIR,—

“Hic . . . . tædæ pingues, hic plurimus ignis  
Semper, et assiduâ postes fuligine nigri.”

I shall make no apology for troubling you with the detail of a very simple piece of domestic œconomy, being satisfied that you think nothing beneath your attention that tends to utility: the matter alluded to is the use of *rushes* instead of candles, which I am well aware prevails in many districts besides this; but as I know there are countries also where it does not obtain, and as I have considered the subject with some degree of exactness, I shall proceed in my humble story, and leave you to judge of the expediency.

The proper species of *rush* for this purpose seems to be the *juncus effusus*, or common soft rush, which is to be found in most moist pastures, by the sides of streams, and under hedges. These rushes are in best condition in the height of summer; but may be gathered, so as to serve the purpose well, quite on to autumn. It would be needless to add that the largest and longest are best. Decayed labourers, women, and children, make it their business to



procure and prepare them. As soon as they are cut, they must be flung into water, and kept there; for otherwise they will dry and shrink, and the peel will not run. At first a person would find it no easy matter to divest a rush of it's peel or rind, so as to leave one regular, narrow, even rib from top to bottom that may support the pith: but this, like other feats, soon become familiar even to children; and we have seen an old woman, stone-blind, performing this business with great dispatch, and seldom failing to strip them with the nicest regularity. When these *junci* are thus far prepared, they must lie out on the grass to be bleached, and take the dew for some nights, and afterwards be dried in the sun.

Some address is required in dipping these rushes in scalding fat or grease; but this knack also is to be attained by practice. The careful wife of an industrious *Hampshire* labourer obtains all her fat for nothing; for she saves the scummings of her bacon-pot for this use; and, if the grease abounds with salt, she causes the salt to precipitate to the bottom, by setting the scummings in a warm oven. Where hogs are not much in use, and especially by the sea-side, the coarser animal-oils will come very cheap. A pound of common grease may be procured for fourpence; and about six pounds of grease will dip a pound of rushes; and one pound of rushes may be bought for one shilling: so that a pound of rushes, medicated and ready for use, will cost three shillings. If men that keep bees will mix a little wax with the grease, it will give it a consistency, and render it more cleanly, and make the rushes burn longer; mutton-suet would have the same effect.

A good rush, which measured in length two feet four inches and a half, being minuted, burnt only three minutes short of an hour: and a rush still of greater length has been known to burn one hour and a quarter.

These rushes give a good clear light. Watch-lights (coated with tallow), it is true, shed a dismal one, "darkness visible;" but then the wick of those have *two* ribs of the rind, or peel, to support the pith, while the wick of the

dipped rush has but *one*. The *two* ribs are intended to impede the progress of the flame and make the candle last.

In a pound of dry rushes, avoirdupois, which I caused to be weighed and numbered, we found upwards of one thousand six hundred individuals. Now suppose each of these burns, one with another, only half an hour, then a poor man will purchase eight hundred hours of light, a time exceeding thirty-three entire days, for three shillings. According to this account each rush, before dipping, costs  $\frac{1}{33}$  of a farthing, and  $\frac{1}{11}$  afterwards. Thus a poor family will enjoy five and a half hours of comfortable light for a farthing. An experienced old housekeeper assures me that one pound and a half of rushes completely supplies his family the year round, since working people burn no candles in the long days, because they rise and go to bed by daylight.

Little farmers use rushes much in the short days, both morning and evening, in the dairy and kitchen; but the very poor, who are always the worst œconomists, and therefore must continue very poor, buy a halfpenny candle every evening, which in their blowing open rooms, does not burn much more than two hours. Thus they have only two hours light for their money instead of eleven.

While on the subject of rural œconomy, it may not be improper to mention a pretty implement of housewifery that we have seen nowhere else; that is, little neat besoms which our foresters make from the stalks of the *polytricum commune*, or *great golden maiden-hair*, which they call *silk-wood*, and find plenty in the bogs.<sup>1</sup> When this moss is well combed and dressed, and divested of it's outer skin, it becomes of a beautiful bright-chestnut colour; and, being soft and pliant, is very proper for the dusting of beds, curtains, carpets, hangings, &c. If these besoms were known to the brush-makers in town, it is probable they might come much in use for the purpose above-mentioned.<sup>2</sup>

I am, &c.

<sup>1</sup> Or in Scotland, *ling*, where it is commonly used for besoms, making an excellent implement; also plaited into door-mats for the feet.—[W. J.]

<sup>2</sup> A besom of this sort is to be seen in Sir *Ashton Lever's* Museum.—[G. W.]





THE IDIOT

## LETTER XXVII

TO THE SAME

SELBORNE, Dec. 12, 1775.

DEAR SIR,—We had in this village more than twenty years ago an idiot boy, whom I well remember, who, from a child, showed a strong propensity to bees; they were his food, his amusement, his sole object. And as people of this cast have seldom more than one point in view, so this lad exerted all his few faculties on this one pursuit. In the winter he dozed away his time, within his father's house, by the fireside, in a kind of torpid state, seldom departing from the chimney-corner; but in the summer he was all alert, and in quest of his game in the fields, and on sunny banks. Honey-bees, humble-bees, and wasps, were his prey wherever he found them: he had no apprehensions from their stings, but would seize them *nudis manibus*, and at once disarm them of their weapons, and suck their bodies for the sake of their honey-bags. Sometimes he would fill his bosom between his shirt and his skin with a number of these captives; and sometimes would confine them in bottles. He was a very *merops apiaster*, or *bee-bird*; and very injurious to men that kept bees; for he would slide into their bee-gardens, and, sitting down before the stools, would rap with his finger on the hives, and so take the bees as they came out. He has been known to overturn hives for the sake of honey, of which he was passionately fond. Where metheglin was making he would linger round the tubs and vessels, begging a draught of what he called *bee-wine*. As he ran about he used to make a humming noise with his lips, resembling the buzzing of

bees. This lad was lean and sallow, and of a cadaverous complexion; and, except in his favourite pursuit, in which he was wonderfully adroit, discovered no manner of understanding. Had his capacity been better, and directed to the same object, he had perhaps abated much of our wonder at the feats of a more modern exhibitor of bees; and we may justly say of him now,—

“ . . . . . Thou,  
Had thy presiding star propitious shone,  
Should'st *Wildman* be . . . . .”

When a tall youth he was removed from hence to a distant village, where he died, as I understand, before he arrived at manhood.

I am, &c.

## LETTER XXVIII

TO THE SAME

SELBORNE, *Jan. 8, 1776.*

DEAR SIR,—It is the hardest thing in the world to shake off superstitious prejudices : they are sucked in as it were with our mother's milk ; and, growing up with us at a time when they take the fastest hold and make the most lasting impressions, become so interwoven into our very constitutions, that the strongest good sense is required to disengage ourselves from them. No wonder, therefore, that the lower people retain them their whole lives through, since their minds are not invigorated by a liberal education, and therefore not enabled to make any efforts adequate to the occasion.

Such a preamble seems to be necessary before we enter on the superstitions of this district, lest we should be suspected of exaggeration in a recital of practices too gross for this enlightened age.

But the people of *Tring*, in *Hertfordshire*, would do well to remember, that no longer ago than the year 1751, and within twenty miles of the capital, they seized on two superannuated wretches, crazed with age, and overwhelmed with infirmities, on a suspicion of witchcraft ; and, by trying experiments, drowned them in a horse-pond.

In a farm-yard near the middle of this village stands, at this day, a row of pollard-ashes, which, by the seams and long cicatrices down their sides, manifestly shew that, in former times, they have been cleft asunder. These trees, when young and flexible, were severed and held

open by wedges, while ruptured children, stripped naked, were pushed through the apertures, under a persuasion that, by such a process, the poor babes would be cured of their infirmity. As soon as the operation was over, the tree, in the suffering part, was plastered with loam, and carefully swathed up. If the parts coalesced and soldered together, as usually fell out, where the feat was performed with any adroitness at all, the party was cured; but, where the cleft continued to gape, the operation, it was supposed, would prove ineffectual. Having occasion to enlarge my garden not long since, I cut down two or three such trees, one of which did not grow together.

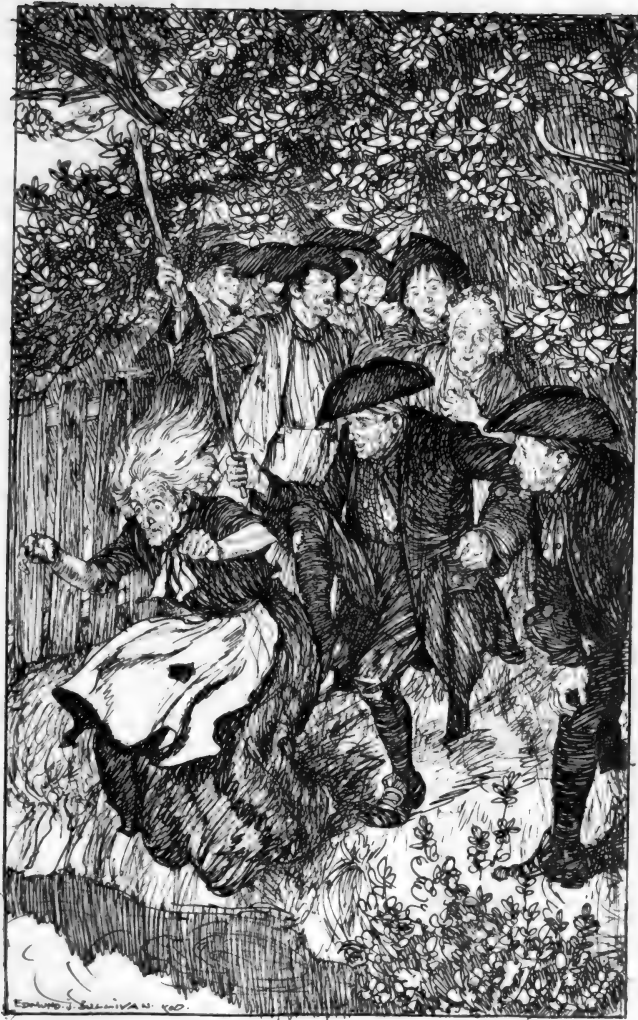
We have several persons now living in the village, who, in their childhood, were supposed to be healed by this superstitious ceremony, derived down perhaps from our *Saxon* ancestors, who practised it before their conversion to Christianity.

At the fourth corner of the *Plestor*, or area, near the church, there stood, about twenty-years ago, a very old grotesque hollow pollard-ash, which for ages had been looked on with no small veneration as a *shrew-ash*. Now a shrew-ash is an ash whose twigs or branches, when gently applied to the limbs of cattle, will immediately relieve the pains which a beast suffers from the running of a *shrew-mouse* over the part affected; for it is supposed that a shrew-mouse is of so baneful and deleterious a nature, that wherever it creeps over a beast, be it horse, cow, or sheep, the suffering animal is afflicted with cruel anguish, and threatened with the loss of the use of the limb.<sup>1</sup> Against this accident, to which they were continually liable, our provident fore-fathers always kept a shrew-ash at hand, which, when once medicated, would maintain it's virtue for ever. A shrew-ash was made thus:<sup>2</sup>—Into

<sup>1</sup> When a horse in the fields happened to be suddenly seized with anything like a numbness in his legs, he was immediately judged by the old persons to be either planet-struck, or shrew-struck. The mode of cure which they prescribed, and which they considered in all cases infallible, was to drag the animal through a piece of bramble that grew at both ends."—BINGLEY.—[W. J.]

<sup>2</sup> For a similar practice, see Plot's Staffordshire.—[G. W.]





*They seized on two superannuated wretches  
crippled with age... and... drowned them in a horse pond.*





the body of the tree a deep hole was bored with an auger, and a poor devoted shrew-mouse was thrust in alive, and plugged in, no doubt, with several quaint incantations long since forgotten. As the ceremonies necessary for such a consecration are no longer understood, all succession is at an end, and no such tree is known to subsist in the manor, or hundred.

As to that on the *Plestor*

“The late vicar stubb’d and burnt it,”

when he was way-warden, regardless of the remonstrances of the by-standers, who interceded in vain for it’s preservation, urging its power and efficacy, and alledging that it had been

“Religione patrum multos servata per annos.”

I am, &c.



## LETTER XXIX

TO THE SAME

SELBORNE, *Feb. 7, 1776.*

DEAR SIR,—In heavy fogs, on elevated situations especially, trees are perfect alembics ; and no one that has not attended to such matters can imagine how much water one tree will distil in a night's time, by condensing the vapour, which trickles down the twigs and boughs, so as to make the ground below quite in a float. In *Newton-lane*, in *October 1775*, on a misty day, a particular oak in leaf dropped so fast that the cart-way stood in puddles and the ruts ran with water, though the ground in general was dusty.

In some of our smaller islands in the *West-Indies*, if I mistake not, there are no springs or rivers ; but the people are supplied with that necessary element, water, merely by the dripping of some large, tall trees, which, standing in the bosom of a mountain, keep their heads constantly enveloped with fogs and clouds, from which they dispense their kindly never-ceasing moisture ; and so render those districts habitable by condensation alone.

Trees in leaf have such a vast proportion more of surface than those that are naked, that, in theory, their condensations should greatly exceed those that are stripped of

their leaves ; but, as the former *imbibe* also a great quantity of moisture, it is difficult to say which drip most ; but this I know, that deciduous trees that are entwined with much ivy seem to distil the greatest quantity. Ivy-leaves are smooth, and thick, and cold, and therefore condense very fast ; and besides, ever-greens imbibe very little. These facts may furnish the intelligent with hints concerning what sorts of trees they should plant round small ponds that they would wish to be perennial ; and show them how advantageous some trees are in preference to others.

Trees perspire profusely, condense largely, and check evaporation so much, that woods are always moist ; no wonder, therefore, that they contribute much to pools and streams.

That trees are great promoters of lakes and rivers appears from a well-known fact in *North-America* : for, since the woods and forests have been grubbed and cleared, all bodies of water are much diminished ; so that some streams, that were very considerable a century ago, will not now drive a common mill.<sup>1</sup> Besides, most woodlands, forests, and chases, with us abound with pools and morasses ; no doubt for the reason given above.

To a thinking mind few phenomena are more strange than the state of little ponds on the summits of chalk-hills, many of which are never dry in the most trying droughts of summer. On *chalk-hills* I say, because in many rocky and gravelly soils springs usually break out pretty high on the sides of elevated grounds and mountains : but no person acquainted with chalky districts will allow that they ever saw springs in such a soil but in vallies and bottoms, since the waters of so pervious a stratum as chalk all lie on one dead level, as well-diggers have assured me again and again.

Now we have many such little round ponds in this district ; and one in particular on our sheep-down, three hundred feet above my house ; which, though never above three feet deep in the middle, and not more than thirty feet

<sup>1</sup> Vide *Kalm's Travels to North-America*.

in diameter, and containing perhaps not more than two or three hundred hogsheads of water, yet never is known to fail, though it affords drink for three hundred or four hundred sheep, and for at least twenty head of large cattle beside. This pond, it is true, is overhung with two moderate beeches, that, doubtless, at times afford it much supply: but then we have others as small, that, without the aid of trees, and in spite of evaporation from sun and wind, and perpetual consumption by cattle, yet constantly maintain a moderate share of water, without overflowing in the wettest seasons, as they would do if supplied by springs. By my journal of *May*, 1775, it appears that "the small and even considerable ponds in the vales are now dried up, while the small ponds on the very tops of hills are but little affected." Can this difference be accounted for from evaporation alone, which certainly is more prevalent in bottoms? or rather have not those elevated pools some unnoticed recruits, which in the night time counterbalance the waste of the day; without which the cattle alone must soon exhaust them? And here it will be necessary to enter more minutely into the cause. Dr. *Hales*, in his *Vegetable Statics*, advances, from experiment, that "the moister the earth is the more dew falls on it in a night; and more than a *double* quantity of dew falls on a surface of *water* than there does on an equal surface of moist earth." Hence we see that water, by it's coolness, is enabled to assimilate to itself a large quantity of moisture nightly by condensation; and that the air, when loaded with fogs and vapours, and even with copious dews, can alone advance a considerable and never-failing resource. Persons that are much abroad, and travel early and late, such as shepherds, fishermen, &c., can tell what prodigious fogs prevail in the night on elevated downs, even in the hottest parts of summer; and how much the surfaces of things are drenched by those swimming vapours, though, to the senses, all the while, little moisture seems to fall.

I am, &c.

## LETTER XXX

TO THE SAME

SELBORNE, April 3, 1776.

DEAR SIR,—MONSIEUR HERISSANT, a *French* anatomist, seems persuaded that he has discovered the reason why cuckoos do not hatch their own eggs; the impediment, he supposes, arises from the internal structure of their parts, which incapacitates them for incubation. According to this gentleman, the crop, or craw, of a cuckoo does not lie before the sternum at the bottom of the neck, as in the *gallinæ, colombæ, &c.*, but immediately behind it, on and over the bowels, so as to make a large protuberance in the belly.<sup>1</sup>

Induced by this assertion, we procured a cuckoo; and, cutting open the breast-bone, and exposing the intestines to sight, found the crop lying as mentioned above. This stomach was large and round, and stuffed hard, like a pincushion, with food, which, upon nice examination, we found to consist of various insects; such as small scarabs, spiders, and dragon-flies; the last of which we have seen cuckoos catching on the wing as they were just emerging out of the aurelia state. Among this farrago also were to be seen maggots, and many seeds, which belonged either to gooseberries, currants, cranberries, or some such fruit; so that these birds apparently subsist on insects and fruits; nor was there the least appearance of bones, feathers, or fur, to support the idle notion of their being birds of prey.

The sternum in this bird seemed to us to be remark-

<sup>1</sup> *Histoire de l'Académie Royale, 1752.*

ably short, between which and the anus lay the crop, or craw, and immediately behind that the bowels against the back-bone.

It must be allowed, as this anatomist observes, that the crop placed just upon the bowels must, especially when full, be in a very uneasy situation during the business of incubation; yet the test will be to examine whether birds that are actually known to sit for certain are not formed in a similar manner. This inquiry I proposed to myself to make with a *fern-owl*, or goatsucker, as soon as opportunity offered: because, if their formation proves the same, the reason for incapacity in the cuckoo will be allowed to have been taken up somewhat hastily.

Not long after a fern-owl was procured, which, from its habit and shape, we suspected might resemble the cuckoo in its internal construction. Nor were our suspicions ill-grounded; for, upon the dissection, the crop, or craw,<sup>1</sup> also lay behind the sternum, immediately on the viscera, between them and the skin of the belly. It was bulky, and stuffed hard with large *phalæna*, moths of several sorts, and their eggs, which no doubt had been forced out of those insects by the action of swallowing.

Now as it appears that this bird, which is so well known to practise incubation, is formed in a similar manner with cuckoos, Monsieur *Herissant's* conjecture, that cuckoos are incapable of incubation from the disposition of their intestines, seems to fall to the ground; and we are still at a loss for the cause of that strange and singular peculiarity in the instance of the *cuculus canorus*.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Neither Herissant nor Gilbert White appears to have had any clear notion of the distinction between the "crop or craw" and the stomach. It will be noticed that White uses the terms "crop or craw" and stomach indifferently, or as synonyms of the same organ. As a matter of fact the structure which so much troubled these gentlemen is really the stomach. This, it is true, in its backward position is somewhat abnormal, but as it is precisely similarly situated in the Nightjar—as White himself pointed out—and many other birds, this can have no share in causing the parasitic habits of the Cuckoo. Moreover, the parasitic *Molothrus* has the stomach normally placed with regard to the sternum.—[W.P.P.]

<sup>2</sup> There is nothing in the anatomical structure of the Cuckoo to prevent its performing all the duties of incubation. Parasitism is extended over a considerable





*Cuckoo.*

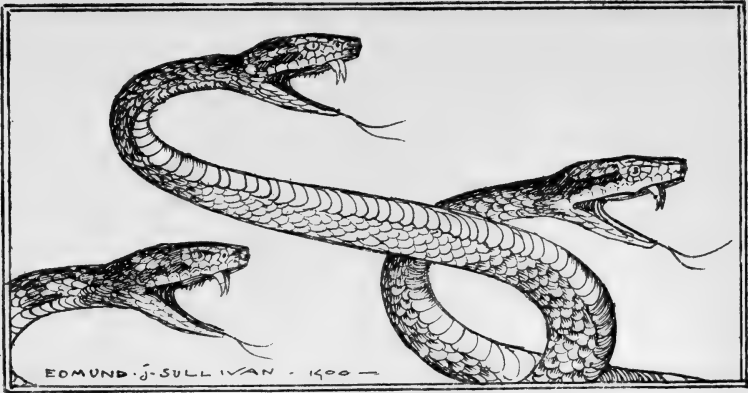
*'s Life size*



We found the case to be the same with the ring-tail hawk, in respect to formation; and, as far as I can recollect, with the swift; and probably it is so with many more sorts of birds that are not granivorous.

I am, &c.

number of species, and probably exists among most of the true *Cuculidæ*; a large black species, *Eudynamys orientalis*, has had its habits detailed by Mr. Blyth, in "Contributions to Ornithology for 1850." It selects a species of Crow generally for the foster-mother, and it is a remarkable instance of design that the eggs of both birds are nearly similar in colour, that of the Cuckoo being rather smaller in size. It is suspected that this species breaks the eggs of the Crow before depositing its own, and there seems little cause to doubt that it lays several eggs at the usual periods, the same as other birds. The genus *Dolychonyx*, among the *Icterine* birds, also breeds parasitically, while several species of birds depute the office of incubation to artificial heat, of which the most remarkable is the hotbed-making *Megapodius* of Australia. There is another form which this habit assumes, commonality of hatching, as in *Crotophaga*, where various individuals make use of a common nest and hatch by turns.—[W. J.]



## LETTER XXXI

TO THE SAME

SELBORNE, *April 29, 1776.*

DEAR SIR,—On *August* the 4th, 1775, we surprised a large viper, which seemed very heavy and bloated, as it lay in the grass basking in the sun. When we came to cut it up, we found that the abdomen was crowded with young, fifteen in number; the shortest of which measured full seven inches, and were about the size of full-grown earth-worms. This little fry issued into the world with the true viper-spirit about them, showing great alertness as soon as disengaged from the belly of the dam:<sup>1</sup> they twisted and wriggled about, and set themselves up, and gaped very wide when touched with a stick, showing manifest tokens of menace and defiance, though as yet they had no manner of fangs that we could find, even with the help of our glasses.

To a thinking mind nothing is more wonderful than that early instinct which impresses young animals with a notion of the situation of their natural weapons, and of using them

<sup>1</sup> As White correctly supposed, the young were *in utero*. Scientific evidence is still wanting to show that the Adder ever shelters her young in her neck. It is very desirable that one of the many Adders reported to have given refuge to their progeny in the manner described should be preserved, with the young *in situ*, for the scalpel of an anatomist.—[G. A. B.]

properly in their own defence, even before those weapons subsist or are formed. Thus a young cock will spar at his adversary before his spurs are grown ; and a calf or a lamb will push with their heads before their horns are sprouted. In the same manner did these young adders attempt to bite before their fangs were in being. The dam however was furnished with very formidable ones, which we lifted up (for they fold down when not used) and cut them off with the points of our scissars.

There was little room to suppose that this brood had ever been in the open air before ; and that they were taken in for refuge, at the mouth of the dam, when she perceived that danger was approaching ; because then probably we should have found them somewhere in the neck, and not in the abdomen.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See Letter XVII to Pennant, vol. i. p. 72.—[R. B. S.]

## LETTER XXXII

TO THE SAME

CASTRATION has a strange effect : it emasculates both man, beast, and bird, and brings them to a near resemblance of the other sex. Thus eunuchs have smooth unmuscular arms, thighs, and legs ; and broad hips, and beardless chins, and squeaking voices. Gelt-stags and bucks have hornless heads, like hinds and does. Thus wethers have small horns, like ewes ; and oxen large bent horns, and hoarse voices when they low, like cows : for bulls have short straight horns ; and though they mutter and grumble in a deep tremendous tone, yet they low in a shrill high key. Capons have small combs and gills, and look pallid about the head like pullets ; they also walk without any parade, and hover chickens like hens. Barrow-hogs have also small tusks like sows.

Thus far it is plain that the deprivation of *masculine vigour* puts a stop to the growth of those parts or appendages that are looked upon as it's insignia. But the ingenious Mr. *Lisle*, in his book on husbandry, carries it much farther ; for he says that the loss of those insignia alone has sometimes a strange effect on the ability itself : he had a boar so fierce and venereous, that, to prevent mischief, orders were given for his tusks to be broken off. No sooner had the beast suffered this injury than his powers forsook him, and he neglected those females to whom before he was passionately attached, and from whom no fences could restrain him.

## LETTER XXXIII

TO THE SAME

THE natural term of an hog's life is little known, and the reason is plain—because it is neither profitable nor convenient to keep that turbulent animal to the full extent of it's time : however, my neighbour, a man of substance, who had no occasion to study every little advantage to a nicety, kept an half-bred Bantam-sow, who was as thick as she was long, and whose belly swept on the ground till she was advanced to her seventeenth year ; at which period she showed some tokens of age by the decay of her teeth and the decline of her fertility.

For about ten years this prolific mother produced two litters in the year of about ten at a time, and once above twenty at a litter ; but, as there were near double the number of pigs to that of teats many died. From long experience in the world this female was grown very sagacious and artful. When she found occasion to converse with a boar she used to open all the intervening gates, and march, by herself, up to a distant farm where one was kept ; and when her purpose was served would return by the same means. At the age of about fifteen her litters began to be reduced to four or five ; and such a litter she exhibited when in her fattening-pen. She proved, when fat, good bacon, juicy, and tender ; the rind, or sward, was remarkably thin. At a moderate computation she was allowed to have been the fruitful parent of three hundred pigs : a prodigious instance of fecundity in so large a quadruped ! She was killed in spring 1775.

I am, &c.

## LETTER XXXIV

TO THE SAME

SELBORNE, *May 9, 1776.*

DEAR SIR,—

“ . . . admōrunt ubera tigres.”

We have remarked in a former letter<sup>1</sup> how much incongruous animals, in a lonely state, may be attached to each other from a spirit of sociality; in this it may not be amiss to recount a different motive which has been known to create as strange a fondness.

My friend had a little helpless *leveret* brought to him, which the servants fed with milk in a spoon, and about the same time his cat kittened and the young were dispatched and buried. The hare was soon lost, and supposed to be gone the way of most fondlings, to be killed by some dog or cat. However, in about a fortnight, as the master was sitting in his garden in the dusk of the evening, he observed his cat, with tail erect, trotting towards him, and calling with little short inward notes of complacency, such as they use towards their kittens, and something gamboling after, which proved to be the leveret that the cat had supported with her milk, and continued to support with great affection.

Thus was a graminivorous animal nurtured by a carnivorous and predaceous one!

Why so cruel and sanguinary a beast as a cat, of the ferocious genus of *Felis*, the *murium leo*, as *Linnæus* calls it, should be affected with any tenderness towards an animal which is its natural prey, is not so easy to determine.

<sup>1</sup> Letter XXIV.



This strange affection probably was occasioned by that desiderium, those tender maternal feelings, which the loss of her kittens had awakened in her breast; and by the complacency and ease she derived to herself from the procuring her teats to be drawn, which were too much distended with milk, till, from habit, she became as much delighted with this foundling as if it had been her real offspring.

This incident is no bad solution of that strange circumstance which grave historians as well as the poets assert, of exposed children being sometimes nurtured by female wild beasts that probably had lost their young. For it is not one whit more marvellous that *Romulus* and *Remus*, in their infant state, should be nursed by a she-wolf, than that a poor little sucking leveret should be fostered and cherished by a bloody grimalkin.<sup>1</sup>

“ . . . . . viridi fœtam Mavortis in antro  
 Procubuisse lupam : geminos huic ubera circum  
 Ludere pendentés pueros, et lambere matrem  
 Impavidos : illam tereti cervice reflexam  
 Mulcere alternos, et corpora fingere linguâ.”

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<sup>1</sup> See Gilbert White's note on a Cat suckling three young Squirrels (Obs. on Quadrupeds). Sir William Jardine (ed. "Selborne," p. 209) writes: "We once saw a litter of pigs suckled by a pointer-bitch." "On the 27th of April 1820," writes Mr. Broderip in "Zoological Journal," "I saw a cat giving suck to five young rats and a kitten. The cat paid the same maternal attention to the young rats in licking them and dressing their fur as she did to her kitten, notwithstanding the great disparity in size." These occurrences, however, take place naturally, for they cannot be forced, as every shepherd well knows while attempting to persuade a ewe that has lost her own lamb to become a foster-mother. Instinct by smell at once discovers the proposed change, and deception is sometimes successful by employing the skin of the dead-born as a temporary covering for the other, until it has been once permitted to suck.—[R. B. S.]

## LETTER XXXV

TO THE SAME

SELBORNE, *May 20, 1777.*

DEAR SIR,—Lands that are subject to frequent inundations are always poor; and probably the reason may be because the worms are drowned. The most insignificant insects and reptiles are of much more consequence, and have much more influence in the œconomy of Nature, than the incurious are aware of; and are mighty in their effect, from their minuteness, which renders them less an object of attention; and from their numbers and fecundity. Earth-worms, though in appearance a small and despicable link in the chain of Nature, yet, if lost, would make a lamentable chasm. For to say nothing of half the birds, and some quadrupeds which are almost entirely supported by them, worms seem to be the great promoters of vegetation, which would proceed but lamely without them, by boring, perforating, and loosening the soil, and rendering it pervious to rains and the fibres of plants, by drawing straws and stalks of leaves and twigs into it; and, most of all, by throwing up such infinite numbers of lumps of earth called worm-casts, which, being their excrement, is a fine manure for grain and grass. Worms probably provide new soil for hills and slopes where the rain washes the earth away; and they affect slopes, probably to avoid being flooded.<sup>1</sup> Gardeners and farmers express their detestation

<sup>1</sup> Sir Willian Jardine's note is as follows: "We scarcely agree with White's proposition here: grass lands are very much benefited by frequent inundations. That worms are great fertilisers there can be no doubt, but at the same time in all cases they are not beneficial, as for instance in flower-pots or boxes where plants

of worms; the former because they render their walks unsightly, and make them much work: and the latter because, as they think, worms eat their green corn. But these men would find that the earth without worms would soon become cold, hard-bound, and void of fermentation, and consequently sterile; and, besides, in favour of worms, it should be hinted that green corn, plants, and flowers, are not so much injured by them as by many species of *coleoptera* (scarabs), and *tipulæ* (long-legs) in their larva, or grub-state; and by unnoticed myriads of small shell-less snails, called slugs, which silently and imperceptibly make amazing havoc in the field and garden.<sup>1</sup>

These hints we think proper to throw out in order to set the inquisitive and discerning to work.

A good monography of worms would afford much entertainment and information at the same time, and would open a large and new field in natural history. Worms work most in the spring; but by no means lie torpid in the dead months: are out every mild night in the winter, as any person may be convinced that will take the pains to examine his grass-plots with a candle; are hermaphrodites, and much addicted to venery, and consequently very prolific.<sup>2</sup>

I am, &c.

are kept. In pasture lands, however, they do act mechanically, and their castings or excrement (earth-worm guano) is often very abundant, so much so as to mark the surface. Mr. Darwin applies the offices of worms geologically by their gradually covering the surface of land, and concealing loose stones, &c., which, however, may be also assisted by the decomposition of vegetable matter; he goes so far as to say, "that every particle of earth in old pasture land has passed through the intestines of worms, and hence that in some instances, the term 'animal world' would be more appropriate than 'vegetable world.'"—(*Proceed. Geol. Soc.*) It is remarkable after a flood has covered the low pastures to observe the numbers of birds, crows, thrushes, hens, gulls, that assemble when the water recedes; the drowned earth-worm is their chief prey." Darwin's celebrated treatise on earth-worms and their effect upon the globe is well known to all naturalists.—[R. B. S.]

<sup>1</sup> Farmer *Young*, of *Norton-farm*, says, that this spring (1777) about four acres of his wheat in one field was entirely destroyed by *slugs*, which swarmed on the blades of corn, and devoured it as fast as it sprang.—[G. W.]

<sup>2</sup> The importance of the work done by earth-worms, here so prophetically emphasised by Gilbert White, was afterwards made the subject of study by Charles

Darwin, as described by Professor Bell in a foot-note to his edition (p. 202):—  
 “The important functions performed by earth-worms so sensibly suggested in the text formed the subject of an elaborate and interesting paper by Mr. Darwin, which was published in the ‘Transactions’ of the Geological Society (Ser. 2, vol. v. p. 505), in which he shows that these despised creatures are instrumental in comminuting the soil, and producing a superficial bed above the previous surface, and forming a layer of mould perfectly prepared for vegetable growth. The rate at which this layer of new soil is formed may be guessed at from some of the facts stated by Mr. Darwin. In one case, in a field which had been reclaimed from waste land, 3 inches depth of mould had been prepared by the worms in 15 years; and in another, within a period of less than 80 years, the earth-worms covered the marl with a bed of earth of no less than 12 or 13 inches.”—[R. B. S.]

NOTE.—In the Barrington Letters in the British Museum is one dated “Selborne, June 13, 1777,” which opens thus: “Dear Sir, not being at all aware of the great honours befalling my *silk-wood besom*, I was somewhat astonished to hear that it should be thought worthy of the *Leverian Museum*,<sup>1</sup> but I was not at all surprised to find that you received my humble present with your usual affability and complacency.” The rest of the letter consists of the notes on the Swifts given in Letter XXXIX, and the account of the nest of the Harvest Mouse which White transferred to his Letter XII to Pennant (see vol. i. p. 45).—[R. B. S.]

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<sup>1</sup> See foot-note to p. 96, *antea*.—[R. B. S.]





*The 26<sup>th</sup> & 27<sup>th</sup> of last March were very hot days -  
so sultry that everybody complained.*



Old Brattle-path Gate from Selborne to Eastington

## LETTER XXXVI<sup>1</sup>

TO THE SAME

SELBORNE, Nov. 22, 1777.

DEAR SIR,—You cannot but remember that the twenty-sixth and twenty-seventh of last *March* were very hot days; so sultry that everybody complained and were restless under those sensations to which they had not been reconciled by gradual approaches.

This sudden summer-like heat was attended by many summer coincidences; for on those two days the thermometer rose to sixty-six in the shade; many species of insects revived and came forth; some bees swarmed in this neighbourhood; the old tortoise, near *Lewes*, in *Sussex*, awakened and came forth out of it's dormitory; and, what is most to my present purpose, many *house-swallows* appeared and were very alert in many places, and particularly at *Cobham*, in *Surrey*.

<sup>1</sup> A paper "On the Torpidity of the Swallow Tribe, when they Disappear," was published by Barrington in his "Miscellanies," and includes this letter, with the following acknowledgment: "I shall here subjoin a letter which I received from that ingenious and observant naturalist, the Rev. Mr. White, of Selborne, in Hampshire."—[R. B. S.]

But as that short warm period was succeeded as well as preceded by harsh severe weather, with frequent frosts and ice, and cutting winds, the insects withdrew, the tortoise retired again into the ground, and the swallows were seen no more until the 10th of *April*, when, the rigour of the spring abating, a softer season began to prevail.

Again; it appears by my journals for many years past that *house-martins* retire, to a bird, about the beginning of *October*; so that a person not very observant of such matters would conclude that they had taken their last farewell; but then it may be seen in my diaries also that considerable flocks have discovered themselves again in the first week of *November*, and often on the fourth day of that month only *for one day*; and that not as if they were in actual migration, but playing about at their leisure and feeding calmly, as if no enterprise of moment at all agitated their spirits. And this was the case in the beginning of this very month; for on the fourth of *November*, more than twenty house-martins, which, in appearance, had all departed about the seventh of *October*, were seen again for that *one morning only* sporting between my fields and *the Hanger*, and feasting on insects which swarmed in that sheltered district.<sup>1</sup> The preceding day was wet and blustering, but the fourth was dark, and mild, and soft, the wind at south-west, and the thermometer at  $58\frac{1}{2}$ ; a pitch not common at that season of the year. Moreover, it may not be amiss to add in this place, that whenever the thermometer is above 50, the bat comes flitting out in every autumnal and winter-month.<sup>2</sup>

From all these circumstances, laid together, it is obvious that torpid insects, reptiles, and quadrupeds, are awakened from their profoundest slumbers by a little untimely warmth; and therefore that nothing so much promotes

<sup>1</sup> See Letter XXXVIII to Pennant (vol. i. p. 162).

<sup>2</sup> Professor Bell (ed. "Selborne," i. p. 204, *note*) says: "I have seen the Pipistrelle, the commonest of our Bats, flying in every month of the year; and whenever Gnats are tempted to come forth, the Bat is sure to follow for a meal."



this death-like stupor as a defect of heat. And farther, it is reasonable to suppose that two whole species, or at least many individuals of those two species of *British hirundines* do never leave this island at all, but partake of the same benumbed state; for we cannot suppose, that after a month's absence, house-martins can return from southern regions to appear for *one* morning in *November*,<sup>1</sup> or that house-swallows should leave the districts of *Africa* to enjoy in *March* the transient summer of a *couple* of days.

I am, &c.

<sup>1</sup> The Martins which appear at the end of March are early arrivals, whose progress northwards is arrested by a cold "snap," such as often occurs in England in spring. Those which appear in November are doubtless belated young birds from the later broods. See foot-notes to vol. i. pp. 36, 48, 102. It still remains a remarkable fact that the true winter home of the House-Martin remains undiscovered. The species did not appear in Lord Delamere's recent collection from the Athi River in British East Africa, though a number of our summer migrants were procured by him in that region.—[R. B. S.]

## LETTER XXXVII

TO THE SAME

SELBORNE, *Jan. 8, 1778.*

DEAR SIR,—There was in this village several years ago a miserable pauper, who from his birth was afflicted with a leprosy, as far as we are aware of a singular kind, since it affected only the palms of his hands and the soles of his feet. This scaly eruption usually broke out twice in the year, at the spring and fall; and, by peeling away, left the skin so thin and tender that neither his hands or feet were able to perform their functions; so that the poor object was half his time on crutches, incapable of employ, and languishing in a tiresome state of indolence and inactivity. His habit was lean, lank, and cadaverous. In this sad plight he dragged on a miserable existence, a burden to himself and his parish which was obliged to support him till he was relieved by death at more than thirty years of age.

The good women, who love to account for every defect in children by the doctrine of longing, said that his mother felt a violent propensity for oysters, which she was unable to gratify; and that the black rough scurf on his hands and feet were the shells of that fish. We knew his parents, neither of which were lepers; his father in particular lived to be far advanced in years.

In all ages the leprosy has made dreadful havoc among mankind. The *Israelites* seem to have been greatly afflicted with it from the most remote times; as appears from the peculiar and repeated injunctions given them in the *Levitical* law.<sup>1</sup> Nor was the rancour of this foul disorder much

<sup>1</sup> See Leviticus, xiii. and xiv.—[G. W.]



“THE POOR OBJECT WAS HALF HIS TIME ON CRUTCHES”



abated in the last period of their commonwealth, as may be seen in many passages of the New Testament.

Some centuries ago this horrible distemper prevailed all *Europe* over : and our forefathers were by no means exempt, as appears by the large provision made for objects labouring under this calamity. There was an hospital for female lepers in the diocese of *Lincoln* ; a noble one near *Durham* ; three in *London* and *Southwark* ; and perhaps many more in or near our great towns and cities. Moreover, some crowned heads, and other wealthy and charitable personages, bequeathed large legacies to such poor people as languished under this hopeless infirmity.

It must, therefore, in these days be to an humane and thinking person a matter of equal wonder and satisfaction, when he contemplates how nearly this pest is eradicated, and observes that a leper now is a rare sight. He will, moreover, when engaged in such a train of thought naturally inquire for the reason. This happy change, perhaps, may have originated and been continued from the much smaller quantity of salted meat and fish now eaten in these kingdoms ; from the use of linen next the skin ; from the plenty of better bread ; and from the profusion of fruits, roots, legumes, and greens, so common in every family. Three or four centuries ago before there were any enclosures, sown-grasses, field-turnips, or field-carrots, or hay, all the cattle which had grown fat in summer, and were not killed for winter-use, were turned out soon after *Michaelmas* to shift as they could through the dead months ; so that no fresh meat could be had in winter or spring. Hence the marvellous account of the vast stores of salted flesh found in the larder of the eldest *Spencer*<sup>1</sup> in the days of *Edward* the Second, even so late in the spring as the third of *May*. It was from magazines like these that the turbulent barons supported in idleness their riotous swarms of retainers ready for any disorder or mischief. But agriculture is now arrived at such a pitch

<sup>1</sup> *Viz.*, Six hundred bacons, eighty carcasses of beef, and six hundred muttons.—[G. W.]

of perfection that our best and fattest meats are killed in the winter ; and no man need eat salted flesh unless he prefers it, that has money to buy fresh.

One cause of this distemper might be, no doubt, the quantity of wretched fresh and salt fish consumed by the commonalty at all seasons as well as in lent ; which our poor now would hardly be persuaded to touch.

The use of linen changes, shirts or shifts, in the room of sordid and filthy woollen, long worn next the skin, is a matter of neatness comparatively modern ; but must prove a great means of preventing cutaneous ails. At this very time woollen, instead of linen prevails among the poorer *Welch*, who are subject to foul eruptions.

The plenty of good wheaten bread that now is found among all ranks of people in the south, instead of that miserable sort which used in old days to be made of barley or beans, may contribute not a little to the sweetening their blood and correcting their juices ; for the inhabitants of mountainous districts, to this day, are still liable to the itch and other cutaneous disorders, from a wretchedness and poverty of diet.

As to the produce of a garden, every middle-aged person of observation may perceive, within his own memory, both in town and country, how vastly the consumption of vegetables is increased. Green-stalls in cities now support multitudes in a comfortable state, while gardeners get fortunes. Every decent labourer also has his garden, which is half his support, as well as his delight ; and common farmers provide plenty of beans, peas, and greens, for their hinds to eat with their bacon ; and those few that do not are despised for their sordid parsimony, and looked upon as regardless of the welfare of their dependents. Potatoes have prevailed in this little district by means of premiums within these twenty years only ; and are much esteemed here now by the poor, who would scarce have ventured to taste them in the last reign.

Our *Saxon* ancestors certainly had some sort of cabbage, because they call the month of *February sprout-*

*cale*; but long after their days the cultivation of gardens was little attended to.<sup>1</sup> The religious, being men of leisure, and keeping up a constant correspondence with *Italy*, were the first people among us that had gardens and fruit-trees in any perfection within the wall of their abbies and priories. The *barons* neglected every pursuit that did not lead to war or tend to the pleasure of the chase.

It was not till gentlemen took up the study of horticulture themselves that the knowledge of gardening made such hasty advances. Lord *Cobham*, Lord *Ila*, and Mr. *Waller*, of *Beaconsfield*, were some of the first people of rank that promoted the elegant science of ornamenting without despising the superintendence of the kitchen quarters and fruit walls.

A remark made by the excellent Mr. *Ray*, in his *Tour of Europe*, at once surprises us, and corroborates what has been advanced above; for we find him observing so late as his days, that "The *Italians* use several herbs for sallets, which *are not yet*, or have not been but *lately*, used in *England*, viz. *selleri* (celery),<sup>2</sup> which is nothing else but the sweet smallage; the young shoots whereof, with a little of the head of the root cut off, they eat raw with oil and pepper;" and further he adds: "*curled endive* blanched is much used beyond seas; and, for a raw sallet, seemed to excel lettuce itself." Now this journey was undertaken no longer ago than in the year 1663.

I am, &c.

<sup>1</sup> As our Saxon ancestors called the month of February "sprout-cale," so the names of many other months were equally significant: viz., March, Stormy Month; May, Trimilki, the cows being milked three times a day; June, Dig-and-Weed Month; September, Barley Month," &c.—MITFORD. [See Jardine's ed., p. 216.]

<sup>2</sup> As Bell points out (vol. i. p. 208, *note*), Gilbert White adopted the spelling "celeri." See Garden Kalendar (vol. i. p. 260).—[R. B. S.]



## LETTER XXXVIII

TO THE SAME

SELBORNE, *Feb. 12th, 1778.*

“Fortè puer, comitum seductus ab agmine fido,  
 Dixerat, ecquis adest? et, adest, responderat echo,  
 Hic stupet; utque aciem partes divisit in omnes;  
 Voce, veni, clamat magnâ. Vocat illa vocantem.”<sup>1</sup>

DEAR SIR,—In a district so diversified as this, so full of hollow vales and hanging woods, it is no wonder that echoes should abound. Many we have discovered that return the cry of a pack of dogs, the notes of a hunting-horn, a tunable ring of bells, or the melody of birds very agreeably; but we were still at a loss for a polysyllabical articulate echo, till a young gentleman, who had parted from his company in a summer evening walk, and was calling after them, stumbled upon a very curious one in a

<sup>1</sup>“Chance parts the youth from his companions dear,  
 He cries ‘Who’s here?’ and Echo answers ‘Here;’  
 He stares around, and for a while stands dumb,  
 Then shouts out, ‘Come,’ and Echo answers ‘Come.’

[Jardine’s ed., p. 217, *note.*]



spot where it might least be expected. At first he was much surprised, and could not be persuaded but that he was mocked by some boy; but repeating his trials in several languages, and finding his respondent to be a very adroit polyglot, he then discerned the deception.

This echo in an evening before rural noises cease, would repeat ten syllables most articulately and distinctly, especially if quick dactyls were chosen. The last syllables of

“Tityre, tu patulæ recubans . . . .”

were as audibly and intelligibly returned as the first; and there is no doubt, could trial have been made, but that at midnight when the air is very elastic, and a dead stillness prevails, one or two syllables more might have been obtained; but the distance rendered so late an experiment very inconvenient.

Quick dactyls, we observed, succeeded best; for when we came to try it's powers in slow, heavy, embarrassed spondees of the same number of syllables,

“Monstrum horrendum, informe, ingens . . . .”

we could perceive a return but of four or five.

All echoes have some one place to which they are returned stronger and more distinct than to any other; and that is always the place that lies at right angles with the object of repercussion, and is not too near nor too far off. Buildings, or naked rocks, re-echo much more articulately than hanging woods or vales; because in the latter the voice is as it were entangled and embarrassed in the covert, and weakened in the rebound.

The true object of this echo, as we found by various experiments, is the stone-built, tiled hop-kiln in *Gally-lane*, which measures in front 40 feet, and from the ground to the eaves 12 feet. The true *centrum phonicum*, or just distance, is one particular spot in the *King's-field*, in the path to *Nore-hill*, on the very brink of the steep balk above the hollow cartway. In this case there is no choice of distance; but the path, by meer contingency, happens to be the

lucky, the identical spot, because the ground rises or falls so immediately, if the speaker either retires or advances, that his mouth would at once be above or below the object.

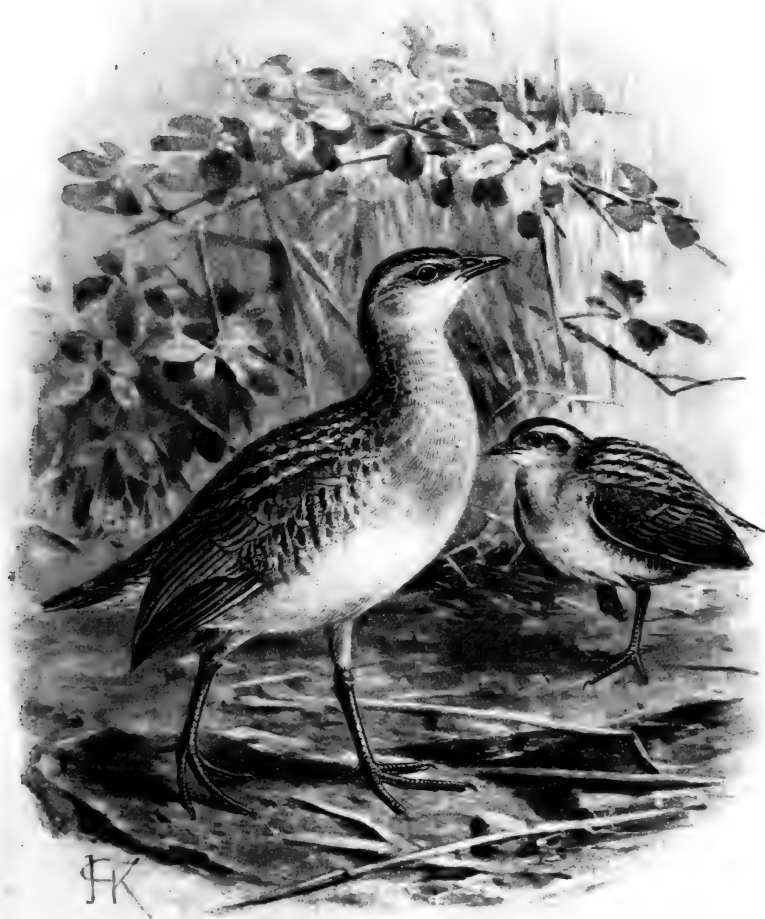
We measured this polysyllabical echo with great exactness, and found the distance to fall very short of Dr. *Plot's* rule for distinct articulation ; for the Doctor, in his history of *Oxfordshire*, allows 120 feet for the return of each syllable distinctly ; hence this echo, which gives ten distinct syllables, ought to measure 400 yards, or 120 feet to each syllable ; whereas our distance is only 258 yards, or near 75 feet to each syllable. Thus our measure falls short of the Doctor's, as five to eight ; but then it must be acknowledged that this candid philosopher was convinced afterwards, that some latitude must be admitted of in the distance of echoes according to time and place.

When experiments of this sort are making, it should always be remembered that weather and the time of day have a vast influence on an echo ; for a dull, heavy, moist air deadens and clogs the sound, and hot sunshine renders the air thin and weak, and deprives it of all it's springiness ; and a ruffling wind quite defeats the whole. In a still, clear, dewy evening the air is most elastic ; and perhaps the later the hour the more so.

Echo has always been so amusing to the imagination, that the poets have personified her ; and in their hands she has been the occasion of many a beautiful fiction. Nor need the gravest man be ashamed to appear taken with such a phænomenon, since it may become the subject of philosophical or mathematical inquiries.

One should have imagined that echoes, if not entertaining, must at least have been harmless and inoffensive ; yet, *Virgil* advances a strange notion, that they are injurious to bees. After enumerating some probable and reasonable annoyances, such as prudent owners would wish far removed from their bee-gardens, he adds—

————— “ aut ubi concava pulsu  
Saxa sonant, vocisque offensa resultat imago.”



*Land-Rail.*

*1/3 Life size.*



This wild and fanciful assertion will hardly be admitted by the philosophers of these days, especially as they all now seem agreed that insects are not furnished with any organs of hearing at all. But if it should be urged, that though they cannot *hear* yet perhaps they may *feel* the repercussions of sounds, I grant it is possible they may. Yet that these impressions are distasteful or hurtful, I deny, because bees, in good summers, thrive well in my outlet, where the echoes are very strong : for this village is another *Anathoth*, a place of *responses* or *echoes*. Besides, it does not appear from experiment that bees are in any way capable of being affected by sounds : for I have often tried my own with a large speaking-trumpet held close to their hives, and with such an exertion of voice as would have haled a ship at the distance of a mile, and still these insects pursued their various employments undisturbed, and without showing the least sensibility or resentment.<sup>1</sup>

Some time since it's discovery this echo is become totally silent, though the object, or hop-kiln, remains : nor is there any mystery in this defect ; for the field between is planted as an hop-garden, and the voice of the speaker is totally absorbed and lost among the poles and entangled foliage of the hops. And when the poles are removed in autumn the disappointment is the same ; because a tall quick-set hedge, nurtured up for the purpose of shelter to the hop ground, entirely interrupts the impulse and reper-

<sup>1</sup> Sir William Jardine writes (ed. "Selborne," p. 219, *note*) : "Insects are now proved to be sensible of the impression of sounds. Mr. Bennett has quoted experiments of Brunelli in proof ; he learned to imitate the chirping of grasshoppers, and when he did this at the door of a closet in which they were kept they soon began to answer him. He afterwards enclosed a male grasshopper in a box, and placed it in one part of his garden, leaving a female at liberty in a distant part of it ; as soon as the male began to sing the female immediately hopped away toward him." My friend, the late Mr. Joachim Monteiro, the explorer of Angola, possessed a marvellous faculty for mimicking the cries and notes of birds and insects : among other exploits in this direction, he was in the habit of calling house-crickets to him by imitating their note, and used to feed them with chopped meat and other things. By going into the kitchen at night, when the house was still, and calling them he has had as many as eleven of these little creatures sitting on his hand and eating the food provided for them.—[R. B. S.]

cussion of the voice: so that till those obstructions are removed no more of it's garrulity can be expected.

Should any gentleman of fortune think an echo in his park or outlet a pleasing incident, he might *build* one at little or no expense. For whenever he had occasion for a new barn, stable, dog-kennel, or the like structure, it would be only needful to erect this building on the gentle declivity of an hill, with a like rising opposite to it, at a few hundred yards distance; and perhaps success might be the easier insured could some canal, lake, or stream intervene. From a seat at the *centrum phonicum* he and his friends might amuse themselves sometimes of an evening with the prattle of this loquacious nymph; of whose complacency and decent reserve more may be said than can with truth of every individual of her sex; since she is . . . . .

“——quæ nec *reticere* loquenti,  
Nec *prior ipsa loqui* didicit resonabilis echo.”

I am, &c.

P.S. The classic reader will, I trust, pardon the following lovely quotation, so finely describing echoes, and so poetically accounting for their causes from popular superstition:—

“Quæ benè quom videas, rationem reddere possis  
Tute tibi atque aliis, quo pacto per loca sola  
Saxa pareis formas verborum ex ordine reddant,  
Palanteis comites quom monteis inter opacos  
Quærimus, et magnâ dispersos voce ciemus.  
Sex etiam, aut septem loca vidi reddere voces  
Unam quom jaceres: ita colles collibus ipsis  
Verba repulsantes iterabant dicta referre.  
Hæc loca capripedes Satyros, Nymphasque tenere  
Finitimi fingunt, et Faunos esse loquuntur;  
Quorum noctivago strepitu, ludoque jocanti  
Adfirmant volgo taciturna silentia rumpi,  
Chordarumque sonos fieri, dulcisque querelas,  
Tibia quas fundit digitis pulsata canentum:  
Et genus agricolûm latè sentiscere, quom Pan  
Pinea semiferi capitis velamina quassans,

Unco sæpe labro calamos percurrit hianteis,  
Fistula silvestrem ne cesset fundere musam."<sup>1</sup>

*Lucretius*, Lib. iv. l. 576.

