Nature Notes:

THE

Selborne Society's Magazine

VOL. I.

EDITED BY

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AND

JAMES BRITTEN, F.L.S.

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OUR PROGRAMME.

By the EDITORS.

NATURE NOTES, the Selborne Society's Magazine, is intended to be a record of progress—progress in the love of Nature, in the knowledge of natural objects, and in the war to be waged in defence of the beauties of Nature against their more or less avowed exterminators.

One main object of the Magazine (which will be kept steadily in view by the Editors) is to establish a connecting link between uninstructed love of Nature and accurate scientific knowledge. Those who know most are not always those who love most; but additional knowledge will certainly increase the pleasure of those who are already Nature-lovers, *i.e.*, Selbornians. Accordingly, the articles in the Magazine will not be of a technically scientific nature, but the writers will seek to combine accuracy of statement with a popular style. Such topics will be chosen as are likely to interest the ordinary reader, who is not a trained botanist or zoologist, but wishes to learn more about the Flowers, Birds, and Insects, which attract his attention in his daily walks, if he lives in the country, or which have caught his eye in his holiday rambles, if he is one who passes most of his time "in populous city pent."

It is believed that a large number of interesting observations, made by those who use their eyes for the purpose of Nature-study, are lost, because the observers do not think what they have noticed is of sufficient value to be worthy of record in any scientific Journal. We may hope that *Nature Notes* will do much to utilise such observations and to collate the experience of various observers.

Records of the *Earliest Leafing and Flowering of Plants*, and the time when the last flowers are seen, will be inserted. A useful little Handbook for those who wish to compile such a calendar is "The Naturalists' Diary," by Mr. Roberts.

Careful observations on the *Migrations and other Habits of Birds* will be given, and authentic records of such habits are invited.

The question of the injurious and beneficial agency of *Insects* in Field and Garden will be dealt with, and an attempt will be made to discriminate carefully and justly between the friends and foes of mankind.

Not only are animals and plants disappearing from various parts of our land, but the quaint old legends concerning them, the ancient superstitions which throw so much light on Comparative Mythology, the fanciful, and often poetical *Local Names*—all these, valuable almost as the subjects they commemorate, are rapidly dying out. We shall endeavour to secure what still lingers of this mass of old-world tradition, and shall receive with gratitude communications from those who will note down provincial names of birds and plants and the folk-lore, perpetually varying, and yet essentially the same, which has clustered round the animal and vegetable kingdom. In this connection we shall be led occasionally to refer to the work done by the Folk-lore Society and by the Society for the Preservation of Ancient Monuments. These Societies are in spirit closely akin to our own. We have the same foes to contend with, and many tastes in common. The man who loves every stone of the old abbey, beautiful even in its ruins, and reverently garners the legends of its ancient fame, will strive to preserve also the trees and flowers that gather round its walls, and the birds that have found in its desecrated altars "a nest where they may lay their young."

Not only will local English names be examined and their etymology discussed, but articles on the *Derivation and Pronunciation of Scientific Names*, will be occasionally given. There are few subjects which yield a more abundant crop of popular errors to be eradicated and replaced by correct information.

Biographies of Naturalists will be introduced now and again, and it is not unlikely that some of our members may supply valuable information concerning the lives of half-forgotten worthies of time past.

At the suggestion of Prof. Flower (Director of the Natural History Department, British Museum), a series of short papers is projected on "*How to use the Natural History Museum for Nature-Study*." In these papers there will be a full description of the various type collections and of several other additions recently made to the Museum for the purpose of facilitating elementary study. Similar aids to the use of the Museums at Kew are hoped for, from Mr. J. R. Jackson, the Curator of the Museums.

The Allusions to Plants and Flowers which occur in our great Poets will be noticed; and a series of articles is planned dealing with some of those masters of song who have found their highest inspiration in the reverent study of natural beauty, "knowing that Nature never did betray the heart that loved her."

"Young Selborne" will certainly not be forgotten, and a

Children's Column will be devoted to the instruction of juvenile Selbornians. Their queries will obtain special attention, and plain directions will be given by which they may gather knowledge, as well as amusement, from every hedgerow and wayside pond.

Reviews of Books which bear on the various branches of Natural History will appear, and the Editors will always be glad to give information as to books suitable for any particular study.

If funds permit, suitable *Illustrations* will occasionally be given. In this matter we have been promised the advice and assistance of Mr. G. C. Haité, the well-known artist, and author of "Plant-studies," to whom we owe the appropriate design on the cover of the magazine.

In addition to the various departments enumerated above, NATURE NOTES, as the *Official Organ* of the Selborne Society, will give authentic accounts of the proceedings of the Central Council, as well as reports of any meetings of the Branches to which exceptional interest is attached.

Notices of *Work done* and work which requires to be done—of destruction threatened to some beautiful spot, of destruction happily averted by energetic Selbornians, or devastation most unhappily effected by ruthless evictors of Nature from her ancient seats—all these things will be recorded for the encouragement or admonition of those who have the interests of the Society at heart.

Abstracts of Scientific Reports bearing on the destruction of the fauna or flora of certain districts, or on the ravages wrought by too fertile foreign weeds, will find a place in our pages.

It will be part of our duty to keep an eye on *Legislative Measures* which affect the objects that we are pledged to support. NATURE NOTES will be a medium by which supporters may be rallied for the advancement of good measures and stout resistance offered to bad ones.

Correspondence on all matters which lie within the scope of the Selborne Society's Programme will be inserted. A free expression of opinion is invited, but it is hardly necessary to remind our readers that no personalities or remarks reflecting upon individuals can be admitted.

If funds are available, *Prizes* will be offered for the best Coloured Sketches of Plants or Birds *in situ*, and also to the winners in other competitions which may be arranged by the Council.

Answers to Queries on all subjects which can fairly be considered to come within our province will be given, and practical suggestions afforded to those who are desirous of engaging in the pursuit of any branch of Natural History.

In the accomplishment of the various objects which have been detailed, the Editors have been promised the assistance of writers of eminence in every department of Natural History,

including some of the best authorities on the Botany, Entomology and Ornithology of the British Isles. The gentlemen who are connected with the Natural History Department of the British Museum, and with the Royal Gardens, Kew, have been especially kind in their readiness to help. Communications are expected in early numbers from some of the following:— Edmund J. Baillie, F.L.S.; Rev. D. W. Barrett, M.A.; Anthony Belt; Hon. Mrs. R. C. Boyle; Miss A. M. Buckton; G. B. Buckton, F.R.S., F.L.S.; Sir Mounstuart E. Grant Duff, G.C.S.I., F.R.S.; Alfred East, R.I.; Prof. Flower, C.B., F.R.S., LL.D.; Rev. H. D. Gordon, M.A.; G. C. Haité, F.L.S.; G. Harley, M.D., F.R.S.; Francis George Heath; W. B. Hemsley, F.R.S., A.L.S.; Walter E. P. Hogg; Prof. F. E. Hulme, F.L.S., F.S.A.; Robert Hunter; J. R. Jackson, A.L.S.; Edward King; W. F. Kirby, F.Z.S.; Rev. C. T. Millard, M.A.; G. R. M. Murray, F.L.S.; G. A. Musgrave, F.Z.S., F R.G.S.; Geo. Nicholson, A.L.S.; J. L. Otter; Rev. H. Rawnsley, M.A.; R. Bowdler Sharpe, F.L.S.; H. J. Slack, F.R.M.S.; Worthington G. Smith, F.L.S.; Henry Smith; G. B. Sowerby, F.L.S.; Prof. Trail, M.A., M.D., F.L.S.; T. F. Wakefield; Miss Annie Wallis; Rev. H. C. White, B.A.; F. N. Williams, F.L.S.

Enough has been said to show that much thought has been taken how best to meet the wants and wishes of Selbornians. But after all, it is upon the Members of the Society that the success of the undertaking depends; and to them we confidently appeal to give every aid in their power to secure a wide circulation and high position for Nature Notes, the Selborne Society's Magazine.

THE INTRODUCTION OF FOREIGN WEEDS.