<sup>1</sup> Sir William Jardine's edition contains a rendering of the above into English by Mr. J. Mason Good (ed. "Selborne," p. 221, *note*), but Professor Bell gives an excellent note, which I transcribe (ed. "Selborne," vol. i. p. 213):—

"The following sonnet appeared in a review of White's 'Selborne' in the 'Topographer,' shortly after the publication of the first edition. It forms a note on the above quotation from Lucretius:—

'This beautiful passage appeared with the following translation in "Sonnets and other Poems," printed for Wilkie, 1785.

"Wand'ring amid deep woods and mountains dark,  
Wilder'd by night, my comrades lost to guide,  
Oft through the void I raised my voice; and hark!  
The rocks with twenty mimic tones replied.  
Within these sacred haunts, 'tis said, abide  
Fauns, nymphs, and satyrs, who delight to mark  
And mock each lonely sound: but ere the lark  
Wakes her shrill note, to secret cells they glide.

Night-wand'ring noises, revelry and joke  
Disturb the air ('tis said by rustics round,  
Who start to hear the solemn silence broke),  
And warbling strings and plaintive pipes resound;  
And oft they hear, when Pan his reed hath woke,  
Hills, vales, and woods and glens the harmony rebound."'"

Professor Bell failed to discover the author of this "pleasing translation."  
—[R. B. S.]

## LETTER XXXIX

TO THE SAME

SELBORNE, *May 13, 1778.*

DEAR SIR,—Among the many singularities attending those amusing birds the *swifts*, I am now confirmed in the opinion that we have every year the same number of pairs invariably ; at least the result of my inquiry has been exactly the same for a long time past. The swallows and martins are so numerous, and so widely distributed over the village, that it is hardly possible to recount them ; while the swifts, though they do not all build in the church, yet so frequently haunt it, and play and rendezvous round it, that they are easily enumerated. The number that I constantly find are *eight pairs* ; about half of which reside in the church, and the rest build in some of the lowest and meanest thatched cottages. Now as these eight pairs, allowance being made for accidents, breed yearly eight pairs more, what becomes annually of this increase ; and what determines every spring which pairs shall visit us, and reoccupy their ancient haunts ?

Ever since I have attended to the subject of ornithology, I have always supposed that that sudden reverse of affection, that strange *ἀντιστοργή*, which immediately succeeds in the feathered kind to the most passionate fondness, is the occasion of an equal dispersion of birds over the face of the earth. Without this provision one favourite district would be crowded with inhabitants, while others would be destitute and forsaken. But the parent birds seem to maintain a jealous superiority, and to oblige the young to seek for new abodes ; and the rivalry of the males in many



kinds, prevents their crowding the one on the other. Whether the swallows and house-martins return in the same exact number annually is not easy to say, for reasons given above ; but it is apparent, as I have remarked before in my Monographies, that the numbers returning bear no manner of proportion to the numbers retiring.



## LETTER XL

TO THE SAME

SELBORNE, *June 2, 1778.*

DEAR SIR,—The standing objection to botany has always been, that it is a pursuit that amuses the fancy and exercises the memory without improving the mind or advancing any real knowledge: and where the science is carried no farther than a mere systematic classification, the charge is but too true. But the botanist that is desirous of wiping off this aspersion should be by no means content with a list of names; he should study plants philosophically, should investigate the laws of vegetation, should examine the powers and virtues of efficacious herbs, should promote their cultivation, and graft the gardener, the planter, and the husbandman, on the phytologist. Not that system is by any means to be thrown aside; without system the field of Nature would be a pathless wilderness; but system should be subservient to, not the main object of, pursuit.

Vegetation is highly worthy of our attention; and in itself is of the utmost consequence to mankind, and productive of many of the greatest comforts and elegancies of life. To plants we owe timber, bread, beer, honey, wine, oil, linen, cotton, &c., what not only strengthens our hearts, and exhilarates our spirits, but what secures us from inclemencies of weather and adorns our persons. Man, in his true state of nature, seems to be subsisted by spontaneous vegetation; in middle climes, where grasses prevail, he mixes some animal food with the produce of the field and garden; and it is towards the polar extremes

only that, like his kindred bears and wolves, he gorges himself with flesh alone, and is driven, to what hunger has never been known to compel the very beasts, to prey on his own species.<sup>1</sup>

The productions of vegetation have had a vast influence on the commerce of nations, and have been the great promoters of navigation, as may be seen in the articles of sugar, tea, tobacco, opium, ginseng, betel, paper, &c. As every climate has it's peculiar produce, our natural wants bring on a mutual intercourse; so that by means of trade each distant part is supplied with the growth of every latitude. But, without the knowledge of plants and their culture, we must have been content with our hips and haws, without enjoying the delicate fruits of *India* and the salutiferous drugs of *Peru*.

Instead of examining the minute distinctions of every various species of each obscure genus, the botanist should endeavour to make himself acquainted with those that are useful. You shall see a man readily ascertain every herb of the field, yet hardly know wheat from barley, or at least one sort of wheat or barley from another.

But of all sorts of vegetation the *grasses* seem to be most neglected; neither the farmer nor the grazier seem to distinguish the annual from the perennial, the hardy from the tender, nor the succulent and nutritive from the dry and juiceless.

The study of grasses would be of great consequence to a northerly, and grazing kingdom. The botanist that could improve the sward of the district where he lived would be an useful member of society: to raise a thick turf on a naked soil would be worth volumes of systematic knowledge; and he would be the best commonwealth's man that could occasion the growth of "*two blades of grass where one alone was seen before.*"  
I am, &c.

<sup>1</sup> See the late Voyages to the south-seas.—[G. W.]

## LETTER XLI

TO THE SAME

SELBORNE, July 3, 1778.

DEAR SIR,—In a district so diversified with such a variety of hill and dale, aspects, and soils, it is no wonder that great choice of plants should be found. Chalks, clays, sands, sheep-walks and downs, bogs, heaths, woodlands, and champaign fields, cannot but furnish an ample *Flora*. The deep rocky lanes abound with *filices*, and the pastures and moist woods with *fungi*. If in any branch of botany we may seem to be wanting, it must be in the large aquatic plants, which are not to be expected on a spot far removed from rivers, and lying up amidst the hill country at the spring heads. To enumerate all the plants that have been discovered within our limits would be a needless work; but a short list of the more rare, and the spots where they are to be found, may be neither unacceptable nor unentertaining:—

*Helleborus fœtidus*, stinking hellebore, bear's foot, or setterworth,—all over the *High-wood* and *Coney-croft-hanger*: this continues a great branching plant the winter through, blossoming about *January*, and is very ornamental in shady walks and shrubberies. The good women give the leaves powdered to children troubled with worms; but it is a violent remedy, and ought to be administered with caution.

*Helleborus viridis*, green hellebore,—in the deep stony lane on the left hand just before the turning to *Norton-farm*, and at the top of *Middle Dorton* under the hedge: this plant dies down to the ground early in autumn, and



Dorton Cottage  
Abbot Dalry



springs again about *February*, flowering almost as soon as it appears above ground.

*Vaccinium oxycoccos*, creeping bilberries, or cranberries,—in the bogs of *Bin's-pond*.<sup>1</sup>

*Vaccinium myrtillus*, whortle, or bleaberries,—on the dry hillocks of *Woolmer-forest*.

*Drosera rotundifolia*, round-leaved sundew,—in the bogs of *Bin's-pond*.

*Drosera longifolia*, long-leaved sundew,—in the bogs of *Bin's-pond*.

*Comarum palustre*, purple comarum, or marsh cinquefoil,—in the bogs of *Bin's-pond*.

*Hypericum androsæmun*, Tutsan, St. John's Wort,—in the stony, hollow lanes.

*Vinea minor*, less periwinkle,—in *Selborne-hanger* and *Shrub-wood*.

*Monotropa hypopithys*, yellow monotropa, or birds' nest,—in *Selborne-hanger* under the shady beeches, to whose roots it seems to be parasitical, at the north-west end of the *Hanger*.

*Chlora perfoliata*, *Blackstonia perfoliata*, *Hudsoni*, perfoliated yellow-wort,—on the banks in the *King's-field*.

*Paris quadrifolia*, herb Paris, true-love, or one-berry,—in the *Church-litten-coppice*.

*Chrysosplenium oppositifolium*, opposite golden saxifrage,—in the dark and rocky hollow lanes.

*Gentiana amarella*, autumnal gentian, or fellwort,—on the *Zigzag* and *Hanger*.

*Lathræa squamaria*, tooth-wort,—in the *Church-litten-coppice* under some hazels near the foot-bridge, in *Trimming's* garden hedge, and on the dry wall opposite *Grange-yard*.

*Dipsacus pilosus*, small teasel,—in the *Short* and *Long Lith*.

*Lathyrus sylvestris*, narrow-leaved, or wild lathyrus,—in the bushes at the foot of the *Short Lith*, near the path.

*Ophrys spiralis*, ladies' traces,—in the *Long Lith*, and towards the south-corner of the common.

<sup>1</sup> This pond is now drained.—[R. B. S.]

*Ophrys nidus avis*, birds' nest ophrys,—in the *Long Lith* under the shady beeches among the dead leaves ; in *Great Dorton* among the bushes, and on the *Hanger* plentifully.

*Serapias latifolia*, helleborine,—in the *High-wood* under the shady beeches.

*Daphne laureola*, spurge laurel,—in *Selborne-Hanger* and the *High-wood*.

*Daphne mezereum*, the mezereon,—in *Selborne-Hanger* among the shrubs, at the south-east end above the cottages.

*Lycoperdon tuber*, truffles,—in the *Hanger* and *High-wood*.

*Sambucus ebulus*, dwarf elder, walwort, or danewort,—among the rubbish and ruined foundations of the *Priory*.<sup>1</sup>

Of all the propensities of plants, none seem more strange than their different periods of blossoming. Some produce their flowers in the winter, or very first dawns of spring ; many when the spring is established ; some at midsummer, and some not till autumn. When we see the *helleborus fœtidus* and *helleborus niger* blowing at Christmas, the *helleborus hyemalis* in January, and the *helleborus viridis* as soon as ever it emerges out of the ground, we do not wonder, because they are kindred plants that we expect should keep pace the one with the other ; but other congenerous vegetables differ so widely in their time of flowering, that we cannot but admire. I shall only instance at present in the *crocus sativus*, the vernal and the autumnal crocus, which have such an affinity, that the best botanists only make them varieties of the same genus, of which there is only one *species*, not being able to discern any difference in the *corolla*, or in the internal structure. Yet the *vernal crocus* expands its flowers by the beginning of March at farthest, and often in very rigorous weather ; and cannot be retarded but by some violence offered ; while the *autumnal* (the *Saffron*) defies the influence of the spring

<sup>1</sup> The foregoing was all that Gilbert White printed of his letter, but as Professor Bell writes, "the remainder of this letter does not appear in the first edition, but was added by his brother from the MS. of Gilbert on the publication of the second edition in 2 vols. 8vo in 1802."—[R. B. S.]



and summer, and will not blow till most plants begin to fade and run to seed. This circumstance is one of the wonders of the creation, little noticed because a common occurrence; yet ought not to be overlooked on account of its being familiar, since it would be as difficult to be explained as the most stupendous phenomenon in nature.

“ Say, what impels, amidst surrounding snow  
 Congeal'd ; the *crocus*' flamy bud to glow ?  
 Say, what retards, amidst the summer's blaze,  
 Th' *autumnal bulb*, till pale, declining days ?

The GOD of SEASONS ; whose pervading power  
 Controls the sun, or sheds the fleecy shower :  
 He bids each flower his quickening word obey,  
 Or to each lingering bloom enjoins delay.”



## LETTER XLII

### TO THE SAME

“Omnibus animalibus reliquis certus et uniusmodi, et in suo cuique genere incessus est: aves solæ vario meatu feruntur, et in terrâ, et in æere.”—PLIN. Hist. Nat., lib. x. cap. 38.

SELBORNE, Aug. 7, 1778.

DEAR SIR,—A good ornithologist should be able to distinguish birds by their air as well as by their colours and shape; on the ground as well as on the wing; and in the bush as well as in the hand. For, though it must not be said that every *species* of bird has a manner peculiar to itself, yet there is somewhat in most *genera* at least, that at first sight discriminates them, and enables a judicious observer to pronounce upon them with some certainty. Put a bird in motion

“—Et verâ incessu patuit—.”

Thus *kites* and *buzzards* sail round in circles with wings expanded and motionless; and it is from their gliding manner that the former are still called in the north of *England* *gleads*, from the *Saxon* verb *glidan*, to glide. The *kestrel*, or *wind-hover*, has a peculiar mode of hanging in the air in one place, his wings all the while being briskly agitated. *Hen-harriers* fly low over heaths or fields of corn, and beat the ground regularly like a pointer or setting-dog. *Owls* move in a buoyant manner, as if lighter than the air; they seem to want ballast. There is a peculiarity belonging to *ravens* that must draw the attention even of the most incurious—they spend all their leisure time in striking and cuffing each other on the wing in a kind of playful





*Larger Spotted Woodpecker.*

Life size.

skirmish ; and, when they move from one place to another, frequently turn on their backs with a loud croak, and seem to be falling to the ground. When this odd gesture betides them, they are scratching themselves with one foot, and thus lose the center of gravity. *Rooks* sometimes dive and tumble in a frolicsome manner ; *crows* and *daws* swagger in their walk ; *wood-peckers* fly *volatu undoso*, opening and closing their wings at every stroke, and so are always rising or falling in curves. All of this genus use their tails, which incline downward, as a support, while they run up trees. *Parrots*, like all other hooked-clawed birds, walk aukwardly, and make use of their bill as a third foot, climbing and descending with ridiculous caution. All the *gallinæ* parade and walk gracefully, and run nimbly ; but fly with difficulty, with an impetuous whirring, and in a straight line. *Magpies* and *jays* flutter with powerless wings, and make no dispatch ; *herons* seem incumbered with too much sail for their light bodies, but these vast hollow wings are necessary in carrying burdens, such as large fishes and the like ; *pigeons*, and particularly the sort called *smiters*, have a way of clashing their wings the one against the other over their backs with a loud snap ; another variety, called *tumblers*, turn themselves over in the air. Some birds have movements peculiar to the season of love ; thus *ring-doves*, though strong and rapid at other times, yet in the spring hang about on the wing in a toying and playful manner ; thus the *cock-snipe*, while breeding, forgetting his former flight, fans the air like the *wind-hover* ; and the *green-finch* in particular, exhibits such languishing and faltering gestures as to appear like a wounded and dying bird ; the *king-fisher* darts along like an arrow ; *fern-owls*, or *goat-suckers*, glance in the dusk over the tops of trees like a meteor ; *starlings* as it were swim along, while *missel-thrushes* use a wild and desultory flight ; *swallows* sweep over the surface of the ground and water, and distinguish themselves by rapid turns and quick evolutions ; *swifts* dash round in circles ; and the *bank-martin* moves with frequent vacillations like a butterfly. Most of the small birds fly by jerks,

rising and falling as they advance. Most small birds hop; but *wagtails* and *larks* walk, moving their legs alternately. *Skylarks* rise and fall perpendicularly as they sing; *wood-larks* hang poised in the air; and *titlarks* rise and fall in large curves, singing in their descent. The *white-throat* uses odd jerks and gesticulations over the tops of hedges and bushes. All the *duck-kind* waddle; *divers* and *auks* walk as if fettered, and stand erect on their tails: these are the *compedes* of *Linnæus*. *Geese* and *cranes*, and most wild fowls, move in figured flights, often changing their position. The secondary *remiges* of *Tringæ*, *wild-ducks*, and some others, are very long, and give their wings, when in motion, an hooked appearance.<sup>1</sup> *Dabchicks*, *moor-hens*, and *coots*, fly erect, with their legs hanging down, and hardly make any dispatch; the reason is plain, their wings are placed too forward out of the true center of gravity; as the legs of *auks* and *divers* are situated too backward.

<sup>1</sup> To be correct, the author should have written 'inner secondaries,' as it is only these which are elongated. The inner secondaries are often called 'tertials' or 'tertiaries,' and are found in a similar elongated form in certain Passeres, such as Larks, Pipits, and Wagtails.—[R. B. S.]

## LETTER XLIII

TO THE SAME

SELBORNE, Sept. 9, 1778.

DEAR SIR,—From the motion of birds, the transition is natural enough to their notes and language, of which I shall say something. Not that I would pretend to understand their language like the *vizier*; who, by the recital of a conversation which passed between two owls reclaimed a sultan,<sup>1</sup> before, delighting in conquest and devastation; but I would be thought only to mean that many of the winged tribes have various sounds and voices adapted to express their various passions, wants, and feelings; such as anger, fear, love, hatred, hunger, and the like. All species are not equally eloquent; some are copious and fluent as it were in their utterance, while others are confined to a few important sounds: no bird, like the fish kind, is quite mute, though some are rather silent.<sup>2</sup> The language of birds is very ancient, and, like other ancient modes of speech, very elliptical; little is said, but much is meant and understood.

The notes of the eagle-kind are shrill and piercing; and about the season of nidification much diversified, as I have been often assured by a curious observer of Nature, who long resided at *Gibraltar*, where eagles abound.<sup>3</sup> The notes

<sup>1</sup> See Spectator, Vol. vii., No. 512.—[G. W.]

<sup>2</sup> Fish are not all mute. The grey gurnard, *Trigla gurnardus*, called *crooner*, from its noise, may be seen in a calm day in large shoals rising and ploughing the surface of the sea with their noses, at which time they utter a grunting sound which may be heard at a distance of half a mile; we have heard them called *grunTERS*. Schomburgk writes of the *Phractocephalus* of the Guiana rivers “that when hauled on shore they make a loud grunting noise.”—[W. J.]

<sup>3</sup> His brother, John White.—[R. B. S.]

of our *hawks* much resemble those of the king of birds. *Owls* have very expressive notes; they hoot in a fine vocal sound, much resembling the *vox humana*, and reducible by a pitch-pipe to a musical key. This note seems to express complacency and rivalry among the males: they use also a quick call and an horrible scream; and can snore and hiss when they mean to menace. *Ravens*, besides their loud croak, can exert a deep and solemn note that makes the woods to echo; the amorous sound of a *crow* is strange and ridiculous; *rooks*, in the breeding season, attempt sometimes in the gaiety of their hearts to sing, but with no great success; the *parrot-kind* have many modulations of voice, as appears by their aptitude to learn human sounds; *doves* coo in an amorous and mournful manner, and are emblems of despairing lovers; the *woodpecker* sets up a sort of loud and hearty laugh; the *fern-owl*, or *goat-sucker*, from the dusk till day-break, serenades his mate with the clattering of castanets. All the tuneful *passeres* express their complacency by sweet modulations, and a variety of melody. The *swallow*, as has been observed in a former letter, by a shrill alarm bespeaks the attention of the other *hirundines*, and bids them be aware that the hawk is at hand. Aquatic and gregarious birds, especially the nocturnal, that shift their quarters in the dark, are very noisy and loquacious; as cranes, wild-geese, wild-ducks, and the like: their perpetual clamour prevents them from dispersing and losing their companions.

In so extensive a subject, sketches and outlines are as much as can be expected; for it would be endless to instance in all the infinite variety of the feathered nation. We shall therefore confine the remainder of this letter to the few domestic fowls of our yards, which are most known, and therefore best understood. And first the *peacock*, with his gorgeous train, demands our attention; but, like most of the gaudy birds, his notes are grating and shocking to the ear: the yelling of cats, and the braying of an ass, are not more disgustful. The voice of the *goose* is trumpet-like, and clanking; and once saved the Capitol at



*Rome*, as grave historians assert: the hiss, also, of the *gander*, is formidable and full of menace, and "protective of his young." Among *ducks* the sexual distinction of voice is remarkable; for, while the *quack* of the female is loud and sonorous, the voice of the *drake* is inward and harsh, and feeble, and scarce discernible. The cock *turkey* struts and gobbles to his mistress in a most uncouth manner; he hath also a pert and petulant note when he attacks his adversary. When a hen *turkey* leads forth her young brood she keeps a watchful eye; and if a bird of prey appear, though ever so high in the air, the careful mother announces the enemy with a little inward moan, and watches him with a steady and attentive look; but, if he approach, her note becomes earnest and alarming, and her outcries are redoubled.

No inhabitants of a yard seem possessed of such a variety of expression and so copious a language as common poultry. Take a chicken of four or five days old, and hold it up to a window where there are flies, and it will immediately seize it's prey, with little twitterings of complacency; but if you tender it a wasp or a bee, at once it's note becomes harsh, and expressive of disapprobation and a sense of danger. When a pullet is ready to lay she intimates the event by a joyous and easy soft note. Of all the occurrences of their life that of *laying* seems to be the most important; for no sooner has a hen disburdened herself, than she rushes forth with a clamorous kind of joy, which the cock and the rest of his mistresses immediately adopt. The tumult is not confined to the family concerned, but catches from yard to yard, and spreads to every homestead within hearing, till at last the whole village is in an uproar. As soon as a hen becomes a mother her new relation demands a new language: she then runs clocking and screaming about, and seems agitated as if possessed. The father of the flock has also a considerable vocabulary; if he finds food, he calls a favourite concubine to partake; and if a bird of prey passes over, with a warning voice he bids his family beware. The gallant *chanticleer* has, at

command, his amorous phrases and his terms of defiance. But the sound by which he is best known is his *crowing*: by this he has been distinguished in all ages as the countryman's clock or larum, as the watchman that proclaims the divisions of the night. Thus the poet elegantly styles him :

“—— the crested cock, whose clarion sounds  
The silent hours.”

A neighbouring gentleman one summer had lost most of his chickens by a sparrow-hawk, that came gliding down between a faggot pile and the end of his house to the place where the coops stood. The owner, inwardly vexed to see his flock thus diminished, hung a setting net adroitly between the pile and the house, into which the caitiff dashed, and was entangled. Resentment suggested the law of retaliation ; he therefore clipped the hawk's wings, cut off his talons, and, fixing a cork on his bill, threw him down among the brood-hens. Imagination cannot paint the scene that ensued ; the expressions that fear, rage, and revenge, inspired, were new, or at least such as had been unnoticed before : the exasperated matrons upbraided, they execrated, they insulted, they triumphed. In a word, they never desisted from buffeting their adversary till they had torn him in an hundred pieces.

## LETTER XLIV

TO THE SAME

SELBORNE.

“—Monstrent

Quid tantum Oceano properent se tingere soles  
Hyberni ; vel quæ tardis mora noctibus obster.”

GENTLEMEN who have outlets might contrive to make ornament subservient to utility : a pleasing eye-trap might also contribute to promote science : an obelisk in a garden or park might be both an embellishment and an *heliotrope*.

Any person that is curious, and enjoys the advantage of a good horizon, might, with little trouble, make two *heliotropes* ; the one for the *winter*, the other for the *summer* solstice : and the set two erections might be constructed with very little expense ; for two pieces of timber framework, about ten or twelve feet high, and four feet broad at the base, and close lined with plank, would answer the purpose.

The erection for the former should, if possible, be placed within sight of some window in the common sitting parlour ; because men, at that dead season of the year, are usually within doors at the close of the day ; while that for the latter might be fixed for any given spot in the garden or outlet : whence the owner might contemplate, in a fine summer's evening, the utmost extent that the sun makes to the *northward* at the season of the longest days. Now nothing would be necessary but to place these two *objects* with so much exactness, that the *westerly* limb of the sun, at setting, might but just clear the *winter heliotrope* to the

*west* of it on the *shortest* day; and that the *whole* disc of the sun, at the *longest* day, might exactly at setting also clear the *summer heliotrope* to the *north* of it.

By this simple expedient it would soon appear that there is no such thing, strictly speaking, as a solstice; for, from the *shortest* day, the owner would, every clear evening, see the disc *advancing*, at it's setting, to the *westward* of the object; and, from the *longest* day observe the sun *retiring* backwards every evening at it's setting, towards the object *westward*, till, in a few nights, it would set quite behind it and so by degrees, to the *west* of it: for when the sun comes near the summer solstice, the whole disc of it would at first set behind the object; after a time the *northern* limb would first appear, and so every night gradually more, till at length the whole diameter would set *northward* of it for about three nights; but on the middle night of the three, sensibly more remote than the former or following. When beginning it's recess from the summer tropic, it would continue more and more to be hidden every night, till at length it would descend quite behind the object again; and so nightly more and more to the *westward*.



## LETTER XLV

TO THE SAME

SELBORNE.

“——Mugire videbis  
Sub pedibus terram, et descendere montibus ornos.”

WHEN I was a boy I used to read, with astonishment and implicit assent, accounts in *Baker's Chronicle* of walking hills and travelling mountains. *John Philips*, in his *Cyder*, alludes to the credit that was given to such stories with a delicate but quaint vein of humour peculiar to the author of the *Splendid Shilling*.

“ I nor advise, nor reprehend the choice  
Of *Marcley Hill* ; the apple no where finds  
A kinder mould ; yet 'tis unsafe to trust  
Deceitful ground : who knows but that once more  
This mount may journey, and his present site  
Forsaken, to thy neighbour's bounds transfer  
Thy goodly plants, affording matter strange  
For law debates ! ”

But, when I came to consider better, I began to suspect that though our hills may never have journeyed far, yet that the ends of many of them have slipped and fallen away at distant periods, leaving the cliffs bare and abrupt. This seems to have been the case with *Nore* and *Whetham Hills*; and especially with the ridge between *Harteley Park* and *Ward-le-Ham*, where the ground has slid into vast swellings and furrows; and lies still in such romantic confusion as cannot be accounted for from any other cause. A strange event, that happened not long since, justifies our suspicions; which, though it befel not within the limits of this parish, yet as it was within the hundred of *Selborne*, and as the circumstances were singular, may fairly claim a place in a work of this nature.

The months of *January* and *February*, in the year 1774, were remarkable for great melting snows and vast gluts of rain; so that by the end of the latter month the land-springs, or *lavants*, began to prevail, and to be near as high as in the memorable winter of 1764. The beginning of *March* also went on in the same tenor; when, in the night between the 8th and 9th of that month, a considerable part of the great woody hanger at *Hawkley* was torn from it's place, and fell down, leaving a high free-stone cliff naked and bare, and resembling the steep side of a chalk-pit.<sup>1</sup> It appears that this huge fragment, being perhaps sapped and undermined by waters, foundered, and was engulfed, going down in a perpendicular direction; for a gate which stood in the field, on the top of the hill, after sinking with it's posts for thirty or forty feet, remained in so true and upright a position as to open and shut with great exactness, just as in it's first situation. Several oaks also are still standing, and in a state of vegetation after taking the same desperate leap. That great part of this prodigious mass was absorbed in some gulf below, is plain also from the inclining ground

<sup>1</sup> In Professor Bell's edition (Vol. ii., p. 103) is a letter from Gilbert's nephew, John, to his cousin Samuel Barker, dated April 6, 1774, describing the late landslip at Hawkley, when, "during the vast rains, a large fragment of the Hanger, late my grandfather's, slipped away, &c."—[R. B. S.]



Quint Goules  
Selborne





at the bottom of the hill, which is free and unincumbered ; but would have been buried in heaps of rubbish, had the fragment parted and fallen forward. About an hundred yards from the foot of this hanging coppice stood a cottage by the side of a lane ; and two hundred yards lower, on the other side of the lane, was a farm-house, in which lived a labourer and his family ; and, just by, a stout new barn. The cottage was inhabited by an old woman and her son, and his wife. These people in the evening, which was very dark and tempestuous, observed that the brick floors of their kitchens began to heave and part ; and that the walls seemed to open, and the roofs to crack : but they all agree that no tremor of the ground, indicating an earthquake, was ever felt ; only that the wind continued to make a most tremendous roaring in the woods and hangers. The miserable inhabitants, not daring to go to bed, remained in the utmost solicitude and confusion, expecting every moment to be buried under the ruins of their shattered edifices. When day-light came they were at leisure to contemplate the devastations of the night : they then found that a deep rift, or chasm, had opened under their houses, and torn them, as it were, in two ; and that one end of the barn had suffered in a similar manner ; that a pond near the cottage had undergone a strange reverse, becoming deep at the shallow end, and so *vice versâ* ; that many large oaks were removed out of their perpendicular, some thrown down, and some fallen into the heads of neighbouring trees ; and that a gate was thrust forward, with it's hedge, full six feet, so as to require a new track to be made to it. From the foot of the cliff the general course of the ground, which is pasture, inclines in a moderate descent for half a mile, and is interspersed with some hillocks, which were rifted, in every direction, as well towards the great woody hanger, as from it. In the first pasture the deep clefts began ; and running across the lane, and under the buildings, made such vast shelves that the road was impassable for some time ; and so over to an arable field on the other side, which was strangely torn and disordered. The second

pasture field, being more soft and springy, was protruded forward without many fissures in the turf, which was raised in long ridges resembling graves, lying at right angles to the motion. At the bottom of this enclosure the soil and turf rose many feet against the bodies of some oaks that obstructed their farther course, and terminated this awful commotion.

The perpendicular height of the precipice in general is twenty-three yards; the length of the lapse or slip as seen from the fields below, one hundred and eighty-one; and a partial fall, concealed in the coppice, extends seventy yards more; so that the total length of this fragment that fell was two hundred and fifty-one yards. About fifty acres of land suffered from this violent convulsion; two houses were entirely destroyed; one end of a new barn was left in ruins, the walls being cracked through the very stones that composed them; a hanging coppice was changed to a naked rock; and some grass grounds and an arable field so broken and rifted by the chasms as to be rendered for a time neither fit for the plough or safe for pasturage, till considerable labour and expense had been bestowed in levelling the surface and filling in the gaping fissures.

## LETTER XLVI<sup>1</sup>

TO THE SAME

SELBORNE.

—“resonant arbusta—.”

THERE is a steep abrupt pasture field interspersed with furze close to the back of this village, well known by the name of the *Short Lithe*, consisting of a rocky dry soil, and inclining to the afternoon sun. This spot abounds with the *gryllus campestris*, or *field-cricket*; which, though frequent in these parts, is by no means a common insect in many other counties.

<sup>1</sup> My friend, Mr. R. I. Pocock, sends me the following interesting note: “In connection with White’s admirable account of the habits of crickets, it may be added that these insects are very closely allied to the locusts and grasshoppers, possessing, like them, special organs for the production of the sounds whereby they everywhere advertise their presence. These organs consist of a horny file and ridge; but, curiously enough, whereas in the grasshoppers the file is situated on the inner surface of the thigh of the hind leg, and the noise is produced by this segment being moved up and down in such a way that the file scrapes across a prominent ridge on the outer surface of the front wing, in the locusts, and, as White states, the crickets also, the chirrup is emitted when the two front wings are rubbed together, the file being upon the under side of one of these wings, and the ridge that it scrapes against, on the upper side of the other. Nor is this all; sounding organs are naturally enough accompanied by hearing organs. These consist, as in ourselves, of a tightly stretched vibratory membrane or tympanum, supplied with nerves for the appreciation of the vibration. But the situation of these ears differs even more than that of the stridulating organs, being in the case of the grasshoppers lodged on the first segment of the abdomen, and, in the locusts and crickets, on the shin-joint of the first pair of legs!”

“Four species of crickets are found in England, namely, the three mentioned above by White, and a smaller kind, the wood-cricket (*Nemobius sylvestris*), which was evidently unknown to that naturalist, although it is to be met with amongst dead leaves in the southern counties of England.”—[R. B. S.]

As their cheerful summer cry cannot but draw the attention of a naturalist, I have often gone down to examine the œconomy of these *grylli*, and study their mode of life ; but they are so shy and cautious that it is no easy matter to get a sight of them ; for feeling a person's footsteps as he advances, they stop short in the midst of their song, and retire backward nimbly into their burrows, where they lurk till all suspicion of danger is over.

At first we attempted to dig them out with a spade,<sup>1</sup> but without any great success ; for either we could not get to the bottom of the hole, which often terminated under a great stone ; or else in breaking up the ground, we inadvertently squeezed the poor insect to death. Out of one so bruised we took a multitude of eggs, which were long and narrow, of a yellow colour, and covered with a very tough skin. By this accident we learned to distinguish the male from the female ; the former of which is shining black, with a golden stripe across his shoulders ; the latter is more dusky, more capacious about the abdomen, and carries a long, sword-shaped weapon at her tail, which probably is the instrument with which she deposits her eggs in crannies and safe receptacles.

Where violent methods will not avail, more gentle means will often succeed ; and so it proved in the present case ; for, though a spade be too boisterous and rough an implement, a pliant stalk of grass, gently insinuated into the caverns, will probe their windings to the bottom, and quickly bring out the inhabitant ; and thus the humane inquirer may gratify his curiosity without injuring the object of it. It is remarkable, that though these insects are furnished with long legs behind, and brawny thighs for leaping, like grasshoppers ; yet when driven from their holes they show no activity, but crawl along in a shiftless manner, so as easily to be taken ; and again, though provided with a curious apparatus of wings, yet they never exert them when there seems to be the greatest occasion. The males only make that shrilling noise perhaps out of

<sup>1</sup> See the account in the "Garden Kalendar" (Vol. i., p. 307).—[R. B. S.]

rivalry and emulation, as is the case with many animals which exert some sprightly note during their breeding time: it is raised by a brisk friction of one wing against the other.<sup>1</sup> They are solitary beings, living singly male and female, each as it may happen; but there must be a time when the sexes have some intercourse, and then the wings may be useful perhaps during the hours of night. When the males meet they will fight fiercely, as I found by some which I put into the crevices of a dry stone wall, where I should have been glad to have made them settle. For though they seemed distressed by being taken out of their knowledge, yet the first that got possession of the chinks would seize on any other that were obtruded upon them with a vast row of serrated fangs. With their strong jaws, toothed like the shears of a lobster's claws, they perforate and round their curious regular cells, having no fore-claws to dig, like the mole-cricket. When taken in hand I could not but wonder that they never offered to defend themselves, though armed with such formidable weapons. Of such herbs as grow before the mouths of their burrows they eat indiscriminately; and on a little platform which they make just by, they drop their dung; and never, in the day time, seem to stir more than two or three inches from home. Sitting in the entrance of their caverns they chirp all night as well as day from the middle of the month of *May* to the middle of *July*; and in hot weather, when they are most vigorous, they make the hills echo; and in the stiller hours of darkness may be heard to a considerable distance. In the beginning of the season their notes are more faint and inward; but become louder as the summer advances, and so die away again by degrees.

Sounds do not always give us pleasure according to

<sup>1</sup> Xenarchus, the Athenian comic poet of the Middle Comedy, flourished about 330 B.C.; in his play, *yclept* ὕπνος, or "Sleep," he thus felicitates the male cicadas,—

“ εἰτ’ εἰσὶν οἱ τέττιγες οὐκ εὐδαίμονες  
ὦν ταῖς γυναῖξιν οὐδ’ ὀτιοῦν φωνῆς ἐνι: ”

“ Happy the cicadas’ lives  
Since they all have voiceless wives.”—[W. J.]

their sweetness and melody ; nor do harsh sounds always displease. We are more apt to be captivated or disgusted with the associations which they promote than with the notes themselves. Thus the shrilling of the *field-cricket*, though sharp and stridulous, yet marvellously delights some hearers, filling their minds with a train of summer ideas of everything that is rural, verdurous, and joyous.

About the tenth of *March* the crickets appear at the mouths of their cells, which they then open and bore, and shape very elegantly. All that ever I have seen at that season were in their pupa state, and had only the rudiments of wings, lying under a skin or coat, which must be cast before the insect can arrive at it's perfect state ;<sup>1</sup> from whence I should suppose that the old ones of last year do not always survive the winter. In *August* their holes begin to be obliterated, and the insects are seen no more till spring.

Not many summers ago I endeavoured to transplant a colony to the terrace in my garden, by boring deep holes in the sloping turf. The new inhabitants stayed some time, and fed and sung ; but wandered away by degrees, and were heard at a farther distance every morning ; so that it appears that on this emergency they made use of their wings in attempting to return to the spot from which they were taken.

One of these crickets when confined in a paper cage and set in the sun, and supplied with plants moistened with water, will feed and thrive, and become so merry and loud as to be irksome in the same room where a person is sitting ; if the plants are not wetted it will die.

<sup>1</sup> We have observed that they cast these skins in *April*, which are then seen lying at the mouths of their holes.—[G. W.]

## LETTER XLVII

TO THE SAME

DEAR SIR,—

“Far from all resort of mirth  
Save the cricket on the hearth.”

MILTON'S *Il Penseroso*.

SELBORNE.

While many other insects must be sought after in fields and woods, and waters, the *gryllus domesticus*, or *house-cricket*, resides altogether within our dwellings, intruding itself upon our notice whether we will or no. This species delights in new-built houses, being, like the spider, pleased with the moisture of the walls; and besides, the softness of the mortar enables them to burrow and mine between the joints of the bricks or stones, and to open communications from one room to another. They are particularly fond of kitchens and bakers' ovens, on account of their perpetual warmth.

Tender insects that live abroad either enjoy only the short period of one summer, or else doze away the cold uncomfortable months in profound slumbers; but these, residing as it were in a torrid zone, are always alert and merry,—a good *Christmas* fire is to them like the heats of the dog-days. Though they are frequently heard by day, yet is their natural time of motion only in the night. As soon as it grows dusk, the chirping increases, and they come running forth, and are from the size of a flea to that of their full stature. As one should suppose, from the burning atmosphere which they inhabit, they are a thirsty race, and show a great propensity for liquids, being found

frequently drowned in pans of water, milk, broth, or the like. Whatever is moist they affect; and therefore often gnaw holes in wet woollen stockings and aprons that are hung to the fire: they are the housewife's barometer, foretelling her when it will rain; and are prognostic sometimes, she thinks, of ill or good luck; of the death of a near relation, or the approach of an absent lover. By being the constant companions of her solitary hours they naturally become the objects of her superstition. These crickets are not only very thirsty, but very voracious; for they will eat the scummings of pots, and yeast, salt, and crumbs of bread, and any kitchen offal or sweepings. In the summer we have observed them to fly when it became dusk out of the windows, and over the neighbouring roofs. This feat of activity accounts for the sudden manner in which they often leave their haunts, as it does for the method by which they come to houses where they were not known before. It is remarkable that many sorts of insects seem never to use their wings but when they have a mind to shift their quarters and settle new colonies. When in the air they move "*volatu undoso*," in waves or curves, like *wood-peckers*, opening and shutting their wings at every stroke, and so are always rising or sinking.

When they increase to a great degree, as they did once in the house where I am now writing, they become noisy pests, flying into the candles, and dashing into people's faces; but may be blasted and destroyed by gunpowder discharged into their crevices and crannies. In families at such times they are like Pharaoh's plague of frogs,—“in their bedchambers, and upon their beds, and in their ovens, and in their kneading troughs.”<sup>1</sup> Their shrilling noise is occasioned by a brisk attrition of their wings. Cats catch hearth-crickets, and, playing with them as they do with mice, devour them. Crickets may be destroyed, like wasps, by phials half-filled with beer, or any liquid, and set in their haunts; for being always eager to drink, they will crowd in till the bottles are full.

<sup>1</sup> Exod. viii. 3.—[G. W.]



## LETTER XLVIII

TO THE SAME

SELBORNE.

How diversified are the modes of life not only of incongruous but even of congenerous animals; and yet their specific distinctions are not more various than their propensities. Thus while the *field-cricket* delights in sunny dry banks, and the *house-cricket* rejoices amidst the glowing heat of the kitchen hearth or oven, the *Gryllus gryllotalpa* (the *mole-cricket*),<sup>1</sup> haunts moist meadows, and frequents the sides of ponds and banks of streams, performing all its functions in a swampy wet soil. With a pair of fore-feet, curiously adapted to the purpose, it burrows and works under ground like the mole, raising a ridge as it proceeds, but seldom throwing up hillocks.

As *mole-crickets* often infest gardens by the sides of canals, they are unwelcome guests to the gardener, raising up ridges in their subterraneous progress, and rendering the walks unsightly. If they take to the kitchen quarters they occasion great damage among the plants and roots, by destroying whole beds of cabbages, young legumes, and flowers. When dug out they seem very slow and helpless, and make no use of their wings by day; but at night they come abroad, and make long excursions, as I have been convinced by finding stragglers, in a morning, in improbable places. In fine weather, about the middle of *April*, and just at the close of day, they begin to solace themselves with a low, dull, jarring note, continued for a long time

<sup>1</sup> *Gryllotalpa gryllotalpa*, or *Gryllotalpa vulgaris* of modern entomologists.—  
[R. B. S.]

without interruption, and not unlike the chattering of the fern-owl, or goat-sucker, but more inward.

About the beginning of *May* they lay their eggs, as I was once an eye-witness : for a gardener at an house where I was on a visit, happening to be mowing, on the 6th of that month, by the side of a canal, his scythe struck too deep, pared off a large piece of turf, and laid open to view a curious scene of domestic œconomy :—

“——*Ingentem lato dedit ore fenestram :*  
*Apparet domus intus, et atria longa patescunt :*  
 Apparent—penetralia.”

There were many caverns and winding passages leading to a kind of chamber, neatly smoothed and rounded, and about the size of a moderate snuff-box. Within this secret nursery were deposited near an hundred eggs of a dirty yellow colour, and enveloped in a tough skin, but too lately excluded to contain any rudiments of young, being full of a viscous substance. The eggs lay but shallow, and within the influence of the sun, just under a little heap of fresh-mowed mould, like that which is raised by ants.

When *mole-crickets* fly they move “*cursu undoso*,” rising and falling in curves, like the other species mentioned before. In different parts of this kingdom people call them *fen-crickets*, *churr-worms*, and *eve-churrs*, all very apposite names.

Anatomists, who have examined the intestines of these insects astonish me with their accounts ; for they say that, from the structure, position, and number of their stomachs, or maws, there seems to be good reason to suppose that this and the two former species *ruminant* or *chew the cud* like many quadrupeds !

## LETTER XLIX

TO THE SAME

SELBORNE, *May 7, 1779.*

IT is now more than forty years that I have paid some attention to the ornithology of this district, without being able to exhaust the subject: new occurrences still arise as long as any inquiries are kept alive.

In the last week of last month five of those most rare birds, too uncommon to have obtained an *English* name, but known to naturalists by the terms of *himantopus*, or *loripes*, and *charadrius himantopus*,<sup>1</sup> were shot upon the verge of *Frinsham-pond*, a large lake belonging to the Bishop of *Winchester*, and lying between *Woolmer-forest* and the town of *Farnham*, in the county of *Surrey*. The pond keeper says there were three brace in the flock; but, that after he had satisfied his curiosity, he suffered the sixth to remain unmolested. One of these specimens I procured, and found the length of the legs to be so extraordinary, that, at first sight, one might have supposed the shanks had been fastened on to impose on the credulity of the beholder: they were legs in *caricatura*; and had we seen such proportions on a *Chinese* or *Japan* screen we should have made large allowances for the fancy of the draughtsman. These birds are of the *plover* family, and might with propriety be called the *stilt plovers*. *Brisson*, under that idea, gives them the apposite name of *l'echasse*. My speci-

<sup>1</sup> The Black-winged Stilt (*Himantopus candidus* or *Himantopus himantopus*) is a bird of Southern and South-eastern Europe, and only occurs accidentally in Great Britain, principally in summer (*cf.* Howard Saunder's "Manual," p. 563).  
—[R. B. S.]

men, when drawn and stuffed with pepper, weighed only four ounces and a quarter, though the *naked* part of the thigh measured three inches and a half, and the legs four inches and a half. Hence we may safely assert that these birds exhibit, weight for inches, incomparably the greatest length of legs of any known bird. The *flamingo*, for instance, is one of the most long legged birds, and yet it bears no manner of proportion to the *himantopus*; for a cock *flamingo* weighs, at an average, about four pounds avoirdupois; and his legs and thighs measure usually about twenty inches. But four pounds are fifty times and a fraction more than four ounces, and one quarter; and if four ounces and a quarter have eight inches of legs, four pounds must have one hundred and twenty inches and a fraction of legs, *viz.*, somewhat more than ten feet; such a monstrous proportion as the world never saw!<sup>1</sup> If you should try the experiment in still larger birds the disparity would still increase. It must be matter of great curiosity to see the *stilt plover* move; to observe how it can wield such a length of lever with such feeble muscles as the thighs seem to be furnished with. At best one should expect it to be but a bad walker: but what adds to the wonder is, that it has no back toe. Now without that steady prop to support it's steps, it must be liable, in speculation, to perpetual vacillations, and seldom able to preserve the true center of gravity.

The old name of *himantopus* is taken from *Pliny*; and, by an aukward metaphor, implies that the legs are as slender and pliant as if cut out of a *thong* of leather. Neither *Willughby* nor *Ray*, in all their curious researches, either at home or abroad, ever saw this bird. Mr. *Pennant* never

<sup>1</sup> On this statement Professor Bell has the following comment: "It is remarkable that a man so accurate as the author should have fallen into so obvious a mistake as this, to which my attention was drawn, many years ago, by my late nephew Dr. Bell Salter; and it is not less so that one edition after another has appeared under the supervision and auspices of so many successive editors without detection. The proportion of the limit should be according to the cube root of the weight of each bird; and in the present instance, by a single calculation, it will be seen that nature is right, and that Gilbert White was wrong."—[R. B. S.]



*Black-winged Stilt.*

*1/4 Life size.*



met with it in all *Great-Britain*, but observed it often in the cabinets of the curious at *Paris*. *Hasselquist* says that it migrates to *Egypt* in the autumn: and a most accurate observer of Nature has assured me that he has found it on the banks of the streams in *Andalusia*.<sup>1</sup>

Our writers record it to have been found only twice in *Great-Britain*. From all these relations it plainly appears that these long legged *plovers* are birds of *South Europe*, and rarely visit our island; and when they do, are wanderers and stragglers, and impelled to make so distant and northern an excursion from motives or accidents for which we are not able to account. One thing may fairly be deduced, that these birds come over to us from the continent, since nobody can suppose that a species not noticed once in an age, and of such a remarkable make, can constantly breed unobserved in this kingdom.

<sup>1</sup> This would be again his brother John. Colonel Soby mentions the species as principally migratory near Gibraltar, but it breeds in the south of Spain and in Marocco (*cf. Orn. Gibr. p. 275*).—[R. B. S.]



## LETTER L

TO THE SAME

SELBORNE, *April 21, 1780.*

DEAR SIR,—The old *Sussex* tortoise, that I have mentioned to you so often, is become my property. I dug it out of it's winter dormitory in *March* last, when it was enough awakened to express it's resentments by hissing; and, packing it in a box with earth, carried it eighty miles in post-chaises. The rattle and hurry of the journey so perfectly roused it that, when I turned it out on a border, it walked twice down to the bottom of my garden; however, in the evening, the weather being cold, it buried itself in the loose mould, and continues still concealed.

As it will be under my eye, I shall now have an opportunity of enlarging my observations on it's mode of life, and propensities; and perceive already that, towards the time of coming forth, it opens a breathing place in the ground near it's head, requiring, I conclude, a freer respiration as it becomes more alive. This creature not only



goes under the earth from the middle of *November* to the middle of *April*, but sleeps great part of the summer : for it goes to bed in the longest days at four in the afternoon, and often does not stir in the morning till late. Besides, it retires to rest for every shower, and does not move at all in wet days.

When one reflects on the state of this strange being, it is a matter of wonder to find that Providence should bestow such a profusion of days, such a seeming waste of longevity, on a reptile that appears to relish it so little as to squander more than two-thirds of it's existence in a joyless stupor, and be lost to all sensation for months together in the profoundest of slumbers.

While I was writing this letter, a moist and warm afternoon, with the thermometer at 50, brought forth troops of *shell-snails* ; and, at the same juncture, the *tortoise*<sup>1</sup> heaved up the mould and put out it's head ; and the next morning came forth, as it were raised from the dead ; and walked about till four in the afternoon. This was a curious coincidence ! a very amusing occurrence ! to see such a similarity of feelings between the two *φερέοικοι* ! for so the *Greeks* called both the *shell-snail* and the *tortoise*.<sup>2</sup>

Summer birds are, this cold and backward spring, unusually late : I have seen but one swallow yet. This conformity with the weather convinces me more and more that they sleep in the winter.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> [Professor Bell refers White's Tortoise to *Testudo marginata*, but Mr. Bennett considered it to be a distinct species, and named it after Gilbert White, *Testudo whitei*. The tortoise survived its owner nearly a year, dying in the spring of 1794. Its shell was preserved, and when Mr. Bennett wrote his edition of 1836 it was in the possession of Mrs. White. It was given by Mrs. Christopher to the British Museum, where it still remains. [See notes to Jardine's ed. "Selborne," p. 251, and Bell's edition, vol. i., p. 240.—R. B. S.]

<sup>2</sup> White's tortoise is referred by me (Cat. Chelon. 1889, p. 176) to *Testudo ibera*, Pallas, the species commonly sent to England from North Africa and of which barrows' full are often seen in the London streets.—[G. A. B.]

<sup>3</sup> At the end of the "Antiquities" Gilbert White published a further note on the tortoise, which, not without reason, has been printed by some editors at the end of Letter L.—[R. B. S.]

## LETTER LI

TO THE SAME

SELBORNE, *Sept.* 3, 1781.

I HAVE now read your miscellanies through with much care and satisfaction; and am to return you my best thanks for the honourable mention made in them of me as a naturalist, which I wish I may deserve.

In some former letters I expressed my suspicions that many of the house-martins do not depart in the winter far from this village. I therefore determined to make some search about the south-east end of the hill, where I imagined they might slumber out the uncomfortable months of winter. But supposing that the examination would be made to the best advantage in the spring, and observing that no martins had appeared by the 11th of *April* last; on that day I employed some men to explore the shrubs and cavities of the suspected spot. The persons took pains, but without any success; however, a remarkable incident occurred in the midst of our pursuit—while the labourers were at work, a house-martin, the first that had been seen this year, came down the village in the sight of several people, and went at once into a nest, where it stayed a short time, and then flew over the houses; for some days after no martins were observed, not till the 16th of *April*, and then only a pair. Martins in general were remarkably late this year.

## LETTER LII

TO THE SAME

SELBORNE, *Sept. 9th*, 1781.

I HAVE just met with a circumstance respecting swifts, which furnishes an exception to the whole tenor of my observations ever since I have bestowed any attention on that species of hirundines. Our swifts, in general, withdrew this year about the first day of *August*, all save one pair, which in two or three days was reduced to a single bird. The perseverance of this individual made me suspect that the strongest of motives, that of an attachment to her young, could alone occasion so late a stay. I watched therefore till the twenty-fourth of *August*, and then discovered that, under the eaves of the church, she attended upon two young, which were fledged, and now put out their white chins from a crevice. These remained till the twenty-seventh, looking more alert every day, and seeming to long to be on the wing. After this day they were missing at once; nor could I ever observe them with their dam coursing round the church in the act of learning to fly, as the first broods evidently do. On the thirty-first I caused the eaves to be searched, but we found in the nest only two callow, dead, stinking swifts, on which a second nest had been formed. This double nest was full of the black shining cases of the *hippoboscæ hirundinis*.<sup>1</sup>

The following remarks on this unusual incident are obvious. The first is, that though it may be disagreeable to swifts to remain beyond the beginning of *August*, yet

<sup>1</sup> A parasitic fly, now known as *Stenopteryx hirundinis*, which infests the bodies and nests of birds of the swallow tribe.—[R. I. P.]

that they can subsist longer is undeniable. The second is, that this uncommon event, as it was owing to the loss of the first brood, so it corroborates my former remark, that swifts breed regularly but once; since, was the contrary the case, the occurrence above could neither be new nor rare.

P.S.—One swift was seen at *Lyndon*, in the county of *Rutland*, in 1782, so late as the third of *September*.



## LETTER LIII

### TO THE SAME

AS I have sometimes known you make inquiries about several kinds of insects, I shall here send you an account of one sort which I little expected to have found in this kingdom. I had often observed that one particular part of a vine growing on the walls of my house was covered in the autumn with a black dust-like appearance, on which the flies fed eagerly ; and that the shoots and leaves thus affected did not thrive ; nor did the fruit ripen. To this substance I applied my glasses ; but could not discover that it had anything to do with animal life, as I at first expected : but, upon a closer examination behind the larger boughs, we were surprised to find that they were coated over with husky shells, from whose sides proceeded a cotton-like substance, surrounding a multitude of eggs. This curious and uncommon production put me upon recollecting what I have heard and read concerning the *coccus vitis viniferæ* of *Linnaeus*, which, in the south of *Europe*, infests many vines, and is an horrid and loathsome pest. As soon as I had turned to the accounts given of this insect, I saw at once that it swarmed on my vine ; and did not appear to have been at all checked by the preceding winter, which had been uncommonly severe.

Not being then at all aware that it had anything to do with *England*, I was much inclined to think that it came from *Gibraltar* among the many boxes and packages of plants and birds which I had formerly received from thence ; and especially as the vine infested grew immediately under my study-window, where I usually kept my specimens.

True it is that I had received nothing from thence for some years: but as insects, we know, are conveyed from one country to another in a very unexpected manner, and have a wonderful power of maintaining their existence till they fall into a *nidus* proper for their support and increase, I cannot but suspect still that these *cocci* came to me originally from *Andalusia*. Yet, all the while, candour obliges me to confess that Mr. *Lightfoot* has written me word that he once, and but once, saw these insects on a vine at *Weymouth* in *Dorsetshire*; which, it is here to be observed, is a sea-port town to which the *coccus* might be conveyed by shipping.