By GEORGE NICHOLSON, A.L.S.
Curator of the Royal Gardens, Kew.

THE paragraph from Herschell, which Mr. Hewett Cottrell Watson chose as the motto for his famous "Cybele Britannica," indicates, with characteristic clearness, the spirit in which he himself worked, and might well be taken as a guiding principle by those who wish to follow in the footsteps of that eminent observer of nature. "There is scarcely any well-informed person who, if he has but the will, has not also the power, to add something essential to the general stock of knowledge, if he will only observe regularly and methodically some particular class of facts which may excite his attention or which his situation may best enable him to study with effect." Another writer, a well-known local botanist, Mr. T. R. Archer Briggs, of Plymouth, in a paper entitled

"Queries in Local Topographical Botany," published in the 'Transactions of the Plymouth Institution and Devon and Cornwall Natural History Society,' writes: "I have endeavoured to show that the investigation of local phenomena may be undertaken with a view to the solution of scientific questions of the utmost importance and greatest magnitude; that evidence supplied by local facts may be used to support or weaken—possibly to prove or disprove—some of the startling theories of the age."

These two quotations afford much guidance and encouragement for the Members of the Selborne Society, who, without any very prolonged special training, are endeavouring to substitute systematic study of natural objects for mere haphazard observations without any connecting link. The special subject which I would suggest in this present paper, as a means by which those principles may be applied, is the systematic observation of the establishment and subsequent increase or decrease of aliens in the shape of foreign weeds. When it is remembered that a very large number of exotic plants from similar climates to our own are continually being introduced into this country, and when one remembers also that our own "ne'er-do-weels" have often spread with tremendous rapidity after transportation to foreign climes, one might be inclined to dread lest the foreign element might in many instances overcome and supplant our own natives. These patriotic fears may be safely set aside; the instances in which the immigrants eradicate the home-dwellers are comparatively few in number.

Kew Gardens, perhaps, afford the best means of deciding this question. Did the immense number of plants introduced there, from places with similar climatic conditions to our own, establish themselves in the neighbourhood with the audacity which is sometimes ascribed to them, Kew would be a sort of centre of contagion from which would be disseminated all manner of foreign weeds, supplanting and disturbing our native flora. But hardly anything of the sort ever occurs. Few, very few, of the exotics in the vicinity have held their own against the rightful owners of the soil for many successive years. Most of them—some prolific enough and apparently well-fitted to survive—scarcely appear a second season. It is very interesting to watch the more or less rapid crowding-out of these strangers by the hardier and more persistent natives. Probably the whole of the thoroughly-naturalised foreigners in the flora of the neighbourhood could be counted on the fingers. One plant—a Composite (*Galinsoga parviflora*), introduced to Kew from Peru some forty years ago—has, however, proved its ability to hold its own in cultivated ground, and even to oust, to a great extent, our native ubiquitous groundsel. In Germany, too, particularly in some of the great seed-growing districts, it has become such a perfect pest that laws have been made to prevent its further spread, and if possible to destroy it. The magistrates of Hanover, in 1865,

issued a series of regulations, and appointed commissions to visit waste and cultivated lands in their respective districts. The dates of the various visits were to be made known eight days beforehand, and those on whose land the objectionable weed was found were ordered to remove and destroy it at once. If this was found undone at a succeeding visit, the commission had power to fine the offender, and to have the weed destroyed at his expense. The name *Franzosenkraut*, or French weed, by which this troublesome annual is known in Germany, would seem to point the inference that it had found its way first to Germany by way of France; but I believe there is no evidence to back this view.

(*To be continued.*)

PROTECTION OF BIRDS ON THE CONTINENT.

By A VICE-PRESIDENT.

THE belief that nothing is done on the Continent for the preservation of wild birds is so generally entertained that it may be useful at the commencement of the year to place before our readers the opinions of M. Oustalet, Doctor of Science and Assistant Naturalist to the Museum of Paris, submitted to the Agricultural Department of the French Republic after his return from Vienna in 1884.

The Agricultural Department sent M. Oustalet as delegate to the Ornithological Congress and Exhibition, requesting him to present a succinct report of the discussions, resolutions and measures proposed for the protection of wild birds, and improvements in the methods of raising poultry.

The Report, which is not sold to the public, was issued in the year 1885, and contains an account of the origin of the Ornithological Union of Vienna, through whose instrumentality the Congress was convoked; also a list of the representatives of the chief nations of the world and delegates of scientific societies, and a carefully written précis of the business of the Congress, which was opened with an address by the Archduke Rudolf.

The Congress was divided into three sections, open to all members, for the consideration of the following subjects:—(1) The protection of birds by an international law. (2) An examination into the origin of the domestic fowl and the means to be taken with a view to an improvement in the method of raising poultry. (3) The establishment of a system of stations for ornithological observations all over the inhabited globe. Priority was unanimously given to the question concerning the protection of birds as being of international interest, and on account of the position already occupied by it in the measures taken by

most governments. Everybody sees that it is high time to stop the mania for destruction raging at various parts of the globe and threatening to completely annihilate some species. As for indigenous birds their condition has latterly become more critical, as the demands of fashion made on them raises them almost to the same value as the birds of paradise, glossy starlings, humming birds and other exotic species of brilliant plumage.

To protect all these birds by an international law appeared to be most desirable, but in the course of a very long discussion many difficulties presented themselves.

Approaching the subject of protection from various aspects, the members of the assembly, although in favour of protecting useful birds, were more or less influenced by laws and customs already existing in various countries.

"I know well enough," said M. Fatio, the representative of the Swiss Confederation, "that the authorities in northern countries would not hesitate about preventing destruction and illegal trade in birds, if it were an easy matter.

"In the name of agriculture, as well as forestry, in the name of justice and humanity, on behalf of Switzerland, of the 'Société des Chasseurs,' and in the name of the Swiss Society for the Protection of Animals, I ask various governing bodies to do their utmost to obtain :—(1) The prevention, during the second part of winter and in spring, of all pursuit of migratory and useful birds and of all *gibier de passage*. (2) The prohibition of all trade during the same seasons in such birds, dead or alive and their eggs. (3) The prohibition of the use of all engines, at all times, for taking birds *en masse*. (4) The prevention of all trade, except for stated reasons, in birds generally admitted to be useful.

"Lastly, a second proposal which, whilst affecting private property in different countries, cannot fail, by reciprocity, to be efficacious in checking poaching, always encouraged by the increasing facilities for international commerce. This proposal would consist in the prohibition of all dealing in game during the close season without special permission.

"Abuses cannot be removed at the first attempt, but with time and decision I think that a general and legal protection of birds, so desirable in every respect, may be obtained.

"Of course, every state would reserve to itself the right of destroying rapacious birds, and birds becoming temporarily injurious from their too great abundance.

"As it is not possible in a numerous assembly such as this Congress is to draft a law for the international protection of birds, therefore, I propose that a committee be appointed for obtaining as quickly and as completely as possible the opinions of various European States with regard to the best ways and means for arriving at a general understanding. All questions of detail or exceptional bye-laws may be left to the consideration of the chief authorities in each country."

(*To be continued.*)

THE DISAPPEARANCE OF BRITISH PLANTS.

By JAMES BRITTEN, F.L.S.

AN interesting report on this subject was presented to the British Association last year, and was reprinted in the *Journal of Botany* for December. It may be well to call the attention of Selbornians to the conclusions arrived at, which are in themselves of interest.

As might be supposed, such showy plants as attract the attention of dealers are in especial danger. One such person had removed and sold almost all the plants of White Water-lily from the lochs of the Dumfries district; but he was at last discovered, and is now forbidden access to any estate in the district. The Thames and its tributaries are almost stripped of the blossoms of this beautiful plant during the early summer, but the roots are less frequently interfered with. Ferns are, of course, in special danger; and the Report gives a long list of places from which the rarer Aspleniums, the Cetrach, Hart's tongue, Holly Fern, Osmunda, Limestone Polypody and others, have nearly or quite disappeared, owing to the rapacity of dealers and collectors. Tourists should not encourage these men by buying from them; if there were no demand the supply would cease, and the ferns would be left alone. In the Killarney district, the rare Killarney Fern owes its safety in some measure to the ignorance of tourists, who buy the *Hymenophyllum Wilsoni* which is offered them under the former name, under the impression that they are obtaining the genuine article.