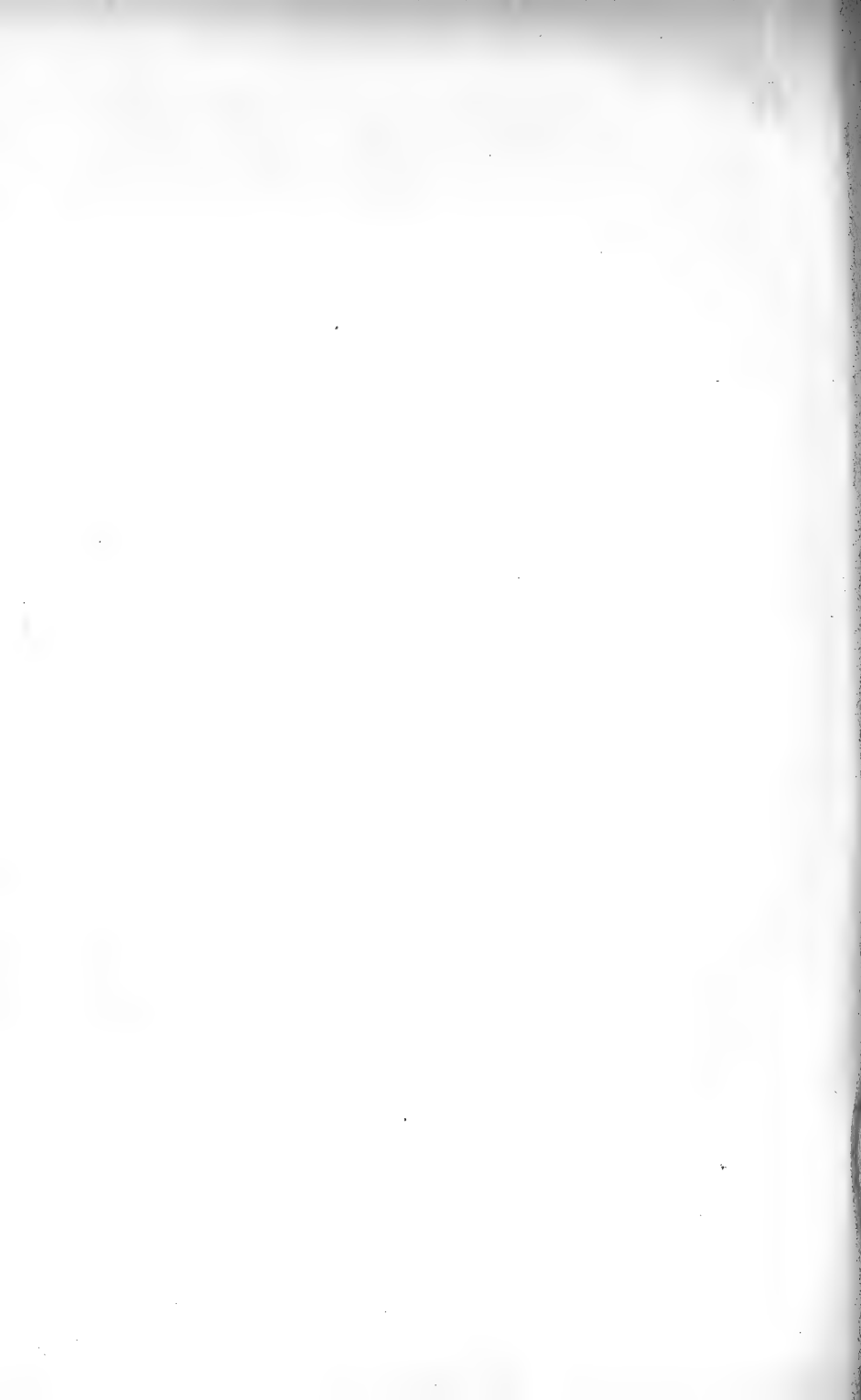
As many of my readers may possibly never have heard of this strange and unusual insect, I shall here transcribe a passage from a natural history of *Gibraltar*, written by the Reverend *John White*, late Vicar of *Blackburn* in *Lancashire*, but not yet published:—

“In the year 1770 a vine, which grew on the east-side of my house, and which had produced the finest crops of grapes for years past, was suddenly overspread on all the woody branches with large lumps of a white fibrous substance resembling spiders webs, or rather raw cotton. It was of a very clammy quality, sticking fast to everything that touched it, and capable of being spun into long threads. At first I suspected it to be the product of spiders, but could find none. Nothing was to be seen connected with it but many *brown oval husky shells*, which by no means looked like insects but rather resembled bits of the dry bark of the vine. The tree had a plentiful crop of grapes set, when this pest appeared upon it; but the fruit was manifestly injured by this foul incumbrance. It remained all the summer, still increasing, and loaded the woody and bearing branches to a vast degree. I often pulled off great quantities by handfuls; but it was so slimy and tenacious that it could by no means be cleared. The grapes never filled to their natural perfection, but turned watery and vapid. Upon perusing the works afterwards of M. de *Reaumur*, I found this matter perfectly described and ac-



*Redstart.*

$\frac{2}{3}$  Life size.





counted for. Those husky shells which I had observed, were no other than the *female coccus*, from whose side this cotton-like substance exsudes, and serves as a covering and security for their eggs."

To this account I think proper to add, that, though the female *cocci* are stationary, and seldom remove from the place to which they stick, yet the male is a winged insect; and that the black dust which I saw was undoubtedly the excrement of the females, which is eaten by ants as well as flies. Though the utmost severity of our winter did not destroy these insects, yet the attention of the gardener in a summer or two has entirely relieved my vine from this filthy annoyance.

As we have remarked above that insects are often conveyed from one country to another in a very unaccountable manner, I shall here mention an emigration of small *aphides*, which was observed in the village of *Selborne* no longer ago than *August* the 1st, 1785.

About three o'clock in the afternoon of that day, which was very hot, the people of this village were surprised by a shower of *aphides*, or *smother-flies*, which fell in these parts. Those that were walking in the street at that juncture found themselves covered with these insects, which settled also on the hedges and gardens, blackening all the vegetables where they alighted. My annuals were discoloured with them, and the stalks of a bed of onions were quite coated over for six days after. These armies were then, no doubt, in a state of emigration, and shifting their quarters; and might have come, as far as we know, from the great hop-plantations of *Kent* or *Sussex*, the wind being all that day in the easterly quarter. They were observed at the same time in great clouds about *Farnham*, and all along the vale from *Farnham* to *Alton*.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> For various methods by which several insects shift their quarters, see *Derham's* "Physico-Theology."—[G. W.]



## LETTER LIV<sup>1</sup>

TO THE SAME

DEAR SIR,—When I happen to visit a family where *gold* and *silver fishes* are kept in a glass bowl, I am always pleased with the occurrence, because it offers me an opportunity of observing the actions and propensities of those beings with whom we can be little acquainted in their natural state. Not long since I spent a fortnight at the house of a friend where there was such a *vivary*, to which I paid no small attention, taking every occasion to remark what passed within its narrow limits. It was here that I first observed the manner in which fishes die. As soon as the creature sickens, the head sinks lower and lower, and it stands as it were on it's head; till, getting weaker, and losing all poise, the tail turns over, and at last it floats on the surface of the water with it's belly uppermost. The reason why fishes, when dead, swim in that manner is very obvious; because, when the body is no longer balanced by the fins of the belly, the broad muscular back preponderates by it's own gravity, and turns the belly uppermost, as lighter from it's being a cavity, and because it

<sup>1</sup> Mr. E. T. Bennett points out in his edition of "Selborne," that this Letter first appeared in the *Gentleman's Magazine* for 1786 (Vol. LVI. p. 488). The Letter was signed "V." and had the date of June 12th.—[R. B. S.]

contains the swimming-bladders, which contribute to render it buoyant. Some that delight in *gold* and *silver fishes* have adopted a notion that they need no aliment. True it is that they will subsist for a long time without any apparent food but what they can collect from pure water frequently changed; yet they must draw some support from animalcula, and other nourishment supplied by the water; because, though they seem to eat nothing, yet the consequences of eating often drop from them. That they are best pleased with such *jejune* diet may easily be confuted, since if you toss them crumbs they will seize them with great readiness, not to say greediness; however, bread should be given sparingly, lest, turning sour it corrupt the water. They will also feed on the water-plant called *Lemna* (*ducks' meat*), and also on small fry.

When they want to move a little, they gently protrude themselves with their *pinnæ pectorales*; but it is with their strong muscular tails only that they and all the fishes shoot along with such inconceivable rapidity. It has been said that the eyes of fishes are immovable; but these apparently turn them forward or backward in their sockets as occasions require. They take little notice of a lighted candle, though applied close to their heads, but flounce and seem much frightened by a sudden stroke of the hand against the support whereon the bowl is hung; especially when they have been motionless, and are perhaps asleep. As fishes have no eye-lids, it is not easy to discern when they are sleeping or not, because their eyes are always open.

Nothing can be more amusing than a glass bowl containing such fishes; the double refractions of the glass and water represent them, when moving, in a shifting and changeable variety of dimensions, shades and colours; while the two mediums, assisted by the concavo-convex shape of the vessel, magnify and distort them vastly; not to mention that the introduction of another element and it's inhabitants into our parlours engages the fancy in a very agreeable manner.

*Gold* and *silver fishes*, though originally natives of *China*

and *Japan*, yet are become so well reconciled to our climate as to thrive and multiply very fast in our ponds and stews. *Linnæus* ranks this species of fish under the genus of *cyprinus*, or *carp*, and calls it *cyprinus auratus*.

Some people exhibit this sort of fish in a very fanciful way; for they cause a glass bowl to be blown with a large hollow space within, that does not communicate with it. In this cavity they put a bird occasionally; so that you may see a goldfinch or a linnet hopping as it were in the midst of the water, and the fishes swimming in a circle round it. The simple exhibition of the fishes is agreeable and pleasant; but in so complicated a way becomes whimsical and unnatural, and liable to the objection due to him,

“Qui variare cupit rem prodigialitèr unam.”

I am, &c.

## LETTER LV

TO THE SAME

October 10, 1781.

DEAR SIR,—I think I have observed before that much of the most considerable part of the *house-martins* withdraw from hence about the first week in *October*; but that some, the latter broods I am now convinced, linger on till towards the middle of that month; and that at times, once perhaps in two or three years, a flight, for one day only, has shown itself in the first week in *November*.

Having taken notice in *October*, 1780, that the last flight was numerous, amounting perhaps to one hundred and fifty; and that the season was soft and still; I was resolved to pay uncommon attention to these late birds; to find, if possible, where they roosted, and to determine the precise time of their retreat. The mode of life of these latter *hirundines* is very favourable to such a design; for they spend the whole day in the sheltered district, between me and the *Hanger*, sailing about in a placid, easy manner, and feasting on those insects which love to haunt a spot so secure from ruffling winds. As my principal object was to discover the place of their roosting, I took care to wait on them before they retired to rest, and was much pleased to find that for several evenings together, just at a quarter past five in the afternoon, they all scudded away in great haste towards the south-east, and darted down among the low shrubs above the cottages at the end of the hill. This spot in many respects seemed to be well calculated for their winter residence; for in many parts it is as steep as the roof of any house, and therefore secure from the annoyances of water; and it is moreover clothed with beechen

shrubs, which, being stunted and bitten by sheep, make the thickest covert imaginable; and are so entangled as to be impervious to the smallest spaniel; besides it is the nature of underwood beech never to cast it's leaf all the winter; so that, with the leaves on the ground and those on the twigs, no shelter can be more complete. I watched them on to the thirteenth and fourteenth of *October*, and found their evening retreat was exact and uniform; but after this they made no regular appearance. Now and then a straggler was seen; and on the twenty-second of *October*, I observed two in the morning over the village, and with them my remarks for the season ended.

From all these circumstances put together, it is more than probable that this lingering flight, at so late a season of the year, never departed from the island. Had they indulged me that autumn with a *November* visit, as I much desired, I presume that, with proper assistants, I should have settled the matter past all doubt; but though the third of November was a sweet day, and in appearance exactly suited to my wishes, yet not a martin was to be seen; and so I was forced, reluctantly, to give up the pursuit.

I have only to add that were the bushes, which cover some acres, and are not my own property, to be grubbed and carefully examined, probably those late broods, and perhaps the whole aggregate body of the house-martins of this district, might be found there, in different secret dormitories; and that, so far from withdrawing, into warmer climes, it would appear that they never depart three hundred yards from the village.

## LETTER LVI

### TO THE SAME

THEY who write on natural history cannot too frequently advert to *instinct*, that wonderful limited faculty, which, in some instances, raises the brute creation as it were, above *reason*, and in others leaves them so far below it. Philosophers have defined *instinct* to be that secret influence by which every species is impelled naturally to pursue, at all times, the same way or track, without any teaching or example; whereas *reason*, without instruction, would often vary and do that by many methods which *instinct* effects by one alone. Now this maxim must be taken in a qualified sense; for there are instances in which *instinct* does vary and conform to the circumstances of place and convenience.

It has been remarked that every species of bird has a mode of nidification peculiar to itself, so that a school-boy would at once pronounce on the sort of nest before him. This is the case among fields and woods, and wilds; but, in the villages round *London*, where mosses and gossamer, and cotton from vegetables, are hardly to be found, the nest of the *chaffinch* has not that elegant finished appearance, nor is it so beautifully studded with lichens, as in a more rural district: and the *wren* is obliged to construct it's house with straws and dry grasses, which do not give it that rotundity and compactness so remarkable in the edifices of that little architect. Again, the regular nest of the *house-martin* is hemispheric; but where a rafter, or a joist, or a cornice, may happen to stand in the way, the nest is







*Nuthach.*

*1/2 Life size.*

so contrived as to conform to the obstruction, and becomes flat, or oval, or compressed.

In the following instances *instinct* is perfectly uniform and consistent. There are three creatures, the *squirrel*, the *field-mouse*, and the bird called the *nut-hatch* (*sitta Europæa*), which live much on hazel-nuts; and yet they open them each in a different way. The first, after rasping off the small end, splits the shell in two with his long fore-teeth, as a man does with his knife; the second nibbles a hole with his teeth, so regular as if drilled with a wimble, and yet so small that one would wonder how the kernel can be extracted through it; while the last picks an irregular ragged hole with it's bill: but as this artist has no paws to hold the nut firm while he pierces it, like an adroit workman, he fixes it, as it were, in a vice, in some cleft of a tree, or in some crevice; when, standing over it, he perforates the stubborn shell. We have often placed nuts in the chink of a gate-post where *nut-hatches* have been known to haunt, and have always found that those birds have readily penetrated them. While at work they make a rapping noise that may be heard at a considerable distance.

You that understand both the theory and practical part of music may best inform us why *harmony* or *melody* should so strangely affect some men, as it were by recollection, for days after a concert is over. What I mean the following passage will most readily explain:—

“Præhabebat porrò vocibus humanis, instrumentisque harmonicis musicam illam avium: non quod aliâ quoque non delectaretur; sed quod ex musicâ humanâ relinqueretur in animo continens quædam, attentionemque et somnum conturbans agitato; dum ascensus, excensus, tenores, ac mutationes illæ sonorum, et consonantiarum euntque, redeuntque per phantasiam:—cum nihil tale relinqui possit ex modulationibus avium, quæ, quod non sunt perinde a nobis imitabiles, non possunt perinde internam facultatem commovere.”—*Gassendus in Vitâ Peireskii*.

This curious quotation strikes me much by so well representing my own case, and by describing what I have



*Nuthach.*

*1/2 Life size.*



so often felt, but never could so well express. When I hear fine music I am haunted with passages therefrom night and day; and especially at first waking, which by their importunity, give me more uneasiness than pleasure; elegant lessons still tease my imagination, and recur irresistibly to my recollection at seasons, and even when I am desirous of thinking of more serious matters.

I am, &c.

## LETTER LVII

### TO THE SAME

A RARE, and I think a new, little bird frequents my garden, which I have great reason to think is the *pettichaps*:<sup>1</sup> it is common in some parts of the kingdom; and I have received formerly several dead specimens from *Gibraltar*. This bird much resembles the *white-throat*, but has a more white or rather silvery breast and belly; is restless and active, like the *willow-wrens*, and hops from bough to bough, examining every part for food; it also runs up the stems of the *crown-imperials*, and, putting its head into the bells of those flowers, sips the liquor which stands in the *nectarium* of each petal. Sometimes it feeds on the ground like the *hedge-sparrow*, by hopping about on the grass-plots and mown walks.

One of my neighbours, an intelligent and observing man, informs me that, in the beginning of *May*, and about ten minutes before eight o'clock in the evening, he dis-

<sup>1</sup> Evidently the Lesser Whitethroat (*Sylvia curruca*).—[R. B. S.]  
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covered a great cluster of *house-swallows*, thirty, at least, he supposes, perching on a willow that hung over the verge of *James Knight's* upper-pond. His attention was first drawn by the twittering of these birds, which sat motionless in a row on the bough, with their heads all one way, and, by their weight, pressing down the twig so that it nearly touched the water. In this situation he watched them till he could see no longer. Repeated accounts of this sort, spring and fall, induce us greatly to suspect that *house-swallows* have some strong attachment to water, independent of the matter of food; and, though they may not retire into that element, yet they may conceal themselves in the banks of pools and rivers during the uncomfortable months of winter.

One of the keepers of *Woolmer-forest* sent me a *peregrine alcon*, which he shot on the verge of that district as it was devouring a wood-pigeon. The *falco peregrinus*, or *haggard falcon* is a noble species of hawk seldom seen in the southern counties.<sup>1</sup> In winter 1767, one was killed in the neighbouring parish of *Faringdon*, and sent by me to Mr. *Pennant* into *North-Wales*.<sup>2</sup> Since that time I have met with none till now. The specimen mentioned above was in fine preservation, and not injured by the shot: it measured forty-two inches from wing to wing, and twenty-one from beak to tail, and weighed two pounds and an half standing weight. This species is very robust, and wonderfully formed for rapine; it's breast was plump and muscular; it's thighs long, thick, and brawny; and it's legs remarkably short and well set: the feet were armed with most formidable, sharp, long talons: the eyelids and cere of the bill were yellow: but the irides of the eyes dusky; the beak was thick and hooked, and of a dark colour, and had a jagged process near the end of the upper mandible

<sup>1</sup> As Professor Newton (Bell's ed., i. p. 253, *note*), and Mr. Harting (ed. "Selborne," p. 290), have both pointed out, the Peregrine breeds in many of the cliffs of the south coast of England, and doubtless did so in Gilbert White's time. Their numbers have increased of late years.—[R. B. S.]

<sup>2</sup> See my tenth and eleventh letter to that gentleman.—[G. W.] Cf. vol. i. pp. 39, 40, 45.—[R. B. S.]



*Peregrine Falcon.*

*1/4 Life size.*





on each side : it's tail, or train, was short in proportion to the bulk of it's body : yet the wings, when closed, did not extend to the end of the train. From it's large and fair proportions it might be supposed to have been a female ; but I was not permitted to cut open the specimen. For one of the birds of prey, which are usually lean, this was in high case : in it's craw were many barley-corns, which probably came from the crop of the wood-pigeon, on which it was feeding when shot : for voracious birds do not eat grain ; but when devouring their quarry, with undistinguishing vehemence swallow bones and feathers, and all matters, indiscriminately. This falcon was probably driven from the mountains of *North-Wales* or *Scotland*, where they are known to breed, by rigorous weather and deep snows that had lately fallen.<sup>1</sup>

I am, &c.

<sup>1</sup> Professor Bell mentions his having seen a Peregrine between Empshott and Selborne, and records the Hobby (*Falco subbuteo*) and Montagu's Harrier (*Circus pygargus*) as having been procured in the neighbourhood (ed. "Selborne," i. p. 254, *note*).—[R. B. S.]

## LETTER LVIII

TO THE SAME

MY near neighbour, a young gentleman in the service of the *East-India* Company,<sup>1</sup> has brought home a dog and a bitch of the *Chinese* breed from *Canton*, such as are fattened in that country for the purpose of being eaten : they are about the size of a moderate spaniel ; of a pale yellow colour, with coarse bristling hairs on their backs ; sharp upright ears, and peaked heads, which give them a very fox-like appearance. Their hind legs are unusually straight, without any bend at the hock or ham, to such a degree as to give them an aukward gait when they trot. When they are in motion their tails are curved high over their backs like those of some hounds, and have a bare place each on the outside from the tip midway, that does not seem to be matter of accident, but somewhat singular. Their eyes are jet-black, small, and piercing ; the insides of their lips and mouths of the same colour, and their tongues blue. The bitch has a dew-claw on each hind leg ; the dog has none. When taken out into a field the bitch showed some disposition for hunting, and dwelt on the scent of a covey of partridges till she sprung them, giving her tongue all the time. The dogs in *South America* are dumb ; but these bark much in a short thick manner like foxes, and have a surly, savage demeanour like their ancestors, which are not domesticated, but bred up in sties, where they are fed for the table with rice-meal and

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Charles Etty, the son of Gilbert's great friend, the Rev. Andrew Etty, Vicar of Selborne, who died in 1784. (See Gilbert's letter to Mrs. Barker, in Bell's ed., ii. p. 156.)—[R. B. S.]

other farinaceous food. These dogs, having been taken on board as soon as weaned, could not learn much from their dam; yet they did not relish flesh when they came to *England*. In the islands of the *pacific* ocean the dogs are bred up on vegetables, and would not eat flesh when offered them by our circumnavigators.

We believe that all dogs, in a state of nature, have sharp, upright, fox-like ears; and that hanging ears, which are esteemed so graceful, are the effect of choice breeding and cultivation. Thus, in the Travels of *Ysbrandt Ides* from *Muscovy* to *China*, the dogs which draw the *Tartars* on snow-sledges, near the river *Oby*, are engraved with prick-ears, like those from *Canton*. The *Kamschatdales* also train the same sort of sharp-eared, peak-nosed dogs to draw their sledges; as may be seen in an elegant print engraved for Captain *Cook's* last voyage round the world.

Now we are upon the subject of dogs, it may not be impertinent to add, that spaniels, as all sportsmen know, though they hunt partridges and pheasants as it were by instinct, and with much delight and alacrity, yet will hardly touch their bones when offered as food; nor will a mongrel dog of my own, though he is remarkable for finding that sort of game. But when we came to offer the bones of partridges to the two *Chinese* dogs, they devoured them with much greediness, and licked the platter clean.

No sporting dogs will flush woodcocks till inured to the scent and trained to the sport, which they then pursue with vehemence and transport; but then they will not touch their bones, but turn from them with abhorrence, even when they are hungry.

Now, that dogs should not be fond of the bones of such birds as they are not disposed to hunt is no wonder; but why they reject and do not care to eat their natural game is not so easily accounted for, since the end of hunting seems to be, that the chase pursued should be eaten. Dogs again will not devour the more rancid water-fowls, nor indeed the bones of any wild-fowls; nor will they touch the fœtid bodies of birds that feed on offal and garbage:

and indeed there may be somewhat of providential instinct in this circumstance of dislike ; for vultures,<sup>1</sup> and kites, and ravens, and crows, &c., were intended to be messmates with dogs<sup>2</sup> over their carrion ; and seem to be appointed by Nature as fellow-scavengers to remove all cadaverous nuisances from the face of the earth. I am, &c.

<sup>1</sup> *Hasselquist*, in his *Travels to the Levant*, observes that the dogs and vultures at *Grand Cairo* maintain such a friendly intercourse as to bring up their young together in the same place.—[G. W.]

<sup>2</sup> The *Chinese* word for a dog to an *European* ear sounds like *quihloh*.—[G. W.]



## LETTER LIX

THE fossil wood buried in the bogs of *Woolmer forest* is not yet all exhausted; for the peat-cutters now and then stumble upon a log.<sup>1</sup> I have just seen a piece which was sent by a labourer of *Oakhanger* to a carpenter of this village; this was the but-end of a small oak, about five feet long, and about five inches in diameter. It had apparently been severed from the ground by an axe, was very ponderous, and as black as ebony. Upon asking the carpenter for what purpose he had procured it; he told me that it was to be sent to his brother, a joiner at *Farnham*, who was to make use of it in cabinet work, by inlaying it along with whiter woods.

Those that are much abroad on evenings after it is dark, in spring and summer, frequently hear a nocturnal bird passing by on the wing, and repeating often a short, quick note. This bird I have remarked myself, but never could make out till lately. I am assured now that it is the *Stone-curlew* (*charadrius ædicnemus*).<sup>2</sup> Some of them pass over or near my house almost every evening after it is dark, from the uplands of the hill and *North field*, away down towards *Dorton*, where, among the streams and meadows, they find a greater plenty of food. Birds that fly by night are obliged to be noisy; their notes often repeated become signals or watch-words to keep them together, that they may not stray or lose each the other in the dark.

The evening proceedings and manœuvres of the rooks are curious and amusing in the autumn. Just before dusk

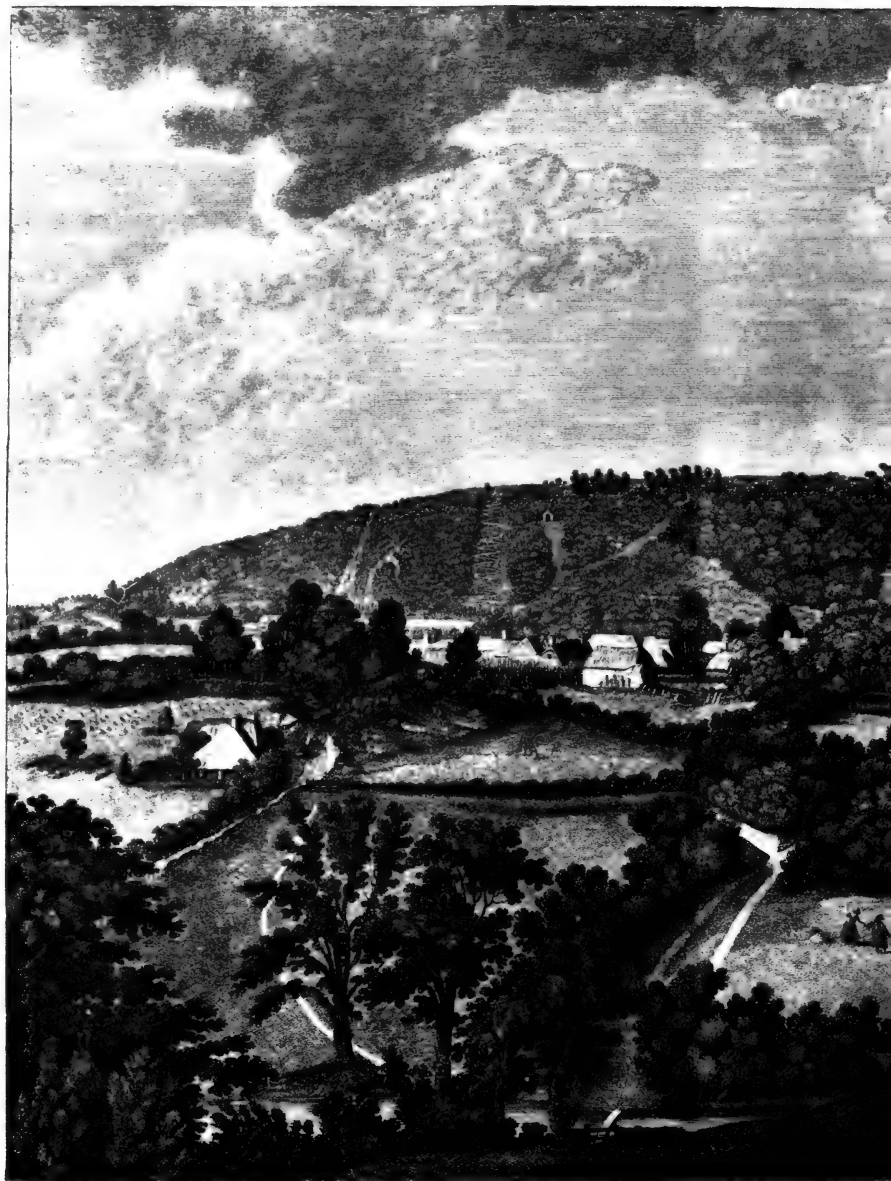
<sup>1</sup> See vol. i. p. 21.—[R. B. S.]

<sup>2</sup> *Ædicnemus ædicnemus*. See vol. i. pp. 59, 61, 78, 90—[R. B. S.]

they return in long strings from the foraging of the day, and rendezvous by thousands over *Selborne-down* where they wheel round in the air and sport and dive in a playful manner, all the while exerting their voices, and making a loud cawing, which, being blended and softened by the distance that we at the village are below them, becomes a confused noise or chiding; or rather a pleasing murmur, very engaging to the imagination, and not unlike the cry of a pack of hounds in hollow, echoing woods, or the rushing of the wind in tall trees, or the tumbling of the tide upon a pebbly shore. When this ceremony is over, with the last gleam of day, they retire for the night to the deep beechen woods of *Tisted* and *Ropley*. We remember a little girl who, as she was going to bed, used to remark on such an occurrence, in the true spirit of *physico-theology*, that the rooks were saying their prayers; and yet this child was much too young to be aware that the scriptures have said of the Deity—that “he feedeth the ravens who call upon him.”

I am, &c.





*North East view of SELB  
Reproduced from*





*View from the SUORT LYTTIE,  
an Old Engraving*



## LETTER LX

TO THE SAME

IN reading Dr. *Huxham's Observations de Aëre, &c.*, written at *Plymouth*, I find by those curious and accurate remarks, which contain an account of the weather from the year 1727 to the year 1748, inclusive, that though there is frequent rain in that district of *Devonshire*, yet the quantity falling is not great; and that some years it has been very small: for in 1731 the rain measured only 17.266 in.; and in 1741, 20.354 in.; and again, in 1743, only 20.908 in. Places near the sea have frequent scuds, that keep the atmosphere moist, yet do not reach far up into the country; making thus the maritime situations appear wet, when the rain is not considerable. In the wettest years at *Plymouth* the doctor measured only once 36; and again once, viz. 1734, 37.114 in.—a quantity of rain that has twice been exceeded at *Selborne* in the short period of my observations.<sup>1</sup> Dr. *Huxham* remarks that frequent small rains keep the air moist; while heavy ones render it more dry, by beating down the vapours. He is also of opinion that the *dingy smoky appearance* in the sky, in very dry seasons, arises from the want of moisture sufficient to let the light through, and render the atmosphere transparent; because he had observed several bodies more diaphanous when wet than dry, and did never recollect that the air had that look in rainy seasons.

My friend, who lives just beyond the top of the down, brought his three swivel guns to try them in my outlet,

<sup>1</sup> See Letter to Pennant (vol. i. p. 14).

with their muzzles towards the *Hanger*,<sup>1</sup> supposing that the report would have had a great effect ; but the experiment did not answer his expectation. He then removed them to the *Alcove* on the *Hanger* ; when the sound, rushing along the *Lythe* and *Comb-wood* was very grand : but it was at the *Hermitage* that the echoes and repercussions delighted the hearers ; not only filling the *Lythe* with the roar, as if all the beeches were tearing up by the roots ; but, turning to the left, they pervaded the vale above *Combwood-ponds*, and after a pause seemed to take up the crash again, and to extend round *Harteley-hangers*, and to die away at last among the coppices and coverts of *Ward-le-ham*. It has been remarked before that this district is an *anathoth*, a place of responses or echoes, and therefore proper for such experiments : we may farther add that the pauses in echoes, when they cease and yet are taken up again, like the pauses in music, surprise the hearers, and have a fine effect on the imagination.

The gentleman above-mentioned has just fixed a barometer in his parlour at *Newton Valence*.<sup>2</sup> The tube was first filled here (at *Selborne*) twice with care, when the mercury agreed and stood exactly with my own ; but, being filled twice again at *Newton*, the mercury stood, on account of the great elevation of that house, three-tenths of an inch lower than the barometers at this village, and so continues to do, be the weight of the atmosphere what it may. The plate of the barometer at *Newton* is figured as low as 27 ; because in stormy weather the mercury there will sometimes descend below 28. We have supposed *Newton-house* to stand two hundred feet higher than this house : but

<sup>1</sup> See note 2, vol. i. p. 261. I have since satisfied myself that Mr. Grant Allen was right and that I was wrong as regards the position of the *Hermitage* and the *Alcove*. I lately had a conversation with an old inhabitant of *Selborne*, who can remember when both these summer houses were still standing.—[R. B. S., Oct. 1900.]

<sup>2</sup> Professor Bell (ed. "Selborne," i. p. 259) adds a very interesting note, stating that, according to his calculations, the height of *Selborne Hill* is nearly or quite 300 feet above the *Wakes*, and the *Vicarage* at *Newton Valence* is about the same. Both barometers were in existence when Bell wrote, 1877.—[R. B. S.]

if the rule holds good, which says that mercury in a barometer sinks one-tenth of an inch for every hundred feet elevation, then the *Newton* barometer, by standing three-tenths lower than that of *Selborne*, proves that *Newton-house* must be three hundred feet higher than that in which I am writing, instead of two hundred.

It may not be impertinent to add, that the barometers at *Selborne* stand three-tenths of an inch lower than the barometers at *South Lambeth*: whence we may conclude that the former place is about three hundred feet higher than the latter; and with good reason, because the streams that rise with us run into the *Thames* at *Weybridge*, and so to *London*. Of course, therefore, there must be lower ground all the way from *Selborne* to *South Lambeth*; the distance between which, all the windings and indentings of the streams considered, cannot be less than an hundred miles.

I am, &c.

## LETTER LXI

TO THE SAME

SINCE the weather of a district is undoubtedly part of it's natural history, I shall make no further apology for the four following letters, which will contain many particulars concerning some of the great frosts, and a few respecting some very hot summers, that have distinguished themselves from the rest during the course of my observations.

As the frost in *January* 1768 was, for the small time it lasted, the most severe that we had then known for many years, and was remarkably injurious to ever-greens, some account of it's rigour, and reason of it's ravages, may be useful, and not unacceptable to persons that delight in planting and ornamenting; and may particularly become a work that professes never to lose sight of utility.

For the last two or three days of the former year there were considerable falls of snow, which lay deep and uniform on the ground without any drifting, wrapping up the more humble vegetation in perfect security. From the first day to the fifth of the new year more snow succeeded; but from that day the air became entirely clear, and the heat of the sun about noon had a considerable influence in sheltered situations.

It was in such an aspect that the snow on the author's ever-greens was melted every day, and frozen intensely every night; so that the laurustines, bays, laurels, and arbutuses looked, in three or four days, as if they had been burnt in the fire; while a neighbour's plantation of the same kind, in a high cold situation, where the snow was never melted at all, remained uninjured.

From hence I would infer that it is the repeated melting and freezing of the snow that is so fatal to vegetation, rather than the severity of the cold. Therefore it highly behoves every planter, who wishes to escape the cruel mortification of losing in a few days the labour and hopes of years, to bestir himself on such emergencies; and if his plantations are small, to avail himself of mats, cloths, pease-haum, straw, reeds, or any such covering, for a short time; or, if his shrubberies are extensive, to see that his people go about with prongs and forks, and carefully dislodge the snow from the boughs: since the naked foliage will shift much better for itself, than where the snow is partly melted and frozen again.

It may perhaps appear at first like a paradox; but doubtless the more tender trees and shrubs should never be planted in hot aspects; not only for the reason assigned above, but also because, thus circumstanced, they are disposed to shoot earlier in the spring, and to grow on later in the autumn than they would otherwise do, and so are sufferers by lagging or early frosts. For this reason also plants from *Siberia* will hardly endure our climate; because, on the very first advances of spring, they shoot away, and so are cut off by the severe nights of *March* or *April*.

Dr. *Fothergill* and others have experienced the same inconvenience with respect to the more tender shrubs from *North-America*, which they therefore plant under north-walls. There should also perhaps be a wall to the east to defend them from the piercing blasts from that quarter.

This observation might without any impropriety be carried into animal life; for discerning bee-masters now find that their hives should not in the winter be exposed to the hot sun, because such unseasonable warmth awakens the inhabitants too early from their slumbers; and by putting their juices into motion too soon, subjects them afterwards to inconveniences when rigorous weather returns.

The coincidents attending this short but intense frost were, that the horses fell sick with an epidemic distemper,

which injured the winds of many, and killed some; that colds and coughs were general among the human species; that it froze under people's beds for several nights; that meat was so hard frozen that it could not be spitted, and could not be secured but in cellars; that several redwings and thrushes were killed by the frost; and that the large titmouse continued to pull straws lengthwise from the eaves of thatched houses and barns in a most adroit manner for a purpose that has been explained already.<sup>1</sup>

On the 3d of *January*, *Benjamin Martin's* thermometer within doors, in a close parlour where there was no fire, fell in the night to 20, and on the 4th, to 18, and on the 7th, to 17½, a degree of cold which the owner never since saw in the same situation; and he regrets much that he was not able at that juncture to attend his instrument abroad. All this time the wind continued north and north-east; and yet on the 8th roost-cocks, which had been silent, began to sound their clarions, and crows to clamour, as prognostic of milder weather; and, moreover, moles began to heave and work, and a manifest thaw took place. From the latter circumstance we may conclude that thaws often originate under ground from warm vapours which arise; else how should subterraneous animals receive such early intimations of their approach. Moreover, we have often observed that cold seems to descend from above; for when a thermometer hangs abroad in a frosty night, the intervention of a cloud shall immediately raise the mercury 10 degrees; and a clear sky shall again compel it to descend to it's former gage.

And here it may be proper to observe, on what has been said above, that though frosts advance to their utmost severity by somewhat of a regular gradation, yet thaws do not usually come on by as regular a declension of cold, but often take place immediately from intense freezing; as men in sickness often mend at once from a paroxysm.

To the great credit of *Portugal* laurels and *American* junipers, be it remembered that they remained untouched

<sup>1</sup> See Letter XLI. to Mr. *Pennant*.—[G. W.]





*Colds and coughs were general among the human species.*



amidst the general havock : hence men should learn to ornament chiefly with such trees as are able to withstand accidental severities, and not subject themselves to the vexation of a loss which may befall them once perhaps in ten years, yet may hardly be recovered through the whole course of their lives.

As it appeared afterwards, the ilexes were much injured, the cypresses were half destroyed, the arbutuses lingered on, but never recovered ; and the bays, laurustines, and laurels, were killed to the ground ; and the very wild hollies, in hot aspects, were so much affected that they cast all their leaves.

By the 14th of *January* the snow was entirely gone ; the turnips emerged not damaged at all, save in sunny places ; the wheat looked delicately, and the garden plants were well preserved ; for snow is the most kindly mantle that infant vegetation can be wrapped in : were it not for that friendly meteor no vegetable life could exist at all in northerly regions. Yet in *Sweden* the earth in *April* is not divested of snow for more than a fortnight before the face of the country is covered with flowers.

## LETTER LXI<sup>1</sup>

TO THE SAME

THERE were some circumstances attending the remarkable frost in *January*, 1776, so singular and striking, that a short detail of them may not be unacceptable.

The most certain way to be exact will be to copy the passages from my journal, which were taken from time to time, as things occurred. But it may be proper previously to remark that the first week in *January* was uncommonly wet, and drowned with vast rains from every quarter : from whence may be inferred, as there is great reason to believe is the case, that intense frosts seldom take place till the earth is perfectly glutted and chilled with water ;<sup>2</sup> and hence dry autumns are seldom followed by rigorous winters.

*January* 7th.—Snow driving all the day, which was followed by frost, sleet, and some snow, till the 12th, when a prodigious mass overwhelmed all the works of men, drifting over the tops of the gates and filling the hollow lanes.

On the 14th the writer was obliged to be much abroad ; and thinks he never before or since has encountered such rugged *Siberian* weather. Many of the narrow roads were now filled above the tops of the hedges ; through which the snow was driven into most romantic and grotesque

<sup>1</sup> In the first edition both this and the preceding letter are numbered LXI. and it has been deemed advisable to adhere to Gilbert White's numbering.—[R. B. S.]

<sup>2</sup> The autumn preceding *January* 1768 was very wet, and particularly the month of *September*, during which there fell at *Lyndon*, in the county of *Rutland*, six inches and a half of rain. And the terrible long frost in 1739–40 set in after a rainy season, and when the springs were very high.—[G. W.]

shapes, so striking to the imagination as not to be seen without wonder and pleasure. The poultry dared not to stir out of their roosting-places; for cocks and hens are so dazzled and confounded by the glare of snow that they would soon perish without assistance. The hares also lay sullenly in their seats, and would not move till compelled by hunger; being conscious, poor animals, that the drifts and heaps treacherously betray their footsteps, and prove fatal to numbers of them.

From the 14th the snow continued to increase, and began to stop the road wagons, and coaches, which could no longer keep on their regular stages; and especially on the western roads, where the fall appears to have been deeper than in the south. The company at *Bath*, that wanted to attend the *Queen's birth-day*, were strangely incommoded: many carriages of persons, who got in their way to town from *Bath* as far as *Marlborough*, after strange embarrassments, here met with a *ne plus ultra*. The ladies fretted, and offered large rewards to labourers if they would shovel them a track to *London*; but the relentless heaps of snow were too bulky to be removed; and so the 18th passed over, leaving the company in very uncomfortable circumstances at the *Castle* and other inns.<sup>1</sup>

On the 20th the sun shone out for the first time since the frost began; a circumstance that has been remarked before much in favour of vegetation. All this time the cold was not very intense, for the thermometer stood at 29, 28, 25, and thereabout; but on the 21st it descended to 20. The birds now began to be in a very pitiable and starving condition. Tamed by the season, sky-larks settled in the streets of towns, because they saw the ground was bare; rooks frequented dunghills close to houses; and crows watched horses as they passed, and greedily devoured what dropped from them; hares now came into men's gardens, and, scraping away the snow, devoured such plants as they could find.

<sup>1</sup> To Bell's edition (vol. i. p. 265, *note*) Professor Newton contributes a very interesting quotation from Mrs. John Herschel's book.—[R. B. S.]

On the 22nd the author had occasion to go to *London* through a sort of *Laplandian-scene*, very wild and grotesque indeed. But the metropolis itself exhibited a still more singular appearance than the country; for being bedded deep in snow, the pavement of the streets could not be touched by the wheels or the horses' feet, so that the carriages ran about without the least noise. Such an exemption from din and clatter was strange, but not pleasant; it seemed to convey an uncomfortable idea of desolation:—

“—— Ipsa silentia terrent.”

On the 27th much snow fell all day, and in the evening the frost became very intense. At *South Lambeth*, for the four following nights, the thermometer fell to 11, 7, 6, 6, and at *Selborne* to 7, 6, 10, and on the 31st of *January*, just before sunrise, with rime on the trees and on the tube of the glass, the quicksilver sunk exactly to zero, being 32 degrees below the freezing point; but by eleven in the morning, though in the shade, it sprang up to 16½,<sup>1</sup>—a most unusual degree of cold this for the south of *England*! During these four nights the cold was so penetrating that it occasioned ice in warm chambers and under beds; and in the day the wind was so keen that persons of robust constitutions could scarcely endure to face it. The *Thames* was at once so frozen over both above and below bridge that crowds ran about on the ice. The streets were now strangely encumbered with snow, which crumbled and trod dusty; and, turning grey, resembled bay-salt: what had fallen on the roofs was so perfectly dry that, from first to last, it lay twenty-six days on the houses in the city; a longer time than had been remembered by the oldest housekeepers living. According to all appearances we might now have expected the continuance of this rigorous

<sup>1</sup> At *Selborne* the cold was greater than at any other place that the author could hear of with certainty; though some reported at the time that at a village in *Kent* the thermometer fell two degrees below zero, viz. thirty-four degrees below the freezing point.—[G. W.]

The thermometer used at *Selborne* was graduated by *Benjamin Martin*.—[G. W.]

weather for weeks to come, since every night increased in severity ; but, behold, without any apparent cause, on the 1st of *February* a thaw took place, and some rain followed before night, making good the observation above, that frosts often go off as it were at once, without any gradual declension of cold. On the 2d of *February* the thaw persisted ; and on the 3d swarms of little insects were frisking and sporting in a court-yard at *South Lambeth*, as if they had felt no frost. Why the juices in the small bodies and smaller limbs of such minute beings are not frozen is a matter of curious inquiry.

Severe frosts seem to be partial, or to run in currents ; for at the same juncture, as the author was informed by accurate correspondents, at *Lyndon*, in the county of *Rutland*, the thermometer stood at 19 ; at *Blackburn*, in *Lancashire*, at 19 ; and at *Manchester* at 21, 20, and 18. Thus does some unknown circumstance strangely over-balance latitude, and render the cold sometimes much greater in the southern than the northern parts of this kingdom.

The consequences of this severity were, that in *Hampshire*, at the melting of the snow, the wheat looked well, and the turnips came forth little injured. The laurels and laurustines were somewhat damaged, but only in *hot aspects*. No evergreens were quite destroyed ; and not half the damage sustained that befell in *January*, 1768. Those laurels that were a little scorched on the south-sides were perfectly untouched on their north-sides. The care taken to shake the snow day by day from the branches seemed greatly to avail the author's evergreens. A neighbour's laurel-hedge, in a high situation, and facing to the north, was perfectly green and vigorous ; and the *Portugal laurels* remained unhurt.

As to the birds, the thrushes and blackbirds were mostly destroyed ; and the partridges, by the weather and poachers, were so thinned that few remained to breed the following year.

## LETTER LXII

TO THE SAME

As the frost in *December* 1784 was very extraordinary, you, I trust, will not be displeas'd to hear the particulars; and especially when I promise to say no more about the severities of winter after I have finished this letter.

The first week in *December* was very wet, with the barometer very low. On the 7th, with the barometer at 28.5°—came on a vast snow, which continued all that day and the next, and most part of the following night; so that by the morning of the 9th the works of men were quite overwhelmed, the lanes fill'd so as to be impassable, and the ground cover'd twelve or fifteen inches without any drifting. In the evening of the 9th the air began to be so very sharp that we thought it would be curious to attend to the motions of a thermometer; we therefore hung out two, one made by *Martin* and one by *Dollond*, which soon began to show us what we were to expect; for by ten o'clock they fell to 21, and at eleven to 4, when we went to bed. On the 10th, in the morning, the quicksilver of *Dollond's* glass was down to *half a degree below zero*; and that of *Martin's*, which was absurdly graduated only to four degrees *above zero*, sunk quite into the brass guard of the ball; so that when the weather became most interesting this was useless. On the 10th, at eleven at night, though the air was perfectly still, *Dollond's* glass went down to *one degree below zero*! This strange severity of the weather made me very desirous to know what degree of cold there might be in such an exalted and near situation at *Newton*. We had therefore, on the morning



of the 10th, written to Mr. —, and intreated him to hang out his thermometer, made by *Adams*, and to pay some attention to it morning and evening, expecting wonderful phenomena, in so elevated a region, at two hundred feet or more above my house. But, behold! on the 10th, at eleven at night, it was down only to 17, and the next morning at 22, when mine was at ten! We were so disturbed at this unexpected reverse of comparative local cold, that we sent one of my glasses up, thinking that of Mr. — must, somehow, be wrongly constructed. But, when the instruments came to be confronted, they went exactly together; so that for one night at least, the cold at *Newton* was 18 degrees less than at *Selborne*; and, through the whole frost, 10 or 12 degrees, and indeed, when we came to observe consequences, we could readily credit this; for all my *laurustines*, *bays*, *ilexes*, *arbutuses*, *cypresses*, and even my *Portugal laurels*,<sup>1</sup> and (which occasions more regret) my fine sloping laurel-hedge, were scorched up; while at *Newton*, the same trees have not lost a leaf!

We had steady frost on to the 25th, when the thermometer in the morning was down to 10 with us, and at *Newton* only to 21. Strong frost continued till the 31st, when some tendency to thaw was observed; and, by *January* the 3d, 1785, the thaw was confirmed, and some rain fell.

A circumstance that I must not omit, because it was new to us, is, that on *Friday, December* the 10th, being bright sun-shine, the air was full of icy *spiculæ*, floating in all direction, like atoms in a sun-beam let into a dark room. We thought them at first particles of the rime falling from my tall hedges; but were soon convinced to the contrary, by making our observations in open places where no rime could reach us. Were they watery particles of the air

<sup>1</sup> Mr. *Miller*, in his "Gardener's Dictionary," says positively that the *Portugal laurels* remained untouched in the remarkable frost of 1739-40. So that either that accurate observer was much mistaken, or else the frost of *December* 1784 was much more severe and destructive than that in the year above-mentioned.—[G. W.]

frozen as they floated ; or were they evaporations from the snow frozen as they mounted ?

We were much obliged to the thermometers for the early information they gave us ; and hurried our apples, pears, onions, potatoes, &c., into the cellar, and warm closets ; while those who had not, or neglected such warnings, lost all their store of roots and fruits, and had their very bread and cheese frozen.

I must not omit to tell you that, during these two *Siberian* days, my parlour-cat was so electric, that had a person stroked her, and been properly *insulated*, the shock might have been given to a whole circle of people.

I forgot to mention before, that, during the two severe days, two men, who were tracing hares in the snow, had their feet frozen ; and two men, who were much better employed, had their fingers so affected by the frost while they were thrashing in a barn, that a mortification followed, from which they did not recover for many weeks.

This frost killed all the furze and most of the ivy, and in many places stripped the hollies of all their leaves. It came at a very early time of the year, before old *November* ended ; and yet may be allowed from it's effects to have exceeded any since 1730-40.

## LETTER LXIII

### TO THE SAME

AS the effects of heat are seldom very remarkable in the northerly climate of *England*, where the summers are often so defective in warmth and sun-shine as not to ripen the fruits of the earth so well as might be wished, I shall be more concise in my account of the severity of a summer season, and so make a little amends for the prolix account of the degrees of cold, and the inconveniences that we suffered from some late rigorous winters.

The summers of 1781 and 1783 were unusually hot and dry; to them therefore I shall turn back in my journals, without recurring to any more distant period. In the former of these years my peach and nectarine-trees suffered so much from the heat that the rind on the bodies was scalded and came off; since which the trees have been in a decaying state. This may prove a hint to assiduous gardeners to fence and shelter their wall-trees with mats or boards, as they may easily do, because such annoyance is seldom of long continuance. During that summer also, I observed that my apples were coddled, as it were, on the trees; so that they had no quickness of flavour, and would not keep in the winter. This circumstance put me in mind of what I have heard travellers assert, that they never ate a good apple or apricot in the south of *Europe*, where the heats were so great as to render the juices vapid and insipid.

The great pests of a garden are wasps, which destroy all the finer fruits just as they are coming into perfection. In 1781 we had none; in 1783 there were myriads; which

would have devoured all the produce of my garden, had not we set the boys to take the nests, and caught thousands with hazel-twigs tipped with bird-lime : we have since employed the boys to take and destroy the large breeding wasps in the spring. Such expedients have a great effect on these marauders, and will keep them under. Though wasps do not abound but in hot summers, yet they do not prevail in every hot summer, as I have instanced in the two years above-mentioned.

In the sultry season of 1783, honey-dews were so frequent as to deface and destroy the beauties of my garden. My honeysuckles, which were one week the most sweet and lovely objects that the eye could behold, became the next the most loathsome ; being enveloped in a viscous substance, and loaded with black aphides, or smother-flies. The occasion of this clammy appearance seems to be this, that in hot weather the effluvia of flowers in fields and meadows and gardens are drawn up in the day by a brisk evaporation, and then in the night fall down again with the dews, in which they are entangled ; that the air is strongly scented, and therefore impregnated with the particles of flowers in summer weather, our senses will inform us ; and that this clammy sweet substance is of the vegetable kind we may learn from bees, to whom it is very grateful : and we may be assured that it falls in the night, because it is always first seen in warm still mornings.

On chalky and sandy soils, and in the hot villages about *London*, the thermometer has been often observed to mount as high as 83 or 84 ; but with us, in this hilly and woody district, I have hardly ever seen it exceed 80 ; nor does it often arrive at that pitch. The reason, I conclude, is that our dense clayey soil, so much shaded by trees, is not so easily heated through as those above-mentioned : and, besides, our mountains cause currents of air and breezes ; and the vast effluvia from our woodlands temper and moderate our heats.



*Fieldfare.*

*1/2 Life size*



## LETTER LXIV

TO THE SAME

THE summer of the year 1783 was an amazing and portentous one, and full of horrible phænomena; for, besides the alarming meteors and tremendous thunder-storms that affrighted and distressed the different counties of this kingdom, the peculiar *haze*, or smoky fog, that prevailed for many weeks in this island, and in every part of *Europe*, and even beyond it's limits, was a most extraordinary appearance, unlike anything known within the memory of man. By my journal I find that I had noticed this strange occurrence from *June 23* to *July 20* inclusive, during which period the wind varied to every quarter without making any alteration in the air. The sun, at noon, looked as blank as a clouded moon, and shed a rust-coloured ferruginous light on the ground, and floors of rooms; but was particularly lurid and blood-coloured at rising and setting. All the time the heat was so intense that butchers' meat could hardly be eaten on the day after it was killed; and the flies swarmed so in the lanes and hedges that they rendered the horses half frantic, and riding irksome. The country people began to look with a superstitious awe at the red, louring aspect of the sun; and indeed there was reason for the most enlightened person to be apprehensive; for, all the while, *Calabria* and part of the isle of *Sicily*, were torn and convulsed with earthquakes; and about that juncture a *volcano* sprang out of the sea on the coast of *Norway*. On this occasion *Milton's* noble simile of the sun, in his first book of *Paradise Lost*, frequently occurred to my mind; and it is indeed particularly applicable,

because, towards the end, it alludes to a superstitious kind of dread, with which the minds of men are always impressed by such strange and unusual phænomena.

“——As when the *sun*, new risen,  
Looks through the horizontal, *misty* air,  
*Shorn* of his *beams* ; or from behind the moon,  
In *dim* eclipse, *disastrous twilight sheds*  
On half the nations, and with *fear of change*  
*Perplexes* monarchs——.”

C wrought Iron Finige  
from Selborne Church.





## LETTER LXV

### TO THE SAME

WE are very seldom annoyed with thunder-storms: and it is no less remarkable than true, that those which arise in the south have hardly been known to reach this village; for, before they get over us, they take a direction to the east or to the west, or sometimes divide in two, go in part to one of those quarters, and in part to the other; as was truly the case in summer 1783, when, though the country round was continually harassed with tempests, and often from the south, yet we escaped them all, as appears by my journal of that summer.<sup>1</sup> The only way that I can at all account for this fact—for such it is—is that, on that quarter, between us and the sea, there are continual mountains, hill behind hill, such as *Nore-hill*, the *Barnet*, *Butser-hill*, and *Ports-down*, which somehow divert the storms, and give them a different direction. High promontories, and elevated grounds, have always been observed to attract clouds and disarm them of their mischievous contents, which are discharged into the trees and summits as soon as they come in contact with those turbulent meteors; while the humble vales escape, because they are so far beneath them.

But, when I say I do not remember a thunder-storm from the south, I do not mean that we never have suffered from thunder-storms at all; for on *June 5th*, 1784, the thermometer in the morning being at 64, and at noon at 70, the barometer at 29.6½°, and the wind north, I observed

<sup>1</sup> To this awful summer of 1783 Cowper also alludes in his "Task," Book II., p. 41. See Harting's ed., "Selborne," p. 312, *note*.—[R. B. S.]

a blue mist, smelling strongly of sulphur, hanging along our sloping woods, and seeming to indicate that thunder was at hand. I was called in about two in the afternoon, and so missed seeing the gathering of the clouds in the north; which they who were abroad assured me had something uncommon in it's appearance. At about a quarter after two the storm began in the parish of *Hartley*, moving slowly from north to south; and from thence it came over *Norton-farm*, and so to *Grange-farm*, both in this parish. It began with vast drops of rain, which were soon succeeded by round hail, and then by convex pieces of ice, which measured three inches in girth. Had it been as extensive as it was violent, and of any continuance (for it was very short), it must have ravaged all the neighbourhood. In the parish of *Hartley* it did some damage to one farm; but *Norton*, which lay in the center of the storm, was greatly injured; as was *Grange*, which lay next to it. It did but just reach to the middle of the village, where the hail broke my north windows, and all my garden-lights and hand-glasses, and many of my neighbours' windows. The extent of the storm was about two miles in length and one in breadth. We were just sitting down to dinner; but were soon diverted from our repast by the clattering of tiles and the jingling of glass. There fell at the same time prodigious torrents of rain on the farms above-mentioned, which occasioned a flood as violent as it was sudden; doing great damage to the meadows and fallows, by deluging the one and washing away the soil of the other. The hollow lane towards *Alton* was so torn and disordered as not to be passable till mended, rocks being removed that weighed 200 weight. Those that saw the effect which the great hail had on ponds and pools say that the dashing of the water made an extraordinary appearance, the froth and spray standing up in the air three feet above the surface. The rushing and roaring of the hail, as it approached, was truly tremendous.

Though the clouds at *South Lambeth*, near *London*, were at that juncture thin and light, and no storm was in

sight, nor within hearing, yet the air was strongly electric ; for the bells of an electric machine at that place rang repeatedly, and fierce sparks were discharged.

When I first took the present work in hand I proposed to have added an *Annus Historico-naturalis*, or The Natural History of the Twelve Months of the Year ; which would have comprised many incidents and occurrences that have not fallen in my way to be mentioned in my series of letters ; but, as Mr. *Aikin* of *Warrington* has lately published somewhat of this sort, and as the length of my correspondence has sufficiently put your patience to the test, I shall here take a respectful leave of you and natural history together,<sup>1</sup> and am,

With all due deference and regard,

Your most obliged and most humble servant,

GIL. WHITE.

SELBORNE,

June 25, 1787.

<sup>1</sup> As Professor Bell has pointed out (ed., "Selborne," i. p. 274, *note*), "his correspondence with Mr. Marsham shows that, so far from fulfilling this intention, his love of natural history continued as intense, and his observations as accurate as ever, throughout the remainder of his life."—[R. B. S.]



THE  
ANTIQUITIES OF SELBORNE



THE  
ANTIQUITIES  
OF  
SELBORNE,  
IN THE  
COUNTY OF SOUTHAMPTON.



----- JUVAT IRE -----  
DESERTOSQUE VIDERE LOCOS ----- VIRGIL.





★

THE  
ANTIQUITIES OF SELBORNE

LETTER I

IT is reasonable to suppose that in remote ages this woody and mountainous district was inhabited only by bears and wolves. Whether the *Britons* ever thought it worthy their attention, is not in our power to determine;<sup>1</sup> but we may safely conclude, from circumstances, that it was not unknown to the *Romans*. Old people remember to have heard their fathers and grandfathers say that, in dry summers and in windy weather, pieces of money were sometimes found round the verge of *Woolmer-pond*; and tradition had inspired the foresters with a notion that the bottom of that lake contained great stores of treasure. During the spring and summer of 1740 there was little rain; and the following summer also, 1741, was so uncommonly dry, that many springs and ponds failed, and this lake, in particular, whose bed became as dusty as the surrounding heaths and wastes. This favourable juncture induced some of the forest-cottagers to begin a search, which was attended with such success, that all the labourers in the neighbourhood flocked to the spot, and with spades and hoes turned up great part of that large area. Instead of pots of coins, as they expected, they found great heaps, the one lying on the other, as if shot out of a bag; many of which were in good preservation. Silver and gold these

<sup>1</sup> See Harting's edition of "Selborne," p. 405, *note*.—[R. B. S.]  
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inquirers expected to find ; but their discoveries consisted solely of many hundreds of *Roman* copper-coins, and some medallions, all of the lower empire. There was not much *virtù* stirring at that time in this neighbourhood ; however, some of the gentry and clergy around bought what pleased them best, and some dozens fell to the share of the author.

The owners at first held their commodity at an high price ; but, finding that they were not likely to meet with dealers at such a rate, they soon lowered their terms, and sold the fairest as they could. The coins that were rejected became current, and passed for farthings at the petty shops. Of those that we saw, the greater part were of *Marcus Aurelius*, and the Empress *Faustina*, his wife, the father and mother of *Commodus*. Some of *Faustina* were in high relief, and exhibited a very agreeable set of features, which probably resembled that lady, who was more celebrated for her beauty than for her virtues. The medallions in general were of a paler colour than the coins. To pretend to account for the means of their coming to this place would be spending time in conjecture. The spot, I think, could not be a *Roman* camp, because it is commanded by hills on two sides ; nor does it show the least traces of entrenchments ; nor can I suppose that it was a *Roman* town, because I have too good an opinion of the taste and judgment of those polished conquerors to imagine that they would settle on so barren and dreary a waste.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See also Lord Selborne's appendix to Bell's volume ii. (pp. 378-394), "On the Roman-British Antiquities of Selborne." See also Mr. Seirell's letter to Gilbert White published in Bell's edition (vol. ii. pp. 393, 394.—[R. B. S.]

## LETTER II

THAT *Selborne* was a place of some distinction and note in the time of the *Saxons* we can give most undoubted proofs. But, as there are few if any accounts of the villages before *Domesday*, it will be best to begin with that venerable record. "Ipse rex tenet *Selesburne*. *Eddid* regina tenuit, et nunquam geldavit. De isto manerio dono dedit rex *Radfredo* presbytero dimidiam hidam cum ecclesia. Tempore regis *Edwardi* et post, valuit duodecim solidos et sex denarios; modo octo solidos et quatuor denarios." Here we see that *Selborne* was a royal manor; and that *Editha* the queen of *Edward* the Confessor, had been lady of that manor, and was succeeded in it by the Conqueror, and that it had a church. Besides these, many circumstances concur to prove it to have been a *Saxon* village; such as the name of the place itself,<sup>1</sup> the names of many fields, and some families,<sup>2</sup> with a variety of words in husbandry and common life, still subsisting among the country people.

<sup>1</sup> *Selesburne*, *Seleburne*, *Selburn*, *Selbourn*, *Selborne*, and *Selborn*, as it has been variously spelt at different periods, is of *Saxon* derivation; for *Sel* signifies *great*, and *burn* torrens, a *brook* or *rivulet*: so that the name seems to be derived from the great perennial stream that breaks out at the upper end of the village. —*Sel* also signifies *bonus*, item *fecundus*, *fertilis*. "Sel *Ǣærj-tun*: *fecunda graminis clausura*; *fertile pascuum*: a meadow in the parish of *Godelming* is still called *Sal-gars-ton*."—*LYE'S Saxon Dictionary*, in the Supplement, by *Mr. Manning*.—[G. W.]

<sup>2</sup> Thus, the name of *Aldred* signifies *all-reverend*, and that of *Kemp* means a *soldier*. Thus we have a *church-litton*, or enclosure for dead bodies, and not a *church-yard*; there is also a *Culver-croft* near the *Grange-farm*, being the enclosure where the priory pigeon-house stood, from *culver* a pigeon. Again there are three steep pastures in this parish called the *Lithe*, from *Hlith*, *clivus*. The wicker-work that binds and fastens down a hedge on the top is called *ether*, from

What probably first drew the attention of the *Saxons* to this spot was the beautiful spring or fountain called *Well-head*,<sup>1</sup> which induced them to build by the banks of that perennial current; for ancient settlers loved to reside by brooks and rivulets, where they could dip for their water without the trouble and expense of digging wells and of drawing.

It remains still unsettled among the antiquaries at what time tracts of land were first appropriated to the chase alone for the amusement of the sovereign. Whether our *Saxon* monarchs had any royal forests, does not, I believe, appear on record; but the *Constitutiones de Foresta*, of *Canute*, the Dane, are come down to us. We shall not, therefore, pretend to say whether *Woolmer-forest* existed as a royal domain before the conquest. If it did not, we may suppose it was laid out by some of our earliest *Norman* kings, who were exceedingly attached to the pleasures of the chase, and resided much at *Winchester*, which lies at a moderate distance from this district. The *Plantagenet* princes seem to have been pleased with *Woolmer*, for tradition says that King *John* resided just upon the verge, at *Ward-le-ham*, on a regular and remarkable mount, still called *King John's Hill*, and *Lodge hill*; and *Edward III.* had a chapel in his park, or enclosure, at *Kingsley*.<sup>2</sup>

*ether*, an hedge. When the good women call their hogs they cry *sic, sic*,\* not knowing that *sic* is *Saxon*, or rather *Celtic*, for a hog. Coppice or brushwood our countrymen call *rise*, from *hris*, frondes; and talk of a load of *rise*. Within the author's memory the *Saxon* plurals, *housen* and *peason*, were in common use. But it would be endless to instance in every circumstance: he that wishes for more specimens must frequent a farmer's kitchen. I have therefore selected some words to show how familiar the *Saxon* dialect was to this district, since in more than seven hundred years it is far from being obliterated.—[G. W.]

<sup>1</sup> *Well-head* signifies spring-head, and not a deep pit from whence we draw water. For particulars about which see Letter I. to Mr. *Pennant*.—[G. W.]

<sup>2</sup> The parish of *Kingsley* lies between, and divides *Woolmer-forest* from *Ayles Holt-forest*. See Letter IX. to Mr. *Pennant*.—[G. W.]

\* *Σικα*, porcus, apud *Lacones*; un *Porceau* chez les *Lacédémoniens*: ce mot a sans doute esté pris des *Celtes*, qui disoient *sic*, pour marquer un porceau. Encore aujourd'hui quand les Bretons chassent ces animaux, ils ne disent autrement, que *sic, sic*.—*Antiquité de la Nation et de la Langue des Celtes*, par *Pezron*.—[G. W.]

*Humphrey*, Duke of *Gloucester*, and *Richard*, Duke of *York*, say my evidences, were both, in their turns, *wardens* of *Woolmer-forest*, which seems to have served for an appointment for the younger princes of the royal family, as it may again.

I have intentionally mentioned *Edward* III. and the dukes *Humphrey* and *Richard*, before king *Edward* II., because I have reserved, for the entertainment of my readers, a pleasant anecdote respecting that prince, with which I shall close this letter.

As *Edward* II. was hunting on *Woolmer-forest*, *Morris Ken*, of the kitchen, fell from his horse several times, at which accidents the king laughed immoderately; and, when the chase was over, ordered him twenty shillings,<sup>1</sup> an enormous sum for those days! Proper allowances ought to be made for the youth of this monarch, whose spirits also, we may suppose, were much exhilarated by the sport of the day; but, at the same time, it is reasonable to remark that, whatever might be the occasions of *Ken's* first fall, the subsequent ones seem to have been designed. The scullion appears to have been an artful fellow, and to have seen the king's foible, which furnishes an early specimen of that his easy softness and facility of temper, of which the infamous *Gaveston* took such advantages, as brought innumerable calamities on the nation, and involved the prince at last in misfortunes and sufferings too deplorable to be mentioned, without horror and amazement.

<sup>1</sup> "Item, paid at the lodge at *Woolmer*, when the king was stag-hunting there, to *Morris Ken*, of the kitchen, because he rode before the king and often fell from his horse, at which the king laughed exceedingly—a gift by command, of twenty shillings."—A *MS.* in possession of *Thomas Astle*, Esq., containing the private expenses of *Edward* II.—[G. W.]

### LETTER III

FROM the silence of *Domesday* respecting churches, it has been supposed that few villages had any at the time when that record was taken; but *Selborne*, we see, enjoyed the benefit of one: hence, we may conclude, that this place was in no abject state even at that very distant period. How many fabrics have succeeded each other since the days of *Radfredrus* the *presbyter*, we cannot pretend to say; our business leads us to a description of the present edifice, in which we shall be circumstantial.

Our church, which was dedicated to the *Virgin Mary*, consists of three ailes, and measures fifty-four feet in length, by forty-seven in breadth, being almost as broad as it is long. The present building has no pretensions to antiquity, and is, as I suppose, of no earlier date than the beginning of the reign of *Henry VII.* It is perfectly plain and unadorned, without painted glass, carved work, sculpture, or tracery. But when I say it has no claim to antiquity, I would mean to be understood the fabric in general; for the pillars, which support the roof, are undoubtedly old, being of that low, squat, thick order, usually called *Saxon*. These, I should imagine, upheld the roof of a former church which, falling into decay, was rebuilt on those massy props, because their strength had preserved them from the injuries of time.<sup>1</sup> Upon these rest blunt *gothic* arches, such, as prevailed in the reign above mentioned, and by

<sup>1</sup> In the same manner, to compare great things with small, did *Wykeham* when he new-built the cathedral at *Winchester*, from the tower westward, apply to his purpose the old piers or pillars of Bishop *Walkelin's* church, by blending *Saxon* and *Gothic* architecture together.—See *Lowth's* "Life of *Wykeham*."—[G. W.]

which, as a criterion, we would prove the date of the building.

At the bottom of the south aisle, between the west and south doors, stands the font, which is deep and capacious, and consists of three massy round stones, piled one on another, without the least ornament or sculpture: the cavity at the top is lined with lead, and has a pipe at the bottom to convey off the water after the sacred ceremony is performed.

The east end of the south aisle is called the *South Chancel*, and, till within these thirty years, was divided off by old carved *gothic* framework of timber, having been a private chantry. In this opinion we are more confirmed by observing two *gothic* niches within the space, the one in the east wall and the other in the south, near which there probably stood images and altars.

In the middle aisle there is nothing remarkable; but I remember when it's beams were hung with garlands in honour of young women of the parish, reputed to have died virgins; and recollect to have seen the clerk's wife cutting, in white paper, the resemblances of gloves, and ribbons to be twisted in knots and roses, to decorate these memorials of chastity. In the church of *Faringdon*, which is the next parish, many garlands of this sort still remain.

The north aisle is narrow and low, with a sloping ceiling, reaching within eight or nine feet of the floor. It had originally a flat roof, covered with lead, till within a century past, a churchwarden stripping off the lead, in order, as he said, to have it mended, sold it to a plumber, and ran away with the money. This aisle has no door, for an obvious reason; because the north-side of the church-yard, being surrounded by the vicarage-garden, affords no path to that side of the church. Nothing can be more irregular than the pews of this church, which are of all dimensions and heights, being patched up according to the fancy of the owners: but whoever nicely examines them will find that the middle aisle had, on each side, a regular row of benches of solid oak, all alike, with a low back-board to

each. These we should not hesitate to say are coeval with the present church : and especially as it is to be observed that, at their ends, they are ornamented with carved, blunt *gothic* niches, exactly correspondent to the arches of the church, and to a niche in the south wall. The fourth aisle also has a row of these benches ; but some are decayed through age, and the rest much disguised by modern alterations.

At the upper end of this aisle, and running out to the north, stands a transept, known by the name of the *North Chancel*, measuring twenty-one feet from south to north, and nineteen feet from east to west : this was intended, no doubt, as a private chantry : and was also, till of late, divided off by a *gothic* framework of timber. In its north wall, under a very blunt *gothic* arch, lies perhaps the founder of this edifice, which, from the shape of its arch, may be deemed no older than the latter end of the reign of *Henry VII.* The tomb was examined some years ago, but contained nothing except the skull and thigh-bones of a large tall man, and the bones of a youth or woman, lying in a very irregular manner, without any escutcheon or other token to ascertain the names or rank of the deceased. The grave was very shallow, and lined with stone at the bottom and on the sides.

From the east wall project four stone brackets, which I conclude supported images and crucifixes. In the great thick pilaster, jutting out between this transept and the chancel, there is a very sharp *gothic* niche, of older date than the present chantry or church. But the chief pieces of antiquity are two narrow stone coffin-lids, which compose part of the floor, and lie from west to east, with the very narrow ends eastward : these belong to remote times ; and, if originally placed here, which I doubt, must have been part of the pavement of an older transept. At present there are no coffins under them, whence I conclude they have been removed to this place from some part of a former church. One of these lids is so eaten by time, that no sculpture can be discovered upon it ; or, perhaps, it may



be the wrong side uppermost; but on the other, which seems to be of stone of a closer and harder texture, is to be discerned a *discus*, with a cross on it, at the end of a staff or rod, the well-known symbol of a *Knight-Templar*.<sup>1</sup>

This order was distinguished by a red cross on the left shoulder of their cloak, and by this attribute in their hand. Now, if these stones belonged to *Knights-Templars*, they must have lain here many centuries; for this order came into *England* early in the reign of King *Stephen* in 1113; and was dissolved in the time of *Edward II.* in 1312, having subsisted only one hundred and ninety-nine years. Why I should suppose that *Knights-Templars* were occasionally buried at this church, will appear in some future letter, when we come to treat more particularly concerning the property they possessed here, and the intercourse that subsisted between them and the *priors* of *Selborne*.

We must now proceed to the chancel, properly so called, which seems to be coeval with the church, and is in the same plain unadorned style, though neatly kept. This room measures thirty-one feet in length, and sixteen feet and a half in breadth, and is wainscoted all round, as high as to the bottom of the windows. The space for the communion table is raised two steps above the rest of the floor, and railed in with oaken balusters. Here I shall say somewhat of the windows of the chancel in particular, and of the whole fabric in general. They are mostly of that simple and unadorned sort called *Lancet*, some single, some double, and some in triplets. At the east end of the chancel are two of a moderate size, near each other; and in the north wall two very distant small ones, unequal in length and height: and in the south wall are two, one on each side of the chancel door, that are broad and squat, and of a different order. At the east end of the south aisle of the church there is a large lancet-window in a triplet; and two very small, narrow, single ones in the south wall, and a broad, squat window beside, and a double lancet one

<sup>1</sup> See *Dugdale Monasticon Anglicanum*, vol. ii., where there is a fine engraving of a *Knight-Templar*, by *Hollar*.—[G. W.]

in the west end; so that the appearance is very irregular. In the north aisle are two windows, made shorter when the roof was sloped; and in the north transept a large triple window, shortened at the time of a repair in 1721; when over it was opened a round one of considerable size, which affords an agreeable light, and renders that chantry the most cheerful part of the edifice.

The church and chancels have all covered roofs, ceiled about the year 1683; before which they were open to the tiles and shingles, showing the naked rafters, and threatening the congregation with the fall of a spar, or a blow from a piece of loose mortar.

On the north wall of the chancel is fixed a large oval white marble monument, with the following inscription; and at the foot<sup>1</sup> of the wall, over the deceased, and inscribed with his name, age, arms, and time of death, lies a large slab of black marble:

Prope hunc parietem sepelitur  
 GILBERTUS WHITE, SAMSONIS WHITE, de  
 Oxon. militis filius tertius, Collegii Magdale-  
 -nensis ibidem alumnus, & socius. Tandem faven-  
 -te collegio ad hanc ecclesiam promotus; ubi primæ-  
 -vâ morum simplicitate, et diffusâ erga omnes bene-  
 -volentia feliciter consenuit.  
 Pastor fidelis, comis, affabilis,  
 Maritus, et pater amantissimus.  
 A conjuge invicem, et liberis, atque  
 A parochianis impensè dilectus.  
 Pauperibus ita beneficus  
 ut decimam partem census  
 moribundus  
 piis usibus consecravit.  
 Meritis demum juxta et annis plenus  
 ex hac vitâ migravit Feb. 13<sup>o</sup>.  
 anno salutis 1727<sup>g</sup>  
 Ætatis suæ 77.  
 Hoc posuit Rebecca  
 Conjux illius mæstissima,  
 mox secutura.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> This slab is now in the middle of the chancel.—[R. B. S.]

<sup>2</sup> She lived to the age of ninety-one, and died in January 1755, twenty-eight years after her husband.—[R. B. S.]

On the same wall is newly fixed a small square table-  
monument of white marble, inscribed in the following  
manner :

Sacred to the memory  
of the Rev<sup>d</sup>. ANDREW ETTY, B.D.<sup>1</sup>  
23 Years Vicar of this parish :  
In whose character  
The conjugal, the parental, and the sacerdotal virtues  
were so happily combined  
as to deserve the imitation of mankind.  
And if in any particular he followed more invariably  
the steps of his blessed Master,  
It was in his humility.  
His parishioners,  
especially the sick and necessitous,  
as long as any traces of his memory shall remain,  
must lament his death.  
To perpetuate such an example, this stone is erected ;  
as while living he was a preacher of righteousness,  
so, by it, he being dead yet speaketh.  
He died April 8<sup>th</sup>, 1784, aged 66 years.

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Etty was a great friend of Gilbert White's, and many entries in the "Garden Kalendar" and other references in his letters testify to the author's esteem for the good Vicar. See Letter to Mrs. Barker (Oct. 19, 1784) in Bell's edition, vol. ii. p. 152), where Gilbert writes:—"I miss poor Mr. Etty very much; he was a blameless man without guile."—[R. B. S.]

## LETTER IV

WE have now taken leave of the inside of the church, and shall pass by a door at the west end of the middle aisle into the belfry. This room is part of a handsome square embattled tower of forty-five feet in height, and of much more modern date than the church; but old enough to have needed a thorough repair in 1781, when it was neatly stuccoed at a considerable expense, by a set of workmen who were employed on it for the greatest part of the summer. The old bells, three in number, loud and out of tune, were taken down in 1735, and cast into four; to which *Sir Simeon Stuart*, the grandfather of the present baronet, added a fifth at his own expense: and, bestowing it in the name of his favourite daughter, Mrs. *Mary Stuart*, caused it to be cast with the following motto round it:

“Clara puella dedit, dixitque mihi esto Maria :  
Illius et laudes nomen ad astra sono.”

The day of the arrival of this tuneable peal was observed as an high festival by the village, and rendered more joyous, by an order from the donor, that the treble bell should be fixed bottom upward in the ground and filled with punch, of which all present were permitted to partake.

The porch of the church, to the south, is modern, and would not be worthy attention did it not shelter a fine sharp *gothic* door-way. This is undoubtedly much older than the present fabric; and, being found in good preservation, was worked into the wall, and is the grand entrance into the church: nor are the folding-doors to be passed over in





silence ; since, from their thick and clumsy structure, and the rude flourished-work of their hinges, they may possibly be as ancient as the door-way itself.

The whole roof of the south aisle, and the south-side of the roof of the middle aisle, is covered with oaken shingles instead of tiles, on account of their lightness, which favours the ancient and crazy timber-frame. And, indeed, the consideration of accidents by fire excepted, this sort of roofing is much more eligible than tiles. For shingles well seasoned, and cleft from quartered timber, never warp, nor let in drifting snow ; nor do they shiver with frost ; nor are they liable to be blown off, like tiles ; but, when well nailed down, last for a long period, as experience has shown us in this place, where those that face to the north are known to have endured, untouched, by undoubted tradition, for more than a century.

Considering the size of the church, and the extent of the parish, the church-yard is very scanty ; and especially as all wish to be buried on the south-side, which is become such a mass of mortality that no person can be there interred without disturbing or displacing the bones of his ancestors. There is reason to suppose that it once was larger, and extended to what is now the vicarage court and garden ; because many human bones have been dug up in those parts several yards without the present limits. At the east end are a few graves ; yet none till very lately on the northside ; but, as two or three families of best repute have begun to bury in that quarter, prejudice may wear out by degrees, and their example be followed by the rest of the neighbourhood.

In speaking of the church, I have all along talked of the east and west-end, as if the chancel stood exactly true to those points of the compass ; but this is by no means the case, for the fabric bears so much to the north of the east that the four corners of the tower, and not the four sides, stand to the four cardinal points. The best method of accounting for this deviation seems to be, that the workmen, who probably were employed in the longest

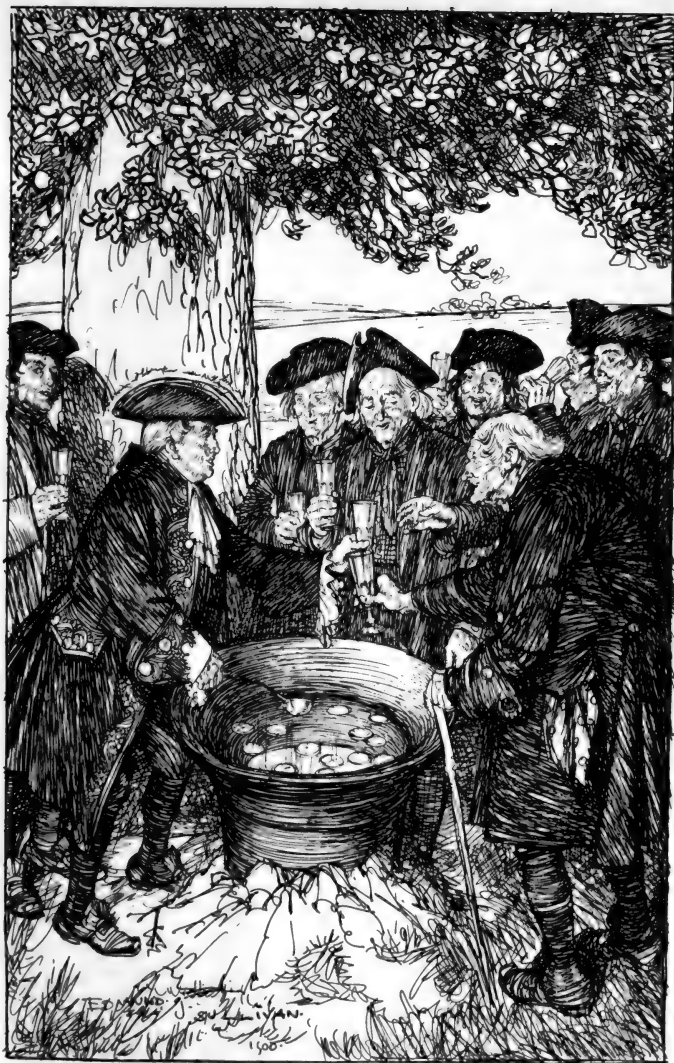
days, endeavoured to set the chancels to the rising of the sun.

Close by the church, at the west-end, stands the vicarage-house; an old, but roomy and convenient edifice. It faces very agreeably to the morning sun, and is divided from the village by a neat and cheerful court. According to the manner of old times, the hall was open to the roof; and so continued, probably, till the vicars became family-men, and began to want more conveniences; when they flung a floor across, and, by partitions, divided the space into chambers. In this hall we remember a date, some time in the reign of *Elizabeth*; it was over the door that leads to the stairs.

Behind the house is a garden of an irregular shape, but well laid out; whose terrace commands so romantic and picturesque a prospect, that the first master in landscape might contemplate it with pleasure, and deem it an object well worthy of his pencil.







*The treble bell fixed bottom upwards in the ground filled with punch, of which all present were expected to partake.*



## LETTER V

IN the church-yard of this village is a *yew-tree*, whose aspect bespeaks it to be of a great age : it seems to have seen several centuries, and is probably coeval with the church, and therefore may be deemed an antiquity : the body is squat, short, and thick, and measures twenty-three feet in the girth, supporting an head of suitable extent to it's bulk. This is a male tree, which in the spring sheds clouds of dust and fills the atmosphere around with it's farina.

As far as we have been able to observe, the males of this species become much larger than the females ; and it has so fallen out that most of the yew-trees in the church-yards of this neighbourhood are males : but this must have been matter of mere accident, since men, when they first planted yews, little dreamed that there were sexes in trees.

In a yard, in the midst of the street, till very lately grew a middle-sized female tree of the same species, which commonly bore great crops of berries. By the high winds usually prevailing about the autumnal equinox, these berries, then ripe, were blown down into the road, where the hogs ate them. And it was very remarkable, that, though barrow-hogs and young sows found no inconvenience from this food, yet milch-sows often died after such a repast : a circumstance that can be accounted for only by supposing that the latter, being much exhausted and hungry, devoured a larger quantity.

While mention is making of the bad effects of yew-berries, it may be proper to remind the unwary that the twigs and leaves of yew, though eaten in a very small quantity, are certain death to horses and cows, and that in

a few minutes. An horse tied to a yew-hedge, or to a faggot-stack of dead yew, shall be found dead before the owner can be aware that any danger is at hand : and the writer has been several times a sorrowful witness to losses of this kind among his friends ; and in the island of *Ely* had once the mortification to see nine young steers or bullocks of his own all lying dead in a heap from browsing a little on an hedge of yew in an old garden, into which they had broken in snowy weather. Even the clippings of a yew-hedge have destroyed a whole dairy of cows when thrown inadvertently into a yard. And yet sheep and turkies, and, as park-keepers say, deer, will crop these trees with impunity.

Some intelligent persons assert that the branches of yew, while *green*, are not noxious ; and that they will kill only when *dead* and *withered*, by lacerating the stomach ; but to this assertion we cannot by any means assent, because among the number of cattle that we have known fall victims to this deadly food, not one has been found, when it was opened, but had a lump of *green* yew in it's paunch. True it is, that yew-trees stand for twenty years or more in a field, and no bad consequences ensue : but at some time or other cattle, either from wantonness when full, or from hunger when empty (from both which circumstances we have seen them perish), will be meddling, to their certain destruction ; the yew seems to be a very improper tree for a pasture-field.

Antiquaries seem much at a loss to determine at what period this tree first obtained a place in church-yards. A statute passed A.D. 1307 and 35 *Edward* I. the title of which is "Ne rector arbores in cemeterio prosternat." Now if it is recollected that we seldom see any other very large or ancient tree in a church-yard but yews, this statute must have principally related to this species of tree ; and consequently their being planted in church-yards is of much more ancient date than the year 1307.

As to the use of these trees, possibly the more respectable parishioners were buried under their shade before the



*Conium maculatum*, New



improper custom was introduced of burying within the body of the church, where the living are to assemble. *Deborah, Rebekah's nurse*,<sup>1</sup> was buried under an oak; the most honourable place of interment probably next to the cave of *Machpelah*,<sup>2</sup> which seems to have been appropriated to the remains of the patriarchal family alone.

The farther use of yew-trees might be as a screen to churches, by their thick foliage, from the violence of winds; perhaps also for the purpose of archery, the best long bows being made of that material: and we do not hear that they are planted in the church-yards of other parts of *Europe*, where long bows were not so much in use. They might also be placed as a shelter to the congregation assembling before the church-doors were opened, and as an emblem of mortality by their funereal appearance. In the south of *England* every church-yard almost has it's tree, and some two; but in the north, we understand, few are to be found.

The idea of R. C. that the *yew-tree* afforded it's branches instead of palms for the processions on *Palm-Sunday*, is a good one, and deserves attention. See *Gent. Mag.* vol. 1. p. 128.

<sup>1</sup> Gen. xxxv. 8.—[G. W.]

<sup>2</sup> Gen. xxiii. 9.—[G. W.]

## LETTER VI

THE living of *Selborne* was a very small vicarage ; but being in the patronage of *Magdalen-college*, in the university of *Oxford*, that society endowed it with the great tithes of *Selborne*, more than a century ago : and since the year 1758 again with the great tithes of *Oakhanger*, called *Bene's parsonage* : so that, together, it is become a respectable piece of preferment, to which one of the fellows is always presented. The vicar holds the great tithes, by lease, under the college. The great disadvantage of this living is, that it has not one foot of glebe near home.<sup>1</sup>

### IT'S PAYMENTS ARE—

	£	s.	d.
King's books . . . . .	8	2	1
Yearly tenths . . . . .	0	16	2½
Yearly procurations for <i>Blackmore</i> and <i>Oakhanger Chap.</i> }			
with acquit : . . . . .	0	1	7
<i>Selborne</i> procurations and acquit : . . . . .	0	9	0

I am unable to give a complete list of the vicars of this parish till towards the end of the reign of Queen *Elizabeth* ; from which period the registers furnish a regular series.

In *Domesday* we find thus—" De isto manerio dono dedit Rex *Radfredo* presbytero dimidiam hidam cum ecclesia." So that before *Domesday*, which was compiled between the years 1081 and 1086, here was an officiating minister at this place.

<sup>1</sup> At *Bene's*, or *Bin's*, *parsonage* there is a house and stout barn, and seven acres of glebe ; *Bene's* *parsonage* is three miles from the church.—[G. W.]



After this, among my documents, I find occasional mention of a vicar here and there ; the first is—

*Roger*, instituted in 1254.

In 1410 *John Lynne* was vicar of *Selborne*.

In 1411 *Hugo Tybbe* was vicar.

The presentations to the vicarage of *Selborne*, generally ran in the name of the prior and the convent ; but *Tybbe* was presented by Prior *John Wynchestre* only.

June 29, 1528, *William Fisher*, vicar of *Selborne*, resigned to *Miles Peyrson*.

1594, *William White* appears to have been vicar to this time. Of this person there is nothing remarkable, but that he hath made a regular entry twice in the register of *Selborne* of the funeral of *Thomas Cowper*, bishop of *Winchester*, as if he had been buried at *Selborne* ; yet this learned prelate, who died 1594, was buried at *Winchester*, in the cathedral, near the episcopal throne.<sup>1</sup>

1595, *Richard Boughton*, vicar.

1596, *William Inkforbye*, vicar.

May 1606, *Thomas Phippes*, vicar.

June 1631, *Ralph Austine*, vicar.

July 1632, *John Longworth*. This unfortunate gentleman, living in the time of *Cromwell's* usurpation, was deprived of his preferment for many years, probably because he would not take the league and covenant : for I observe that his father-in-law, the Reverend *Jethro Beal*, rector of *Faringdon*, which is the next parish, enjoyed his benefice during the whole of that unhappy period. *Longworth*, after he was dispossessed, retired to a little tenement about one hundred and fifty yards from the church, where he earned a small pittance by the practice of physic. During those dismal times it was not uncommon for the deposed clergy to take up a medical character ; as was the case in particular, I know, with the Reverend Mr. *Yalden*, rector of *Compton*, near *Guildford*, in the county of *Surrey*. Vicar *Longworth* used frequently to mention to his sons, who told

<sup>1</sup> See *Godwin de præsulibus*, Folio *Cant.* 1743, p. 239.—[G. W.]

it to my relations, that, the *Sunday* after his deprivation, his puritanical successor stepped into the pulpit with no small petulance and exultation: and began his sermon from *Psalm* xx. 8, "*They are brought down and fallen; but we are risen and stand upright.*"<sup>1</sup> This person lived to be restored in 1660, and continued vicar for eighteen years; but was so impoverished by his misfortunes, that he left the vicarage-house and premises in a very abject and dilapidated state.

*July* 1678. *Richard Byfield*, who left eighty pounds by will, the interest to be applied to apprentice out poor children: but this money, lent on private security, was in danger of being lost, and the bequest remained in an unsettled state for near twenty years, till 1700; so that little or no advantage was derived from it. About the year 1759 it was again in the utmost danger by the failure of a borrower; but, by prudent management, has since been raised to one hundred pounds stock in the three per cents. reduced. The trustees are the vicar and the renters or owners of *Temple, Priory, Grange, Blackmore, and Oakhanger-house*, for the time being. This gentleman seemed inclined to have put the vicarial premises in a comfortable state; and began by building a solid stone wall round the front court, and another in the lower yard, between that and the neighbouring garden; but was interrupted by death from fulfilling his laudable intentions.

*April* 1680, *Barnabas Long* became vicar.

*June* 1681. This living was now in such low estimation in *Magdalen-college* that it descended to a junior fellow, *Gilbert White*, M.A., who was instituted to it in the thirty-first year of his age. At his first coming he ceiled the chancel, and also floored and wainscoted the parlour and hall, which before were paved with stone and had naked walls; he enlarged the kitchen and brewhouse, and dug a

<sup>1</sup> According to Professor Bell (ed. "*Selborne*," i. p. 296), Mr. Longworth's successor was John Ferrol, M.A., Fellow of Magdalen College, Oxford. He seems from Calaumy's account of his life, which Bell quotes, to have been a good man, and one who had the courage of his opinions.—[R. B. S.]

cellar and well : he also built a large new barn in the lower yard, removed the hovels in the front court, which he laid out in walks and borders ; and entirely planned the back garden, before a rude field with a stone-pit in the midst of it. By his will he gave and bequeathed "the sum of forty pounds to be laid out in the most necessary repairs of the church ; that is in strengthening and securing such parts as seem decaying and dangerous." With this sum two large buttresses were erected to support the east end of the south wall of the church ; and the gable-end wall of the west-end of the south aisle was new built from the ground.<sup>1</sup>

By his will also he gave "One hundred pounds to be laid out on lands ; the yearly rents whereof shall be employed in teaching the poor children of *Selbourn* parish to read and write, and say their prayers and catechism, and to sew and knit :—and be under the direction of his executrix as long as she lives ; and, after her, under the direction of such of his children and their issue, as shall live in or within five miles of the said parish : and on failure of any such, then under the direction of the vicar of *Selbourn* for the time being ; but still to the uses above-named." With this sum was purchased of *Thomas Turville* of *Hawkeley*, in the county of *Southampton*, yeoman, and *Hannah* his wife, two closes of freehold land, commonly called *Collier's*, containing, by estimation, eleven acres lying in *Hawkeley* aforesaid.<sup>2</sup> These closes are let at this time, 1785, on lease, at the rate of three pounds by the year.

This vicar also gave by will two hundred pounds towards the repairs of the highways<sup>3</sup> in the parish of *Selborne*. That

<sup>1</sup> See Mr. Railton's sketch of the tablet in this wall, inserted in memory of the vicar, by whose legacy it was restored. "G. W., 1730."—[R. B. S.]

<sup>2</sup> This was the scene of the great landslip described in Letter XLV. to Barrington [*antea*, p. 147], and also in John White's letter of April 6, 1774, to his cousin, Samuel Barker, reproduced in Bell's edition (vol. ii. p. 103):—"During the vast rains, a large fragment of the Hanger, late my grandfather's, &c."—[R. B. S.]

<sup>3</sup> "Such legacies were very common in former times, before any effectual laws were made for the repairs of highways."—Sir John Cullum's *Hawsted*, p. 15.—[G. W.]

sum was carefully and judiciously laid out in the summer of the year 1730, by his son *John White*,<sup>1</sup> who made a solid and firm causey from *Rood-green*, all down *Honey-lane* to a farm called *Oak-woods*, where the sandy soil begins. This miry and gulfy lane was chosen as worthy of repair, because it leads to the forest, and thence through the *Holt* to the town of *Farnham* in *Surrey*, the only market in those days for men who had wheat to sell in this neighbourhood. This causey was so deeply bedded with stone, so properly raised above the level of the soil, and so well drained, that it has, in some degree, withstood fifty-four years of neglect and abuse; and might, with moderate attention, be rendered a solid and comfortable road. The space from *Rood-green* to *Oak-woods* measures about three quarters of a mile.

In 1727, *William Henry Cane*, B.D., became vicar, and, among several alterations and repairs, new-built the back front of the vicarage-house.

On *February 1*, 1740, *Duncombe Bristowe*, D.D., was instituted to this living. What benefactions this vicar bestowed on the parish will be best explained by the following passages from his will:—"Item, I hereby give and bequeath to the minister and church-wardens of the parish of *Selbourn*, in the county of *Southampton*, a mahogany table, which I have ordered to be made for the celebration of the Holy Communion; and also the sum of thirty pounds, in trust, to be applied in manner following; that is, ten pounds towards the charge of erecting a gallery at the west end of the church; and ten pounds to be laid out for cloathing and such like necessaries among the poor (and especially among the ancient and infirm) of the said parish: and the remaining ten pounds to be distributed in bread, at twenty shillings a week, at the discretion of *John White*, esq., or any of his family, who shall be resident in the said parish."

On *November 12*, 1758, *Andrew Etty*, B.D., became vicar. Among many useful repairs he new-roofed the

<sup>1</sup> Gilbert's father.—[R. B. S.]

body of the vicarage-house; and wainscoted up to the bottom of the windows, the whole of the chancel; to the neatness and decency of which he always paid the most exact attention.

On *September 25, 1784, Christopher Taylor, B.D.*, was inducted into the vicarage of *Selborne*.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Gilbert White was buried by this Vicar, and a copy of the certificate in the Register is reproduced in Frank Buckland's edition (vol. ii. p. 165).—[R. B. S.]

The following have been Vicars of Selborne since White's time:—

Aug. 10, 1800. J. Covey, B.D.

1808. William Alcock, D.D.

1813. William Cobbold, B.D.

1841. Frederic James Parsons, B.D. He rebuilt the vicarage, and had the new road made to Alton.

1875. Edward Russel Bernard, M.A. [now Canon of Salisbury]. He restored the church.

1889. Walter Octavius Peile, M.A., formerly demy of Magdalen College.

1894. Arthur Kaye, M.A., formerly commoner of Magdalen College.

I am indebted to the Rev. Arthur Kaye, the present Vicar of Selborne, for the above details.—[R. B. S.]



## LETTER VII

I SHALL now proceed to the *Priory*, which is undoubtedly the most interesting part of our history.

The *Priory* of *Selborne* was founded by *Peter de la Roche*, or *de Rupibus*,<sup>1</sup> one of those accomplished foreigners that resorted to the court of King *John*, where they were usually caressed, and met with a more favourable reception than ought, in prudence, to have been shown by any monarch to strangers. This adventurer was a *Poictevin* by birth, had been bred to arms in his youth, and distinguished by knighthood. Historians all agree not to speak very favourably of this remarkable man; they allow that he was possessed of courage and fine abilities, but then they charge him with arbitrary principles, and violent conduct. By his insinuating manners he soon rose high in the favour of *John*; and in 1205, early in the reign of that prince, was appointed Bishop of *Winchester*. In 1214, he became lord chief justiciary of *England*, the first magistrate in the state, and a kind of viceroy, on whom depended all the civil affairs in the kingdom. After the death of *John*, and during the minority of his son *Henry*, this prelate took upon him the entire management of the realm, and was soon appointed protector of the king and kingdom.

The barons saw with indignation a stranger possessed of all the power and influence, to part of which they thought they had a claim; they therefore entered into an association against him, and determined to wrest some of that authority from him which he had so unreasonably usurped. The bishop discerned the storm at a distance;

<sup>1</sup> See *Godwin de Præsulibus Anglia*. Folio. London, 1743, p. 217.—[G. W.]

and, prudently resolving to give way to that torrent of envy which he knew not how to withstand, withdrew quietly to the Holy Land, where he resided some time.

At this juncture a very small part of *Palestine* remained in the hands of the Christians ; they had been by *Saladine* dispossessed of *Jerusalem*, and all the internal parts, near forty years before ; and with difficulty maintained some maritime towns and garrisons ; yet the busy and enterprising spirit of *de Rupibus* could not be at rest ; he distinguished himself by the splendour and magnificence of his expenses, and amused his mind by strengthening fortresses and castles, and by removing and endowing of churches. Before his expedition to the east he had signalised himself as the founder of convents, and as a benefactor to hospitals and monasteries.

In the year 1231 he returned again to *England* ; and the very next year, in 1232, began to build and endow the PRIORY of SELBORNE. As this great work followed so close upon his return, it is not improbable that it was the result of a vow made during his voyage ; and especially as it was dedicated to the *Virgin Mary*. Why the bishop made choice of *Selborne* for the scene of his munificence can never be determined now : it can only be said that the parish was in his diocese, and lay almost midway between *Winchester* and *Farnham*, or *South Waltham* and *Farnham* ; from either of which places he could without much trouble overlook his workmen, and observe what progress they made ; and that the situation was retired, with a stream running by it, and sequestered from the world, amidst woods and meadows, and so far proper for the site of a religious house.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The institution at *Selborne* was a priory of *Black-Canons* of the order of *St. Augustine*, called also *Canons-Regular*. *Regular-Canons* were such as lived in a conventual manner, under one roof, had a common refectory and dormitory, and were bound by vows to observe the rules and statutes of their order : in fine, they were a kind of religious, whose discipline was less rigid than the *monks*. The chief rule of these *canons* was that of *St. Augustine*, who was constituted bishop of *Hippo*, A.D. 395 : but they were not brought into *England* till after the conquest : and seem not to have obtained the appellation of *Augustine canons* till some years after. Their habit was a long black *cassock*, with a white *rocket* over it : and over

The first person with whom the founder treated about the purchase of land was *Jacobus de Achangre*, or *Ochangre*, a gentleman of property who resided at that hamlet; and, as appears, at the house now called *Oakhanger-house*. With him he agreed for a croft, or little close of land, known by the name of *La liega*, or *La Lyge*, which was to be the immediate site of the *Priory*.

*De Achangre* also accommodated the bishop at the same instant with three more adjoining crofts, which for a time was all the footing that this institution obtained in the parish. The seller in the conveyance says, "Warantizabimus, defendemus, et æquietabimus, *contra omnes gentes*:" *viz.*, "We will warrant the thing sold against all claims from any quarter." In modern conveyancing this would be termed a covenant for *further assurance*. Afterwards is added—"pro hac autem donacione, &c., dedit mihi pred. Episcopus sexdecem marcas argenti in Gersumam;" *i.e.*, "the bishop gave me sixteen silver marks as a consideration for the thing purchased."

As the grant from *Jac. de Achangre* was without date,<sup>1</sup> and the next is circumstanced in the same manner, we cannot say exactly what interval there was between the two purchases; but we find that *Jacobus de Nortun*, a neighbouring gentleman, also soon sold to the bishop of *Winchester* some adjoining grounds, through which our stream passes, that the priory might be accommodated with a *mill*, which was a common necessary appendage to every manor: he also allowed access to these lands by a road for carts and waggons.—"*Jacobus de Nortun* concedit *Petro Winton* episcopo totum cursum aque que descendit de *Molendino de Durton* usq; ad boscum *Will. Mauduit*, et croftam terre vocat: *Edriche croft*, cum extensione ejusdem et abuttamentis; ad fundandam domum

that a black *cloak and hood*. The monks were always shaved; but these canons wore their hair and beards, and caps on their heads. There were of these *canons*, and women of the same order called *Canonesses*, about 175 houses.—[G. W.]

<sup>1</sup> The custom of affixing dates to deeds was not become general in the reign of *Henry III.*—[G. W.]





South Arch

1847



religiosam de ordine *Sti. Augustini*; Concedit etiam viam ad carros, et caretas," &c. This vale, down which runs the brook, is now called the *Long Lithe*, or *Lythe*. Bating the following particular expression, this grant runs much in the style of the former: "Dedit mihi episcopus predictus triginta quinque marcas argenti *ad me acquietandum versus Judæos*;" that is, "the bishop advanced me thirty-five marks of silver to pay my debts to the Jews," who were then the only lenders of money.

Finding himself still streightened for room, the founder applied to his royal master, *Henry*, who was graciously pleased to bestow certain lands in the manor at *Selborne* on the new priory of his favourite minister. These grounds had been the property of *Stephen de Lucy*; and, abutting upon the narrow limits of the convent, became a very commodious and agreeable acquisition. This grant, I find, was made on *March* the 9th, in the eighteenth year of *Henry*, viz., 1234, being two years after the foundation of the monastery. The royal donor bestowed his favour with a good grace, by adding to it almost every immunity and privilege that could have been specified in the law-language of the times.—"Quare volumus prior, &c., habeant totam terram, &c., cum omnibus libertatibus in bosco et plano, in viis et semitis, pratis et pasuis; aquis et piscariis; infra burgum, et extra burgum, cum soka et saca, Thol et Them, Infangenethef et Utfangenethef, et hamsocne et blodwite, et pecunia que dari solet pro murdro et forstal, et flemenestrick, et cum quietancia de omni scotto et geldo, et de omnibus auxiliis regum, vicecomitum, et omn: ministrantium suorum; et hidagio et exercitibus, et scutagiis, et tallagiis, et shiris et hundredis, et placitis et querelis, et warda, et wardpeny, et opibus castellorum et pontium, et clausuris parcorum, et omni carcio et sumagio, et domor: regal: edificatione, et omnimoda reparatione, et cum omnibus aliis libertatibus." This grant was made out by *Richard* bishop of *Chichester*, then chancellor, at the town of *Northampton*, before the lord chief justiciary, who was the founder himself.

The *charter* of foundation of the *Priory*, dated 1233, comes next in order to be considered; but being of some length, I shall not interrupt my narrative by placing it here. This my copy, taken from the original, I have compared with *Dugdale's* copy, and find that they perfectly agree; except that in the latter the preamble and the names of the witnesses are omitted. Yet I think it proper to quote a passage from this charter: "Et ipsa domus religiosa a cujuslibet alterius domûs religiosæ subjectione libera permaneat, et in omnibus absoluta," to show how much *Dugdale* was mistaken when he inserted *Selborne* among the *alien priories*; forgetting that this disposition of the convent contradicted the grant that he had published. In the "*Monasticon Anglicanum*," in English, p. 119, is part of his catalogue of *alien priories*, suppressed 2 *Henry V.*, viz., 1414, where may be seen as follows:—

S.  
*Sele, Sussex,*  
 SELEBURN.  
*Shirburn.*

This appeared to me from the first to have been an oversight, before I had seen my authentic evidences. For *priories alien*, a few *conventual* ones excepted, were little better than *granges* to foreign abbies; and their priors little more than bailiffs removeable at will; whereas the *priory* of *Selborne* possessed the valuable estates and manors of *Selborne, Achangre, Norton, Brompden, Basinges, Basingstoke, and Natele*, and the prior challenged the right of *Pillory, Thurcet, and Furcas*, and every manerial privilege.

I find next a grant from *Jo de Venur*, or *Venus*, to the prior of *Selborne*,—"de tota mora [a moor or bog] ubi *Beme* oritur, usque ad campum vivarii, et de prato voc. *Sydenmeade* cum abutt: et de cursu aque molendini." And also a grant in reversion "unius virgate terre," (a yard land) in *Achangre* at the death of *Richard Actedene* his sister's husband, who had no child. He was to present a pair of

gloves of one penny value to the prior and canons, to be given annually by the said *Richard*; and to quit all claim to the said lands in reversion, provided the prior and canons would engage annually to pay to the king, through the hands of his bailiffs of *Aulton*, ten shillings at four quarterly payments, "pro omnibus serviciis, consuetudinibus, exactionibus, et demandis."

This *Jo. de Venur* was a man of property at *Oakhanger*, and lived probably at the spot now called *Chapel-farm*. The grant bears date the 17th year of the reign of *Henry III.* (*vis.* 1233).

It would be tedious to enumerate every little grant for lands or tenements that might be produced from my vouchers. I shall therefore pass over all such for the present, and conclude this letter with a remark that must strike every thinking person with some degree of wonder. No sooner had a monastic institution got a footing, but the neighbourhood began to be touched with a secret and religious awe. Every person round was desirous to promote so good a work; and either by sale, by grant, or by gift in reversion, was ambitious of appearing a benefactor. They who had not lands to spare gave roads to accommodate the infant foundation. The religious were not backward in-keeping up this pious propensity, which they observed so readily influenced the breasts of men. Thus did the more opulent monasteries add house to house, and field to field, and by degrees manor to manor: till at last "there was no place left;" but every district around became appropriated to the purposes of their founders, and every precinct was drawn into the vortex.

## LETTER VIII

OUR forefathers in this village were no doubt as busy and bustling, and as important, as ourselves; yet have their names and transactions been forgotten from century to century, and have sunk into oblivion; nor has this happened only to the vulgar, but even to men remarkable and famous in their generation. I was led into this train of thinking by finding in my vouchers that Sir *Adam Gurdon* was an inhabitant of *Selborne*, and a man of the first rank and property in the parish. By Sir *Adam Gurdon* I would be understood to mean that leading and accomplished malcontent in the *Mountfort* faction, who distinguished himself by his daring conduct in the reign of *Henry III.* The first that we hear of this person in my papers is, that with two others he was bailiff of *Alton* before the sixteenth of *Henry III.*, viz., about 1231, and then not knighted. Who *Gurdon* was, and whence he came, does not appear: yet there is reason to suspect that he was originally a mere soldier of fortune, who had raised himself by marrying women of property. The name of *Gurdon* does not seem to be known in the south; but there is a name so like it in an adjoining kingdom, and which belongs to two or three noble families, that it is probable this remarkable person was a *North Briton*; and the more so, since the Christian name of *Adam* is a distinguished one to this day among the family of the *Gordons*.—But, be this as it may, Sir *Adam Gurdon* has been noticed by all the writers of *English* history for his bold disposition and disaffected spirit, in that he not only figured during the successful rebellion of *Leicester*, but kept up the war after the defeat and death of that baron's

entrenching himself in the woods of *Hampshire*, towards the town of *Farnham*. After the battle of *Evesham*, in which *Mountfort* fell, in the year 1265, *Gurdon* might not think it safe to return to his house for fear of a surprise; but cautiously fortified himself amidst the forests and woodlands with which he was so well acquainted. Prince *Edward*, desirous of putting an end to the troubles which had so long harassed the kingdom, pursued the arch-rebel into his fastnesses; attacked his camp; leaped over the entrenchments; and, singling out *Gurdon*, ran him down, wounded him, and took him prisoner.<sup>1</sup>

There is not perhaps in all history a more remarkable instance of command of temper, and magnanimity, than this before us: that a young prince, in the moment of victory, when he had the fell adversary of the crown and royal family at his mercy, should be able to withhold his hand from that vengeance which the vanquished so well deserved. A cowardly disposition would have been blinded by resentment; but this gallant heir-apparent saw at once a method of converting a most desperate foe into a lasting friend. He raised the fallen veteran from the ground, he pardoned him, he admitted him into his confidence, and introduced him to the queen, then lying at *Guildford*, that very evening. This unmerited and unexpected lenity melted the heart of the rugged *Gurdon* at once; he became in an instant a loyal and useful subject, trusted and employed in matters of moment by *Edward* when king, and confided in till the day of his death.

<sup>1</sup> M. Paris, p. 675, and *Triveti Annale*.—[G. W.]

## LETTER IX

It has been hinted in a former letter that Sir *Adam Gurdon* had availed himself by marrying women of property. By my evidences it appears that he had three wives, and probably in the following order ; *Constantia*, *Ameria*, and *Agnes*. The first of these ladies, who was the companion of his middle life, seems to have been a person of considerable fortune, which she inherited from *Thomas Makerel*, a gentleman of *Selborne*, who was either her father or uncle. The second, *Ameria*, calls herself the quondam wife of Sir *Adam*, "quæ fui uxor," &c., and talks of her sons under age. Now *Gurdon* had no son : and beside, *Agnes*, in another document, says, "Ego *Agnes* quondam uxor Domini *Adæ Gurdon* in pura et ligea viduitate mea :—" but *Gurdon* could not leave two widows ; and therefore it seems probable that he had been divorced from *Ameria*, who afterwards married and had sons. By *Agnes* Sir *Adam* had a daughter *Johanna*, who was his heiress, to whom *Agnes* in her life-time surrendered part of her jointure :— he had also a bastard son.

Sir *Adam* seems to have inhabited the house now called *Temple*, lying about two miles east of the church, which had been the property of *Thomas Makerel*.

In the year 1262 he petitioned the prior of *Selborne* in his own name, and that of his wife *Constantia* only, for leave to build him an *oratory* in his manor-house, "in curia sua." Licenses of this sort were frequently obtained by men of fortune and rank from the bishop of the diocese, the archbishop, and sometimes, as I have seen instances, from the pope ; not only for convenience-sake, and on



account of distance, and the badness of the roads, but as a matter of state and distinction. Why the owner should apply to the *prior*, in preference to the *bishop* of the *diocese*, and how the former became competent to such a grant, I cannot say; but that the priors of *Selborne* did take that privilege is plain, because some years afterward, in 1280, Prior *Richard* granted to *Henry Waterford* and his wife *Nicholaa*, a license to build an *oratory* in their court-house, "*curia sua de Waterford*," in which they might celebrate divine service, saving the rights of the mother church of *Basynges*. Yet all the while the prior of *Selborne* grants with such reserve and caution, as if in doubt of his power, and leaves *Gurdon* and his lady answerable in future to the bishop, or his ordinary, or to the vicar for the time being, in case they should infringe the rights of the mother church of *Selborne*."

The manor-house, called *Temple*, is at present a single building, running in length from south to north, and has been occupied as a common farmhouse from time immemorial. The south end is modern, and consists of a brew-house, and then a kitchen. The middle part is an hall twenty-seven feet in length, and nineteen feet in breadth; and has been formerly open to the top; but there is now a floor above it, and also a chimney in the western wall. The roofing consists of strong massive rafter-work ornamented with carved roses. I have often looked for the *lamb* and *flag*, the arms of the *knights templars*, without success; but in one corner found a fox with a goose on his back, so coarsely executed, that it required some attention to make out the device.

Beyond the hall to the north is a small parlour with a vast heavy stone chimney-piece, and at the end of all the *chapel* or *oratory*, whose massive thick walls and narrow windows at once bespeak great antiquity. This room is only sixteen feet by sixteen feet eight inches; and full seventeen feet nine inches in height. The ceiling is formed of vast joists, placed only five or six inches apart. Modern delicacy would not much approve of such a place of

worship : for it has at present much more the appearance of a dungeon than of a room fit for the reception of people of condition. The field on which this oratory abuts is called Chapel-field. The situation of this house is very particular, for it stands upon the immediate verge of a steep abrupt hill.

Not many years since this place was used for a hop-kiln, and was divided into two stories by a loft, part of which remains at present, and makes it convenient for peat and turf, with which it is stowed.



*Ancient Coffin &c  
from Pricey Farm*

## LETTER X

THE priory at times was much obliged to *Gurdon* and his family. As *Sir Adam* began to advance in years he found his mind influenced by the prevailing opinion of the reasonableness and efficacy of prayers for the dead; and therefore, in conjunction with his wife *Constantia*, in the year 1271, granted to the prior and convent of *Selborne* all his right and claim to a certain place, *placea*, called *La Pleystow*, in the village aforesaid, "*in liberam, puram, et perpetuam elemosinam.*" This *Pleystow*,<sup>1</sup> *locus ludorum*, or play-place, is a level area near the church of about forty-four yards by thirty-six, and is known now by the name of the *Plestor*.<sup>2</sup>

It continues still, as it was in old times, to be the scene of recreation for the youths and children of the neighbourhood; and impresses an idea on the mind that this village, even in *Saxon* times, could not be the most abject of places, when the inhabitants thought proper to assign so spacious a spot for the sports and amusements of its young people.<sup>3</sup>

As soon as the prior became possessed of this piece of ground, he procured a charter for a *market*,<sup>4</sup> from King

<sup>1</sup> In *Saxon*  $\text{Plegestop}$ , or  $\text{Plegstow}$ ; viz., *Plegestow*, or *Plegstow*.—[G. W.]

<sup>2</sup> At this juncture probably the vast oak, mentioned page 6, was planted by the prior, as an ornament to his new acquired market-place. According to this supposition the oak was aged 432 years when blown down.—[G. W.]

<sup>3</sup> For more circumstances respecting the *Plestor*, see Letter II. to Mr. *Pennant*.—[G. W.]

<sup>4</sup> Bishop *Tanner*, in his "*Notitia Monastica*," has made a mistake respecting the *market* and *fair* at *Selborne*; for in his references to *Dodsworth*, cart. 54 *Hen. III.*, m. 3, he says, "*De mercatu, et feria de Seleburn.*" But this reference is

*Henry III.*, and began to erect houses and stalls, "*seldas*," around it. From this period *Selborne* became a market town: but how long it enjoyed that privilege does not appear. At the same time, *Gurdon* reserved to himself, and his heirs, a way through the said *Plestor* to a tenement and some crofts at the upper end, abutting on the south corner of the church-yard. This was, in old days the manerial house of the street manor, though now a poor cottage; and is known at present by the modern name of *Elliot's*. *Sir Adam* also did, for the health of his own soul and that of his wife *Constantia*, their predecessors and successors, grant to the prior and canons quiet possession of all the tenements and gardens, "*curtillagia*," which they had built and laid out on the lands in *Selborne*, on which he and his vassals, "*homines*," had undoubted right of common: and moreover did grant to the convent the full privilege of that right of common; and empowered the religious to build tenements and make gardens along the king's highway in the village of *Selborne*.

From circumstances put together, it appears that the above were the first grants obtained by the Priory in the village of *Selborne* after it had subsisted about thirty-nine years; moreover, they explain the nature of the mixed manor still remaining in and about the village, where one field or tenement shall belong to *Magdalen-college* in the University of *Oxford*, and the next to *Norton Powlet*, esq., of *Rotherfield* house, and so down the whole street. The case was, that the whole was once the property of *Gurdon*, till he made his grants to the convent; since which some belongs to the successors of *Gurdon* in the manor, and some to the college; and this is the occasion of the strange jumble of property. It is remarkable that the tenement

wrong; for, instead of *Seleburn*, it proves that the place there meant was *Lekeborne*, or *Legeborne*, in the county of *Lincoln*. This error was copied from the index of the *Cat. MSS. Angl.* It does not appear that there ever was a chartered fair at *Selborne*. For several particulars respecting the present fair at *Selborne*, see Letter XXVI. of these Antiquities.—[G. W.]



Selborne Church from the West

John R. ...  
1850



and crofts which Sir *Adam* reserved at the time of granting the *Plestor* should still remain a part of the *Gurdon-manor*, though so desirable an addition to the vicarage that is not as yet possessed of one inch of glebe at home : but of late, *viz.*, in *January*, 1785, *Magdalen-college* purchased that little estate, which is life-holding, in reversion, for the generous purpose of bestowing it, and it's lands, being twelve acres (three of which abut on the church-yard and vicarage-garden) as an improvement hereafter to the living, and an eligible advantage to future incumbents.

The year after *Gurdon* had bestowed the *Plestor* on the Priory, *viz.*, in 1272, *Henry III.*, King of *England*, died, and was succeeded by his son *Edward*. This magnanimous prince continued his regard for Sir *Adam*, whom he esteemed as a brave man, and made him *warden*, "*custos*," of the forest of *Wolmer*.<sup>1</sup> Though little emolument might hang to this appointment, yet are there reasons why it might be highly acceptable ; and in a few reigns after, it

<sup>1</sup> Since the letters respecting *Wolmer-forest* and *Ayles-Holt* [*Cf* vol. i. Letters VI.-IX. to Pennant] were printed, the author has been favoured with the following extracts :—

"In the 'Act of Resumption, 1 Hen. VII.' it was provided, that it be not prejudicial to '*Harry at Lode*, ranger of our forest of *Wolmere* to him by oure letters patents before tyme gevyen.'"—*Rolls of Parl.*, vol. vi. p. 370.

"In the 11 Hen. VII., 1495, '*Wartham* (*Wardleham*) and the office of forest (forester) of *Wolmere*,' were held by *Edmund*, duke of *Suffolk*.'"—*Rolls*, *ib.* 474.

"Act of general pardon, 14 Hen. VIII., 1523, not to extend to '*Rich. Bp. of Wynton* (bishop *Fox*) for any seizure or forfeiture of liberties, &c., within the forest of *Wolmer*, *Alysholt*, and *Newe Forest* ; nor to any person for waste, &c., within the manor of *Wardlam*, or parish of *Wardlam* (*Wardleham*) ; nor to abusing, &c., of any office or fee, within the said forests of *Wolmer* or *Alysholt*, or the said park of *Wardlam*.'"—County Suth't.—*Rolls prefixt to 1st Vol. of Journals of the Lords*, p. xciii. b.

To these may be added some other particulars, taken from a book lately published, entitled "An account of all the Manors, Messuages, Lands, &c., in the different Counties of *England* and *Wales*, held by Lease from the Crown ; as contained in the Report of the Commissioners appointed to inquire into the State and Condition of the Royal Forests, &c." *London*, 1787.

"Southampton.

P. 64. "A fee-farm rent of 31l. 2s. 11d. out of the manors of East and West *Wardleham* ; and also the office of lieutenant or keeper of the forest or chase of

was given to princes of the blood.<sup>1</sup> In old days gentry resided more at home on their estates, and having fewer resources of elegant in-door amusement, spent most of their leisure hours in the field and the pleasures of the chase. A large domain therefore, at little more than a mile distance, and well stocked with game, must have been a very eligible acquisition, affording him influence as well as entertainment; and especially as the manorial house of *Temple*, by its exalted situation, could command a view of near two-thirds of the forest.

That *Gurdon*, who had lived some years the life of an outlaw, and at the head of an army of insurgents, was for a considerable time in high rebellion against his sovereign, should have been guilty of some outrages, and should have committed some depredations, is by no means matter of wonder. Accordingly we find a *distringas* against him, ordering him to restore to the bishop of *Winchester* some of the temporalities of that see, which he had taken by violence and detained, viz., some lands in *Hocheleye*, and a mill.<sup>2</sup> By a *breve*, or writ, from the king he is also enjoined to readmit the bishop of *Winchester*, and his tenants of the parish and town of *Farnham*, to pasture their horses, and other *larger* cattle, "*averia*," in the forest of *Wolmer*, as

*Aliceholt* and *Wolmer*, with all offices, fees, commodities, and privileges thereto belonging.

"Names of lessees, *William*, earl of *Dartmouth*, and others (in trust).

"Date of the last lease, March 23, 1780; granted for such term as would fill up the subsisting term to 31 years.

"Expiration March 23, 1811.

"Southampton.

"Hundreds—*Selborne* and *Finchdeane*.

"Honours and manors, &c.

"*Aliceholt* forest, three parks there.

"*Bensted* and *Kingsley*; a petition of the parishioners concerning the three parks in *Aliceholt* Forest."

"*William*, first earl of *Dartmouth*, and paternal grandfather to the present Lord *Stawel*, was a lessee of the forests of *Aliceholt* and *Wolmer* before brigadier-general *Emmanuel Scroope Howe*."—[G. W.]

<sup>1</sup> See Letter II. of these Antiquities.—[G. W.]

<sup>2</sup> *Hocheleye*, now spelt *Hawkey*, is in the hundred of *Selborne*, and has a mill at this day.—[G. W.]



had been the usage from time immemorial. This writ is dated in the tenth year of the reign of *Edward*, viz., 1282.

All the king's writs directed to *Gurdon* are addressed in the following manner—" *Edwardus Dei gratia, &c., dilecto et fideli suo Ade Gurdon salutem;*" and again, " *Custodi foreste sue de Wolvemere.*"

In the year 1293 a quarrel between the crews of an *English* and a *Norman* ship about some trifle, brought on by degrees such serious consequences, that in 1295 a war broke out between the two nations. The *French* king, *Philip the Hardy*, gained some advantages in *Gascony*; and, not content with those, threatened *England* with an invasion, and by a sudden attempt took and burnt *Dover*.

Upon this emergency, *Edward* sent a writ to *Gurdon*, ordering him and four others to enlist three thousand soldiers in the counties of *Surrey*, *Dorset*, and *Wiltshire*, able-bodied men, " *tam sagittare quam balistare potentes;*" and to see that they were marched by the feast of *All Saints*, to *Winchelsea*, there to be embarked aboard the king's transports.

The occasion of this armament appears also from a summons to the bishop of *Winchester* to parliament, part of which I shall transcribe on account of the insolent menace which is said therein to have been denounced against the *English* language:—" *qualiter rex Franciæ de terra nostra Gascon nos fraudulenter et cautelose decepit, eam nobis nequiter detinendo . . . . . vero predictis fraude et nequitia non contentus, ad expugnationem regni nostri classe maxima et bellatorum copiosa multitudine congregatis, cum quibus regnum nostrum et regni ejusdem incolas hostiliter jam invasurus, linguam Anglicam si concepte iniquitatis proposito detestabili potestas correspondeat, quod Deus avertat, omnino de terra delere proponit.*" Dated 30th September, in the year of king *Edward's* reign xxiii.<sup>1</sup>

The above are the last traces that I can discover of *Gurdon's* appearing and acting in public. The first notice

<sup>1</sup> Reg. *Winton*, *Stratford*, but query *Stratford*; for *Stratford* was not bishop of *Winton* till 1323, near thirty years afterwards.—[G. W.]

that my evidences give of him is that in 1232, being the 16th of *Henry III.*, he was the king's bailiff, with others, for the town of *Alton*. Now, from 1232 to 1295 is a space of sixty-three years, a long period for one man to be employed in active life! Should any one doubt whether all these particulars can relate to one and the same person, I should wish him to attend to the following reasons why they might. In the first place, the documents from the priory mention but one Sir *Adam Gurdon*, who had no son lawfully begotten; and in the next, we are to recollect that he must have probably been a man of uncommon vigour, both of mind and body, since no one unsupported by such accomplishments could have engaged in such adventures, or could have borne up against the difficulties which he sometimes must have encountered, and, moreover, we have modern instances of persons that have maintained their abilities for near that period.

Were we to suppose *Gurdon* to be only twenty years of age in 1232, in 1295 he would be eighty-three: after which advanced period it could not be expected that he should live long. From the silence, therefore, of my evidences it seems probable that this extraordinary person finished his life in peace, not long after, at his mansion of *Temple*. *Gurdon's* seal had for it's device—a man, with an helmet on his head, drawing a cross-bow; the legend, "*Sigillum Ade de Gurdon*;" his arms were, "Goulis, iii floures argent issant de testes de leopards."<sup>1</sup>

If the stout and unsubmitting spirit of *Gurdon* could be so much influenced by the belief and superstition of the times, much more might the hearts of his ladies and daughter. And accordingly we find that *Ameria*, by the consent and advice of her sons, though said to be all under age, makes a grant for ever of some lands down by the stream at *Durton*; and also of her right of the common of *Durton* itself.<sup>2</sup> *Johanna*, the daughter and heiress of Sir

<sup>1</sup> From the collection of *Thomas Martin*, Esq., in the "Antiquarian Repertory," p. 109, No. XXXI.—[G. W.]

<sup>2</sup> *Durton*, now called *Dorton*, is still a common for the copyholders of *Selborne* manor.—[G. W.]

*Adam*, was married, I find, to *Richard Achard*; she also grants to the prior and convent lands and tenements in the village of *Selborne*, which her father obtained from *Thomas Makerel*; and also all her goods and chattels in *Selborne* for the consideration of two hundred pounds sterling. This last business was transacted in the first year of *Edward II.*, viz., 1307. It has been observed before that *Gurdon* had a natural son; this person was called by the name of *John Dastard*, alias *Wastard*, but more probably *Bastard*; since bastardy, in those days, was not deemed any disgrace, though dastardy was esteemed the greatest. He was married to *Gunnorie Duncan*; and had a tenement and some land granted him in *Selborne* by his sister *Johanna*.

## LETTER XI

THE *Knights Templars*,<sup>1</sup> who have been mentioned in a former letter, had considerable property in *Selborne*; and also a *preceptory* at *Sudington*, now called *Southington*, a hamlet lying one mile to the east of the village. Bishop *Tanner* mentions only two such houses of the *Templars* in all the county of *Southampton*, viz., *Godesfield*, founded by

### <sup>1</sup> THE MILITARY ORDERS of the RELIGIOUS.

The *Knights Hospitalars of St. John of Jerusalem*, afterwards called *Knights of Rhodes*, now of *Malta*, came into *England* about the year 1100, 1 *Hen. I.*

The *Knights Templars* came into *England* pretty early in *Stephen's* reign, which commenced 1135. The order was dissolved in 1312, and their estates given by Act of Parliament to the *Hospitalars* in 1323 (all in *Edw. II.*) though many of their estates were never actually enjoyed by the said *Hospitalars*.—*Vid. Tanner*, p. 24, 10.

The *commandries* of the *Hospitalars*, and *preceptories* of *Templars*, were each subordinate to the principal house of their respective religion in *London*. Although these are the different denominations, which *Tanner* at p. 37 assigns to the cells of these different orders, yet throughout the work very frequent instances occur of *preceptories* attributed to the *Hospitalars*; and if in some passages of "*Notitia Monast.*" *commandries* are attributed to the *Templars*, it is only where the place afterwards became the property of the *Hospitalars*, and so is there indifferently styled *preceptory* or *commandry*; see p. 243, 263, 276, 577, 678. But, to account for the first observed inaccuracy, it is probable the *preceptories* of the *Templars*, when given to the *Hospitalars*, were still vulgarly, however, called by their old name of *preceptories*; whereas in propriety societies of the *Hospitalars* were indeed (as has been said) *commandries*. And such deviation from the strictness of expression in this case might occasion those societies of *Hospitalars* also to be indifferently called *preceptories*, which had originally been vested in them, having never belonged to the *Templars* at all.—See in *Archer*, p. 609; *Tanner*, p. 300, col. 1. 720, n. e.

It is observable that the very statute for the dissolution of the *Hospitalars* holds the same language; for there, in the enumeration of particulars occur "*commandries, preceptories.*"—*Codex*, p. 1190. Now this intercommunity of names, and that in an Act of Parliament too, made some of our ablest antiquaries look upon a *preceptory*

*Henry de Blois*, bishop of *Winchester*, and *South Badesley*, a preceptory of the *Knights Templars*, and afterwards of *St. John of Jerusalem*, valued at one hundred and eighteen pounds sixteen shillings and sevenpence *per annum*. Here then was a *preceptory* unnoticed by antiquaries, between the village and *Temple*. Whatever the edifice of the *preceptory* might have been, it has long since been dilapidated; and the whole hamlet contains now only one mean farmhouse, though there were two in the memory of man.

It has been usual for the religious of different orders to fall into great dissensions, and especially when they were near neighbours. Instances of this sort we have heard of between the monks of *Canterbury*; and again between the old abbey of *St. Swythun*, and the comparatively new minster of *Hyde* in the city of *Winchester*.<sup>1</sup> These feuds

and *commandry* as strictly synonymous; accordingly we find *Camden*, in his "*Britannia*," explaining *preceptoría* in the text by a *commandry* in the margin, p. 356, 510.—J. L.

*Commandry*, a manor or chief message with lands, &c., belonging to the priory of *St. John of Jerusalem*; and he who had the government of such house was called the *commander*, who could not dispose of it but to the use of the priory, only taking thence his own sustenance, according to his degree, who was usually a brother of the same priory.—*Cowell*. He adds (confounding these with *preceptorías*) they are in many places termed *Temples*, as *Temple Bruere* in *Lincolnshire*, &c. *Preceptorías* were possessed by the more eminent sort of *Templars*, whom the chief master created and called *Præceptores Templi*.—*Cowell*, who refers to *Stephens De Jurisd.* lib. iv. c. 10, no. 27.

Placita de juratis et assis coram Salom. de Roff et sociis suis justic. Itiner. apud Wynton, &c., anon regni R. Edwardi fil. Reg. Hen. octavo.—"et Magr. Milicie Templi in Angl. ht emendassē panis, et suis [cerevisiæ] in *Sodington*, et nescint q<sup>o</sup>. war. et—et magist. Milicie Templi nōn vēn iō distr."—*Chapter House, Westminster*.—[G. W.]

<sup>1</sup> *Notitia Monastica*, p. 155.

"*Winchester, Newminster*. King *Alfred* founded here first only a house and chapel for the learned monk *Grimbald*, whom he had brought out of *Flanders*; but afterwards projected, and by his will ordered, a noble Church or religious house to be built in the cemetery on the north side of the old minster or cathedral, and designed that *Grimbald* should preside over it. This was begun A.D. 901, and finished to the honour of the *Holy Trinity*, *Virgin Mary*, and *St. Peter*, by his son king *Edward*, who placed therein secular canons, but A.D. 963 they were expelled, and an abbot and monks put in possession by bishop *Ethelwold*.

"Now the churches and habitations of these two societies being so very near together, the differences which were occasioned by their singing, bells, and other

arose probably from different orders being crowded within the narrow limits of a city, or garrison-town, where every inch of ground was precious, and an object of contention. But with us, as far as my evidences extend, and while *Robert Saunford* was *master*,<sup>1</sup> and *Richard Carpenter* was *preceptor*, the *Templars* and the *Priors* lived in an intercourse of mutual good offices.

My papers mention three transactions, the exact time of which cannot be ascertained, because they fell out before dates were usually inserted; though probably they happened about the middle of the thirteenth century, not long after Saunford became master. The first of these is that the *Templars* shall pay to the priory of Selborne, annually, the sum of ten shillings at two half-yearly payments from their chamber, "camera," at Sudington, "per manum preceptoris, vel ballivi nostri, qui pro tempore fuerit ibidem," till they can provide the prior and canons with an equivalent in lands or rents within four or five miles of the said convent. It is also further agreed that, if the *Templars* shall be in arrears for one year, that then the *prior* shall be empowered to distrain upon their live stock in *Bradeseth*. The next matter was a grant from *Robert de Saunford* to the *priory* for ever, of a good and sufficient road, "cheminum," capable of admitting carriages, and proper for the drift of their larger cattle, from the way which extends from *Sudington* towards *Blakemere*, on to the lands which the convent possesses in *Bradeseth*.

matters, arose to so great a height, that the religious of the new monastery thought fit, about A.D. 1119, to remove to a better and more quiet situation without the walls, on the north part of the city called HYDE, where king *Henry I.*, at the instance of *Will. Gifford*, bishop of *Winton*, founded a stately abbey for them. *St. Peter* was generally accounted patron; though it is sometimes called the monastery of *St. Grimbald*, and sometimes of *St. Barnabas*," &c.

NOTE.—A few years since a county bridewell, or house of correction, has been built on the immediate site of *Hide Abbey*. In digging up the old foundations the workmen found the head of a crosier in good preservation.—[G. W.]

<sup>1</sup> *Robert Saunforde* was *master* of the *Temple* in 1241; *Guido de Foresta* was the next in 1292. The former is fifth in a list of the *masters*, in a MS. "*Bib. Cotton. Nero. E. VI.*"—[G. W.]

The third transaction (though for want of dates we cannot say which happened first and which last) was a grant from *Robert Samford* to the priory of a tenement and its appurtenances in the village of *Selborne*, given to the *Templars* by *Americus de Vasca*.<sup>1</sup> This property, by the manner of describing it,—“totum tenementum cum omnibus pertinentiis suis, scilicet in terris, & hominibus, in pratis & pascuis, & nemoribus,” &c., seems to have been no inconsiderable purchase, and was sold for two hundred marks sterling, to be applied for the buying of more land for the support of the holy war.

Prior *John* is mentioned as the person to whom *Vasca's* land is conveyed. But in *Willis's* list there is no Prior *John* till 1339, several years after the dissolution of the order of the *Templars* in 1312; so that, unless *Willis* is wrong, and has omitted a prior *John* since 1262 (that being the date of his first prior), these transactions must have fallen out before that date.

I find not the least traces of any concerns between *Gurdon* and the *Knights Templars*; but probably after his death his daughter *Johanna* might have, and might bestow, *Temple* on that order in support of the holy land: and moreover, she seems to have been removing from *Selborne*, when she sold her goods and chattels to the priory, as mentioned above.

*Temple*, no doubt, did belong to the knights, as may be asserted, not only from it's name, but also from another corroborating circumstance of it's being still a manor, *tithe-free*; “for, by virtue of their order,” says *Dr. Blackstone*, “the lands of the *Knights Templars* were privileged by the pope with a discharge from tithes.”

Antiquaries have been much puzzled about the terms *preceptores* and *preceptorium*, not being able to determine what officer or edifice was meant. But perhaps all the while the passage quoted above from one of my papers,

<sup>1</sup> *Americus Vasca*, by his name, must have been an *Italian*, and had been probably a soldier of fortune, and one of *Gurdon's* captains. *Americus Vesputio*, the person who gave name to the new world, was a *Florentine*.—[G. W.]

“per manum *preceptoris* vel *ballivi* nostri, qui pro tempore fuerit, *ibidem*,” may help to explain the difficulty. For if it be allowed here that *preceptor* and *ballivus* are synonymous words, then the brother who took on him that office resided in the house of the *Templars* at *Sudington*, a *preceptory*; where he was their *preceptor*, superintended their affairs, received their money, and, as in the instance there mentioned, paid from their chamber, “*camera*,” as directed; so that, according to this explanation, a *preceptor* was no other than a steward, and a *preceptorium* was his residence. I am well aware that, according to strict Latin, the *vel* should have been *seu* or *sive*, and the order of the words “*preceptoris* nostri, vel *ballivi*, qui” — et “*ibidem*” should have been *ibi*; *ibidem* necessarily having reference to *two* or more persons: but it will hardly be thought fair to apply the niceties of classic rule to the Latinity of the thirteenth century, the writers of which seem to have aimed at nothing farther than to render themselves intelligible.

There is another remark that we have made, which, I think, corroborates what has been advanced; and that is, that *Richard Carpenter*, *preceptor* of *Sudington*, at the time of the transactions between the *Templars* and *Selborne Priory*, did always sign *last* as a witness in the three deeds: he calls himself *frater*, it is true, among many other brothers, but subscribes with a kind of deference, as if, for the time being, his *office* rendered him an inferior in the community.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> In two or three ancient records relating to *St. Oswald's Hospital* in the city of *Worcester*, printed by *Dr. Nash*, pp. 227, 228, of his collections for the history of *Worcestershire*, the words *preceptorium* and *preceptoria* signify the *mastership* of the said hospital: “ad *preceptorium* sive *magisterium* presentavit—*preceptoris* sive *magisterii* patronas. Vacavit dicta *preceptoria* seu *magisterium*—ad *preceptoriam* et regimen dicti hospitalis—Te *preceptorem* sive *magistrum* prefecimus.”

Where *preceptorium* denotes a building or apartment it may probably mean the master's lodgings, or at least the *preceptor's* apartment, whatsoever may have been the office or employment of the said *preceptor*.

A *preceptor* is mentioned in *Thoresby's Ducatus Leodiensis*, or *History of Leeds*, p. 225, and a deed witnessed by the *preceptor* and chaplain before dates were inserted.—*Du Fresne's Supplement*: “*Preceptoriaz, prædia preceptoribus assignata.*” *Cowel*, in his *Law Dictionary*, enumerates sixteen *preceptoriaz*, or *preceptories*, in *England*; but *Sudington* is not among them.—It is remarkable that *Gurtlerus*, in his *Historia Templariorum*, *Amstel. 1691*, never once mentions the words *preceptor* or *preceptorium*.—[G. W.]





Coffin-Lid, south Aisle.

## LETTER XII

THE ladies and daughter of Sir *Adam Gurdon* were not the only benefactresses to the priory of *Selborne*; for, in the year 1281, *Ela Longspee* obtained masses to be performed for her soul's health; and the prior entered into an engagement that one of the convent should every day say a special mass for ever for the said benefactress, whether living or dead. She also engaged within five years to pay to the said convent one hundred marks of silver for the support of a *chantry* and *chantry-chaplain*, who should perform his masses daily in the parish church of *Selborne*.<sup>1</sup> In the east end of the south aisle there are two sharp-pointed gothic niches; one of these probably was the place under which these masses were performed; and there is the more reason to suppose as much, because, till within these thirty years, this space was fenced off with *gothic* wooden railing, and was known by the name of the south chancel.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> A *chantry* was a chapel joined to some cathedral or parish church, and endowed with annual revenues for the maintenance of one or more priests to sing mass daily for the soul of the founder, and others.—[G. W.]

<sup>2</sup> For what is said more respecting this chantry see Letter III. of these Antiquities.—Mention is made of a *Nicholas Langrish*, capellanus de *Selborne*, in the

The solicitude expressed by the donor plainly shows her piety and firm persuasion of the efficacy of prayers for the dead ; for she seems to have made every provision for the payment of the sum stipulated within the appointed time ; and to have felt much anxiety lest her death, or the neglect of her executors or assigns, might frustrate her intentions, —“ Et si contingat me in solucione perdicte pecunie annis predictis in parte aut in toto deficere, quod absit ; concedo et obligo pro me et assignatis meis, quod *Vice-Comes . . . Oxon* et . . . . qui pro tempore fuerint, per omnes terras et tenementa, et omnia bona mea mobilia et immobilia ubicunque in balliva sua fuerint inventa ad solucionem predictam faciendam possent nos compellere.” And again —“ Et si contingat dictos religiosos labores seu expensas facere circa predictam pecuniam, seu circa partem dicte pecunie ; volo quod dictorum religiosorum impense et labores levantur ita quod predicto priori vel uni canonicorum suorum superhiis simplici verbo credatur sine alterius honore probacionis ; et quod utrique predictorum virorum in unam marcam argenti pro cujuslibet distrincione super me facienda tenear.—Dat. apud *Wareborn die sabati proxima ante festum St. Marci* evangeliste, anno regni regis *Edwardi* tertio decimo.”<sup>1</sup>

But the reader, perhaps, would wish to be better informed respecting this benefactress, of whom as yet he has heard no particulars.

The *Ela Longspee*, therefore, above-mentioned, was a lady of high birth and rank, and became countess to *Thomas de Newburgh*, the sixth earl of *Warwick* : she was the second daughter of the famous *Ela Longspee*, Countess of *Salisbury*, by *William Longspee*, natural son of King *Henry II.*, by *Rosamond*.

time of *Henry VIII.* Was he chantry-chaplain to *Ela Longspee*, whose masses were probably continued to the time of the Reformation? More will be said of this person hereafter.—[G. W.]

<sup>1</sup> Ancient deeds are often dated on a *Sunday*, having been executed in churches and church-yards for the sake of notoriety, and for the conveniency of procuring several witnesses to attest.—[G. W.]

Our lady, following the steps of her illustrious mother,<sup>1</sup> “was a great benefactress to the university of *Oxford*, to the canons of *Oseney*, the nuns of *Godstow*, and other religious houses in *Oxfordshire*. She died very aged, in the year 1300,<sup>2</sup> and was buried before the high altar in the abbey church of *Oseney*, at the head of the tomb of *Henry D'Oily*, under a flat marble, on which was inlaid her portraiture in the habit of a vowess, engraved on a copper-plate.”—*Edmondson's History and Genealogical Account of the Grevilles*, p. 23.

<sup>1</sup> *Ela Longspee*, countess of *Salisbury*, in 1232, founded a monastery at *Lacock*, in the county of *Wilts*, and also another at *Hendon*, in the county of *Somerset*, in her widowhood, to the honour of the Blessed Virgin and St. *Bernard*.—CAMDEN.—[G. W.]

<sup>2</sup> Thus she survived the foundation of her chantry at *Selborne* fifteen years. About this lady and her mother consult *Dugdale's Baronage*, i. 72, 175, 177; *Dugdale's "Warwickshire"*, i. 383; *Lelana's "Itin."* ii. 45.—[G. W.]

## LETTER XIII

THE reader is here presented with five forms respecting the choosing of a prior; but as they are of some length they must be reserved for the Appendix; their titles are No. 108. "Charta petens licentiam elegendi *prelatum* a Domino episcopo *Wintoniensi*:"—"Forma licentie concessæ:"—"Forma decreti post electionem conficiendi:"—108. "Modus procedendi ad electionem per formam scrutinii:"—et "Forma richte presentandi electum." Such evidences are rare and curious, and throw great light upon the general *monastico-ecclesiastical* history of this kingdom, not yet sufficiently understood.

In the year 1324 there was an election for a prior at *Selborne*; when some difficulties occurring, and a devolution taking place, application was made to *Stratford*, who was bishop of *Winchester* at that time, and of course the visitor and patron of the convent at the spot above-mentioned.<sup>1</sup>

### *An Extract from REG. STRATFORD. Winton.*

P. 4. "Commissio facta sub-priori de *Selebourne*," by the bishop enjoining him to preserve the discipline of the order in the convent during the vacancy made by the late death of the prior, ("nuper pastoris solatio destituta,") dated 4th kal. Maii. ann. 2do sc. of his consecration. sc. 1324.]

P. 6. "Custodia Prioratus de *Seleburne* vacantis," committed by the bishop to *Nicholas de la* —, a layman, it

<sup>1</sup> *Stratford* was bishop of *Winchester* from 1323 to 1333, when he was translated to *Canterbury*.—[G. W.]

belonging to the bishop, "ratione vacationis ejusdem," in July, 1324, *ibid.* "negotium electionis de *Selebourne*. Acta coram *Johanne* Episcopo, &c. 1324 in negotio electionis de fratre *Waltero de Insula* concanonico prioratus de *Selebourne*," lately elected by the sub-prior and convent, by way of scrutiny: that it appeared to the bishop, by certificate from the dean of *Alton*, that solemn citation and proclamation had been made in the church of the convent where the election was held that any who opposed the said election or elected should appear.—Some difficulties were started, which the bishop over-ruled, and confirmed the election, and admitted the new prior *sub hac forma* :—

"In Dei nomine Amen. Ego *Johannes* permissione divina, &c. te *Walterum de Insula* ecclesie de *Selebourne* nostre dioceseos nostrique patronatus vacantis, canonicum et cantorem, virum utique providum, et discretum, literarum scientia preditum, vita moribus et conversatione merito commendatum, in ordine sacerdotali et etate legitima constitutum, de legitimo matrimonio procreatum, in ordine et religione *Sancti Augustini de Selebourne* expresse professum, in spiritualibus et temporalibus circumspectum, *jure* nobis hac vice *devoluto* in hac parte, in dicte ecclesie de *Selebourne* perfectum priorem; curam et administrationem ejusdem tibi in spiritualibus et temporalibus committentes. Dat. apud *Selebourne* XIII. kalend. Augusti anno supradicto."

There follows an order to the sub-prior and convent *pro obedientia* :

A mandate to *Nicholas* above-named to release the Priory to the new prior :

A mandate for the induction of the new prior.

## LETTER XIV

“IN the year 1373 *Wykeham*, bishop of *Winchester*, held a visitation of his whole diocese; not only of the secular clergy through the several deaneries, but also of the monasteries, and religious houses of all sorts, which he visited in person. The next year he sent his commissioners with power to correct and reform the several irregularities and abuses which he had discovered in the course of his visitation.

“Some years afterward, the bishop having visited *three several times* all the religious houses throughout his diocese, and being well informed of the state and condition of each, and of the particular abuses which required correction and reformation, besides the orders which he had already given, and the remedies which he had occasionally applied by his commissioners, now issued his injunctions to each of them. They were accommodated to their several exigencies, and intended to correct the abuses introduced, and to recall them all to a strict observation of the rules of their respective orders. Many of these injunctions are still extant, and are evident monuments of the care and attention with which he discharged this part of his episcopal duty.”<sup>1</sup>

Some of these injunctions I shall here produce; and they are such as will not fail, I think, to give satisfaction to the antiquary, both as never having been published before, and as they are a curious picture of monastic irregularities at that time.

The documents that I allude to are contained in the

<sup>1</sup> See *Lowth's Life of Wykeham*.—[G. W.]



Fairway to church.  
John G. Taylor





*Notabilis Visitatio de Seleburne*, held at the Priory of that place, by *Wykeham* in person, in the year 1387.

This evidence, in the original, is written on two skins of parchment; the one large, and the other smaller, and consists of a *preamble*, 36 *items*, and a *conclusion*, which altogether evince the patient investigation of the visitor, for which he had always been so remarkable in all matters of moment, and how much he had at heart the regularity of those institutions, of whose efficacy in their prayers for the dead he was so firmly persuaded. As the bishop was so much in earnest, we may be assured that he had nothing in view but to correct and reform what he found amiss; and was under no bias to blacken, or misrepresent as the commissioners of *Thomas Lord Cromwell* seem in part to have done at the time of the reformation.<sup>1</sup> We may therefore with reason suppose that the bishop gives us an exact delineation of the morals and manners of the canons of *Selborne* at that juncture; and that what he found they had omitted he enjoins them; and for what they have done amiss, and contrary to their rules and statutes, he reproves them; and threatens them with punishment suitable to their irregularities.

The *visitatio* is of considerable length, and cannot be introduced into the body of this work; we shall therefore refer the reader to the *Appendix*, where he will find every particular, while we shall take some notice, and make some remarks on the most singular *items* as they occur.

In the preamble the visitor says—"Considering the charge lying upon us, that your blood may not be required at our hands, we came down to visit your Priory, as our office required; and every time we repeated our visitation we found something still not only contrary to regular rules but also repugnant to religion and good reputation."

In the first article after the preamble—"he commands them on their obedience, and on pain of the greater ex-

<sup>1</sup> Letters of this sort from Dr. *Layton* to *Thomas Lord Cromwell* are still extant.—[G. W.]

communication, to see that the canonical hours by night and by day be sung in their choir, and the masses of the Blessed *Mary*, and other accustomed masses, be celebrated at the proper hours with devotion, and at moderate pauses; and that it be not allowed to any to absent themselves from the hours and masses, or to withdraw before they are finished."

*Item* 2d. He enjoins them to observe that silence to which they are so strictly bound by the rule of Saint *Augustine* at stated times, and wholly to abstain from frivolous conversation.

*Item* 4th. "Not to permit such frequent passing of secular people of both sexes through their convent, as if a thoroughfare, from whence many disorders may and have arisen."

*Item* 5th. "To take care that the doors of their church and Priory be so attended to that no suspected and disorderly females, 'suspectæ et aliæ inhonestæ,' pass through their choir and cloister in the dark;" and to see that the doors of their church between the nave and the choir, and the gates of their cloister opening into the fields, be constantly kept shut until their first choir-service is over in the morning, at dinner time, and when they meet at their evening collation.<sup>1</sup>

*Item* 6th mentions that several of the canons are found to be very ignorant and illiterate, and enjoins the prior to see that they be better instructed by a proper master.

*Item* 8th. The canons are here accused of refusing to accept of their statutable clothing year by year, and of demanding a certain specified sum of money, as if it were their annual rent and due. This the bishop forbids, and orders that the canons shall be clothed out of the revenue of the Priory, and the old garments be laid by in a chamber and given to the poor according to the rule of Saint *Augustine*.

In *Item* 9th is a complaint that some of the canons are given to wander out of the precincts of the convent without

<sup>1</sup> A collation was a meal or repast on a fast-day in lieu of a supper.

leave; and that others ride to their manors and farms, under pretence of inspecting the concerns of the society, when they please, and stay as long as they please. But they are enjoined never to stir either about their own private concerns or the business of the convent without leave from the prior: and no canon is to go alone, but to have a grave brother to accompany him.

The injunction in *Item* 10th, at this distance of time, appears rather ludicrous; but the visitor seems to be very serious on the occasion, and says that it has been evidently proved to him that some of the canons, living dissolutely after the flesh, and not after the spirit, sleep naked in their beds without their breeches and shirts, “*absque femoralibus et camisiis.*”<sup>1</sup> He enjoins that these culprits shall be punished by severe fasting, especially if they shall be found to be faulty a third time; and threatens the prior and sub-prior with suspension if they do not correct this enormity.

In *Item* 11th the good bishop is very wroth with some of the canons, whom he finds to be professed hunters and sportsmen, keeping hounds, and publicly attending hunting-matches. These pursuits, he says, occasion much dissipation, danger to the soul and body, and frequent expense; he, therefore, wishing to extirpate this vice wholly from the convent, “*radicibus extirpare,*” does absolutely enjoin the canons never intentionally to be present at any public noisy tumultuous huntings; or to keep any hounds, by themselves or by others, openly or by stealth, within the convent, or without.<sup>2</sup>

In *Item* 12th he forbids the canons in office to make

<sup>1</sup> The rule alluded to in *Item* 10th, of not sleeping naked, was enjoined the *Knight's Templars*, who also were subject to the rules of St. *Augustine*.—See *Gurtleri Hist. Templariorum.*—[G. W.]

<sup>2</sup> Considering the strong propensity in human nature towards the pleasures of the chase, it is not to be wondered that the canons of *Selborne* should languish after hunting, when from their situation so near the precincts of *Woolmer-forest*, the king's hounds must have been often in hearing, and sometimes in sight from their windows. If the bishop was so offended at these sporting-canons, what would he have said to our modern fox-hunting divines?—[G. W.]

their business a plea for not attending the service of the choir; since by these means either divine worship is neglected or their brother-canons are over-burdened.

By *Item* 14 we are informed that the original number of canons at the Priory of *Selborne* was *fourteen*; but that at this visitation they were found to be let down to *eleven*. The visitor therefore strongly and earnestly enjoins them that, with all due speed and diligence, they should proceed to the election of proper persons to fill up the vacancies, under pain of the greater excommunication.

In *Item* 17th the prior and canons are accused of suffering, through neglect, notorious dilapidations to take place among their manerial houses and tenements, and in the walls and enclosures of the convent itself, to the shame and scandal of the institution; they are therefore enjoined, under pain of suspension, to repair all defects within the space of six months.

*Item* 18th charges them with grievously burthening the said Priory by means of sales, and grants of *liveries*<sup>1</sup> and *corrodies*.<sup>2</sup>

The bishop, in *item* 19th, accuses the canons of neglect and omission with respect to their perpetual *chantry-services*.

*Item* 20th. The visitor here conjures the prior and canons not to withhold their original *alms*, "*eleemosynas*"; nor those that they were enjoined to distribute for the good of the souls of founders and benefactors: he also strictly orders that the fragments and broken victuals, both from the hall of their prior and their common refectory, should be carefully collected together by their *eleemosynarius*, and given to the poor without any diminution; the officer to be suspended for neglect or omission.

<sup>1</sup> *Liberationes*, or *liberatura*, allowances of corn, &c., to servants, *delivered* at certain times and in certain quantities, as *clothes* were among the allowances from religious houses to their dependants. See the *corrodies* granted by *Croyland abbey*.—*Hist. of Croyland*, Appendix No. XXXIV.—[G. W.]

"It is not improbable that the word in after-ages came to be confined to the uniform of the retainers or servants of the great, who were hence called *livery servants*."—*Sir John Callum's Hist. of Hawsted*.—[G. W.]

<sup>2</sup> A *corrody* is an allowance to a servant living in an abbey or priory.—[G. W.]

*Item* 23d. He bids them distribute their *pittances*, "*pitancias*,"<sup>1</sup> regularly on obits, anniversaries, festivals, &c.

*Item* 25th. All and every one of the canons are hereby inhibited from standing godfather to *any boy* for the future, "*ne compadres alicujus pueri de cetero fieri presumatis*," unless by express license from the bishop obtained; because from such relationship favour and affection, nepotism, and undue influence, arise, to the injury and detriment of religious institutions.<sup>2</sup>

*Item* 26th. The visitor herein severely reprimands the canons for appearing publicly in what would be called in the universities an *unstatutable manner*, and for wearing of boots, "*caligæ de Burneto, et sotularium* —in ocrearum loco, ad modum sotularium."<sup>3</sup>

It is remarkable that the bishop expresses more warmth against this than any other irregularity; and strictly enjoins them, under pain of ecclesiastical censures, and even imprisonment if necessary (a threat not made use of before),

<sup>1</sup> *Pitancia*, an allowance of bread and beer, or other provision to any pious use, "especially to the religious in a monastery, &c., for augmentation of their commons."—*Gloss. to Kennel's Par. Antiq.*—[G. W.]

<sup>2</sup> The relationship between sponsors and their god-children, who were called *spiritual sons and daughters*, was formerly esteemed much more sacred than at present. The presents at christenings were sometimes very considerable: the connexion lasted through life, and was closed with a legacy. This last mark of attention seems to have been thought almost indispensable: for, in a will from whence no extracts have been given, the testator left every one of his god-children a bushel of barley."—*Sir John Callum's Hist. of Hawsted.*—[G. W.]

"D *Margaretæ* filix regis primogenitæ, quam *filiolam*, quia ejus in baptismo *compater* fuit, appellat, cyphum aureum et quadraginta libras, legavit."—Archbishop *Parker* de *Antiquitate Eccles. Brit.* speaking of Archbishop *Morton.*—[G. W.]

<sup>3</sup> *Du Fresne* is copious on *caligæ* of several sorts. "Hoc item de Clericis, presertim beneficiatis: *caligis* scacatis (chequered) rubeis, et viridibus publice utentibus dicimus esse censendum."—*Statut. Eccles. Tutel.* The chequered boots seem to be the highland plaid stockings—"Burnetum, i.e. *Brunetum*, pannus non ex lanâ nativi coloris confectus."—"Sotularium, i.e., subtalaris, quia subtalo est. Peculium genus, quibus maxime Monachi nocte utebantur in ætate; in hyeme vero Soccis."

This writer gives many quotations concerning *Sotularia*, which were not to be made too shapely; nor were the *caligæ* to be laced on too nicely.—[G. W.]

for the future to wear boots, "ocreis seu botis," according to the regular usage of their ancient order.

*Item* 29th. He here again, but with less earnestness, forbids them foppish ornaments, and the affectation of appearing like beaux with garments edged with costly furs, with fringed gloves, and silken girdles trimmed with gold and silver. It is remarkable that no punishment is annexed to this injunction.

*Item* 31st. He here singly and severally forbids each canon not admitted to a cure of souls to administer extreme unction, or the sacrament, to clergy or laity; or to perform the service of matrimony, till he has taken out the license of the parish priest.

*Item* 32d. The bishop says in this *item* that he had observed and found, in his several visitations, that the sacramental plate and cloths of the altar, surplices, &c., were sometimes left in such an uncleanly and disgusting condition as to make the beholders shudder with horror—"Quod aliquibus sunt horri:"<sup>1</sup> he therefore enjoins them for the future to see that the plate, cloths, and vestments, be kept bright, clean, and in decent order: and, what must surprise the reader, adds—that he expects for the future that the sacrist should provide for the sacrament good wine, pure and unadulterated; and not, as had often been the practice, that which was sour, and tending to decay:—he says farther, that it seems quite preposterous to omit in sacred matters that attention to decent cleanliness, the neglect of which would disgrace a common convivial meeting.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> "Men abhorred the offering of the Lord."—1 *Sam. chap. ii. v. 17.* Strange as this account may appear to modern delicacy, the author, when first in orders, twice met with similar circumstances attending the sacrament at two churches belonging to two obscure villages. In the first he found the inside of the chalice covered with birds' dung; and in the other the communion-cloth soiled with cabbage and the greasy drippings of a gammon of bacon. The good dame at the great farm-house, who was to furnish the cloth, being a notable woman, thought it best to save her clean linen, and so sent a foul cloth that had covered her own table for two or three *Sundays* before.—[G. W.]

<sup>2</sup> "— ne turpe toral, ne sordida mappa  
Corruget nares: ne non et cantharus, et lanx  
Ostendat tibi te."—[G. W.]

*Item* 33d says that though the relics of saints, the plate, holy vestments, and books of religious houses, are forbidden by canonical institutes to be pledged or lent out upon pawn ; yet, as the visitor finds this to be the case in his several visitations, he therefore strictly enjoins the prior forthwith to recall those pledges, and to restore them to the convent ; and orders that all the papers and title deeds thereto belonging should be safely deposited, and kept under three locks and keys.

In the course of the *Visitatio Notabilis*, the *constitutions* of *Legate Ottobonus* are frequently referred to. *Ottobonus* was afterwards *Pope Adrian V.*, and died in 1276. His constitutions are in *Lyndewood's Provinciale*, and were drawn up in the 52d of *Henry III.*

In the *Visitatio Notabilis* the usual punishment is fasting on bread and beer ; and in cases of repeated delinquency on bread and water. On these occasions *quarta feria*, et *sexta feria*, are mentioned often, and are to be understood of the days of the *week* numerically on which such punishment is to be inflicted.

## LETTER XV

THOUGH Bishop *Wykeham* appears somewhat stern and rigid in his visitatorial character towards the Priory of *Selborne*, yet he was on the whole a liberal friend and benefactor to that convent, which, like every society or individual that fell in his way, partook of the generosity and benevolence of that munificent prelate.

“In the year 1377 *William* of *Wykeham*, out of his mere good will and liberality, discharged the whole debts of the prior and convent of *Selborne*, to the amount of one hundred and ten marks eleven shillings and sixpence;<sup>1</sup> and, a few years before he died, he made a free gift of one hundred marks to the same Priory: on which account the prior and convent voluntarily engaged for the celebration of two masses a day by two canons of the convent for ten years, for the bishop’s welfare, if he should live so long; and for his soul if he should die before the expiration of this term.”<sup>2</sup>

At this distance of time it seems matter of great wonder to us how these societies, so nobly endowed, and whose members were exempt by their very institution from every means of personal and family expense, could possibly run in debt without squandering their revenues in a manner incompatible with their function.

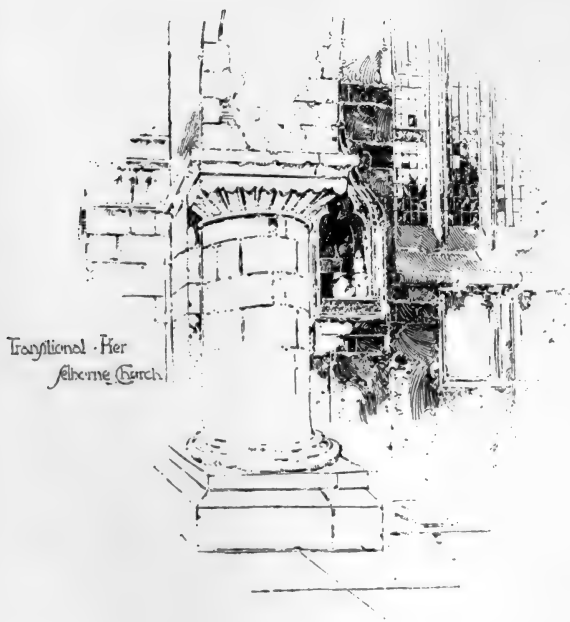
Religious houses might sometimes be distressed in their revenues by fires among their buildings, or large dilapidations from storms, &c.; but no such accident appears to

<sup>1</sup> Yet in ten years time we find, by the *Notabilis Visitatio*, that all their relics, plate, vestments, title-deeds, &c., were in pawn.—[G. W.]

<sup>2</sup> *Lowth’s Life of Wykeham*.—[G. W.]



have befallen the Priory at *Selborne*. Those situate on public roads, or in great towns where there were shrines of saints, were liable to be intruded on by travellers, devotees and pilgrims; and were subject to the importunity of the poor, who swarmed at their gates to partake of doles and broken victuals. Of these disadvantages some convents used to complain, and especially those at *Canterbury*; but this Priory, from its sequestered situation, could seldom be subject to either of these inconveniences, and therefore we must attribute it's frequent debts and embarrassments, well endowed as it was, to the bad conduct of it's members, and a general inattention to the interests of the institution.



## LETTER XVI

BEAUFORT was bishop of *Winchester* from 1405 to 1447; and yet, notwithstanding this long episcopate, only tom. i. of *Beaufort's Register* is to be found. This loss is much to be regretted, as it must unavoidably make a gap in the history of *Selborne Priory*, and perhaps in the list of it's priors.

In 1410 there was an election for a prior, and again in 1411.

In vol. i. p. 24, of *Beaufort's Register*, is the instrument of the election of *John Wynchestre* to be prior—the substance as follows :—

*Richard Elstede*, senior canon, signifies to the bishop that brother *Thomas Weston*, the late prior, died *October 18th*, 1410, and was buried *November 11th*. That the bishop's license to elect having been obtained he and the whole convent met in the chapter-house, on the same day about the hour of vespers, to consider of the election: that brother *John Wynchestre*, then sub-prior, with the general consent, appointed the 12th of *November*, *ad horam ejusdem diei capitularem*, for the business: when they met in the chapter-house, *post missam de sancto Spiritu*, solemnly celebrated in the church;—to wit, *Richard Elstede*; *Thomas Halyborne*; *John Lemyngton*, sacrista; *John Stepe*, cantor; *Walter Ffarnham*; *Richard Putworth*, celerarius; *Hugh London*, *Henry Brampton*, alias *Brompton*; *John Wynchestre*, senior; *John Wynchestre*, junior; then "Proposito primitus verbo Dei," and then ympno "Veni Creator Spiritus" being solemnly sung, cum "versiculo et oratione," as usual, and his letter of license, with the appointment

of the hour and place of election being read, *alta voce*, in valvis of the chapter-house ;—*John Wynchestre*, senior, the sub-prior, in his own behalf, and that of all the canons, and by their mandate, “quasdam monicionem et protestacionem in scriptis redactas fecit, legit, et interposuit”—that all persons disqualified, or not having right to be present, should immediately withdraw ; and protesting against their voting, &c. ; that then having read the constitution of the general council “*Quia propter*,” and explained the modes of proceeding to election, they agreed unanimously to proceed “*per viam seu formam simplicis compromissi* ;” when *John Wynchestre*, sub-prior, and all the others (the commissaries under-named excepted) named and chose brothers *Richard Elstede*, *Thomas Halyborne*, *John Lemyngton*, the sacrist, *John Stepe*, chantor, and *Richard Putworth*, canons, to be commissaries, who were sworn each to nominate and elect a fit person to be prior : and empowered by letters patent under the common seal, to be in force only until the darkness of the night of the same day ;—that they, or the greater part of them, should elect for the whole convent, within the limited time, from their own number, or from the rest of the convent ; that one of them should publish their consent in common before the clergy and people :—they then all promised to receive as prior the person these five canons should fix on. These commissaries seceded from the chapter-house to the refectory of the Priory, and were shut in with Master *John Penkester*, bachelor of laws, and *John Couke* and *John Lynne*, perpetual vicars of the parish churches of *Newton* and *Selborne*, and with *Sampson Maycock*, a public notary ; where they treated of the election ; when they unanimously agreed on *John Wynchestre*, and appointed *Thomas Halyborne* to chuse him in common for all, and to publish the election as customary, and returned long before it was dark to the chapter-house, where *Thomas Halyborne* read publicly the instrument of election ; when all the brothers, the new prior excepted, singing solemnly the hymn “*Te Deum laudamus*,” *fecerunt deportari novum electum*, by some of the brothers from the

chapter-house to the high altar of the church;<sup>1</sup> and the hymn being sung, *dictisque versiculo et oratione consuētis in hac parte*, Thomas Halyborne, *mox tunc ibidem*, before the clergy and people of both sexes solemnly published the election *in vulgari*. Then *Richard Elstede*, and the whole convent by their proctors and nuncios appointed for the purposes, *Thomas Halyborne* and *John Stepe*, required several times the assent of the elected; “et tandem post diutinas interpellationes, et deliberationem providam penes se habitam, in hac parte divine nolens, ut asseruit, resistere voluntati,” within the limited time he signified his acceptance in the usual written form of words. The bishop is then supplicated to confirm their election, and do the needful, under common seal, in the chapter-house. *November 14, 1410.*

The bishop, *January 6, 1410, apud Esher in camera inferiori*, declared the election duly made, and ordered the new prior to be inducted—for this the archdeacon of *Winchester* was written to; “stallumque in choro, et locum in capitulo juxta morem preteriti temporis,” to be assigned him; and everything beside necessary to be done.

“BEAUFORT’S REGISTER,” VOL. I.

P. 2. Taxatio spiritualis Decanatus de *Aulton*, Ecclesia de *Selebourn*, cum Capella, xxx marc. decima xlib. iii. fol. Vicaria de *Selebourn* non taxatur propter exilitatem.

P. 9. Taxatio bonorum temporalium religiosorum in Archidiac. *Wynton*.

Prior de *Selebourn* habet meneria de

<i>Bromdene</i> taxat. ad . . . . .	xxx s. ii d.
Apud <i>Schete</i> ad . . . . .	xvii s.
P. <i>Selebourne</i> ad . . . . .	vi lib.
In civitate <i>Wynton</i> de reddit . . . . .	vi lib. viii ob.
Tannaria sua taxat ad . . . . .	x lib. s.
Summa tax. xxxviii lib. xiiii d. ob. Inde decima . . . . .	vi lib. s. q. ob.

<sup>1</sup> It seems here as if the canons used to *chair* their new elected prior from the chapter-house to the high altar of their convent church. In Letter XXI., on the same occasion it is said—“et sic canentes dictum electum ad majus altare ecclesie deduximus, ut apud nos moris est.”—[G. W.]

## LETTER XVII

INFORMATION being sent to *Rome* respecting the havock and spoil that was carrying on among the revenues and lands of the Priory of *Selborne*, as we may suppose by the bishop of *Winchester*, it's visitor, *Pope Martin*,<sup>1</sup> as soon as the news of these proceedings came before him, issued forth a *bull*, in which he enjoins his commissary immediately to revoke all the property that had been alienated.

In this instrument his holiness accuses the prior and canons of having granted away (they themselves and their predecessors) to certain clerks and laymen their tithes, lands, rents, tenements, and possessions, to some of them for their lives, to others for an undue term of years, and to some again for a perpetuity, to the great and heavy detriment of the monastery; and these leases were granted, he continues to add, under their own hands, with the sanction of an oath and the renunciation of all right and claims, and under penalties, if the right was not made good.—But it will be best to give an abstract from the bull.

N. 298. *Pope Martin's* bull touching the revoking of certaine things alienated from the Priory of *Seleburne*. Pontif. sui ann. i.

“*Martinus* Eps. servus servorum Dei. Dilecto filio Priori de *Suthvale*<sup>2</sup> *Wyntonien*, dioc. Salutem & apostolicam ben. Ad audientiam nostram pervenit quam tam dilecti filii prior et conventus monasterii de *Seleburn* per

<sup>1</sup> *Pope Martin V.* chosen about 1417. He attempted to reform the church, but died in 1431, just as he had summoned the Council of *Basil*.—[G. W.]

<sup>2</sup> Should have been no doubt *Southwick*, a priory under *Portsdown*.—[G. W.]

Priorem soliti gubernari ordinis St<sup>i</sup> *Augustini Winton.* Dioc. quam de predecessores eorum decimas, terras, redditus, domos, possessiones, *vineas*,<sup>1</sup> et quedam alia bona ad monasterium ipsum spectantia, datis super hoc litteris, interpositis juramentis, factis renuntiationibus, et penis adjectis, in gravem ipsius monasterii lesionem nonnullis clericis et laicis, aliquibus eorum ad vitam, quibusdam vero ad non modicum tempus, & aliis perpetuo ad firmam, vel sub censu annuo concesserunt; quorum aliqui, decunt super hiis a sede aplice in communi forma confirmationis litteras impetrasse. Quia vero nostra interest lesis monasteriis subvenire—[He the Pope here commands]—ea ad jus et proprietatem monasterii studeas legitime revocare," &c.

The conduct of the religious had now for some time been generally bad. Many of the monastic societies, being very opulent, were become voluptuous and licentious, and had deviated entirely from their original institutions. The laity saw with indignation the wealth and possessions of their pious ancestors perverted to the service of sensuality and indulgence, and spent in gratifications highly unbecoming the purposes for which they were given. A total disregard to their respective rules and discipline drew on the monks and canons a heavy load of popular odium. Some good men there were who endeavoured to oppose the general delinquency; but their efforts were too feeble to stem the torrent of monastic luxury. As far back as the year 1381, *Wickliffe's* principles and doctrines had made some progress, were well received by men who wished for a reformation, and were defended and maintained by them as long as they dared; till the bishops and clergy began to be so greatly alarmed, that they procured an act to be passed by which the secular arm was em-

<sup>1</sup> Mr. *Barrington* is of opinion that anciently the English *vinea* was in almost every instance an orchard; not perhaps always of apples merely, but of other fruits; as cherries, plums, and currants. We still say a plum or cherry-orchard.—See vol. iii. of *Archæologia*.

In the instance above, the Pope's secretary might insert *vineas* merely because they were a species of cultivation familiar to him in *Italy*.—[G. W.]

powered to support the corrupt doctrines of the church ; but the first lollard was not burnt until the year 1401.

The wits also of those times did not spare the gross morals of the clergy, but boldly ridiculed their ignorance and profligacy. The most remarkable of these were *Chaucer*, and his contemporary *Robert Langelande*, better known by the name of *Piers Plowman*. The laughable tales of the former are familiar to almost every reader ; while the *visions* of the latter are but in few hands. With a quotation from the *Passus Decimus* of this writer I shall conclude my letter ; not only on account of the remarkable prediction therein contained, which carries with it somewhat of the air of a prophecy ; but also as it seems to have been a striking picture of monastic insolence and dissipation ; and a specimen of one of the keenest pieces of satire now perhaps subsisting in any language, ancient or modern.

“ Now is religion a rider, a romer by streate ;  
 A leader of love-days, and a loud begger ;  
 A pricker on a palfrey from maner to maner,  
 A heape of hounds at his arse, as he a lord were.  
 And but if his knave kneel, that shall his cope bring,  
 He loureth at him, and asketh him who taught him curtesie,  
 Little had lords to done, to give lands from her heirs,  
 To religious that have no ruth if it rain on her altars.  
 In many places ther they persons be, by himself at ease :  
 Of the poor have they no pity, and that is her charitie ;  
 And they letten hem as lords, her lands lie so broad.  
 And *there shal come a king*,<sup>1</sup> and confess you religious ;  
 And beate you, as the bible telleth, for breaking your rule  
 And amend monials, and monks, and chanons,  
 And put hem to her penaunce *ad pristinum statum ire*.”

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<sup>1</sup> F. l. a., “ This prediction, although a probable conclusion concerning a king who after a time would suppress the religious houses is remarkable. I imagined it might have been foisted into the copies in the reign of king *Henry VIII.*, but it is to be found in MSS. of this poem, older than the year 1400.”—fol. l. a. b.

“ Again, where he, *Piers Plowman*, alludes to the *Knights Templars*, lately suppressed, he says

“ — Men of holie kirk

Shall turn as *Templars* did ; the tyme approacheth nere.”

“ This I suppose, was a favourite doctrine in *Wickliffe’s* discourses.”—*Warton Hist. of English Poetry*, vol. i. p. 282.—[G. W.]

## LETTER XVIII

WILLIAM of *Waynflete* became bishop of *Winchester* in the year 1447, and seems to have pursued the generous plan of *Wykeham* in endeavouring to reform the Priory of *Selborne*.

When *Waynflete* came to the see he found prior *Stype*, alias *Stepe*, still living, who had been elected as long ago as the year 1411.

Among my documents I find a curious paper of the things put into the custody of *Peter Bernes* the sacrist, and especially some *relics* : the title of this evidence is "No. 50, Indentura prioris de *Selborne* quorundam tradit. *Petro Bernes*, sacristæ ibidem, ann. Hen. VI. . . . una cum confiss. ejusdem *Petri* script." The occasion of this catalogue or list of effects, being drawn between the prior and sacrist does not appear, nor the date when ; only that it happened in the reign of *Hen. VI.* This transaction probably took place when *Bernes* entered on his office ; and there is the more reason to suppose that to be the case, because the list consists of vestments and implements, and relics, such as belonged to the church of the Priory, and fell under the care of the sacrist. For the numerous *items* I shall refer the curious reader to the Appendix, and shall just mention the relics, although they are not all specified ; and the state of the live stock of the monastery at that juncture.

"Item 2. *osculatör*. argent.

"Item 1. *osculatorium* cum *osse digiti auriculär*.—*Sti. Johannis Baptistæ*.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> How the convent came by the bone of the little finger of *St. John the Baptist* does not appear : probably the founder, while in *Palestine*, purchased it





Like Fish Pond.



"Item 1. parvam *crucem* cum V. *reliquiis*.

"Item 1. *anulum* argent. et deauratum *St. Edmundi*.<sup>2</sup>

"Item 2. *osculat.* de coper.

"Item 1. *junctorium* *St. Ricardi*.<sup>3</sup>

"Item 1. *pecten* *St. Ricardi*.<sup>4</sup>

The *staurum*, or live stock, is quite ridiculous, consisting only of "2 vacce, 1 sus, 4 hoggett. et 4 porcell."—viz., two cows, one sow, four porkers, and four pigs.

among the *Asiatics*, who were at that time great traders in relics. We know from the best authority that as soon as *Herod* had cruelly beheaded that holy man "his disciples came and took up the body and buried it, and went and told *Jesus*."—*Matt.* iv. 12. Farther would be difficult to say.—[G. W.]

<sup>2</sup> November 20, in the calendar, *Edmund* king and martyr, in the 9th century. See also a *Sanctus Edmundus* in *Godwin*, among the archbishops of *Canterbury*, in the 13th century; his surname *Rich*, in 1234.—[G. W.]

<sup>3</sup> April 3, *ibid.* *Richard* bishop of *Chichester*, in the 13th century, his surname *De la Wich* in 1245.

*Junctorium*, perhaps a *joint* or *limb* of *St. Richard*; but what particular joint the religious were not such osteologists as to specify. This barbarous word was not to be found in any dictionary consulted by the author.—[G. W.]

<sup>4</sup> "*Pecten* inter ministeria sacra recensetur, quo scil. sacerdotes ac clerici, antequam in ecclesiam procederent, crines pecterent. Equibus colligitur monachos, tunc temporis, non omnino tonsos fuisse."—*Du Fresne*.

The author remembers to have seen in great farm-houses a family comb chained to a post for the use of the hinds when they came into their meals.—[G. W.]

## LETTER XIX

STEPE died towards the end of the year 1453, as we may suppose pretty far advanced in life, having been prior forty-four years.

On the very day that the vacancy happened, viz., *January* 26, 1453-4, the sub-prior and convent petitioned the visitor—"vos unicum levamen nostrum, et spem unanimiter rogamus, quatinus eligendum ex nobis unum confratrem de gremio nostro, in nostra religione probatum et expertem, licenciam vestram paternalem cum plena libertate nobis concedere dignemini gracie." — *Reg. Waynflete*, tom. I.

Instead of the license requested we find next a commission "custodie prioratus de *Selebourne* durante vacatione," addressed to brother *Peter Berne*, canon-regular of the priory of *Selebourne*, and of the order of *St. Augustine*, appointing him keeper of the said priory, and empowering him to collect and receive the profits and revenues and "alia bona" of the said priory; and to exercise in every respect the full power and authority of a prior; but to be responsible to the visitor finally, and to maintain this superiority during the bishop's pleasure only. This instrument is dated from the bishop's manor-house in *Southwark*, March 1, 1453-4, and the seventh of his consecration.

After this transaction it does not appear that the chapter of the Priory proceeded to any election; on the contrary, we find that at six months end from the vacancy the visitor declared that a lapse had taken place; and that therefore he did confer the priorship on canon *Peter Berne*. — "Prioratum vacantem et ad nostram collationem, seu provisionem jure ad nos in hac parte *per lapsum* temporis

legitime devoluto spectantem, tibi (sc. *P. Berne*) de legitimo matrimonio procreato, &c.—conferimus," &c. This deed bears date July 28, 1454.—*Reg. Waynflete*, tom. I. p. 69.

On *February* 8, 1462, the visitor issued out a power of sequestration against the Priory of *Selborne* on account of notorious dilapidations, which threatened manifest ruin to the roofs, walls, and edifices, of the said convent; and appointing *John Hammond*, B.D., rector of the parish church of *Hettleigh*, *John Hylling*, vicar of the parish church of *Newton Valence*, and *Walter Gorfin*, inhabitant of the parish of *Selborne*, his sequestrators, to exact, collect, levy, and receive, all the profits and revenues of the said convent: he adds "ac ea sub areto, et tuto custodiatis, custodirive aciatis;" as they would answer it to the bishop at their peril.

In consequence of these proceedings prior *Berne*, on the last day of *February*, and the next year, produced a state of the revenues of the Priory, No. 381, called "A paper conteyning the value of the manors and lands per-tayning to the Priory of *Selborne*, 4 *Edward* III., with a note of charges yssuing out of it."

This is a curious document, and will appear in the Appendix. From circumstances in this paper it is plain that the sequestration produced good effects; for in it are to be found bills of repairs to a considerable amount.

By this evidence also it appears that there were at that juncture only four canons at the Priory;<sup>1</sup> and that these, and their four household servants, during this sequestration for their clothing, wages, and diet, were allowed *per ann.* xxx. lib.; and that the annual pension of the lord prior, reside where he would, was to be x. lib.

In the year 1468, prior *Berne*, probably wearied out by the dissensions and want of order that prevailed in the convent, resigned his priorship into the hands of the bishop.—*Reg. Waynflete*, tom I., pars 1<sup>ma</sup>, fol. 157.

<sup>1</sup> If bishop *Wykeham* was so disturbed (see *Notab. Visitatio*) to find the number of canons reduced from fourteen to eleven, what would he have said to have seen it diminished below one third of that number?—[G. W.]

*March 28, A.D. 1468.* "In quadam alta camera juxta magnam portam manerii of the bishop of *Wynton de Waltham* coram eodem rev. patre ibidem tunc sedente, *Peter Berne*, prior of *Selborne*, ipsum prioratum in sacras, et venerabiles manus of the bishop, viva voce libere resignavit: and his resignation was admitted before two witnesses and a notary-public. In consequence, *March 29th*, before the bishop, in capella manerii sui ante dicti pro tribunali sedente, comparuerunt fratres" *Peter Berne Thomas London*, *William Wyndesor*, and *William Paynell*, alias *Stretford*, canons regular of the Priory, "capitulum, et conventum ejusdem ecclesie facientes; ac jus et voces in electione futura prioris dicti prioratus solum et in solidum, ut asseruerunt, habentes;" and after the bishop had notified to them the vacancy of a prior, with his free license to elect, deliberated awhile, and then, by way of compromise, as they affirmed, unanimously transferred their right of election to the bishop before witnesses. In consequence of this the bishop, after full deliberation, proceeded, *April 7th*, "in capella manerii sui de *Waltham*," to the election of a prior; "et fratrem *Johannem Morton*, priorem ecclesie conventualis de *Reygate* dicti ordinis S<sup>ti</sup>. *Augustini Wynton*. dioc. in priorem vice et nomine omnium et singulorum canonicorum predictorum elegit, in ordine sacerdotali, et etate licita constitutum, &c." And on the same day, in the same place, and before the same witnesses, *John Morton* resigned to the bishop the priorship of *Reygate viva voce*. The bishop then required his consent to his own election: "qui licet in parte renitens tanti reverendi patris se confirmans," obeyed, and signified his consent *oraculo vive vocis*. Then was there a mandate citing any one who would gainsay the said election to appear before the bishop or his commissary in his chapel at *Farnham* on the second day of *May* next. The dean of the deanery of *Aulton* then appeared before the chancellor, his commissary, and returned the citation or mandate dated *April 22d*, 1468, with signification, in writing, of his having published it as required, dated *Newton Valence, May 1st*,

1468. This certificate being read, the four canons of *Selborne* appeared and required the election to be confirmed; *et ex super abundanti* appointed *William Long* their proctor to solicit in their name that he might be canonically confirmed. *John Morton* also appeared, and proclamation was made; and no one appearing against him, the commissary pronounced all absentees contumacious, and precluded them from objecting at any other time; and, at the instance of *John Morton* and the proctor, confirmed the election by his decree, and directed his mandate to the rector of *Hedley* and the vicar of *Newton Valence* to install him in the usual form.

Thus, for the first time, was a person, a stranger to the convent of *Selborne*, and never canon of that monastery, elected prior; though the style of the petitions in former elections used to run thus,—“Vos - - - rogamus quatinus eligendum ex nobis unum confratrem de gremio nostro,—licentiam vestram—nobis concedere dignemini.”

## LETTER XX

PRIOR *MORTON* dying in 1471, two canons, by themselves, proceeded to election, and chose a prior; but two more (one of them *Berne*) complaining of not being summoned, objected to the proceedings as informal; till at last the matter was compromised that the bishop should again, for that turn, nominate as he had before. But the circumstances of this election will be best explained by the following extract:—

REG. WAYNFLETE, tom. II., pars 1<sup>ma</sup>., fol. 7.

Memorandum. A.D. 1471. August 22.

*William Wyndesor*, a canon-regular of the Priory of *Selborne*, having been elected prior on the death of brother *John*, appeared in person before the bishop in his chapel at *South Waltham*. He was attended on this occasion by *Thomas London* and *John Bromesgrove*, canons, who had elected him. *Peter Berne* and *William Stratfeld*, canons, also presented themselves at the same time, complaining that in this business they had been overlooked, and not summoned; and that therefore the validity of the election might with reason be called in question, and quarrels and dissensions might probably arise between the newly chosen prior and the parties thus neglected.

After some altercation and dispute they all came to an agreement with the new prior, that what had been done should be rejected and annulled; and that they would again, for this turn, transfer to the bishop their power to elect, order, and provide them another prior, whom they promised unanimously to admit.



The bishop accepted of this offer before witnesses ; and on *September 27*, in an inner chamber near the chapel above mentioned, after full deliberation, chose brother *Thomas Fairwise*, vicar of *Somborne*, a canon-regular of *St. Augustine* in the Priory of *Bruscough*, in the diocese of *Coventry* and *Litchfield*, to be prior of *Selborne*. The form is nearly as above in the last election. The canons are again enumerated ; *W. Wyndesor*, sub-prior, *P. Berne*, *T. London*, *W. Stratfeld*, *J. Bromesgrove*, who had formed the chapter, and had requested and obtained license to elect, but had unanimously conferred their power on the bishop. In consequence of this proceeding, the bishop taking the business upon himself, that the priory might not suffer detriment for want of a governor, appoints the aforesaid *T. Fairwise* to be prior. A citation was ordered as above for gainsayers to appear *October 4th*, before the bishop or his commissaries at *South Waltham* ; but none appearing, the commissaries admitted the said *Thomas*, ordered him to be installed, and sent the usual letter to the convent to render him due obedience.

Thus did the bishop of *Winchester* a second time appoint a stranger to be prior of *Selborne*, instead of one chosen out of the chapter. For this seeming irregularity the visitor had no doubt good and sufficient reasons, as probably may appear hereafter.

## LETTER XXI

WHATEVER might have been the abilities and disposition of prior *Fairwise*, it could not have been in his power to have brought about any material reformation in the Priory of *Selborne*, because he departed this life in the month of *August*, 1472, before he had presided one twelve-month.

As soon as their governor was buried the chapter applied to their visitor for leave to chuse a new prior, which being granted, after deliberating for a time, they proceeded to an election by a *scrutiny*. But as this mode of voting has not been described but by the mere form in the *Appendix*, an extract from the bishop's register, representing the manner more fully, may not be disagreeable to several readers.

WAYNEFLETE REG. tom. II. pars. 1<sup>ma</sup>., fol. 15.

“Reverendo, &c., ac nostro patrono graciousissimo vestri humiles, et devote obedientie filii,” &c.

To the right reverend Father in God, and our most gracious patron, we, your obedient and devoted sons, *William Wyndesor*, president of the chapter of the Priory of *Selborne*, and the convent of that place, do make known to your lordship, that our priorship being lately vacant by the death of *Thomas Fairwise*, our late prior, who died August 11th, 1472, having committed his body to decent sepulture, and having requested, according to custom, leave to elect another, and having obtained it under your seal, we, *William Wyndesor*, president of the convent on the

29th of August, in our chapter-house assembled, and making a chapter, taking to us in this business *Richard ap Jenkyn*, and *Galfrid Bryan*, chaplains, that our said Priory might not by means of this vacancy incur harm or loss, unanimously agreed on *August* the last for the day of election; on which day, having first celebrated mass, "De sancto spiritu," at the high altar, and having called a chapter by tolling a bell about ten o' the clock, we, *William Wyndesor*, president, *Peter Berne*, *Thomas London*, and *William Stratfeld*, canons, who alone had voices, being the only canons, about ten o' the clock, first sung "Veni Creator," the letters and license being read in the presence of many persons there. Then *William Wyndesor*, in his own name, and that of all the canons, made solemn proclamation, enjoining all who had no right to vote to depart out of the chapter-house. When all were withdrawn except *Guyllery de Lacuna*, in decretis Baccalarius, and *Robert Peverell*, notary-public, and also the two chaplains, the first was requested to stay, that he might direct and inform us in the mode of election; the other, that he might record and attest the transactions; and the two last that they might be witnesses to them.

Then, having read the constitution of the general council "Quia propter," and the forms of elections contained in it being sufficiently explained to them by *De Lacuna*, as well in Latin as the vulgar tongue, and having deliberated in what mode to proceed in this election, they resolved on that of *scrutiny*. Three of the canons, *Wyndesor*, *Berne*, and *London*, were made *scrutators*: *Berne*, *London*, and *Stratfeld*, chusing *Wyndesor*; *Wyndesor*, *London*, and *Stratfeld*, chusing *Berne*; *Wyndesor*, *Berne*, and *Stratfeld*, chusing *London*.

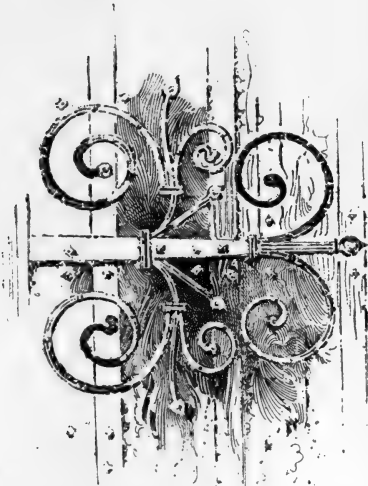
They were empowered to take each other's vote, and then that of *Stratfeld*; "et ad inferiorem partem angularem" of the chapter-house, "juxta ostium ejusdem declinentes," with the other persons (except *Stratfeld*, who staid behind), proceeded to voting, two swearing, and taking the voice of the third, in succession, privately.

*Wyndesor* voted first; "Ego credo *Petrum Berne* meliorem et utiliore ad regimen istius ecclesie, et in ipsum consentio, ac eum nomino," &c. *Berne* was next sworn, and in like manner nominated *Wyndesor*; *London* nominated *Berne*: *Stratfeld* was then called and sworn, and nominated *Berne*.

"Quibus in scriptis redactis," by the notary-public, they returned to the upper part of the chapter-house, where by *Wyndesor* "sic purecta fecerunt in communi" and then solemnly, in form written, declared the election of *Berne*; when all, "antedicto nostro electo excepto, approbantes et ratificantes, cepimus decantare solemniter '*Te Deum laudamus*,' et sic canentes dictum electum ad majus altare ecclesie deduximus, ut apud nos est moris. Then *Wyndesor* electionem clero et populo infra chorum dicte ecclesie congregatis publicavit, et personam electi publice et personaliter ostendit." We then returned to the chapter-house, except our prior; and *Wyndesor* was appointed by the other two their proctor, to desire the assent of the elected, and to notify what had been done to the bishop; and to desire him to confirm the election, and do whatever else was necessary. Then their proctor, before the witnesses, required *Berne's* assent in the chapter-house; "qui quidem instantiis et precibus multiplicatis devictus," consented, "licet indignus electus," in writing. They therefore request the bishop's confirmation of their election "sic canonice et solemniter celebrata," &c., &c. Sealed with their common seal, and subscribed and attested by the notary. Dat. in the chapter-house *September* 5th, 1472.

In consequence, *September* 11th, 1472, in the bishop's chapel at *Esher*, and before the bishop's commissary, appeared *W. Wyndesor*, and exhibited the above instrument, and a mandate from the bishop for the appearance of gainsayers of the election there on that day;—and no one appearing, the absentees were declared contumacious, and the election confirmed; and the vicar of *Aulton* was directed to induct and install the prior in the usual manner.

Thus did canon *Berne*, though advanced in years, re-assume his abdicated priorship for the second time, to the no small satisfaction, as it may seem, of the bishop of *Winchester*, who professed, as will be shown not long hence, an high opinion of his abilities and integrity.



Hinge from Selborne Church.

## LETTER XXII

As prior *Berne*, when chosen in 1454, held his priorship only to 1468, and then made a voluntary resignation, wearied and disgusted, as we may conclude, by the disorder that prevailed in his convent; it is no matter of wonder that, when re-chosen in 1472 he should not long maintain his station; as old age was then coming fast upon him, and the increasing anarchy and misrule of that declining institution required unusual vigour and resolution to stem that torrent of profligacy which was hurrying it on to it's dissolution. We find, accordingly, that in 1478 he resigned his dignity again into the hands of the bishop.

WAYNFLETE REG. fol. 55.

Resignatio Prioris de Seleborne.

*May* 14, 1478. *Peter Berne* resigned the priorship. *May* 16, the bishop admitted his resignation "in manerio suo *de Waltham*," and declared the priorship void; "et priorat. solacio destitutum esse;" and granted his letters for proceeding to a new election: when all the religious assembled in the chapter-house, did transfer their power under their seal to the bishop, by the following public instrument.

"In Dei nomine Amen," &c. A.D. 1478, Maii 19. In the chapter-house for the election of a prior for that day, on the free resignation of *Peter Berne*, having celebrated in the first place mass at the high altar "De spiritu sancto," and having called a chapter by tolling a bell, *ut moris est*; in the presence of a notary and witnesses appeared personally *Peter Berne*, *Thomas Ashford*, *Stephen Clydgrove*, and

*John Ashton*, presbyters, and *Henry Canwood*,<sup>1</sup> in chapter assembled; and after singing the hymn “‘*Veni Creator Spiritus*,’ cum versiculo et oratione ‘*Deus qui corda*;’ declaratque licentia Fundatoris et patroni; futurum priorem eligendi concessa, et constitutione consilii generalis que incipit, ‘*Quia propter*,’ declaratis: viisque per quas possent ad hanc electionem procedere,” by the *decretorum doctorem*, whom the canons had taken to direct them—they all and every one “dixerunt et affirmarunt se nolle ad aliquam viam procedere;”—but for this turn only, renounced their right, and unanimously transferred their power to the bishop, the ordinary of the place, promising to receive whom he should provide; and appointed a proctor to present the instrument to the bishop under their seal; and required their notary to draw it up in due form, &c. subscribed by the notary.

After the visitor had fully deliberated on the matter, he proceeded to the choice of a prior, and elected by the following instrument, *John Sharp*, alias *Glastenbury*.

Fol. 56. PROVISIO PRIORIS per EPM.

Willmus, &c., to our beloved brother in Christ, *John Sharp*, alias *Glastenbury*, Ecclesie conventualis de *Bruton*, of the order of *St. Austin*, in the diocese of *Bath* and *Wells*, canon-regular—*salutem*, &c., “De tue circumspectionis industria plurimum confidentes, te virum providum et discretum, literarum scientia, et moribus merito commendandum,” &c.—do appoint you prior—under our seal, Dat. in manerio nostro de *Suthwaltham*, *May 20*,” 1478, “et nostre Consec. 31.”

Thus did the bishop, three times out of the four that he was at liberty to nominate, appoint a prior from a

<sup>1</sup> Here we see that all the canons were changed in six years; and that there was quite a new chapter, *Berne* excepted, between 1472 and 1478; for, instead of *Wyndesor*, *London*, and *Stratfeld*, we find *Ashford*, *Clydgrove*, *Ashton*, and *Canwood*, all new men, who were soon gone in their turn off the stage, and are heard of no more. For, in six years after, there seem to have been no canons at all.—[G. W.]

distance, a stranger to the place, to govern the convent of *Selborne*, hoping by this method to have broken the cabal, and to have interrupted that habit of mismanagement that had pervaded the society; but he acknowledges, in an evidence lying before us, that he never did succeed to his wishes with respect to those late governors,—“quos tamen male se habuisse, et inutiliter administrare, et administrasse usque ad presentia tempora post debitam investigationem, &c., invenit.” The only time that he appointed from among the canons, he made choice of *Peter Berne*, for whom he had conceived the greatest esteem and regard.

When prior *Berne* first relinquished his priorship, he returned again to his former condition of canon, in which he continued for some years: but when he was re-chosen, and had abdicated a second time, we find him in a forlorn state, and in danger of being reduced to beggary, had not the bishop of *Winchester* interposed in his favour, and with great humanity insisted on a provision for him for life. The reason for this difference seems to have been, that, in the first case, though in years, he might have been hale and capable of taking his share in the duty of the convent; in the second, he was broken with age, and no longer equal to the functions of a canon.

Impressed with this idea, the bishop very benevolently interceded in his favour, and laid his injunctions on the new-elected prior in the following manner.

Fol. 56. “In Dei nomine Amen. Nos *Willmus*, &c., considerantes *Petrum Berne*,” late prior, “in administratione spiritualium et temporalium prioratus laudabiliter vixisse et rexisse; ipsumque senio et corporis debilitate confractum; ne in opprobrium religionis *mendicari cogatur*; —eidem annuam pensionem a Domino *Johanne Sharpe*, alias *Glastonbury*, priore moderno,” and his successors, and, from the Priory or church, to be payed every year during his life, “de voluntate et ex consensu expressis” of the said *John Sharpe* “sub ea que sequitur forma verborum—assignamus:”



1st. That the said prior and his successors, for the time being, *honeste exhibebunt* of the fruits and profits of the priorship, "eidem esculenta et poculenta," while he remained in the Priory "sub consimili portione eorundem prout convenientur priori," for the time being, *ministrari contigerit*; and in like manner *uni famulo*, whom he should choose to wait on him, as to the *servientibus* of the prior.

*Item.* "Invenient seu exhibebunt eidem unam honestam cameram," in the Priory, "cum socalibus necessariis seu opportunis ad eundem."

*Item.* We will, ordain, &c., to the said *P. Berne* an annual pension of ten marks, from the revenue of the Priory, to be paid by the hands of the prior quarterly.

The bishop decrees farther, that *John Sharp*, and his successors, shall take an oath to observe this injunction, and that before their installation.

"*Lecta et facta sunt hæc in quodam alto oratorio,*" belonging to the bishop at *Suthwaltham*, *May 25, 1478*, in the presence of *John Sharp*, who gave his assent, and then took the oath before witnesses, with the other oaths before the chancellor, who decreed he should be inducted and installed; as was done that same day.

How *John Sharp*, alias *Glastonbury*, acquitted himself in his priorship, and in what manner he made a vacancy, whether by resignation, or death, or whether he was removed by the visitor, does not appear; we only find that some time in the year 1484 there was no prior, and that the bishop nominated canon *Ashford* to fill the vacancy.

## LETTER XXIII

THIS *Thomas Ashford* was most undoubtedly the last prior of *Selborne*; and, therefore, here will be the proper place to say something concerning a list of the priors, and to endeavour to improve that already given by others.

At the end of bishop *Tanner's Notitia Monastica*, the folio edition, among *Brown Willis's Principals of Religious Houses*, occur the names of eleven of the priors of *Selborne*, with dates. But this list is imperfect, and particularly at the beginning; for though the Priory was founded in 1232, yet it commences with *Nich. de Cantia*, elected in 1262; so that, for the first thirty years, no prior is mentioned; yet there must have been one or more. We were in hopes that the register of *Peter de Rupibus* would have rectified this omission; but, when it was examined, no information of the sort was to be found. From the year 1410 the list is much corrected and improved, and the reader may depend on it's being thenceforward very exact.

*A LIST of the PRIORS of SELBORNE PRIORY, from BROWN WILLIS'S  
PRINCIPALS OF RELIGIOUS HOUSES, with additions within [ ]  
by the Author*

[ <i>John</i> . . . was prior, <i>sine dat.</i> ] <sup>1</sup>	
<i>Nich de Cantia</i> el. . . . .	1262
[ <i>Peter</i> — was prior in . . . . .	1271]
[ <i>Richard</i> — was prior in . . . . .	1280]
<i>Will. Basing</i> was prior in . . . . .	1299

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<sup>1</sup> See, in Letter XI. of these Antiquities, the reason why Prior *John* . . . who had transactions with the *Knights Templars*, is placed in the list before the year 1262.—[G. W.]



The Graves of the Whites.



- Walter de Insula* el. in . . . . . 1324  
 [Some difficulties, and a devolution; but the election confirmed by bishop *Stratford*.]
- John de Wintōn* . . . . . 1339
- Thomas Weston* . . . . . 1377
- John Winchester* [*Wynchestre*] . . . . . 1410  
 [Elected by bishop *Beaufort* "per viam vel formam simplicis compromissi."]
- [*John Stype*, alias *Stepe*, in . . . . . 1411]
- Peter Bene* [alias *Berne* or *Bernes*, appointed keeper, and, by lapse to bishop *Waynflete*, prior] in . . . . . 1454  
 [He resigns in 1468.]
- John Morton* [Prior of *Reygate*] in . . . . . 1468  
 [The canons by compromise transfer the power of election to the bishop.]
- Will. Winsor* [*Wyndesor*, prior for a few days] . . . . . 1471  
 [But removed on account of an irregular election.]
- Thomas Farwill* [*Fairwise*, vicar of *Somborne*] . . . . . 1471  
 [By compromise again elected by the bishop.]
- [*Peter Berne*, re-elected by scrutiny in . . . . . 1472]  
 [Resigns again in 1478.]
- John Sharper* [*Sharp*], alias *Glastonbury* . . . . . 1478  
 [Canon-reg. of *Bruton*, elected by the bishop by compromise.]
- [*Thomas Ashford*, canon of *Selborne*, last prior elected by the bishop of *Winchester*, some time in the year 1484  
 And deposed at the dissolution.]

## LETTER XXIV

BISHOP *WAYNEFLETE*'S efforts to continue the Priory still proved unsuccessful; and the convent, without any canons, and for some time without a prior, was tending swiftly to its dissolution.

When *Sharp's* alias *Glastonbury's* priorship ended does not appear. The bishop says that he had been obliged to remove some priors for male-administration: but it is not well explained how that could be the case with any unless with *Sharp*, because all the others chosen during his episcopate died in their office, *viz.*, *Morton* and *Fairwise*; *Berne* only excepted, who relinquished twice voluntarily, and was, moreover, approved of by *Wayneflete* as a person of integrity. But the way to show what ineffectual pains the bishop took, and what difficulties he met with, will be to quote the words of the libel of his proctor, *Radolphus Langley*, who appeared for the bishop in the process of the impropriation of the Priory of *Selborne*. The extract is taken from an attested copy.

“Item—that the said bishop—dicto prioratui et personis ejusdem pie compatiens, sollicitudines pastorales, labores, et diligentias gravissimas quam plurimas, tam per se quam per suos, pro reformatione premissorum impendebat; et aliquando illius loci prioribus, propter malam et inutilem administrationem, et dispensationem bonorum predicti prioratus, suis demeritis exigentibus, amotis; alios priores in quorum circumspectione et diligentia confidebat, prefecit; quos tamen male se habuisse ac inutiliter administrare, et administrasse, usque ad presentia tempora post

debitam investigationem, &c., invenit." So that he despaired with all his care—"statum ejusdem reparare vel restaurare; et considerata temporis malicia, et preteritis timendo et conjecturando futura, de aliqua bona et sancta religione ejusdem ordinis, &c., juxta piam intentionem primevi fundatoris ibidem habend, desperatur."

*William Wainfleet*, bishop of *Winchester*, founded his college of *Saint Mary Magdalene* in the university of *Oxford*, in or about the year 1459; but the revenues proving insufficient for so large and noble an establishment, the college supplicated the founder to augment it's income by putting it in possession of the estates belonging to the *Priory of Selborne*, now become a deserted convent, without canons or prior. The president and fellows state the circumstances of their numerous institution and scanty provision and the ruinous and perverted condition of the *Priory*. The bishop appoints commissaries to inquire into the state of the said monastery; and, if found expedient, to confirm the appropriation of it to the college, which soon after appoints attornies to take possession, *September 24, 1484*. But the way to give the reader a thorough insight respecting this transaction, will be to transcribe a farther proportion of the process of the impropration from the beginning, which will lay open the manner of proceeding, and show the consent of the parties.

#### IMPROPRIATIO SELBORNE, 1485.

"Universis sancte matris ecclesie filiis, &c. *Ricardus* gratia prior ecclesie conventualis de *Novo Loco*, &c.,<sup>1</sup> ad universitatem vestre notitie deducimus, &c., quod coram nobis commissario predicto in ecclesia parochiali S<sup>ti</sup>. *Georgii*

<sup>1</sup> *Ecclesia Conventualis de Novo Loco* was the monastery afterwards called the *New Minster*, or *Abbey of Hyde*, in the city of *Winchester*. Should any intelligent reader wonder to see that the *prior of Hyde Abbey* was commissary to the bishop of *Winton*, and should conclude that there was a mistake in titles, and that the *abbot* must have been here meant; he will be pleased to recollect that this person was the second in rank; for, "next under the abbot, in every abbey, was the prior."—Pref. to *Notit. Monast.*, p. 29. Besides, abbots were great personages, and too high in station to submit to any office under the bishop.—[G. W.]

*de Esher*, dict. *Winton.* dioc. 3<sup>o</sup>. die *Augusti*, A.D. 1485. Indictione tertia pontificat. *Innocenti* 8<sup>vi</sup>. ann. 1<sup>mo</sup>. judicialiter comparuit venerabilis vir *Jacobus Preston*, S. T. P. infrascriptus, et exhibuit literas comissionis—quas quidem per magistrum *Thomam Somercotes* notarium publicum, &c., legi fecimus, tenorem sequentem in se continentes.” The same as in No. 103, but dated—“In manerio nostro *de Esher Augusti* 1<sup>mi</sup>. A.D. 1485, et nostre confec. anno 39.” [No 103 is repeated in a book containing the like process in the preceding year by the same commissary, in the parish church of St. *Andrew* the apostle, at *Farnham*, Sept. 6th, anno 1434.] “Post quarum literarum lecturam—dictus magister *Jacobus Preston*, quasdam procuratorias literas mag. *Richardi Mayhewe* presidentis, ut asseruit, *collegii beate Marie Magdalene*, &c., sigillo rotundo communi, &c., in cera rubea impresso sigillatas realiter exhibuit, &c., et pro eisdem dn̄is suis, &c., fecit se partem, ac nobis supplicavit ut juxta formam in eisdem traditam procedere dignaremur,” &c. After these proclamations no contradictor or objector appearing—“ad instantem petitionem ipsius mag. *Jac. Preston*, procuratoris, &c., procedendum fore decrevimus vocatis jure vocandis; nec non mag. *Tho. Somercotes* &c., in actorum nostrorum scribam nominavimus. Consequenter et ibidem tunc comparuit magister *Michael Clyff* &c., et exhibuit in ea parte procuratorium suum,” for the prior and convent of the cathedral of *Winton*, “et fecit se partem pro eisdem. Deinde comperuit coram nobis, &c., honestus vir *Willmus Cowper*,” proctor for the bishop as patron of the Priory of *Selborne*, and exhibited his “procuratorium,” &c. After these were read in the presence of *Clyff* and *Cowper*, “*Preston*, viva voca,” petitioned the commissary to annex and appropriate the Priory of *Selborne* to the college—“propter quod fructus, redditus, et proventus ejusdem coll. adeo tenues sunt, et exiles, quod ad sustentationem ejus, &c., non sufficiunt.” The commissary, “ad libellandum et articulandum in scriptis,”—adjourned the court to the 5th of *August*, then to be held again in the parish church of *Esher*.



*W. Cowper* being then absent, *Radulphus Langley* appeared for the bishop, and was admitted his proctor. *Preston* produced his libel or article in scriptis for the union, &c.; "et admitti petiit eundem cum effectu; cujus libelli tenor sequitur.—In Dei nomine, Amen. Coram nobis venerabili in Christo patre *Richardo*, priore, &c., de *Novo Loco*, &c., commissario, &c." Part of the College of Magd. dicit. allegat, and in his "scriptis proponit," &c.

"*Imprimis*—that said college consists of a president and eighty scholars, besides sixteen choristers, thirteen servientes inibi altissimo famulantibus, et in scientiis plerisque liberalibus, presertim in sacra theologia studentibus, nedum ad ipsorum presidentis et scholarium pro presenti et imposterum, annuente deo, incorporandorum in eodem relevamen; verum etiam ad omnium et singulorum tam scholarium quam religiosorum cujuscunque ordinis undequaque illuc confluere pro salubri doctrina volentium utilitatem multiplicem ad incrementa virtutis fideique catholice stabilimentum. Ita videlicet quod omnes et singuli absque personarum seu nationum delectu illuc accedere volentes, lecturas publicas et doctrinas tam in grammatica in loco ad collegium contiguo, ac philosophiis morali et naturali, quam in sacra theologia in eodem collegio perpetuis temporibus continuandas libere atque gratis audire valeant et possint, ad laudem gloriam et honorem Dei, &c., extitit fundatum et stabilitum."

For the first *item* in this process see the beginning of this letter. Then follows *item* the second—"that the revenues of the college non sufficiunt his diebus." "*Item*—that the premisses are true, &c., et super eisdem laborarunt, et laborante publica vox et fama. Unde facta fide petit pars eorundem that the Priory be annexed to the college; ita quod dicto prioratu vacante liceat iis ex tunc to take possession, &c." This libel, with the express consent of the other proctors, we, the commissary, admitted, and appointed the sixth of *August* for proctor *Preston* to prove the premisses.

*Preston* produced witnesses, *W. Gyfford*, S.T.P., *John Nele*, A.M., *John Chapman*, chaplain, and *Robert Baron*, literatus, who were admitted and sworn, when the court was prorogued to the 6th of *August*; and the witnesses, on the same 5th of *August*, were examined by the commissary, "in capella infra manerium de *Essher* situata secreta et singillatim." Then follow the "literæ procuratoriæ:" first that of the college, appointing *Preston* and *Langport* their proctors, dated *August* 30th, 1484; then that of the prior and convent of the cathedral of *Wintōn*, appointing *David Husband* and *Michael Cleve*, dated *September* 4th, 1484; then that of the bishop, appointing *W. Gyfford*, *Radulphus Langley* and *Will. Cowper*, dated *September* 3d, 1484. Consec. 38<sup>o</sup>.—"Quo die adveniente in dicta ecclesia parochiali," appeared, "coram nobis," *James Preston* to prove the contents of his libel, and exhibited some letters testimonial with the seal of the bishop, and these were admitted; and consequenter *Preston* produced two witnesses, viz., *Dominum Thomam Ashforde*, nuper priorem dicti prioratus, et *Willm. Rabbys*, literatum, who were admitted and sworn, and examined as the others, by the commissary; "tunc & ibidem assistente scriba secreta & singillatim;" and their depositions were read and made public, as follows:—

Mr. *W. Gyfford*, S.T.P., aged 57, of the state of *Magd. Coll.*, &c., &c., as before.

Mr. *John Nele*, aged 57, proves the articles also.

*Robert Baron*, aged 56.

*Johannes Chapman*, aged 35, also affirmed all the five articles.

*Dompnus Thomas Ashforde*, aged 72 years—"dicit 2<sup>dum</sup>. 3<sup>um</sup>. 4<sup>um</sup>. articulos in eodem libello contentos, concernentes statum dicti prioratus de *Selebourne*, fuisse et esse veros."

*W. Rabbys*, ætat 40 ann., agrees with *Gyfford*, &c.

Then follows the letter from the bishop, "in subsidium probationis," above-mentioned—"Willmus, &c., salutem, &c., noverint universitas vestra, quod licet nos prioratui

de *Selbourne*, &c., pie compacientes sollicitudines pastorales, labores, diligentias quam plurimas per nos & commissarios nostros pro reformatione status ejus impenderimus, justitia id poscente; nihilominus tamen," &c., as in the article—to "desperatur," dated "in manerio nostro de *Esher*, Aug. 3d., 1485, & consec. 39." Then on the 6th of *August*, *Preston*, in the presence of the other proctors, required that they should be compelled to answer; when they all allowed the articles, "fuisse & esse vera;" and the commissary, at the request of *Preston*, concluded the business, and appointed *Monday*, *August* 8th, for giving his decree in the same church of *Esher*; and it was that day read, and contains a recapitulation, with the sentence of union, &c., witnessed and attested.

As soon as the president and fellows of *Magdalene college* had obtained the decision of the commissary in their favour, they proceeded to supplicate the *pope*, and to entreat his holiness that he would give his sanction to the sentence of union. Some difficulties were started at *Rome*; but they were surmounted by the college agent, as appears by his letters from that city. At length *pope Innocent VIII.*, by a *bull*<sup>1</sup> bearing date the 8th of *June*, in the year of our Lord 1486, and in the second year of his pontificate, confirmed what had been done, and suppressed the convent.

Thus fell the considerable and well-endowed Priory of *Selborne* after it had subsisted about two hundred and fifty-four years: about seventy-four years after the suppression of Priors alien by *Henry V.*, and about fifty years before the general dissolution of monasteries by *Henry VIII.* The founder, it is probable, had fondly imagined that the sacredness of the institution, and the pious motives on

<sup>1</sup> There is nothing remarkable in this *bull* of *pope Innocent*, except the statement of the annual revenue of the Priory of *Selborne*, which is therein estimated at 160 *stor. auri*; whereas bishop *Godwin* sets it at 337*l.* 15*s.* 6*d.* Now a *stoen*, so named, says *Camden*, because made by *Florentius*, was a gold coin of king *Edward III.*, in value 6*s.*, whereof 160 is not one seventh part of 337*l.* 15*s.* 6*d.* —[G. W.]

which it was established, might have preserved it inviolate to the end of time—yet it fell—

“To teach us that God attributes to *place*  
No sanctity, if none be thither brought  
By men, who there frequent, or therein dwell.”

*Milton's Paradise Lost.*

## LETTER XXV

WAINFLEET did not long enjoy the satisfaction arising from this new acquisition; but departed this life in a few months after he had effected the union of the Priory with his late founded college; and was succeeded in the see of *Winchester*, by *Peter Courtney*, some time towards the end of the year 1486.

In the beginning of the following year, the new bishop released the president and fellows of *Magdalene College* from all actions respecting the Priory of *Selborne*; and the prior and convent of *Saint Swithun*, as the chapter of *Winchester* cathedral, confirmed the release.<sup>1</sup>

N. 293. “Relaxatio *Petri* epi *Wintōn*, *Ricardo*, *Mayew*, Presidenti omnium actionum occasione indemnitatis sibi debite pro unione Prioratus de *Selborne* dicto collegio. Jan. 2. 1487., et transl. anno 1<sup>o</sup>.”

N. 374. “Relaxatio prioris et conventus *Sti. Swithini Wintōn* confirmans relaxationem *Petri* ep. *Wintōn*.” 1487., Jan. 13.

*Ashforde*, the deposed prior, who had appeared as an evidence for the impropriation of the priory at the age of seventy-two years, that he might not be destitute of a maintenance, was pensioned by the college to the day of

<sup>1</sup> The Bishops of *Winchester* were patrons of the Priory.—[G. W.]

his death; and was living on till 1490, as appears by his acquittances.

REG. A. ff. 46.

“Omnibus Christi fidelibus ad quos presens scriptum pervenerit, *Richardus Mayew*, presidens, &c., et scolares, salutem in Domino.

“Noveritis nos prefatos presidentem et scolares, dedisse, concessisse, et hoc presenti scripto confirmasse *Thome Ashforde*, *capellano*, quendam annualem redditum sex librarum tresdecim solidorum et quatuor denariorum bone et legalis monete Anglie—ad terminum vite prefati *Thome*—to be paid from the possessions of the college in *Basingstoke*.—“In cujus rei testimonium sigillum nostrum commune presentibus apponimus. Dat. Oxon. in coll. nostro supra dicto primo die mensis *Junii* anno regis *Ricardi* tertii secundo,” viz. 1484. The college, in their grant to *Ashforde*, style him only *capellanus*; but the annuitant very naturally, and with a becoming dignity, asserts his late title in his acquittances, and identifies himself by the addition of the *nuper priorem*, or late prior.

As according to the persuasion of the times, the depriving the founder and benefactors of the Priory of their masses and services would have been deemed the most impious of frauds, bishop *Wainfleet*, having by statute ordained four *obits* for himself to be celebrated in the chapel of *Magdalen College* enjoined in one of them a special collect for the anniversary of *Peter de Rupibus*, with a particular prayer—“*Deus Indulgentiarum*.”

The college also sent *Nicholas Langrish*, who had been a chantry priest at *Selborne*, to celebrate mass for the souls of all that had been benefactors to the said Priory and college, and for all the faithful who had departed this life.

N. 356. *Thomas Knowles*, presidens, &c.—“*damus et concedimus Nicholao Langrish* quandum *capellaniam*, vel *salarium*, sive alio quocunque nomine censeatur, in prioratu *quondam* de *Selborne* pro termino 40 annorum, si tam diu vixerit. Ubi dictus mag. *Nicholaus* celebrabit pro

animabus omnium benefactorum dicti prioratus et coll. nostri, et omnium fidelium defunctorum. Insuper nos, &c., concedimus eidem ibidem celebranti in sustentationem suam quandam annualem pensionem sive annuitatem octo librarum, &c.—in dicta capella dicti prioratus—concedimus duas cameras contiguas ex parte boreali dicte capelle, cum *una coquina*, et cum uno stabulo conveniente pro tribus equis, cum pomerio eidem adjacente voc. le *Orcheyard*—Preterea 26s. 8d. per ann. ad inveniendum unum clericum ad serviendum sibi ad altare, et aliis negotiis necessariis ejus.”—His wood to be granted him by the president on the progress.—He was not to absent himself beyond a certain time; and was to superintend the coppices, wood, and hedges.—Dat. 5<sup>to</sup>. die *Julii*. an<sup>o</sup>. *Hen. VIII*<sup>vi</sup>. 36<sup>o</sup>. [viz. 1546.]

Here we see the priory in a new light, reduced, as it were, to the state of a *chantry*, without prior and without canons, and attended only by a priest, who was also a sort of bailiff or woodman, his assistant clerk and his female cook. *Owen Oglethorpe*, president of *Magd. Coll.* in the fourth year of *Edward VI.*, viz., 1551, granted an annuity of ten pounds a year for life to *Nich. Langrish*, who from the preamble, appears then to have been fellow of that society; but, being now superannuated for business, this pension is granted him for thirty years, if he should live so long. It is said of him—“cum jam sit provectoris etatis quam ut,” &c.

*Laurence Stubb*, president of *Magd. Coll.*, leased out the Priory lands to *John Sharp*, husbandman, for the term of twenty years, as early as the seventeenth year of *Henry VIII.*, viz., 1526: and it appears that *Henry Newlyn* had been in possession of a lease before, probably towards the end of the reign of *Henry VII.* *Sharp's* rent was vi<sup>li</sup>. *per ann.*—Regist. B. p. 43.

By an abstract from a lease lying before me, it appears that *Sharp* found a house, two barns, a stable, and a *dof-house* [*dove-house*] built, and standing on the south side of the old Priory and late in the occupation of *Newlyn*.

In this abstract also are to be seen the names of all the fields, many of which continue the same to this day.<sup>1</sup> Of some of them I shall take notice, where anything singular occurs.

And here first we meet with *Paradys* [Paradise] *mede*. Every convent had it's *Paradise*; which probably was an enclosed orchard, pleasantly laid out, and planted with fruit-trees. *Tylehouse*<sup>2</sup> grove, so distinguished from having a *tiled house* near it. *Butt-wood close*; here the servants of the Priory and the village-swains exercised themselves with their long bows, and shot at a mark against a butt, or bank.<sup>3</sup> *Cundyth* [conduit] *wood*: the engrosser of the lease not understanding this name, has made a strange barbarous word of it. *Conduit-wood* was and is a steep, rough cow-pasture, lying above the Priory, at about a quarter of a mile to the south-west. In the side of this field there is a spring of water that never fails; at the head of which a cistern was built which communicated with leaden pipes that conveyed water to the monastery. When this reservoir was first constructed does not appear; we only know that it underwent a repair in the episcopate of bishop *Wainsfleet*, about the year 1462.<sup>4</sup> Whether these pipes only conveyed the water to the Priory for common and culinary purposes, or contri-

<sup>1</sup> It may not be amiss to mention here that various names of *tithings, farms, fields, woods, &c.*, which appear in the ancient deeds, and evidences of several centuries standing, are still preserved in common use with little or no variation:—as *Norton, Southington, Durton, Achangre, Blackmore, Bradshot, Rood, Plestor, &c., &c.* At the same time it should be acknowledged that other places have entirely lost their original titles, as *le Buri* and *Trustedde* in this village; and *la Liega*, or *la Lyge*, which was the name of the original site of the Priory, &c.—[G. W.]

<sup>2</sup> Men at first heaped sods, or fern, or heath, on their roofs to keep off the inclemencies of weather; and then by degrees laid straw or haum. The first refinements on roofing were shingles which are very ancient. Tiles are a late and imperfect covering, and were not much in use till the beginning of the sixteenth century. The first tiled house at *Nottingham* was in 1503.—[G. W.]

<sup>3</sup> There is also a *Butt-close* just at the back of the village.—[G. W.]

<sup>4</sup> N. 381. “*Clausure terre abbacie ecclesie parochiali de Seleburne, ixs. iiiiid. Reparacionibus domorum predicti prioratus iiii. lib. xis. Aque conduct. ibidem. xxiiiid.*”—[G. W.]

buted to any matters of ornament and elegance, we shall not pretend to say; nor when artists and mechanics first understood anything of *hydraulics*, and that water confined in tubes would rise to it's original level. There is a person now living who had been employed formerly in digging for these pipes, and once discovered several yards, which they sold for old lead.

There was also a plot of ground called *Tan-house garden*: and "*Tannaria sua*," a *tan-yard of their own*, has been mentioned in Letter XVI. This circumstance I just take notice of, as an instance that monasteries had trades and occupations carried on within themselves.<sup>1</sup>

Registr. B., p. 112. Here we find a lease of the parsonage of *Selborne* to *Thomas Sylvester* and *Miles Arnold*, husbandmen — of the tythes of all manner of corne pertaining to the parsonage—with the offerings at the chapel of *Whaddon* belonging to the said parsonage. Dat. *June 1. 27<sup>th</sup>. Hen. 8<sup>th</sup>. [viz. 1536].*

As the chapel of *Whaddon* has never been mentioned till now, and as it is not noticed by Bishop *Tanner* in his *Notitia Monastica*, some more particular account of it will be proper in this place. *Whaddon* was a chapel of ease to the mother church of *Selborne*, and was situated in the tithing of *Oakhanger*, at about two miles distance from the village. The farm and field whereon it stood are still called *chapel farm* and *field*:<sup>2</sup> but there are no remains or traces of the building itself, the very foundations having been destroyed before the memory of man. In a farm-yard at *Oakhanger* we remember a large hollow stone, of a close substance, which had been used as a *hog-trough*, but was then broken. This stone, tradition said, had been the baptismal font of *Whaddon chapel*. The chapel had been in a very ruinous state in old days; but was new-built at the instance of bishop *Wainfleet*, about the year 1463, during the *first* priorship of *Berne*, in consequence

<sup>1</sup> There is still a wood near the Priory, called *Tanner's-wood*.—[G. W.]

<sup>2</sup> There is a manor-farm, at present the property of *Lord Stawell*; and belonged probably in ancient times to *Jo. de Venur* or *Venus*,\* one of the first benefactors to the Priory.—[G. W.]



of a sequestration issued forth by that visitor against the Priory on account of notorious and shameful dilapidations.<sup>1</sup>

The *Selborne* rivulet becomes of some breadth at *Oakhanger*, and, in very wet seasons, swells to a large flood. There is a bridge over the stream at this hamlet of considerable antiquity and peculiar shape, known by the name of *Tunbridge*: it consists of one single blunt *gothic* arch, so high and sharp as to render the passage not very convenient or safe. Here was also, we find, a bridge in very early times; for *Jacobus de Hochangre*, the first benefactor to the Priory of *Selborne*, held his estate at *Hochangre* by the service of providing the king one foot-soldier for forty days, and by building this bridge. "*Jacobus de Hochangre tenet. Hochangre in com. Southampton, per Serjantiam,*<sup>2</sup> *inveniendi unum valectum in exercitu Domini regis [scil. Henrici III<sup>ti</sup>.] per 40 dies; et ad faciendum pontem de Hochangre: et valet per ann. C. s.*"—"*Blount's Ancient Tenures,*" p. 84.

A *dove-house* was a constant appendant to a manerial dwelling: of this convenience more will be said hereafter.

A *corn-mill* was also esteemed a necessary appendage of every manor; and therefore was to be expected of course at the Priory of *Selborne*.

The prior had *secta molendini* or *ad molendinum*;<sup>3</sup> a power of compelling his vassals to bring their corn to be ground at his mill, according to an old custom. He had also, according to bishop *Tanner*, *secta molendini de Strete*; but the purport of *Strete*, we must confess, we do not understand. *Strete*, in old English, signifies a road or highway, as *Watling Strete*, &c., therefore the prior might have some mill on a high road. The Priory had only one

<sup>1</sup> See Letter XIX. of these Antiquities.—"Summa total. solut. de novis edificationibus, et reparacionibus per idem tempus. ut patet per comput."

"Videlicet de nova edificat. *Capelle Marie de Wadden.* xiiii. lib. vs. viiid.—Reparacionibus ecclesie, Prioratus, cancellor. et capellar. ecclesiarum et capellarum de *Selborne*, et *Estworhlam.*"—&c., &c.—[G. W.]

<sup>2</sup> *Sargentia*, a sort of tenure of doing something for the king.—[G. W.]

<sup>3</sup> "Servitium, quo feudatorii grana sua ad Domini molendinum, ibi molenda perferre, ex consuetudine, astringuntur."—[G. W.]

mill originally at *Selborne*; but, by grants of lands, it came possessed of one at *Durton*, and one at *Oakhanger*, and probably some on its other several manors.<sup>1</sup> The mill at the Priory was in use within the memory of man, and the ruins of the mill-house were standing within these thirty years: the pond and dam, and miller's dwelling, still remain.<sup>2</sup> As the stream was apt to fail in very dry summers, the tenants found their situation very distressing, for want of water, and so were forced to abandon the spot. This inconvenience was probably never felt in old times, when the whole district was nothing but woodlands; and yet several centuries ago there seem to have been two or three mills between *Well-head* and the *Priory*. For the reason of this assertion, see Letter XXIX. to Mr. *Barrington*.

Occasional mention has been made of the many privileges and immunities enjoyed by the convent and its priors; but a more particular state seems to be necessary. The author, therefore, thinks this the proper place, before he concludes these antiquities, to introduce all that has been collected by the judicious bishop *Tanner*, respecting the priory and its advantages, in his *Notitia Monastica*, a book now seldom seen, on account of the extravagance of its price, and being but in few hands cannot be easily consulted.<sup>3</sup> He also adds a few of its many privileges from other authorities:—the account is as follows. *Tanner*, page 166.

#### SELBORNE.

A priory of *black canons*, founded by the often-mentioned *Peter de Rupibus*, bishop of *Winchester*, A.D. 1233, and

<sup>1</sup> Thomas Knowles, president, &c., ann. Hen. 8vi. xxiii<sup>o</sup>. [1532] demised to J. Whitelie their mills. &c., for twenty years. Rent xxiiis. iiiid.—Accepted Frewen, president, &c., ann. Caroli xv. [viz. 1640.] demised to Jo. Hook and Elizabeth his wife, the said mills. Rent as above.—[G. W.]

<sup>2</sup> The last remains of wooden planks which had formed the base of the mill were swept away in the flood of November 1899.—[R. B. S.]

<sup>3</sup> A few days after this was written a new edition of this valuable work was announced in the month of *April* of the year 1787, as published by Mr. *Nasmith*.—[G. W.]

dedicated to the blessed *Virgin Mary*; but was suppressed—and granted to *William Wainfleet*, bishop of *Winchester*, who made it part of the endowment of *St. Mary Magdalene College* in *Oxford*. The bishops of *Winchester* were patrons of it. [Pat. 17, *Edward II.*] Vide in *Mon. Ang.* tom. ii. p. 343. “*Cartam foundationis ex ipso autographo in archivis Coll. Madg. Oxon.* ubi etiam conservata sunt registra, cartæ, rentali et alia munimenta ad hunc prioratum spectantia.

“*Extracta quædam e registro MSS. in bibl. Bodl.—Dods-worth, vol. 89, f. 140.*

“*Cart. antiq. N. N. n. 33. P. P. n. 48. et 71. Q. Q. n. 40. plac. coram justit. itin. [Southampton] 20 Hen. rot. 25. De eccl. de Basing & Basingstoke. Plac. de juratis apud Winton. 40 Hen. III. rot.—Profecta molendini de Strete. Cart. 54. Hen. III. m. 3. [De mercatu, & feria apud Seleborne, a mistake.] Pat. 9. Edw. I. m.—Pat. 30. Edw. I. m.—Pat. 33. Edw. I. p. i. m.—Pat. 35. Edw. I. m.—Pat. i. Edw. II. p. i. m. 9. Pat. 5. Edw. II. p. i. m. 21. De terris in Achanger. Pat. 6. Edw. II. p. i. m. 7. de eisdem. Brev. in Scacc. 6. Edw. II. Pasch. rot. 8. Pat. 17. Edw. II. p. i. m.—Cart. 10. Edw. III. n. 24. Quod terræ suæ in Seleburn, Achangre, Norton, Basings, Basingstoke, and Nately, sint de afforestatæ, and pro aliis libertatibus. Pat. 12. Edw. III. p. 3. m. 3.—Pat. 10. Edw. III. p. i. m.—Cart. 18. Edw. III. n. 24.”*

“*N. N. 33. Rex concessit quod prior, et canonici de Seleburn habeant per terras suas de Seleburne, Achangre, Norton, Brompden, Basinges, Basingstoke, & Nately, diversas libertates.*

“*P. P. 48. Quod prior de Seleburne, habeat terras suas quietas de vasto, et regardo.*—*Extracts from Aylofffe's Calendars of Ancient Charters.*

“*Placita de juratis & assis coram Salôm de Roff, & sociis suis justic. itiner. apud Wynton in comitatu Sutht.—anno regni R. Edwardi filii reg. Henr. octavo.—Et Por de Seleborn ht in Selebr. fure, thurset. pillory, emendasse panis, & suis.*” [cerevisæ.]—*Chapter-house, Westminster.*

“*Placita Foreste apud Wyntôn in com. Sutham.—Anno*

reg. *Edwardi* octavo coram Rog. de *Clifford*, &c. Justic. ad eadem placita audienda et tminand. assigtis.

“Carta Pror de *Seleburn*, H. Dei gra. rex. angl. &c. Concessim, prior. sce. *Marie* de *Seleburn*, et canonicis ibidem Deo servient. — q ipi et oes hoies sui in p̄dcis terris suis et tenementis manentes sint in p̄petum quieti de sectis Swanemoter. et omnium alior. placitor. for. et de *espeltamentis* canum. et de omnibus submonitoibz. aplcitis querelis et exaccoibus et occoibz. ad for. et for. et viridar. et eor. ministros p̄tinentibz.” — *Chapter-house Westminster*.

“Plita Forestarum in com. *Sutht.* apud *Suthampton*— anno regni regis *Edwardi t̄cii* post consequentum quarto coram *Johe Mantvers*, &c., justic. itinand. &c.

“De hiis qui clamant libtates infra Forestas in com. *Sutht.*

“Prior de *Selebourne* clamat esse quietus erga d̄nm regem de omnibus finibus et amerciamentis p̄ tnsgr. et omnibus, exaccoibz ad Dom. regem vel hered. suos p̄tinent. pret. plita corone reg.

“Item clamat q̄d si aliquis hominum suorum de terris et ten̄ p. delicto suo vitam aut membrum debeat amittere vel fugiat, & judicō stare noluerit vel aliud delictum fecit pro quo debeat catella sua amittere, ubicuncq; justitia fieri debeat omnia catella illa sint p̄tci Prioris et successor. suor. Et liceat eidem priori et ballis suis ponere se in seisinam in hujusmodi catall. in casibus p̄dcis sine disturbacone ballivor. dni reg. quorumcunque.

“Item clam. quod licet aliqua libtatum p̄ d̄nm regem concessar, p̄cessu temporis quocunq; casu contingente usi non fuerint, n̄lominus postea ead̄m libtate uti possit. Et p̄dcus prior quesitus p̄ justic. quo waranto clamat omn. terr. et ten. sua in *Seleburne*, *Norton*, *Basynges*, *Basyngestoke*, & *Nattele*, que prior domus p̄dte h̄uit & tenuit X<sup>mo</sup>. die *April* anno regni d̄ni. *Hen.* reg. nue XVIII. imppm̄ effe quieta de vasto et regardo, et visu forestarior. et viridarior. regardator. et omnium ministrorum foreste,”—&c., &c.—*Chapter-house, Westminster*.

## LETTER XXVI

THOUGH the evidences and documents of the Priory and parish of *Selborne* are now at an end, yet as the author has still several things to say respecting the present state of that convent and it's *Grange*, and other matters, he does not see how he can acquit himself of the subject without trespassing again on the patience of the reader by adding one supplementary letter.

No sooner did the Priory (perhaps much out of repair at the time) become an appendage to the college, but it must at once have tended to swift decay. *Magdalen College* wanted now only two chambers for the chantry priest and his assistant ; and therefore had no occasion for the hall, dormitory, and other spacious apartments belonging to so large a foundation. The roofs neglected, would soon become the possession of daws and owls ; and, being rotted and decayed by the weather, would fall in upon the floors, so that all parts must have hastened to speedy dilapidation and a scene of broken ruins. Three full centuries have now passed since the dissolution ; a series of years that would craze the stoutest edifices. But, besides the slow hand of time, many circumstances have contributed to level this venerable structure with the ground ; of which nothing now remains but one piece of a wall of about ten feet long, and as many feet high, which probably was a part of an out-house. As early as the latter end of the reign of *Hen. VII.*, we find that a farm-house and two barns were built to the south of the Priory, and undoubtedly out of it's materials. Avarice again has much contributed to the overthrow of this stately pile, as long as

the tenants could make money of it's stones or timbers. Wantonness, no doubt, has had a share in the demolition; for boys love to destroy what men venerate and admire. A remarkable instance of this propensity the writer can give from his own knowledge. When a schoolboy, more than fifty years ago, he was eye-witness, perhaps a party concerned, in the undermining a portion of that fine old ruin at the north end of *Basingstoke* town, well known by the name of *Holy Ghost Chapel*. Very providentially the vast fragment, which these thoughtless little engineers endeavoured to sap, did not give way so soon as might have been expected; but it fell the night following, and with such violence that it shook the very ground, and, awakening the inhabitants of the neighbouring cottages, made them start up in their beds as if they had felt an earthquake. The motive for this dangerous attempt does not so readily appear: perhaps the more danger the more honour, thought the boys, and the notion of doing some mischief gave a zest to the enterprize. As *Dryden* says upon another occasion—

“It look'd so like a sin it pleas'd the more.”

Had the Priory been only levelled to the surface of the ground, the discerning eye of an antiquary might have ascertained it's *ichnography*, and some judicious hand might have developed it's dimensions. But, besides other ravages, the very foundations have been torn up for the repair of the highways: so that the site of this convent is now become a rough, rugged pasture-field, full of hillocks and pits, choaked with nettles, and dwarf-elder, and trampled by the feet of the ox and the heifer.

As the tenant at the Priory was lately digging among the foundations, for materials to mend the highways,<sup>1</sup> his

<sup>1</sup> Within the last twenty years the foundations of the old Priory have again been ransacked to find stones for road-mending. It is a great pity that there was no one interested enough in the antiquities of the place to make some examination of the form the foundations took. Some idea of the shape of the building might have been gained, but if it was impossible to trace the remains of the Priory when *Gilbert White* wrote 150 years ago, it is ten times more impossible now.—[R. B. S.]





*The author has conversed with very ancient people who remembered the old original Grange.*



labourers discovered two large stones, with which the farmer was so pleased that he ordered them to be taken out whole. One of these proved to be a large *Doric* capital, worked in good taste; and the other a base of a pillar; both formed out of the soft freestone of this district. These ornaments, from their dimensions, seem to have belonged to massive columns; and shew that the church of this *convent* was a large and costly edifice. They were found in the space which has always been supposed to have contained the south transept of the Priory church. Some fragments of large pilasters were also found at the same time. The diameter of the capital was two feet three inches and an half; and of the column where it had stood on the base, eighteen inches and three quarters.

Two years ago, some labourers, digging again among the ruins sounded a sort of rude thick vase or urn of soft stone, containing about two gallons in measure, on the verge of the brook, in the very spot which tradition has always pointed out as having been the site of the convent kitchen. This clumsy utensil,<sup>1</sup> whether intended for holy water, or whatever purpose, we were going to procure, but found that the labourers had just broken it in pieces, and carried it out on the highways.

The priory of Selborne had possessed in this village a grange, an usual appendage to manerial estates, where the fruits of their lands were stowed and laid up for use, at a time when men took the natural produce of their estates in kind. The mansion of this spot is still called the *Grange*, and is the manor-house of the convent possessions in this place. The author has conversed with very ancient people who remembered the old original *Grange*; but it has long given place to a modern farm-house. *Magdalen College* holds a court-leet and court-baron<sup>2</sup> in the great wheat-

<sup>1</sup> A judicious antiquary who saw this vase, observed, that it possibly might have been a standard *mesure* between the monastery and it's tenants. The priory we have mentioned claimed the assize of bread and beer in *Selborne* manor; and probably the adjustment of dry measures for grain, &c.—[G. W.]

<sup>2</sup> The time when this court is held is the mid-week between *Easter* and *Whitsuntide*.—[G. W.]

barn of the said *Grange*, annually, where the president usually superintends, attended by the *bursar* and *steward* of the college.<sup>1</sup>

The following uncommon presentment at the court is not unworthy of notice. There is on the south side of the king's field (a large common-field, so called), a considerable tumulus, or hillock, now covered with thorns and bushes, and known by the name of *Kite's Hill*, which is presented, year by year, in court as not ploughed. Why this injunction is still kept up respecting this spot, which is surrounded on all sides by arable land, may be a question not easily solved, since the usage has long survived the knowledge of the intention thereof. We can only suppose that as the prior, besides *thurset* and *pillory*, had also *furcas*, a power of life and death, that he might have reserved this little eminence as the place of execution for delinquents. And there is the more reason to suppose so, since a spot just by is called *Gally* (Gallows) Hill.

The lower part of the village, next the *Grange*, in which is a pond and a stream, is well known by the name of *Gracious-street*, an appellation not at all understood. There is a lake in *Surrey*, near *Chobham*, called also *Gracious-pond*; and another, if we mistake not, near *Hedleigh*, in the county of *Hants*. This strange denomination we do not at all comprehend, and conclude that it may be a corruption from some *Saxon* word, itself perhaps forgotten.

It has been observed already, that Bishop *Tanner* was mistaken when he refers to an evidence of *Dodsworth*, "*De mercant FERIA de Seleburne*" *Selborne* never had a chartered fair; the present fair was set up since the year 1681, by a set of jovial fellows, who had found in an old almanack that there had been a fair here in former days on the first of *August*; and were desirous to revive so joyous a festival. Against this innovation the vicar set

<sup>1</sup> *Owen Oglethorpe*, president, &c., an. *Edw. Sexti*, primo [viz. 1547.] demised to *Robert Arden Selborne Grange* for twenty years. Rent vii. — *Index of Leases*. — [G. W.]



Grociy's street.

1852



his face, and persisted in crying it down, as the probable occasion of much intemperance. However, the fair prevailed, but was altered to the twenty-ninth of *May*, because the former day often interfered with wheat-harvest. On that day it still continues to be held, and is become an useful mart for cows and calves. Most of the lower house-keepers brew beer against this holiday, which is dutied by the exciseman, and their becoming victuallers for the day without a license is overlooked.

Monasteries enjoyed all sorts of conveniences within themselves. Thus, at the Priory, a low and moist situation, there were ponds and stews for their fish; at the same place also, and at the *Grange* in *Culver-croft*,<sup>1</sup> there were dove-houses; and on the hill opposite to the *Grange* the prior had a warren, as the names of *The Coney-crofts* and *Coney-croft Hanger* plainly testify.<sup>2</sup>

Nothing has been said, as yet, respecting the tenure or holding of the *Selborne* estates. *Temple* and *Norton* are manor farms, and freeholds; as is the manor of *Chapel*, near *Oakhanger*, and also the estate at *Oakhanger-house* and *Black-moor*. The *Priory* and grange are leasehold under *Magdalen-college*, for twenty-one years, renewable every seven: all the smaller estates in and round the village are copyhold of inheritance under the college, except the little remains of the *Gurdon-manor*, which had been of old leased out upon lives, but have been freed of late by their present lord, as fast as those lives have dropped.

*Selborne* seems to have derived much of its prosperity from the near neighbourhood of the Priory. For monasteries were of considerable advantage to places where they had their sites and estates, by causing great resort, by procuring markets and fairs, by freeing them from the cruel oppression of forest-laws, and by letting their lands at easy rates. But, as soon as the convent was suppressed, the town which it had occasioned began to decline, and the

<sup>1</sup> *Culver*, as has been observed before, is Saxon for a pigeon.—[G. W.]

<sup>2</sup> A warren was a usual appendage to a manor.—[G. W.]

market was less frequented; the rough and sequestered situation gave a check to resort, and the neglected roads rendered it less and less accessible.

That it had been a considerable place for size, formerly, appears from the largeness of the church, which much exceeds those of the neighbouring villages; by the ancient extent of the burying-ground, which, from human bones occasionally dug up, is found to have been much encroached upon; by giving a name to the hundred; by the old foundations and ornamented stones, and tracery of windows that have been discovered on the north-east side of the village; and by the many vestiges of disused fish-ponds still to be seen around it. For ponds and stews were multiplied in the times of popery, that the affluent might enjoy some variety at their tables on fast days; therefore, the more they abounded the better probably was the condition of the inhabitants.





“AS SOON AS THE GOOD OLD LADY COMES IN SIGHT, WHO HAS WAITED ON IT FOR MORE THAN THIRTY YEARS, IT HOBBOLES TOWARDS ITS BENEFACTRESS WITH AWKWARD ALACRITY”



*More PARTICULARS respecting the OLD FAMILY TORTOISE  
omitted in the NATURAL HISTORY.*

Because we call this creature an abject reptile, we are too apt to undervalue his abilities, and depreciate his powers of instinct. Yet he is, as Mr. *Pope* says of his lord,

“ — Much too wise to walk into a well : ”

and has so much discernment as not to fall down an haha, but to stop and withdraw from the brink with the readiest precaution.

Though he loves warm weather he avoids the hot sun ; because his thick shell, when once heated, would, as the poet says of solid armour, “ scald with safety.” He therefore spends the more sultry hours under the umbrella of a large cabbage-leaf, or amidst the waving forests of an asparagus-bed.

But, as he avoids heat in the summer, so, in the decline of the year, he improves the faint autumnal beams, by getting within the reflection of a fruit-wall ; and, though he never has read that planes inclining to the horizon receive a greater share of warmth,<sup>1</sup> he inclines his shell, by tilting it against the wall, to collect and admit every feeble ray.

Pitiable seems the condition of this poor embarrassed reptile ; to be cased in a suit of ponderous armour, which he cannot lay aside ; to be imprisoned, as it were, within his own shell, must preclude, we should suppose, all activity and disposition for enterprise. Yet there is a season of the year (usually the beginning of June) when his exertions are remarkable. He then walks on tiptoe, and is stirring by

<sup>1</sup> Several years ago a book was written entitled “ Fruit Walls Improved by Inclining them to the horizon : ” in which the author has shown, by calculation, that a much greater number of the rays of the sun will fall on such walls than on those which are perpendicular.—[G. W.]

five in the morning ; and, traversing the garden, examines every wicket and interstice in the fences, through which he will escape if possible ; and often has eluded the care of the gardener, and wandered to some distant field. The motives that impel him to undertake these rambles seem to be of the amorous kind ; his fancy then becomes intent on sexual attachments, which transports him beyond his usual gravity, and induce him to forget for a time his ordinary solemn deportment.

## APPENDICES



# APPENDIX

## NUMBER I

No. 6.



*Carta Petri et conventus ecclesie Winton. pro fundatione  
prioratus de Seleburne, &c. dat. 1233.*

OMNIBUS Christi fidelibus ad quos presens scriptum pervenerit. P. divina miseracione *Wintōn* ecclesie minister humilis salutem in Domino: Ex officio pastorali tenemur viros religiosos, qui pauperes spiritu esse pro Christo neglectis lucris temporalibus elegerunt; spirituali affectu diligere, fovere pariter et creare, eorumq; quieti sollicite providere; ut tanto uberiores fructus de continua in lege Dei meditatione percipiant, quanto a conturbationibus malignorum amplius fuerint ex patroni provisione et ecclesiastica defensione securi. Hinc est quod universitati vestre notificamus, nos divine caritatis instinctu, de assensu conventus ecclesie nostre *Wintōn*, fundasse domum religiosam, ordinis magni patris *Augustini*, in honore Dei et gloriose semper virginis ejusdem Dei genetricis Marie, apud *Seleburne*; ibidemque canonicos regulares intituisse: ad quorum sustentationem et hospitum et pauperum susceptionem, dedimus, concessimus, et presenti carta nostra confirmavimus eisdem canonicis, totam terram quam habuimus de dono *Jacobi de Acangre*: et totam terram, cursum aque, boscum et pratium que habuimus de dono *Jacobi de Nortone*; et totam terram boscum et redditum que habuimus de dono domini *Henrici* regis *Anglie*; cum omnibus predictarum possessionum pertinentiis. Dedimus etiam et concessimus in proprios usus eisdem canonicis ecclesiam predictae ville de *Seleburne*, et ecclesias de *Basing*, et de *Basingestok*, cum omnibus earundem ecclesiarum capellis, libertatibus, et aliis pertinentiis;

salva honesta et sufficienti sustentatione vicariorum in predictis ecclesiis ministrantium; quorum presentatio ad priorem predictae domus religiose de *Seleburne* et canonicos ejusdem loci in perpetuum pertinebit. Preterea possessiones et redditus, ecclesias sive decimas, quas in episcopatu nostro adempti sunt, vel in posterum, Deo dante, justis modis poterunt adipisci, sub nostra et *Wintōn* ecclesie protectione suscepimus, et episcopalis auctoritate officii confirmavimus; eadem auctoritate firmiter inhibentes, ne quis locum, in quo divino sunt officio mancipati, seu alias eorum possessiones, invadere vi vel fraude vel ingenio malo occupare audeat, vel etiam retinere, aut fratres conversos, servientes, vel homines eorum aliqua violentia perturbare, sive fugientes ad eos causa salutis sue conservande a septis domus sue violenter presumat extraere. Precipimus autem ut in eadem domo religiosa de *Seleburne* ordo canonicus, et regularis conversatio, secundum regulam magni patris *Augustini*, quam primi inhabitatores professi sunt, in perpetuum observetur; et ipsa domus religiosa a cujuslibet alterius domus religiose subjectione libera permaneat, et in omnibus absoluta; salva in omnibus episcopali auctoritate, et *Wintōn* ecclesie dignitate. Quod ut in nosterum ratum permaneat et inconcussum, presenti scripto et sigilli nostri patrocinios duximus confirmandum. His testibus domino *Waltero* abbate de *Hyda*. Domino *Walters* Priore de sancto *Swithuno*, domino *Stephano* priore de *Motesfonte*, magistro *Alano* de *Stoke*; magistro *Willo* de sancte *Marie* ecclesia, tunc officiali nostro; *Luca* archidiacon' de *surr'*. magistro *Humfrido* de *Millers*, *Henrico* & *Hugone* capellanis, *Roberto* de *Clinchamp*, et *Petro Rossinol* clericis, et multis aliis. Datum apud *Wl̄nes*<sup>1</sup> per manum P. de cancellis. In die sanctorum martirum *Fabiani* et *Sebastiani*. Anno Domi millesimo ducesimo tricesimo tercio.

Seal, two saints and a bishop praying :

Legend: S̄VI. M. SITE. BONI. P̄TR' PAVL'E  
PATRONI.

<sup>1</sup> Probably *Wolvesey-house* near *Winchester*.—[G. W.]

## NUMBER II

### III.

(Ni 108.)

*Carta petens licentiam eligendi prelatum a Domino Episcopo  
Wintoniensi.*

*Defuncto prelato forma petendi licentiam eligendi.*

DOMINO et patri in Christo reverendo domino & P. Dei gratia Wintoniensi episcopo, devoti sui filii supprior monasterii de S. Wintoniensis dioceseos salutem cum subjectione humili, reverentiam, et honorem. Monasterio nostro de S. in quo sub protectione vestra vivimus, sub habitu regulari, Prioris solacio destituito per mortem bone memorie, &c. quondam Prioris nostri, qui tali hora in aurora diem clausit extremum, vestre paternitati reverende et dominationi precipue istum nostrum et nostri monasterii casum flebilem cum merore nunciamus; ad vestre paternitatis refugium fratres nostros A. et C. canonicos destinantes, rogando et petendo devote quatenus nobis dignemini licenciam tribuere, ut monasterio predicto, Prioris regimine destituito, providere possimus, invocata Spiritus sancti gratia, per electionem canonicam de Priore. Actum in monasterio predicto 5 kalend. &c. anno Domini, &c. Valeat reverenda paternitas vestra semper in Domino.

*Forma licencie concesse.*

P. Dei gratia Wintoniensis episcopus dilectis in Christo filii suppriori et conventui talis loci salutem, gratiam, et benedictionem. Viduitatem monasterii vestri vacantis per mortem quondam R. Prioris vestri, cujus anime propicietur altissimus, paterno compacientes affectu, petitam a nobis eligendi licenciam vobis concedimus, ut patronus. Datum apud, &c. 3 kalend. Jul. anno consecrationis nostre tertio.

*Forma decreti post electionem conficiendi.*

In nomine Domini nostri Jhesu Christi, Amen. Monasterio beate Marie talis loci Winton. dioc. solacio destituto per mortem R. quondam Prioris ipsius; ac corpore ejus, prout moris est ecclesiastice sepulture commendato; petita cum devocione licentia per fratres K. et . canonicos a ven: in Christo patre et domino domino P. Dei gratia Wintoniensi episcopo ejusdem monasteri, patrono, eligendi priorem, et optenta; die dato, a toto capitulo ad eligendum vocati fuere evocandi, qui debuerunt, voluerunt, et potuerunt comode electioni prioris in monasterio predicto interesse: omnes canonici in capitulo ejusdem ecclesie convenerunt tali die, anno Dom. &c. ad tractandum de electione sui prioris facienda; qui, invocata Spiritus Sancti gratia, ad procedendum per formam scrutinii concencientes.

(N. 108.)

*Modus procedendi ad electionem per formam scrutinii.*

OMNIBUS in capitulo congregatis qui debent volunt et possunt comode interesse electioni eligendi sunt tres de capitulo,<sup>1</sup> *non nostro obediencias ores,*<sup>2</sup> qui erunt scrutatores, et sedebunt in angulo capituli; et primo requirent vota sua propria, videlicet, duo requirent *tertium* et duo *alterum*, &c. dicendo sic, "Frater P. inquem "concentis ad eligendum in prelatum nostrum?" quibus examinatis, et dictis eorum per vicem ex ipsis in scriptura redactis, vocabunt ad se omnes fratres singillatim, primo suppriorem, &c. Et unus de tribus examineribus scribet dictum cujuslibet. Celebrato scrutinio, *publicare db coram omnibus. Facta ptmodū concensum* collectione apparebit in quem pars major capituli et sanior concentit; quo viso, major pars dicet minori, "Cum major pars et sanior capituli nostri "concentiat in fratrem R. ipse est eligendus, unde, si placet, ipsum "communiter eligamus;" si vero omnes acquieverint, tunc ille qui majorem vocem habet in capitulo surgens dicet, "Ego frater R. pro "toto capitulo eligo fratrem R. nobis in pastorem;" et omnes dicent; "Placet nobis." Et incipient, "TE DEUM LAUDAMUS." Si vero in unum concordare nequiverint, tunc hiis, qui majorem

<sup>1</sup> Fratres canonicos. See *Forma decreti, &c.*—[G. W.]

<sup>2</sup> Obedientiores sc. more regular. In virtute obedientiæ occurs in *Not Visit.*—[G. W.]



vocem habet inter illos qui majorem et sanio rem partem capituli constituerint, dicet, "Ego pro me et illis qui mecum concenciunt "in fratrem R. eligo ipsum in," &c. Et illi dicent, "Placet "nobis," &c.

*Forma richte presentandi electum.*

Reverendo in Christo patri et domino domino P. Dei gratia Winton. episcopo devoti sui filii frater R. Supprior conventualis beate Marie de tali loco, et ejusdem loci Conventus, cum subjectione humili, omnem obedienciam, reverenciam, et honorem. Cum conventualis ecclesia beate Marie talis loci, in qua sub protectione vestra vivimus sub habitu regulari, per mortem felicitis recordationis R. quondam prioris nostri destituta ecclesia priore, qui 6<sup>to</sup> kalend. Jul. in aurora anno Dom. &c. diem clausit extremum; de corpore ejus, prout moris est, ecclesiastice tradito sepulture; petita a vobis, tanquam a Domino, et vero ejusdem ecclesie patrono et pastore, licencia eligendi priorem et optenta; convenientibus omnibus canonicis predictae ecclesie in capitulo nostro, qui voluerunt debuerunt et potuerunt comode electioni nostre interesse, tali die anno Dom. supradicto, invocata Spiritus Sancti gratia, fratrem R. de C. ejusdem ecclesie canonicum unanimi assensu et voluntate in priorem nostrum, ex puris votis singulorum, unanimiter eligimus. Quem reverende paternitati vestre et dominationi precipue Priorem vero patrono nostro et pastore confirmandum, si placet, tenore presentium presentamus; *dignitatem* vestram humiliter et devote rogantes, quatenus, dicte electioni felicem prebere volentes assensum, eidem R. electo nostro *nunc* confirmabitis, et quod vestrum est pastoralis *solicitudine* impendere dignemini. In cujus rei testimonium presentes litteras sigillo capituli nostri signatas paternitati vestre *transmittimus*. Valeat reverenda paternitas vestra semper in Domino. Datum tali loco die et anno supradictis. Omnes et singuli, per fratres A. B. et C. ejusdem ecclesie canonicos de voluntate tocus conventus ad inquirenda vota singulorum constitutos, secreto et singillatim requisiti; tandem publicato scrutinio et facta votorum colectione inventum est, majorem et senio rem partem tocus capituli dicte ecclesie in fratrem S. de B. dicte ecclesie canonicum unanimiter et concorditer concencisse; vel sic, quando inventum omnes canonicos dicte ecclesie preter duos in fratrem, A.D. quibus statim majori parti eligendum adquiescenter: frater k. supprior ecclesie memorate, juxta potestatem sibi a toto conventu traditam, vice

consociorum suorum et sua ac tocius conventus, dictum fratrem S. de B. in priorem ejusdem ecclesie elegit, sub hac forma ; “Ego  
“frater supprior conventualis ecclesie beate Marie talis loci, potes-  
“tate et auctoritate mihi a toto conventu dicte ecclesie tradita et  
“commissa, quando, puplicato scrutinio et omnibus circa hoc rite  
“peractis, inveni majorem et partem seniore[m] tocius capituli nostri  
“in fratrem S. de B. virum providum unanimiter concencisse, ipsum  
“nobis et ecclesie nostre, vice tocius conventus, in priorem eligen-  
“dum ; et eidem electioni subscribo ; cui electioni omnes canonici  
“nostri concencerunt, et subscripserunt.”—“Ego frater de C. pre-  
“senti electioni concencio, et subscribo.” Et sic de singulis elec-  
toribus ; in *cujus rei* testimonium sigillum capituli nostri apponi  
fecimus ad presentes.

## NUMBER III

### *Visitatio Notabilis de Seleburne.*

1387.

WILLMUS permissione divina Winton Episcopus dilectis filiis Priori et Conventui Prioratus de Selborne Ordinis S<sup>ti</sup>. Augustini, nostræ dioceseos, Salutem, gratiam, et ben. Suscepti regiminis cura pastoralis officii nos inducit invigilare sollicite nostrorum remediis subsectorum, et eorum obviare periculis ac scandala remove; ut sic de vinea domini per cultoris providi sarculum vicia extirpentur inferantur virtutes, excessus debite corrigantur, et subditorum mores in nimium prolapsorum per appositionem moderaminis congrui reformentur: Hanc nempe sollicitudinem nostris humeris incumbentem assidua meditatione pensantes, ne sanguis vester de manibus nostris requiratur, ad vos et vestrum Prioratum supradictum, prout nostro incumbibat officio pastorali, nuper ex causa descendimus visitandi; et dum inter vos nostre visitacionis officium iteratis vicibus actualiter exercuimus, nonnulla reperimus que non solum obviant regularibus institutis, verum etiam que religioni vestre non congruunt, nec conveniunt honestati; ad que per nostrum antidotum debite reformanda opem et operam prout expedit et oportet apponimus, quas credimus efficaces, infra scripta siquidem precepta nostra pariter et decreta, sanctorum patrum constitutionibus editis et debite promulgatis canonicisque ac regularibus institutis fulcita, vobis nostri sigilli roborata munimine transmittimus, inter vos futuris temporibus efficaciter observanda, quatinus ad Dei laudem, divini cultus ac vestræ religionis augmentum, ipsis mediantibus, per viam salutis feliciter incedatis; mores et actus vestri abstrabantur a noxiis, et ad salutaria dirigantur.

No. I. In primis ut Domino Deo nostro, a quo cuncta bona procedunt, et omnis religio immaculata sumpsit exordium, in Prioratu vestro predicto serviatur laudabiliter in divinis; Vobis, in virtute ante obediencie ac sub majoris excommunicationis sententie

pena, firmiter injungendo mandamus, quatinus hore canonice, tam de nocte quam de die, in choro a conventu cantentur; misse quoque de beata Maria et de die, necnon misse alie consuete horis et devocione debitis et cum moderatis pausacionibus celebrentur: nec liceat alicui de conventu ab horis et missis hujusmodi se absentare, aut, postquam incepte fuerint, ante complecionem earum ab ipsis recedere quovismodo; nisi ex causa necessaria vel legitima per priorem vel suppriorum aut alium presidentem loci, ut convenit, approbanda; in quo casu ipsorum omnium consciencias apud altissimum arctius oneramus; contrarium vero facientes in proximo tunc capitulo celebrando absq; acceptione qualibet personarum regularem subeant disciplinam; acrius insuper puniendi si contumacia vel pertinacia delinquentium hoc exposcat; si quis vero post trinam correpcionem debite se non correxerit in premissis, pro singulis vicibus quibus contrarium fecerit ipsum singulis sextis feriis in pane et aqua dumtaxat precipimus jejunare.

No. II. Item quia in visitacione nostra predicta comperimus evidentur quod silentium, quasi in exilio positum, ad quod juxta regulam S<sup>ti</sup>. Augustini efficaciter estis astricti, locis et temporibus debitis inter vos minime observatur contra observancias regulares; Vobis omnibus et singulis firmiter injungendo mandamus, quatinus silentium, prout vos decet, regula supradicta, de cetero locis et temporibus *hujusmodi* observetis; a vanis et frivolis colloquiis, sicut decet, vos penitus abstinendo: illos vero, qui silentium *hujusmodi* in locis predictis non observaverint, animadversione condigna precipimus castigari; et, si quis tercio super hoc legitime convictus fuerit, preter regularem disciplinam, die, quo debite silentium non tenuerit, pane et servicia dumtaxat et legumine sit contentus.

No. III. Item quia nonnulli concanonici et confratres prioratus vestri predicti validi atq; sani et in sacerdocio constituti celebrationem missarum absq; causa legitima indebite ac minus voluntarie multociens, ut dicitur, negligunt et omittunt; fundatorum aliorumq; benefactorum suorum animas, pro quibus sacrificia offerre tenentur, suffragiis nequiter defraudando; Vobis, ut supra, firmiter injungendo mandamus, quatinus vos omnes et singuli Prioratus predicti concanonici et confratres in sacerdocio constituti frequenter confiteamini confessoribus per Priorem deputandis; quos quidem confessores discretos et idoneos, prout numerus personarum dicti conventus exigit, per vos dominum Priorem predictum precipimus deputari; missasque, impedimento cessante legitimo, tam pro vivis quam pro

defunctis, pro quibus orare tenemini, de cetero, quanto frequencius poteritis, celebretis devocius, sicut decet; impedimentum vero predictum cum contigerit Priori vel Suppriori Prioratus predicti per illud patientes infra triduum declarari volumus et exponi, ac per eorum alterum prout justum fuerit approbari, vel eciam reprobari; in quo casu ipsorum omnium tam exponencium quam approbancium apud altissimum consciencias districtius oneramus; contrarium vero facientes, primo super hoc convicti, proxima quarta feria sequenti in pane, servisia, et legumine; secundo vero convicti feria quarta et sexta sequentibus modo consimili; tercio vero convicti dictis feriis extunc sequentibus in pane et aqua jejurent, quousque iudicio prioris se correxerint in premissis; statuantes preterea quod Prior et Supprior Prioratus predicti contra *hujusmodi* delinquentes semel singulis mensibus diligenter inquirent, et quos culpabiles invenerint in premissis modo predicto studeant castigare.

No. IV. Item quia transitus communis secularium personarum utriusque sexus per claustrum Prioratus vestri in congruis temporibus minime exercetur, et potissime horis illis quibus fratres de conventu in contemplacione sancta studiis quoque ac lectionibus variis inibi occupantur; unde dissolutiones plurime provenerunt, et poterunt in futuro verisimiliter provenire, ac ipsorum fratrem quieti et religionis honestati plurimum derogatur: Vobis ut supra arcius injungendo mandamus, quatinus, cum secundum regulam sancti Augustini converçacio vestra debeat esse a secularibus *hujusmodi* separata, ad animarum ac' eciam rerum pericula, que possent et solent ex concursu *hujusmodi* provenire, caucius evitanda; transitum communem predictum per prefatum claustrum de cetero fieri nullatenus permittatis, per quem vestra devocio et religionis honestas vulnerari vel eciam impediri valeant quovismodo, sub pena excommunicationis majoris quam in contravenientes intendimus canonicè fulminare: illum vero, ad quem ostiorum claustrum custodia pertinet, si propter illius negligenciam sive culpam transitus *hujusmodi* sustineatur indebite, ut perfertur; pro singulis vicibus, quibus hoc factum fuerit, singulis quartis feriis in pane, servisia, et legumine dumtaxat jejuret; et, si nec sic se correxerit debite in hac parte, ab officio deponatur, ac alius, magis providus, loco suo celeriter subrogetur.

No. V. Item quia ostia ecclesie atq; claustrum prioratus vestri predicti non servantur nec serantur temporibus debitis, nec modo debito, ut deceret; sed custodia eorundem agitur et omittitur

multociens negligenter ; adeo quod *suspecte persone et alie inhoneste* per ecclesiam et claustrum *hujusmodi* incedunt frequenter in tenebris atq ; umbris, temporibus eciam suspectis et illicitis, indecenter ; unde dampna et scandala varia pluries provenerunt, et in posterum verisimiliter poterunt provenire ; Vobis, ut supra, mandamus, firmiter injungentes, quatinus dicta ostia de cetero claudi faciatis, et clausa par ministros idoneos custodiri temporibus debitis, prout decet ; vocis inhibentes expresse, ne ostia ecclesie vestre predictae, (illa videlicet que inter navem ipsius ecclesie et chorum ejusdem existunt) nec ostia claustrum que ducunt ad extra, et per que introitus secularium in ipsum claustrum patere poterit, de mane, antequam prima incipiatur in choro ; aut commestionis tempore ; nec eciam de sero, postquam conventus collationem inceperit ; nisi in causa utili vel necessaria per priorem vel suppriorem, ut convenit, approbata, aperiantur de cetero quovis modo : ad que fideliter exequenda sacristam, qui pro tempore fuerit, ad cujus officium permissa pertinent sub pena amocionis ab officio suo arcus oneramus, acrius per nos puniendum prout nobis videbitur expedire.

No. VI. Item quia nonnulli concanonici et confratres prioratus vestri minus sapiunt in lectura, non intelligentes quid legant, sed literas quasi prorsus ignorantes, dum psallunt vel legunt, accentum brevem pro longo ponunt pluries, et e contra ; et per in via gradientes sanum scripturarum intellectum adulterantur multociens, et pervertunt ; fitque, ut dum scripturas sacras non sapiant, ad perpetrandum illicita proniores reddantur : Vobis Domino Priori in virtute obedientie, firmiter injungendo mandamus, quatinus, cum legere et non intelligere sit negligere, noviciis et aliis minus sufficienter literatis idoneus de cetero deputetur magister, qui ipsos in cantu et aliis primitivis scienciis instruat diligenter juxta regularia instituta ; quatinus, in eisdem perfectius eruditi, cecitatis squamis et ignorantie nebulis depositis, que legant intelligant et agnoscant, et ad contemplandum clarius misteria Scripturarum efficiantur, ut convenit, promciores.

No. VII. Item quia constitutiones sive decretales Romanorum Pontificum vestrum ordinem concernentes, (ille videlicet de quibus in constitutionibus recolende memorie Domini Ottoboni, quondam sedis Apostolice in Anglia legati, fit mencio specialis) inter vos nullatenus recitantur, prout per constitutiones ejusdem legati recitari mandantur ; unde, dum decretales ipsas et contenta in eis penitus ignorantis, committitis multociens que prohibentur expressius per

easdem in vestrarum periculum animarum: Vobis firmiter injungendo mandamus, quatinus, ne ignoranciam aliquam pretendere poteritis in hac parte, decretales predictas, prout in prefatis domin. constitutionibus Ottoboni plenius recitantur, in quodam quaterno seu volumine absque more dispendio faciatis conscribi; ipsas bis singulis annis in vestro capitulo, juxta formam constitutionum dictarum, recitari clarius facientes, ad informacionem rudium et perfectionem eciam provectorum; adjicientes preterea, ut magistri noviciorum presencium et eciam futurorum ipsos in regula S<sup>ti</sup>. Augustini diligenter instruant et informant, ipsam regulam eis vulgariter exponendo; quodque iidem novicii per frequentem recitacionem ejusdem illam sciant quasi cordetenus, sicut in dictis constitutionibus plenius continetur, per quam incedere poterint via recta et errorum tenebras caucius evitare: super execucione vero premissorum debite facienda dominum priorem prioratus vestri predicti arcus oneramus quatinus ea que premisimus in hoc casu sub pena suspensionis ab ipsius officio per mensem diligencius exequatur.

No. VIII. Item quia canonici et confratres prioratus vestri predicti, ipsorum propriam voluntatem pocius quam utilitatem communem sectantes, non vestes necessarias, cum opus fuerit, sed certam et limitatam ac determinatam quantitatem pecunie, velut annum redditum, pro vestibus *hujusmodi* percipiunt annuatim, contra regulam S<sup>ti</sup>. Augustini ac domini Ottoboni et aliorum sanctorum patrum canonica instituta; fitque, ut, dum effrenis illa religiosorum cupiditas, aliena specie colorata, vetita concupiscat, sancta religio, solutis constantie frenis, in luxum labentem ad latitudinis tramites que ducunt ad mortem, miserabiliter noscitur declinare: cui quidem morbo pestifero, ne putrescat et vermes generet corruptivos, mederi cicius cupientes nichil novi statuendo sed sanctorum patrum vestigiis inherendo, volumus ac eciam ordinamus, quod canonicis et confratribus memoratis presentibus et futuris de bonis et facultatibus communibus prioratus vestri predicti vestris usibus deputatis vestes et calciamenta, cum indigerint, necessaria, juxta facultates predictas, et nullo modo pecuniam, pro eisdem, per eos qui super hiis ministrandi gerent officium de cetero ministrentur; vestes vero inveteratas et ineptas *hujusmodi* canonicorum camerario communi tradi volumus pauperibus erogandas juxta regulam S<sup>ti</sup>. Augustini, et alias canonicas sanctiones contrarium vero facientes, si camerarius fuerit, penam

suspensionis ab officio ipsum incurrere volumus ipso facto; si vero alius canonicus de conventu existat, preter alias pmas regulares tam pecunia quam eciam indumentis novis careatillo anno.

No. IX. Item quia nonnulli canonici et confratres Prioratus vestri predicti opportunitate captata, extra septa Prioratus absque societate honesta, evagandi causa, nulla super hoc optenta licencia, se transferunt pluries indecenter; alli preterea provectiores certis officiis deputati ad maneria et loca alia officiis *hujusmodi* assignata equitant, quando placet, ibidem manentes pro eorum libito volantatis, nullo canonico ipsis in socium assignato, contra ordinis decenciam et religionis eciam honestatem, constitutionesque Sanctorum Patrum editas in hac parte: Cum igitur religiosos extra eorum Prioratum sic vagari aut in eorum maneriis vel ecclesiis eis appropriatis soli manere expresse prohibeant canonica instituta; nos, premissa fieri de cetero prohibentes. Vobis firmiter injungendo mandamus, quatinus, cum aliquis Prioratus vestri canonicus vel confrater super vel pro negociis propriis vel eciam communibus exire contigerit, pruis ad hoc a Priore vel Suppriore, si presentes in Prioratu fuerint, alioquin, ipsis absentibus, ab ipso qui protunc conventui preesse contigerit, licenciam habeat specialem; cui assignari volumus unum canonicum in socium, ne suspicio sinistra vel scandalum oriatur; qui, associata eisdem juxta qualitatem negotii cometiva honesta, in eundo et eciam redeundo gravitate servata modestius semper incedant, et expletis negociis ad Prioratum cicius revertantur, que regularibus conveniunt institutis devocius impleturi: contrarium vero facientes, absque remissione seu acceptione qualibet personarum, regularem subeant disciplinam; super quo presidencium conventus consciencias arcius oneramus, ipsosque nichilominus pro singulis vicibus, quibus excesserint in premissis, singulis sextis feriis in pane et aqua jejurent; et si officarius fuerit, ipso facto, si aliquod canonicum non obsistat, ab ipsius officio sit suspensus.

No. X. Item quia comperimus evidentem, quod nonnulli canonici domus vestre, secundum carnem pocius quam secundum spiritum dissolute viventes, nulla causa racionabili subsistente, nudi jacent in lectis absque femoralibus et camisiis contra eorum observancias regulares; Vobis igitur firmiter injungendo mandamus, quatinus vos omnes et singuli canonici S<sup>ti</sup>. Augustini regulam et in ea parte ordinis vestri canonica instituta de cetero efficaciter observetis: contrarium vero facientes singulis quartis feriis in pane, servisia, et legumine tantummodo sint contenti; si quis vero post trinam



correctionem reus inventus fuerit in hac parte pro singulis vicibus singulis extunc feriis sextis in pane et aqua hunc precipimus jejunare ; Priorem vero ac Suppriorem domus predicte sub pena suspensionis ab officiis eorundem arcus onerantes, quatinus super premissis sepius et diligenter inquirant, et quos culpabiles invenerint eos penis predictis percellere non postponant.

No. XI. Item quia nonnullos canonicos et confratres Prioratus vestri predicti publicos reperimus venatores ac venacionibus *hujusmodi* spreto jugo regularis observancie, publice intendentes, ac canes tenentes venaticos, contra regularia instituta ; unde dissolutiones quamplures, animarum pericula corporumque, ac rerum dispendia multociens oriuntur ; nos volentes hoc frequens vicium a Prioratu predicto radicitus extirpare ; Vobis omnibus et singulis tenore presentium inhibemus, vobis *nichilominus* firmiter injungentes, ne quisquam canonicorum Prioratus vestri predicti publicis venacionibus vel clamoris ex proposito intendere de cetero, vel eciam interesse ; canesve venaticos per se vel alios tenere presumat, publice vel occulte, infra Prioratum vel extra, contra formam capituli, "NĒ IN AGRO DOMINICO," et alias canonicas sanctiones ; per hoc autem Prioratus vestri predicti nec juri vel consuetudini, quod vel quam habere dinoscitur, in ea parte non intendimus in aliquo derogare : contrarium vero facientes preter disciplinas et penas alias canonicas pro singulis vicibus singulis quartis et sextis feriis in pane et servisia jejunando precipimus castigari.

No. XII. Item quia canonici Prioratus vestri predicti quibus officia forinseca et intrinseca committuntur, fingunt se, cum possent et deberent in choro divinis officiis interesse, in officiis *hujusmodi* sibi commissis multociens occupari, que possent ante vel post horas *hujusmodi* commode fieri, et eciam exerceri ; propter quod cultus divinus minuitur, et alii claustrales nimium onerantur ; Vobis in virtute sancte obedientie et sub pena excommunicationis majoris firmiter injungendo mandamus, quatinus officarii quicumque ecclesie vestre predicte in choro ejusdem divinis officiis a modo personaliter intersint, nisi ex causa legitima officiorum suorum et per presidentem conventus, qui pro tempore fuerit, approbanda, eos contigerit absentare ; in quo casu de et super absentia sua legalitateque causarum in hac parte ipsorum presidencium officiariorum consciencias apud altissimum districtius oneramus.

No. XIII. Item, quia juxta sapientis doctrinam ubi majus iminet periculum, ibi caucius est agendum, volumus et eciam ordi-

namus, quod duo canonici discreti et idonei de conventu Prioratus vestri predicti per ipsum conventum vel majorem partem ejusdem annis singulis de cetero eligantur, qui bis in anno ad maneria, tam Priori quam eciam pro restentacione conventus *hujusmodi* ceteris que officariis assignata, personaliter se transferant et accedant, statum maneriorum ipsorum tam in edificiis quam eciam in stauo vivo vel mortuo plenarie supervisuri; quique super hiis que invenerunt in eisdem conventui supradicto relacionem fidelem in scriptis, ut convenit, facere teneantur; ut, si mors alicujus officarii vel casus illius fortuitus evenerit, de statu officii *hujusmodi* cujuscumque conventum non lateat memoratum; premissa vero vobis precipimus efficaciter observanda sub pena nostro arbitrio limitanda, vobis, si in hiis negligentes fueritis vel remissi, acrius infligenda.

No. XIV. Item quia solitus et antiquus numerus canonicorum in Prioratu vestro predicto, quod dolenter referimus, adeo jam decrevit, ac eciam minuitur in presenti, quod ubi xiiii. canonici vel circiter in habitu et observanciis regularibus in dicto Prioratu solebant Altissimo devocius famulari, (quibus de bonis possessionibus ipsius Prioratus vestri communibus que possidetis in victu et vestitu juxta decenciam ordinis regularis honorifice ac debite fuerat ministratum) modo vero undecim canonici dumtaxat existunt et serviunt in eodem; quo fit, ut dum regis regum cultum attenuet cohabitancium paucitas, contra multiformis nequitiæ hostem minuatur exercitus bellatorum: Cum igitur juxta prefati domini Ottoboni constitutiones aliorumque sanctorum patrum canonica instituta, canonicorum antiquus numerus sit servandus, ac juxta sapientis doctrinam "In multitudine populi sit dignitas regis, et in paucitate plebis "ignominia principis accendatur;" Vobis in virtute sancte obedientie ac sub pena majoris excomm. firmiter injungendo mandamus, quatinus, cum omni diligentia et celeritate debitis, de viris idoneis religioni dispositis, et honestis vobis absque more dispendio providere curetis; ipsos in ordinem vestrum regularem in supplecionem majoris numeri requisiti, seu saltem illius numeri canonicorum ad quorum sustentacionem congruam, aliis oneribus vobis incumbentibus debite supportatis, vestre jam habite suppetunt facultates; super quibus vestram et cujuslibet vestrum conscienciam arcius oneramus; celerius admittentes, ad augmentum cultus divini et perfectionem majorem ordinis regularis, pro fundatoribus et benefactoribus vestris devocius, ut convenit, intercessuros.

No. XV. Item quia comperimus evidentur quod vos, domine

Prior, cui ex debito vestri officii hoc incumbit, de proprietariis canonicis Prioratus vestri predicti, juxta constitutiones domini legati editas in hac parte, inquisitionem debitam hactenus non fecistis, ministerium vobis creditum in ea parte negligenter omittendo; quo fit, ut ille pestifer hostis antiquus pastoris considerans continuatam desideam oves miseris et errantes, ipsius hostis nequissimi fraude deceptas in sitim avaricie prolabentes laqueo proprietatis seduxit, contra sanctorum patrum canonica instituta, in suarum grave periculum animarum; Vos igitur requirimus et monemus, vobisque in virtute obediencie firmiter injungendo mandamus, quatinus dicti legati constitutiones, ut convenit, imitantes super proprietariis *hujusmodi* saltem bis in anno inquisitionem faciatis de cetero diligentem; ipsos, si quos inveneritis, animadversione condigna juxta regularia instituta canonice punientes; si vero id adimplere neglexentis, administracione vestra, ipso facto noveritis vos privatum, donec premissa fueritis diligenter executi, prout in constit. homini Ottoboni legati predicti plenius continetur.

No. XVI. Item, cum secundum constit. dicti legati et aliorum sanctorum patrum canonica instituta, abbates et priores, proprios abbates non habentes, nec non officarii quicumque teneantur bis saltim singulis annis presente toto conventu vel aliquibus ex senioribus ad hoc a capitulo deputatis de statu Prioratus et de administracione sua plenariam reddere rationem, quod tum in Prioratu vestro predicto invenimus hactenus non servatum, unde plura secuntur incommoda, et vestre utilitati communi plurimum derogatur; Vobis in virtute obediencie firmiter injungendo mandamus, quatinus prefati domini legati, domini videlicet Ottoboni, necnon bone memorie domini Stephani quondam Archiepiscopi Cant. constit. editas in hac parte, faciatis inter vos de cetero firmiter observari, sub pena suspensionis officiariorum ipsorum ab eorum *hujusmodi* officiis, dictique Prioris ab administracione sua, quam, si premissa neglexerint observare, ipso facto, donec id perfecerint, se noverint incurrisse, prout in dictis constit. dicti Ottoboni plenius continetur.

No. XVII. Item quia in Prioratu vestro predicto et ecclesia ejusdem ac in nonnullis domibus, edificiis, muris et clausuris ecclesie vestre prelibate, necnon manerium ipsius Prioratus certis diversis officiis deputatorum, quas et quæ precessorum et predecessorum vestrorum industria sumptuose construxerat, quamplures enormes et notabiles sunt defectus, reparatione necessaria indigentes; unde

statum ipsius Prioratus ac maneriorum predictorum deformitas occupat, et multa incommoda insecuntur; Vobis igitur in virtute obedientie firmiter injungendo mandamus, quatinus defectus *hujusmodi*, pro vestra utilitate communi absque dilacionis incommodo, quamcicuius poteritis, juxta vires reparari debite faciatis; alioquin Priorem ceterosque officarios quoscumque, qui in premissis negligentes fuerint vel remissi, nisi infra sex menses post notificacionem presencium sibi factam ad debitam reparationem defectuum *hujusmodi* se preparaverint, cum effectu, ipso facto ab officiis suis *hujusmodi* sint suspensi.

No. XVIII. Item, quia per vendiciones et concessiones liberacionum et *corrodiorum* hactenus per vos factas, reperimus dictum Prioratum multipliciter fore gravatum, adeo quod ea, que ad divini cultus augmentum, sustentacionem pauperum, et infirmorum, pia devocio fidelium erogavit, mercenariorum ceca cupiditas jam absorbet; fitque, ut dum bona ejusdem Prioratus in alios usus quam debitos, ne dixerimus in prophanos, nepharie convertantur, altissimo famulancium in eadem numerus minuitur, pauperes et infirmi suis porcionibus, ac ipsa ecclesia divinis obsequiis nequiter defraudantur, contra intencionem piissimam fundatorum, in vestrarum periculum animarum; Indempnitati igitur ipsius ecclesie vestre in hac parte debite providere, dictum quoque tam frequens incommodum ab eadem radicitus extirpare volentes, bone memorie domini Ottoboni legati predicti aliorumque sanctorum patrum vestigiis inherentes; Vobis tenore presencium districtius inhibemus, eciam sub pena excomm. majoris, ne *corrodia*, liberaciones, aut pensiones personis aliquibus imperpetuum vel ad tempus vendatis de cetero, vel aliquo qualiter concedatis, absque nostro consensu et licencia speciali; presertim cum vendiciones *hujusmodi*, que species alienacionis existunt, Prioratus vestri predicti detrimentum procurent et enormem eciam generat lesionem; si quis vero contra hanc nostram inhibitionem aliquid attemptare presumpserit, nisi id quod sic presumpserit revocaverit, ab officio sit suspensus prout in constit. domini Ottoboni clarius continetur.

No. XIX. Item quia quedam certe perpetue cantarie pro fundatoribus et aliis benefactoribus vestris tam in genere quam in specie antiquitus constitute per diversos presbyteros in Prioratu vestro predicto debite celebrande, pro quibus plura donaria recipistis a multis retro actis temporibus, ac eciam de presenti, ut asseritur, sunt substracte, contra piam intencionem ac ordinacionem eciam

fundatorum, in vestrarum grave periculum animarum; Vobis igitur, in virtute sancte obediencie ac sub majoris excom. sentencie pena, firmiter injungendo mandamus, quatinus cantarias predictas juxta formam institutionum et ordinationum earum faciatis de cetero debite celebrari, ac eisdem congrue deserviri, si redditus et proventus ad *hujusmodi* cantarias antiquitus assignati ad hoc sufficiant hiis diebus, alioquin prout redditus et proventus earum, aliis omnibus eisdem incumbentibus debite supportatis, sufficiunt de presenti, dolo et fraude cessantibus quibuscunque; super quo vestram conscienciam arcius oneramus, a modo deserviri debite faciatis.

No. XX. Item vobis et omnibus et singulis in virtute sancte obediencie ac sub majoris excom. sentencie pena firmiter injungendo mandamus, quatinus elemosinas in Prioratu vestro predicto antiquitus fieri consuetas, et eas ad quas tenemini ex ordinatione antiqua pro animabus fundatorum et aliorum benefactorum vestrorum juxta facultates vestras super quibus vestras consciencias arcius oneramus, prout divinam effugere volueritis ulcionem distribui de cetero faciatis; precipientes preterea quod fragmenta seu reliquiæ tam de aula Prioris quam eciam de refectorio provenienciâ, absque diminucione qualibet, per elimosinarium vel ipsius locum tenentem integre colligantur, pauperibus fideliter eroganda; alioquin, si elimosinarius *hujusmodi* remissus vel negligens fuerit in premissis, penam suspensionis ab officio se noverit incursum.

No. XXI. Item quia debilibus et infirmis humanitatis preberi subsidium jubet caritas, et pietas intelpellat; Vobis domino Priori ceteris obedienciariis Prioratus vestri predicti, quorum interest in hac parte in virtute sancte obediencie firmiter injungendo mandamus, quatinus confratribus vestris debilibus et infirmis, ipsorum infirmitate durante, in esculentes et poculentes eorum infirmitatibus congruentibus, necnon in medicinis et aliis juxta infirmitatis *hujusmodi* qualitatem et Prioratus facultates, de bonis vestris communibus et sicut antiquitus fieri consueverat de cetero faciatis debite procurari, sub pena suspensionis ab officiis vestris si circa premissa negligentes fueritis vel remissi, ipso facto, quousq; id quod negligenter omisum fuerit perfeceritis, incurrenda; prout in constit. domini Ottoboni plenius continetur; statuentes preterea quod camere infirmaria vestra, cum opus fuerit, infirmis canonicis sint communes, ne, quod absit, aliquis sibi retineat in eisdem vel vendicet proprietatem, contra sancti Augustini regulam et constit. sanctorum patrum editas in hac parte.

No. XXII. Item cum negligencia sive remissio in personis precedencium sit plurimum detestanda, facilitas quoq; venie incentivum prebeat delinquendi; Vobis domino Priori, Suppriori, aliisq; conventus predicti presidentibus quibuscumq; presentibus et futuris, in virtute sancte obediencie firmiter injungendo mandamus, Quatinus, cum correctiones in personis ipsius conventus imineant faciende, ipsas, prout ad vos pertinet, absq; acceptione qualibet personarum juxta quantitatem delictorum et personarum qualitatem vestrasq; observancias regulares cum maturitate debita, et discretione previa, facere studeatis; alioquin vos suppriorem ceterosq; presidentes predictos, si negligentes vel remissi aut culpabiles fueritis in premissis, canonica nostra monicione premissa penam suspencionis ab officiis vestris extunc incurrere volumus ipso facto, donec *hujusmodi* negligenciam, remissionem, culpam, vel desidiam a vobis excusseritis in hac parte; pena prefacto domino Priori in hoc casu, ut convenit, infligenda nobis specialiter reservata.

No. XXIII. Item cum consuetudines laudabiles Prioratus cujuscumq; ordinationesque ac statuta que usus longevi temporis approbavit merito sint servandæ; Vobis domino Priori ac singulis officariis Prioratus vestri predicti presentibus et futuris in virtute sancte obediencie, et sub penis infra scriptis, firmiter injungendo mandamus; Quatinus pitancias et alias distribuciones quascunque, in quibuscunque rebus consistant et quocunque nomine censeantur, in obitibus, anniversariis festivitibus, aut aliis diebus, conventui, aut ab uno officio alii officio ex ordinatione antiqua debitas et consuetas, in canonicum aliquod non obsistat a modo faciatias persolvi, sub pena porcionis duple, cujus partem unam conventui predicto, alteram vero partem certis piis usibus nostro arbitrio limitandis debite persolvendam specialiter reservamus.

No. XXIV. Item cum vendiciones boscorum, firme maneriorum vel eciam ecclesiarum, aut alia domus vestre ardua negocia imineant facienda, illa, sine tractatu ac deliberacione provida cum conventu predicto ac eorum consensu expresso vel majoris et sanioris partis ejusdem, de cetero fiere prohibemus; aliter autem *hujusmodi* negocia ardua facta nullius existunt firmitatis; et nichilominus Priorem aliosque officarios quoscumq; qui contra presentem prohibitionem nostram quicquam attemptaverint in premissis, penam suspensionis ab officiis eorundem ipso facto se noverint incururos, cum ex *hujusmodi* factis privatis ecclesiis dispendia multociens prove-

nerunt ; illa quoque que omnes tangunt ab omnibus merito debeant approbari.

No. XXV. Item volumus ac eciam ordinamus, quod sigillum vestrum commune sub quinque clavibus ad minus de cetero custodiatur ; quarum unam penes Priorem, secundam penes suppriorum, terciam penes precentorem, et reliquas duas claves penes confratres alios per conventum ad hoc nominandos decrevimus remanere, per ipsos fideliter custodiendas ; inhibentes preterea sub pena excom. majoris ne quicquam cum dicto sigillo communi a modo sigilletur, nisi litera *hujusmodi* sigellanda primitus legatur, inspiciatur, et eciam intelligatur a majore et saniore parte tocius conventus, et ad ipsam sigillandam communis vester prebeat consensus, cum ex facto *hujusmodi* plura possunt dispendia verisimiliter provenire ; ad hac vobis omnibus et singulis tenore presencium inhibemus, ne *compadres alicujus pueri* de cetero fieri presumatis, nostra super hoc licencia non obtenta, cum ex *hujusmodi* cognacionibus religiosis domibus dispendia sepius invenire noscuntur ; contrarium vero facientes, preter disciplinas alias regulares, singulis sextis feriis per mensem proxime tunc sequentem in pane et aqua jejunando precipimus castigari.

No. XXVI. Item quia nonnulli canonici domus vestre predictæ, freno abjecto observancie regularis, *caligis* de *Burneto* et sotularium basp. in *ocrearum* loco ad modum sotularium uti publice non verentur, contra consuetudinem antiquam laudabilem ordinis supradicti, in perniciosum exemplum et scandalum plurimorum ; nos igitur honestatem dicti ordinis observare volentes, Vobis domino Priori in virtute sancte obediencie firmiter injungendo mandamus, Quatinus quoscumq ; vestros canonicos et confratres ad utendum de cetero ocreis seu botis secundum antiquas vestri ordinis observancias regulares per quascumq ; censuras ecclesiasticas, et si opus fuerit, per incarcerationis penam canonice compellatis, sub pena suspensionis ab officio vestro predicto.

No. XXVII. Item quia tres vel due partes conventus domus vestre non comedunt cotidie in refectorio, prout constitutiones sanctorum patrum sanxerunt providè in hac parte ; Vobis dicti Prioratus conventui firmiter injungendo mandamus, Quatinus tres vel saltem due partes vestrum cotidie in refectorio hora prandii de cetero comedant et remaneant debite, sicut decet ; vobis arcius injungentes, quod nullus vestrum in mansiunculis aut locis aliis privatis eciam cum hospitibus suis regularibus vel secularibus vel confratribus

suis comedat ; hostilaria cum hospitibus, refectorio in communi misericordia, causa recreacionis, et aula Prioris dumtaxat exceptis ; hanc tamen Prior apponat providenciam diligentem, ut, sine personarum acceptione, nunc hos nunc illos ad refectionem convocet, quos magis noverit indigere ; super execucione vero debita premisorum Priorem ac alios conventui presidentes sub pena suspensionis ab eorum officiis arctius oneramus.

No. XXVIII. Item, cum secundum sanctorum patrum constitutiones, juniores canonici a suis prelati vivendi normam habeant assumere, ac iidem prelati super sua conversacione testium copiam debeant obtinere ; Vobis domino Priori in virtute obedientie districte precipiendo mandamus, Quatinus capellanum vestrum canonicum singulis de cetero mutetis annis, juxta constitutiones sanctorum patrum editas in hac parte ; ut sic, qui vobiscum fuerint in officio predicto, per doctrine laudabilis exercitium plus valeant in religione proficere, ac eos innocencie testes, si vobis, quod absit, crimen aliquod seu scandalum per aliquorum invidiam imponatur, prompte poteritis invocare.

No. XXIX. Item, cum communis exquisitus ornatus presertim in religiosis personis a jure sit penitus interdictus ; Vobis tenore presencium inhibemus, ne quis vestram de cetero in suis vestibus *furruris* preciosis aut *manicis* nodulatis *zonisve* sericis auri vel argenti ornatum habentibus utatur de cetero quovis modo, cum abusus *hujusmodi* ad pompam et ostentacionem ac scandalum ordinis manifeste tendere dinoscatur.

No. XXX. Item, quia singula officia sunt singulis committenda personis ; Vobis in virtute obedientie et sub excom. sententie pena firmiter injungendo mandamus, ut officia singula vestri Prioratus, que per canonicos officarios gubernari solebant, per officarios *hujusmodi*, per vos communiter vel divisim juxta Prioratus predicti morem solitum eligendos, quibus ipsa officia, ut olim, committi volumus exercenda, singulariter de cetero gubernentur.

XXXI. Item, cum plus timeri soleat id quod specialiter injungitur quam quod generaliter imperatur ; Vobis omnibus et singulis inhibemus, ne aliquis vestrum, ad curam animarum non admissus, clericis aut laicis sacramentum unctionis extreme vel eucharistia ministrare, matrimonia ve solempnizare, non habita super hiis parochialis presbyteri licencia, quomodolibet presumatis, sub pena excom. majoris sententie in hac parte a canone fulminate.

XXXII. Item quia comperimus in nostris visitacionibus supra-



dictis vasa et pallas altaris, necnon et vestimenta sacra ecclesie vestre, atque corporalia, tam immunda relinqui, quod interdum aliquibus sunt horrore; ut igitur honor debitus divinis impendatur; Vobis firmiter injungendo mandamus, Quatinus vasa, corporalia, pallas, et vestimenta predicta, ac cetera ecclesie ornamenta munda nitida et honesta decetero conserventur hoc quoq; insuper injungentes, ut in ecclesiâ vestra celebrantibus *vinum bonum*, purum, et incorruptum ad sacramentum altaris conficiendum per eum qui super hoc gerit officium, et non *corruptum*, et *acetosum*, prout fieri consueverit, imposterum ministretur; nimis enim videtur absurdum in sacris sordes negligere, que dedecerent in prophanis.

XXXIII. Item licet sanctorum reliquias, vasa, aut vestimenta sacra seu libros ecclesie in *vadem dari*, aut pignori obligari canonica prohibeant instituta, a vobis tamen in dictis visitacionibus comperimus contrarium esse factum; Vobis igitur domino Priori, tenore presencium, firmiter injungendo mandamus, quatinus ab *hujusmodi* impignoracionibus, extra casus a jure permissos vos decetero penitus abstinentes, *hujusmodi* pignori obligata curetis recolligere, et ea ecclesie vestre restituere, absq; more dispendio, sicut decet; statuentes preterea ut omnes carte ac munimenta quecumq; statum bona et possessiones domus vestre qualitercumq; contingentes, sub tribus serruris et clavibus remaneant, futuris temporibus fideliter conservande.

XXXIV. Item cum religiosi de bono in melius continue debeant proficisci, ac ex sacre scripture lectione et inspectione qualiter id faciant plenius instrui valeant; Vobis firmiter injungendo mandamus, ut, completis hiis, que ad vestri ordinis et regularis discipline observanciam pertinent atq; spectant, in claustro sedentes scripture sacre lectioni sancteq; contemplacioni devocius insistatis, sicq; secundum regule vestre exigenciam taliter codices inspiciendos requiratis, ut in eis quid fugiendum quid subsequendum ac cujusmodi premium inde consequendum fuerit agnoscere valeatis.

XXXV. Item vobis Domino Priori injungimus, quod cum parentes vel consanguinei alicujus confratris vestri ad eum accesserint, causa visitandi eundem, liberaliter secundum statum sui exigenciam per vos vel illum qui super hoc ministrandi gerit officium infra Prioratum honeste et debite procurentur; sed videant fratres ne nimis sint in talibus Prioratui onerosi.

XXXVI. Item quia parum est jura condere nisi executioni debita demandentur, ea quoque solent labili memorie eo tenacius com-

mendari quo veraciter audientium auribus fuerint sepius inculcata ; et, ne vestrum quis piam ignorantiam pretendere valeat premisorum ; Vobis firmiter injungendo mandamus, quatinus has nostras injunctiones et decreta pariter supradicta in aliquo volumine competenti absque more dispendio conscribi plenius faciatis, eaque omnia et singula bis annis singulis de cetero coram toto conventu plenius recitari ; vos nichilominus omnes et singulos monemus primo secundo et tercio peremptorie, vobis insuper in virtute obediencie arctius injungentes, quatinus ipsas injunctiones nostras et decreta predicta omnia et singula prout ad vos et vestrum quemlibet pertinent et singulariter vos concernunt, teneatis de cetero ac eciam observetis, sub penis et censuris ecclesiasticis supradictis, et aliis penis canonicis in contravenientes quoscumque, prout contumacia delinquentium exegerit, per nos imposterum canonicè infligendis. Potestatem autem premissa corrigendi, mutandi in toto vel in parte, interpretandi, declarandi et eisdem addendi, et eciam detrahendi, ac penas adjiciendi, suspendendi, necnon super compertis aliis in visitatione nostra predicta procedendi, criminaque et defectus ac excessus in ipsa comperta et delata corrigendi, ac canonicè puniendi, et super ipsis novas injunctiones insuper faciendas, sicut et prout opus fuerit et nobis videbitur expedire, nobis eciam specialiter reservamus. In quorum omnium testimonium sigillum nostrum fecimus hiis apponi. Dat. apud Wynton vicesimo septimo die mensis Septembris anno Domini millesimo ccc<sup>o</sup> octogesimo septimo et nostre consecrationis anno vicesimo.

( L. S. )

## NUMBER IV

(No. 50.)

INDENTURA PRIORIS *de SELBORNE quorundam tradit. Petro Barnes sacriste ibidem ann. Hen. 6. --- una cum confiss. ejusdem Petri script.*

HEC indentura facta die lune proxime post festum natalium Dni anno *regis* Henrici sexti post conquestum anglie v. ----- inter fratrem Johannem Stepe priorem ecclesie beate Marie de Selborne & Petrum Bernes sacrist. ibidem videlicet quod predictus prior deliveravit prefato Petro omnia subscripta In primis xxii amit xxxi aubes vid. v. sine parura pro quadragesima xxii manicul. Item xxii stole Item viii casule vid. iii albe pro quadragesima. Item xi dalmatic. vid. i debit. Item xvi cape vid. iiii veteres. Item unam amittam i albam cum paruris unum manipulum i stolam i casulam et duas dalmaticas de dono Johannis Combe capellani de Cicestria pro diebus principalibus. Item i amittam i aubam cum paruris i manipulum i stolam i casulam de dono ffratris Thome Halybone canonicis. Item i amittam i aubam cum paruris i manipulum i stolam i casulam pertinentem ad altare sancte Catherine virginis pro priore. Item i amittam ii aubas cum paruris ii manipul ii stolas et ii casulas pertinentes ad altare sancti Petri de dono patris Ricardi holte. Item de dono ejusdem ii tuella vid. i cum fructello et i canvas pro eodem altare. Item i tuellum pendentem ad terram pro quadragesima. Item vi tuell. cum ffructibus xv tuell sine fructell. Item iiii tuell. pro lavatore. Item v corporas. Item ii ffructell pro summo altare sine tuellis. Item ii coopertor pro le ceste. Item ii pallias de serico debili. Item i velum pro quadrigesima. Item i tapetum viridi coloris pro summo altare ii ridell cum iiii ridellis parvis pertinent. ad dict. altare. Item vii offretor vid. v debit. Item iiii vexilla. Item iiii pelves iii quessonnes vid. i de serico. Item ii super altaria. Item quinq; calices vid. iiii de

auro. Item II cruettes de argento de dono dñi Johannis Combe capellani de Cicestre. Item VIII cruettes de peuter. Item I coupam argent. et deaur. Item II *osculator argent.* Item I osculatorium cum osse *digiti auricularis S<sup>ti</sup> Johannis Baptiste.* Item I crux argent. et deaur. non radicat. Item turribulum argent. et deaur. Item I anulum cum saphiro. Item I aliud anulum politum aureum. Item I anulum argent. et deauratum *S<sup>ti</sup> Edmundi.* Item I concha cum pereio infixo. Item I cistam argent. et deaur. Item I imaginem beate Marie argent. et deaurat. Item I parvam crucem cum v reliquiis. Item I *junctorium S<sup>ti</sup> Ricardi.* Item I tecam pro reliquiis imponend. Item I *calefactor. S<sup>ti</sup> Ricardi.* Item III candelabra vid. II de stagno et II de ferro. Item I *pecten S<sup>ti</sup> Ricardi.* Item II viell de cristall in parte fract. Item I pelvim de coper ad lavator. Item II *osculat. de coper.* Item I parvum turribulum de latyn. Item I vas de coper pro frank et sence consecrand. Item I pixidem de juery pro corpore Christi. Item II vasa de plumbo pro oleo conservando. Item I patellam eneam ferro ligat. Item I tripodem ferr. Item I costrell contum. II lagen et I potrell. Item II babyngyres. Item II botelles de corio vid. I de quarte et I de pynte. Item III anul. arg. et I pixidem S<sup>te</sup> Marie de Waddon. Item ( ) Instrumenta pro Sandying. Item I ledbnyff. Item I shasshobe. Item I securim. Item II scabell. de ferro pro cancell. Item I plane. Item I cistam sine cerura. Item XIII sonas. Item XIX taperes ponder. XIIIlb et dimid. Item II torches ponder. XXlb. Item XIIIlb cere et dimid. Item de candelis de cera ponder. VIlb. Item I lb de frank et sence. Item I lagenam olei. Item IX pondera de plumbo.

(Vide de stauro in tergo) et in tergo scribuntur hæc,  
 “II vacce I sus III hoggett et III porcell.”

NUMBER V.

(No. 381.)

*A Paper conteyning the value of the Manors and Lands pertayning to the Priorie of Selborne. iv. Edw. 3. With a note of charges yssuing out of it.*

SELEBORNE PRIORATUS.

SUMMA totalis valoris maneriorum terrarum tenementorum et premissorum ejusdem Prioratus in festo S<sup>ti</sup>. Michaelis Archang. anno secundo Regis Edvardi 4<sup>ti</sup>. ut patet Rotul. de valoribus liberat.

xx  
III VI li. (i. e. LXXXVI li.) X s. VI d.

Inde in redditibus resolutis domino pape domino Archiepiscopo et in diversis ffeodis certis personis concessis ac aliis annualibus repris in eisdem Rotul. de valoribus annotatis per annum XIII li. XIX s. V d.

Et remanet de claro valore LXXI li. X s. VIII d.

Videlicet Assignantur pro {  
Quatuor canonicis et quatuor ffamulis deo et ecclesie ibid. servientibus pro eorum vadiis vestur. et diet. ut patet per bill inde fact. per annum xxx li.  
Diversis creditoribus pro eorum debitis persolvendis ut patet per parcell inde fact. XV li. XV s. III d.  
Reparacionibus Ecclesiarum domorum murorum et clausurarum ejusdem Prioratus per annum XV li. XV s. III d.  
Annua pencione Domini Prioris ei assignata per annum quousque remanet X li.

## SELBORNE PRIORATUS.

*Modo sequitur de Reformatione premissorum.*

Redditus omn. firmis et Pensionibus. { Summa total. valorum. ibid. misis et desperatis inde deductis prout patet per declaracionem Dñi Petri Prioris de Selborne ad man. Dni nostri Wynton apud Palacium suum de Wolsley presentat. per ipsum ultimo die ffebr. Ann. Domini MCCCCLXII. et penes ipsum remanet. } LXXI li. x s. VIII d. unde per ipsum Dnum nostrum Wynton assignantur in fforma sequente videlicet.

{ Pro quatuor canonicis et quatuor ffamilis deo et ecclesie ibid. servientibus pro eorum Diet. vadiis et vestur. ut patet per bill inde fact. } XXX li.

{ Pro annua pensione Prioris quousque remanet. } X li.

Assignantur ut supra { Pro diversis creditoribus pro eorum debitis persolvendis ut patet per bill inde fact. } XV li. XV s. IIII d. per II annos ad XXXI li. X s. VIII d. ultra LV li. XIII d. de vendit. stauri.

{ Pro diversis reparacionibus ecclesiarum domorum murorum et clausurarum ut patet per bill. } XV li. XV s. IIII d. per II annos ad XXXI li. X s. VIII d. Summa total. valoris pro debitis et reparacionibus assignat. cum LV li. XIII d. de vendit. Stauri ut supra CXVIII li. II s. VI d.

Debita que debentur ibid. per diversos tenentes et ffirmarios ad festum S<sup>ti</sup>. Michaelis anno tertio Regis Edvardi 4<sup>ti</sup>. videlicet

Abbas de Derford de ffeod. ffirmie sua ad IX li. VI s. VIII d. per annum a retro } XX li. VII s. XI d.

Thomas Perkyns armig. ffirmarius Rectorie de Estworlam pro uno anno finiente ad ffestum S<sup>ti</sup>. Mich. anno II. Regis Edvardi 4<sup>ti</sup>. } LX s.

Johannes Shalmere ball de Selborne debet LXXV s.

Ricardus Cawry debet de eodem anno VI s.

Summa XXVII li. VIII s. XI d.

Thomas Perkyns armig. debet de firme sua predicta ad festum S<sup>ti</sup>. Mich. ann. VII et ultra feod. suum ad XX s. per annum } VII li. VI s. VIII d.

Thomas lusher debet pro firme sua ad XL s. per annum cum feod. suis ad XX s. per annum } C. s.

Hugo Pakenham debet de reddit. suo ad XX s. per ann. } C. s.

Abbas de Derford debet de feod firme sua ultra XX li. VII s. XI d. ut supra pro annis III. IIII. et V. Regis Edvardi } XXVIII li.

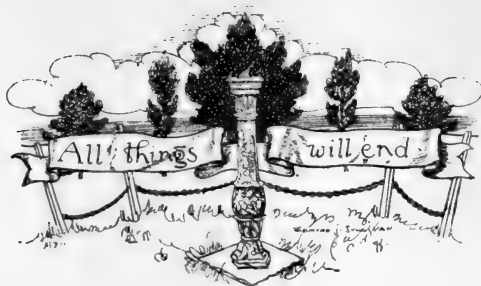
Walterus Berlund firmarius de *Shene* debet IX li. V s. II d.

Henr. Shafter firmarius *feod* de Basynstoke XII li. IIII d.

Henr. lode nuper firmarius manerii de *Chede* debet XX li.

Total. LXXXIV li. XII d.

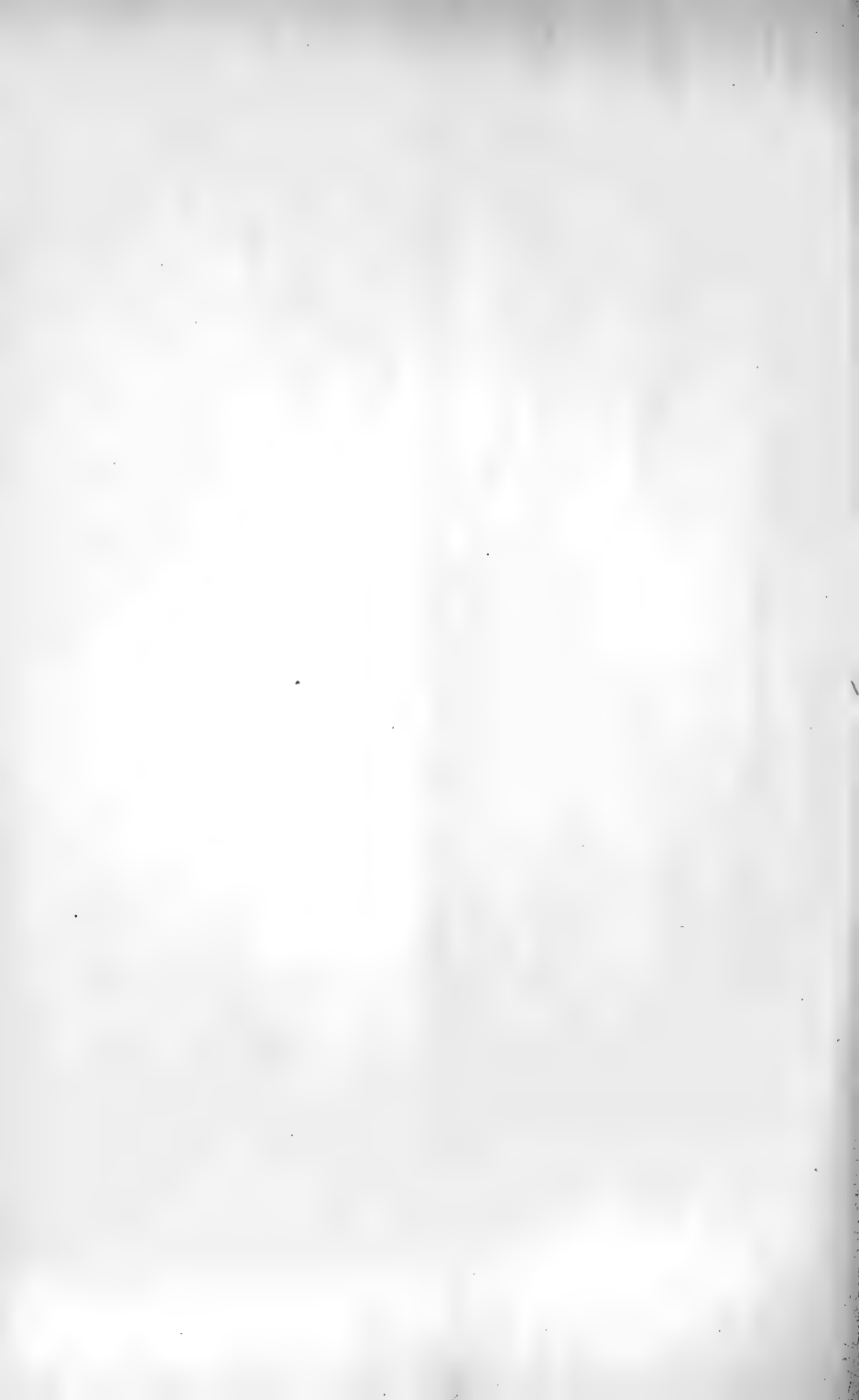
Summa LXVI li. XII s. VI d.







## BIBLIOGRAPHY



## BIBLIOGRAPHY

BY C. DAVIES SHERBORN, F.G.S.

GILBERT WHITE made four contributions to literature: (a) "Account of the House-Martin," 1744; (b) "Of the House-Swallow," 1775; (c) "Natural History and Antiquities of Selborne," 1789; and (d) "Naturalist's Kalendar," 1795. The following is an attempt to show the various editions, or issues, of these works.

White also left unpublished letters and manuscripts. Professor Newton has already provided us with a scholarly account of the various editions of White's works up to 1877, in *Notes and Queries*; Dr. Coues incorporated and increased this list in *Proc. U.S. Nat. Mus.*, ii, 1880; and Mr. Martin issued a bibliography in 1899. These authors have been duly acknowledged in the proper places.

Entries printed between brackets have not been verified by the compiler.

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1774. Account of the House-Martin or Martlet. *Phil. Trans.* lxiv, 1774. pp. 196-201. *London.*

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1775. Of the House-Swallow, Swift, and Sand-Martin. *Phil. Trans.* lxxv, 1775, pp. 258-276. *London.*

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### THE NATURAL HISTORY OF SELBORNE

1789. The | Natural History | and | Antiquities | of | Selborne, | in the | County of Southampton: | with | Engravings, and an Appendix. | - - - "ego apis matinae | "more modoque | "Grata carpentis - - - per laborem | "Plurimum," - - - - Hor. | "omnia benè describere, quæ in hoc mundo, a Deo facta, aut Naturæ creatæ viribus | "elaborata fuerunt, opus est non unius

- hominis, nec unius ævi. Hinc *Fauna & Flora* | utilissimæ : hinc *Monographi* præstantissimi." Scopoli Ann. Hist. Nat. | London : | Printed by T. Bensley ; | for B. White and son ; at Horace's Head, Fleet Street. | M, DCC, LXXXIX. 4to. v [-viii] 468 Pp., Index of 12 pp. & 1 p. errata ; 7 pls. & 1 on p. 307.
1792. [White's Beyträge | zur | Naturgeschichte von England. | Aus dem Englischen übersetzt | und | mit Anmerkungen begleitet | von | Friedrich Albrecht Anton Meyer, | der Weltweisheit und Arzneygelehrtheit Doctor und Privatdocent | zu Göttingen. | Berlin, 1792 | Bey Heinrich August Rottmann. 16mo. [8] 168 Pp. —Newton, *Notes & Queries* [5] vii, p. 265.]
1793. [An edition assigned to this year, that of the author's death, by Agassiz and Strickland (*Bibliogr. Zool.*, iv, p. 560), but probably in error—Afred Newton, *N. & Q.*, [5] vii. p. 241.]
1802. The Works, | in | Natural History, | of the late | Rev. Gilbert White, A.M. | Fellow of Oriel College, Oxford. | comprising | The Natural History of Selborne ; | The Naturalist's Calendar ; | and miscellaneous observations, | Extracted from his Papers. | To which are added, | A Calendar and Observations, | By W. Markwick, Esq. F.L.S. | In two volumes. | Vol. I. | London : | Printed for J. White, Fleet Street, | by T. Bensley, Bolt Court. | 1802. | 8<sup>o</sup> viii, 392 Pp., 2 pls. : idem, Vol. II, idem, 330 Pp., 2 pls.
1813. The | Natural History | and | Antiquities | of | Selborne, | in the | County of Southampton. | To which are added, | the Naturalist's Calendar ; | observations on various parts of Nature ; | and Poems. | By the late Rev. Gilbert White, | formerly Fellow of Oriel College, Oxford. | A new edition, with engravings. | London : | Printed for White, Cochrane, and Co. ; | Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme, and Brown ; J. Mawman ; S. Bagster ; | J. & A. Arch ; J. Hatchard ; R. Baldwin ; and T. Hamilton. | 1813. 4<sup>to</sup> x, 588 Pp., 7 pls.
1813. [The | Natural History | of | Selborne, | by the late | Rev. Gilbert White, A.M. | Fellow of Oriel College, Oxford. | To which are added, | The Naturalist's Calendar, | Miscellaneous Observations, | and Poems. | A New Edition, with engravings. | In two volumes. | London : | printed for White, Cochrane, and Co. | Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme, and Brown ; | J. Mawman ; S. Bagster ; J. and A. Arch : | J. Hatchard ; R. Baldwin ; and | T. Hamilton. | 1813. | 8vo. viii, 352 Pp. Vol. II, 364 Pp.—A. Newton, *Notes & Queries* [5] vii, p. 242.]
1822. The | Natural History | of | Selborne, | by the late | Rev. Gilbert White, A.M. | Fellow of Oriel College, Oxford. | To which are added, | The Naturalist's Calendar, | Miscellaneous Observations, | and poems. | A new edition, with engravings. | In two

- volumes. | Vol. I. | London : | Printed for J. and A. Arch ; Longman, Hurst, Rees, | Orme and Brown ; Lackington and Co. ; J. Mawman ; | Baldwin, Cradock and Joy ; J. Hatchard and son ; S. Bagster ; Ogle, Duncan and Co. ; W. Mason ; J. Sheldon ; | R. Saunders ; and Hurst and Robinson. | 1822. | 8° viii, 351 Pp., 2 pls. ; idem, Vol. II, idem. 364 Pp., 2 pls.
1825. The | Natural History | of | Selborne, | by the late | Rev. Gilbert White, A.M. | Fellow of Oriel College, Oxford. | To which are added, | The Naturalist's Calendar, | miscellaneous observations, | and poems. | A new edition, with engravings. | In two volumes. | Vol. I. | London : | Printed for C. and J. Rivington ; J. and A. Arch ; Long- | man, Hurst, Rees, Orme, Brown and Green ; Harding, | Triphook and Lepard ; Baldwin, Cradock and Joy ; | J. Hatchard and son ; S. Bagster ; G. B. Whitaker ; | James Duncan ; W. Mason ; Saunders and Hodgson ; and | Hurst, Robinson and Co. | 1825. 8°. I. viii, 351 Pp. ; II, 364 Pp., 1 pl.
1829. The | Natural History | of | Selborne, | by the late | Rev. Gilbert White, A.M. | Fellow of Oriel College, Oxford. | With additions | by | Sir William Jardine, Bart. F.R.S.E. F.L.S. M.W.S. | Author of "Illustrations of Ornithology." | A new edition | Edinburgh : | Printed for Constable and Co. | and Hurst, Chance, and Co. London | 1829. 6<sup>mo</sup>. xviii. 344 Pp.  
[Constable's Miscellany, vol. xlv.]
1829. [ . . . "Six pages of Introduction, 330 pp. of text" another edition of "Constable, 1829"—Coues, *Proc. U.S. Nat. Mus.* II, p. 382.]
1830. [ . . . London. 1830. 12<sup>mo</sup>.—Coues, p. 382, cited from Agassiz & Strickland, *Bibliogr.* IV, p. 561 ; probably a reissue of "Constable, 1829."]
1832. [ . . . A reprint of the 1829 ed., 12<sup>mo</sup>. Philadelphia, 1832 ; Allibone, p. 2685 ; E. Coues, *Proc. U.S. Nat. Mus.* II, p. 386.]
1832. [As the "Constable, 1829," but the T.P. ending "New Edition. | Printed for Whittaker, Treacher, and Co. London, | and Waugh and Innes, Edinburgh. | 1832."—A. Newton, *Notes & Queries* [5] vii, p. 242.—325 Pp.,—Martin.]
1833. [ . . . Martin records another issue of "Whittaker, 1832," with 432 Pp.]
1833. The | Natural History | of | Selborne ; | Observations on various parts of Nature ; | and the Naturalist's Calendar. | by the late | Rev. Gilbert White, A.M. | Fellow of Oriel College, Oxford. | With notes ; | by Captain Thomas Brown, F.L.S. M.K.S. &c. | President of the Royal Physical Society. | Edinburgh : | published, for the Proprietors, | by James Chambers, Edinburgh ; W. Orr, London ; | and W. Curry, Jun. & Co. Dublin. | MDCCCXXXIII. 8° xii, 356 Pp.  
[British Library, vol. 1.]

## 352 NATURAL HISTORY OF SELBORNE

1833. The | Natural History | of | Selborne. | By the | Rev. Gilbert White, A.M. | Fellow of Oriel College, Oxford. | Arranged for young persons. | London : | printed for N. Hailes, 168, Piccadilly. | 1833. | 6<sup>mo.</sup> x, 316, Pp.  
 [Dedication reads—"To H. A. E. --- your affectionate Mother. May 25, 1833." = Lady Dover.]
1833. The | Natural History and Antiquities | of | Selborne. | By the late | Rev. Gilbert White. | A New Edition, | with notes, by several eminent naturalists. | And an enlargement of | the Naturalists' Calendar. | W. Herbert, del. East Woodhay Warbler. | London : | Printed for J. and A. Arch ; Longman, Rees, Orme, Brown, Green, | and Longman ; Baldwin and Cradock ; Hatchard and son ; Harding and Lepard ; J. G. and F. Rivington ; S. Bagster ; | Whittaker, Treacher, and Arnot ; J. Duncan ; W. Mason ; J. Cochran ; | E. Hodgson ; J. Bain ; W. J. and J. Maynard ; J. Bohn ; | and Houlston and son. | n.d. but dated on the half title, 1833. 8° xii, 562 Pp.  
 [Notes by W. H. (Hon. & Rev. W. H. Herbert), R. S. (Robert Sweet), and J. R. (Professor Rennie).]
1833. [ . . . Ed. with notes & illustrations, by Sir W. Jardine, Edin., 1833, &c., 18mo.—Allibone, p. 2684.]
1834. [ . . . Fraser and Co., Orr and Smith, and W. Curry, Junr. 2nd. ed. 348 Pp.—Martin ; said to be ed. 2 of "Chambers' 1833." ]
1834. [The | Natural History | . . . | A New Edition. | . . . | London : | published by Allan Bell & Co. and | Simpkin and Marshall : Fraser & Co., Edinburgh ; | and W. Curry, Jun. & Co., Dublin. 1834.—Alfred Newton, *Notes & Queries* [5] vii, p. 243 ; ? ed. 3 of "Chambers' 1833." ]
1835. [ . . . Fraser and Co., Orr and Smith, and W. Curry, Junr. 4th. ed. 348 Pp.—Martin ; 18mo Allibone, p. 2684 ; see "Chambers' 1833." ]
1836. [ . . . Fraser and Co., and Henry Washbourne. 6th ed. 348 Pp.—Martin ; see "Chambers' 1833." ]
1836. [ . . . Fraser and Co., and Henry Washbourne. 7th ed. 348 Pp.—Martin ; see "Chambers' 1833." ]
1836. [? Another ed. of Constable's 1829 issue—see A. Newton, *Notes & Queries*, [5] vii, p. 242, and E. Coues, *Proc. U.S. Nat. Mus.*, ii, p. 393.]
1836. The | Natural History | of | Selborne, | with its | Antiquities ; Naturalist's Calendar, &c., | by | the Rev. Gilbert White, A.M. | A New Edition, | with notes by Edward Blyth. | London : | published by Orr and Smith, Paternoster Row.—MDCCCXXXVI. 8° iii, xix, 418 Pp.
1836. The | Natural History | of | Selborne ; | with | observations on various parts of Nature, | and the Naturalist's Calendar. | By

- the late | Rev. Gilbert White, A.M. | Fellow of Ori el College Oxford. | With extensive additions by | Captain Thomas Brown, F.L.S. &c. | Sixth edition. | Edinburgh : | Fraser & Co. 54, North Bridge ; | Henry Washbourne, London. | MDCCCXXXVI. | 8° xii, 356 Pp. ; see "Chambers' 1833."
1837. The | Natural History and Antiquities | of | Selborne. | By the | Rev. Gilbert White, M.A. | With | the Naturalist's Calendar ; | and miscellaneous observations, | extracted from his papers. | A New Edition ; | with notes, by Edward Turner Bennett, Esq. | F.L.S. etc. Secretary of the Zoological Society ; and others. | London : | Printed for J. and A. Arch ; Longman and Co. ; Baldwin and Cradock ; | Hatchard and son ; R. Scholey ; J. G. and F. Rivington ; | Whittaker and Co. ; J. Duncan ; J. Capes ; W. Mason ; E. Hodgson ; J. Bain ; | W. J. and J. Maynard ; J. Bohn ; J. Vanvoorst ; and Houlston and son | n.d. but dated on the half-title, 1837. 8° xxiii, 640 Pp.
1838. [Engelmann, *Bibl. Hist. Nat.*, 1846, p. 202, records an ed. by Blyth and Mudie in 1838—query a misprint for 1836.]
1838. [ . . . ed. Bennett. 8° Longman 1838—English Catal. 1835–62, p. 823.]
1840. [ . . . Eighth Edition | London : | John Chidley, 123, Aldersgate Street, MDCCCL.—A. Newton, *Notes & Queries* [5] vii, p. 243 ; see "Chambers' 1833."]
1840. [ . . . Arranged for Young Persons, by a Lady, 1840, 12mo.—Allibone, p. 2685 ; Lowndes : this seems to be the second edition of that edited by Lady Dover, and is said to have been published by Tegg. The edition afterwards passed to the S.P.C.K, was issued many times, e.g., 1842, 1860, 1863 ; and was the original of the American reprints issued by Harper Brothers ; see "Hailes, 1833."]
1841. [The | Natural History of Selborne. | By | the Rev. Gilbert White, A.M., | Fellow of Ori el College, Oxford. | New-York : | Harper and Brothers, Cliff-street. | 1841. | 18<sup>mo</sup> xii, 13–335 Pp. No. 147 of the "Family Library," & the original American reprint of the "Lady Dover" edition. Further issues in 1842 (2), 1847, 1853, 1855, 1859, 1860—E. Coues, *Proc. U.S. Nat. Mus.* II, p. 402.]
1842. [ . . . ed. Jenyns. 12mo. Van Voorst, 1842—English Catal. 1835–62, p. 823 ; ? refers to the circular announcing the work.]
1842. The | Natural History | of | Selborne. | By the | Rev. Gilbert White, A.M. | Fellow of Ori el College, Oxford. | Arranged for Young Persons. | London : | printed for the | Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge ; | sold at the Depository, | Great Queen Street, Lincoln's Inn Fields ; | and by all booksellers. | 1842. | 8° viii, 328 Pp.—see "Hailes, 1833."

- [Dedication reads—"To H. A. E. . . . your affectionate Mother. May 25, 1833."]
1842. [Two reprints of the 1841 issue of Harper and Brothers were issued this year—E. Coues.]
1843. The | Natural History of Selborne. | By | the Rev. Gilbert White, A.M. | Fellow of Oriel College, Oxford. | New-York : | Harper and Brothers, Cliff-Street. | 1843. | 6<sup>mo</sup>. 335 Pp.  
[On p. 13 it reads ". . . arranged for young persons."]
1843. The | Natural History | of | Selborne. | By | the late Rev. Gilbert White, M.A. | Wisdom of God in Creation [in Garter] "omnia benè describere, quæ in hoc mundo, à Deo facta, aut Naturæ | creatæ visibus elaborata fuerunt, opus est non unius hominis, nec unius | ævi. Hinc *Faunæ* et *Floræ* utilissimæ ; hinc *Monographi* præstantissimi." | —Scopoli Ann. Hist. Nat. | A New Edition, with notes by | the Rev. Leonard Jenyns, M.A., F.L.S., | etc. | London : | John Van Voorst, Paternoster Row. | M. DCCC. XLIII. | 8° xvi, 398 [2].—see "Van Voorst, 1842."]
1843. [ . . . As the 1840 ed. (see "Chambers' 1833") but bears imprint "Edinburgh : Printed by Andrew Shortrede, Thistle Lane."—Newton, *Notes & Queries* [5] vii, p. 243.]
1845. [As the 1843 ed. (see "Chambers' 1833") but wants the "Index" & terminates with p. 348, bearing the imprint "J. Billing, Printer and Stereotyper, Woking, Surrey."—Newton, *Notes & Queries* [5] vii, p. 243.]
1845. [ . . . John Chidley. 8th ed.—Martin : ? the ed. mentioned by Prof. Newton under 1840 ; see "Chambers' 1833" : Martin also records a 9th ed. but without place, publisher, or date.]
1847. [A reissue of the 1841 Harper and Brothers issue appeared this year.—E. Coues.]
- [? c. 1850] The | Natural History | of | Selborne. | By the | Rev. Gilbert White, A.M. | Fellow of Oriel College, Oxford. | Arranged for young persons. | A new edition, with notes. | London : | Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge ; | sold at the depositories : | 77, Great Queen Street, Lincoln's Inn Fields ; | 4, Royal Exchange ; 16, Hanover Street, Hanover Square ; | and by all booksellers. | n.d. (printed by R. Clay). 12<sup>mo</sup> viii, 339 Pp.  
[Dedication by Lady Dover to Henry Agar Ellis now Lord Clifford, dated 25 May 1833 ; see "Hailes, 1833."]
1850. [The Natural History of Selborne, with its Antiquities ; Naturalist's Calendar, &c., by the Rev. Gilbert White, A.M. A New Edition with notes by Edward Blyth. To which is added a description of the village and neighbourhood, written on the spot for this edition by the late Robert Mudie. London : Published by William S. Orr & Co., Amen Corner, Paternoster Row, MDCCCL. 8°, xix, 418 [-420?] Pp.—Martin, p. 159.]



1850. The | Natural History | of | Selborne ; | with | Observations on various parts of Nature ; | and | the Naturalist's Calendar. | By the late | Rev. Gilbert White, A.M. | Fellow of Oriol College, Oxford. | With additions and supplementary notes by | Sir William Jardine, Bart. F.R.S.E., F.L.S., M.W.S. | Edited, with further illustrations, a biographical sketch of the author, | and a complete index, by | Edward Jesse, Esq. | Author of "Gleanings in Natural History," &c. &c. | With forty engravings. | London : | Henry G. Bohn, York Street, Covent Garden. | 1850. | 8° xxiv, 416 Pp. 1872 (Bell and Daldy).  
["Bohn's Illustrated Library" ; reissues in 1851, 1853, 1854, 1857 & 1861].
1851. [A reissue of 1850, Bohn's Illustr. Library.]
1853. The | Natural History and Antiquities | of Selborne, | with | observations on various parts of Nature, | and | The Naturalist's Calendar. | By the late Rev. Gilbert White, A.M. | A new edition. | Edited, with notes, by | Sir William Jardine, Bart. F.R.S.E. F.L.S. &c. | Completely illustrated with about seventy engravings, | comprising | subjects from natural history, and views of Selborne, its vicinity | and antiquities, sketched from nature expressly | for this edition. | London : | Nathaniel Cooke, Milford House, Strand. | 1853. 8° xviii, 337 Pp.
1853. [Prof. Newton (*Notes & Queries* [5] vii, p. 242), notes another issue of the above with slightly different T.P. and a few more pp., (342) ; it formed part of the "National Illustrated Library" ; a copy is in the B.M., 741. c. 7.]
1853. [ . . . R. Griffin and Co. 10th. ed. 348 Pp.—Martin ; see "Chambers' 1833." ]
1853. [A reissue of the 1841 Harper and Brothers issue appeared this year—E. Coues.]
1853. [A reissue of Bohn, 1850.]
1854. [Reissue of Bohn, 1850.]
1854. The | Natural History | of | Selborne. | By the late Rev. Gilbert White, A.M. | With additional notes, | by the Rev. J. G. Wood, M.A. | Author of the Illustrated Natural History, etc. | Illustrated with engravings on wood. | London : | George Routledge & Co. | Farringdon Street. | 1854. | 8° viii, 428 Pp.  
[3000 issued ; reissued in 1857, 1859, 1864, 1869, 1872, 1876, 1879, & 1893 (2000 of each but 3000 in 1893)—Martin.]
1855. [A reissue of the Harper and Brothers issue appeared this year—E. Coues.]
1857. [ . . . ed. Brown (? 11<sup>th</sup> ed.) 18<sup>mo</sup>. Jas. Blackwood, 1857—English Catal. 1835—1862, p. 823 ; see "Chambers' 1833." ]
1857. [A reissue of Routledge, 1854.]
1857. [A reissue of Bohn, 1850.]

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1858. [ . . . ed. Blyth. | To which is added | a Description of the Village and Neighbourhood, | written on the spot for this Edition, | by the late Robert Mudie. | Thomas Nelson & Sons, | London, Edinburgh, and New York. | MDCCLVIII.—Stereotyped reissue of Blyth's ed. of 1836 with new T.P. &c.—Coues, *Proc. U.S. Nat. Mus.* II. p. 427.]
1859. [A reissue of Routledge, 1854.]
1859. [A reissue of the 1841 Harper and Brothers issue appeared this year—E. Coues.]
1860. The | Natural History | of | Selborne. | By the | Rev. Gilbert White, A.M. | Fellow of Oriel College, Oxford. | Arranged for young persons. | A new edition, with notes. | London : | Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge ; | &c. 8° viii, 338 Pp.  
[Some of the woodcuts in this ed. are by Joseph Wolf : the volume is undated but was received by the B.M., 8 March, 1860 : see 1850.]
1860. [The | Natural History of Selborne. | By | the Rev. Gilbert White, A.M., | Fellow of Oriel College, Oxford. | New York : | Harper & Brothers, Publishers, | 329 & 331 Pead Street, | Franklin Square. | 1860. | 16<sup>mo</sup>. pp. 335—the text beginning at p. 13—Newton, *Notes & Queries* [5] vii, p. 264 ; E. Coues, *Proc. U.S. Nat. Mus.*, II, p. 429, says i-xii, 13-235 Pp ; see "Harper, 1841."]
1860. The | Natural History | of | Selborne. | By the Rev. Gilbert White, M.A. | With additional notes. | By the Rev. J. G. Wood, M.A. | Author of the Illustrated Natural History, etc. | Illustrated with engravings on wood. | London : | George Routledge and sons ; | New York ; 416, Broome Street. | n.d. [1860]. 8° viii, 428 Pp.
1861. [A reissue of Bohn, 1850.]
1862. The | Natural History | of Selborne, | by the late | Rev. Gilbert White, A.M. | Fellow of Oriel College, Oxford. | With miscellaneous observations and explanatory notes. | London : | Bell and Daldy, 186, Fleet Street, | and Sampson Low, Son, and Co. | 47 Ludgate Hill. | 1862. | 8° vi, 426 Pp.  
[One of Bell & Daldy's Pocket Volumes.]
1863. [ . . . 8° S.P.C.K., 1863—English Catal. 1863-71, p. 407 ; a reissue of S.P.C.K. 1842.]
1864. [A reissue of Routledge, 1854.]
1868. [A reissue of the 1841 Harper & Brothers issue appeared this year—E. Coues.]
1869. [A reissue of Routledge, 1854.]
- [1870 or 1871] [ . . . London : | Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge : | - - - n.d. 8° pp. i-x, 1-346 ; woodcuts by Wolf, and

footnotes by "T.B." (Prof. Bell)—Newton, *Notes & Queries*, [5] vii, p. 264.]

1872. [An edition with T.P. worded and arranged precisely the same as in 1850 but instead of Henry G. Bohn, &c., reads as follows:— Bell and Daldy, York Street, Covent Garden. | 1872. | 8° xxiv, 416 Pp.]
1872. [A reissue of Routledge, 1854.]
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## E R R A T A

## VOL. I

- Page 19 (Map), for "Lysse" read "Liss"  
,, 104, note 1, for "salicaria" read "Salicaria"  
,, 147, line 6 from top, for "Mouset" read "Moufet"  
,, 170, note 2, for "Salicaria locustella" read "Locustella nævia"  
,, 277, ,, 2, for "His nephew" read "John Lassam." (See *antea*,  
p. 270.)  
,, 395, line 9, for "Joy" read "Ivy"

## VOL. II

- Page 51, note 2, for "melano leuca" read "melanoleuca"  
,, 155, line 10 from top, for "intrudind" read "intruding"  
,, 160, ,, 2 from bottom, for "might" read "weight"  
,, 210, note 1, for "Seitell" read "Sewell"  
,, 245, line 18 from bottom, for "Warlham" read "Wardlam"

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