The especial rarities of the Highlands—such as the two species of *Oxytropis*, *Lathyrus niger*, *Phyllodoce taxifolia* and others—are always in more or less danger, and botanical collectors are occasionally wanting in discretion in their zeal for obtaining these rare plants. The *Phyllodoce* might easily be protected, if the Duke of Athol, who owns the Sow of Athol—the only British locality for the plant—would give orders to that effect, as "the habitat is within sight of a gamekeeper's house." "An appeal to the proprietor" of the Pass of Killiecrankie might save *Lathyrus niger* from extirpation.

A large number of extinctions are due to the grazing of cattle, drainage, cultivation of various kinds, building and similar unavoidable contingencies. In the first of these cases, the plant destroyed is likely to reappear under more favourable circumstances. The little Musk Orchis (*Herminium*) has more than once almost entirely disappeared from Keep Hill near High Wycombe, which is, I think, its only Buckinghamshire locality; but it has asserted itself when the sheep which cropped it have been removed.

The interesting but insignificant *Scheuchzeria* has been lost from Methven bog, "probably from the settlement there of a large colony of about three thousand black-headed gulls, the result being the destruction of all but the rankest vegetation." Certain plants named in the Report are well-known to be erratic in their appearance, such as Henbane; others can hardly owe their disappearance to the rapacity of collectors, or to the causes above-named; of these the Agrimony, which is becoming very scarce in its Inverness-shire station, is a type.

Coming nearer home, a word of warning may be addressed to the enthusiastic supporters of a certain well-known political organisation, and more especially to the "Dames," to whom

it owes so much of its power. A little sketch just issued of the Flora of Maidstone contains this warning: "If the sale of the roots of the Primrose is carried on to the extent it is now, in about twenty years it will have become comparatively scarce." The literary style is open to criticism, but the meaning of the writer is only too plain. Not only Primrose Leaguers, but church decorators, are doing their best to banish the Primrose from our woods and hedge-rows. In each case ladies are the chief offenders—a fact which, however sad, ceases to be surprising, when we see how deaf many of them are to the entreaties of those who beg them to spare the little birds, sacrificed by thousands to their insane desire for personal decoration, however inappropriate and at whatever cost.

It may be well to add a note of caution to those who find the Limestone Polypody in a new and isolated locality. This pretty fern is in many districts extremely rare, and collectors should abstain from seizing the first specimens found until they have assured themselves of the existence of others. More than twenty years ago, a friend, a true Selbornian in spirit, found two specimens of Limestone Polypody in a wood near High Wycombe. Not doubting but that there were plenty more, he collected them; but a most careful and diligent search on numerous after occasions failed to detect another example. The existence of the fern as a Buckinghamshire plant rests upon the evidence of the two specimens still preserved in his herbarium.

CURIOUS EXPERIENCE WITH A SLUG.

By Miss A. M. BUCKTON.

ATE one evening last summer, walking up and down a drive covered by larches and firs, I noticed a fine specimen of *Arion ater* (or land-sole, as some call him) come forth from a crevice among the stones and proceed to cross the road. Wishing to test the focus of the small eyes at the end of the black tentacles, and discover the distance at which they could appreciate objects, I drew my forefinger, that looked white and ghost-like in the dusk, along the road about half an inch before him. His attention was immediately attracted, and he began following my movements implicitly along the fantastic path I traced for about the space of two feet.

At length I paused and allowed him to overtake me. The cold slimy touch sent an involuntary shiver up my arm, but not to be daunted in the cause of science, I restrained the impulse

to shrink from my new acquaintance. He reconnoitred the finger from side to side, and at length discovered a suitable place to commence his ascent. At the root of the nail he paused; I felt a sharp prick repeated in the same spot once or twice. I then guessed what was about to happen, and stooping as I was in a most irksome position, I awaited the issue. I did not disturb him at his feast till quite a small trickle of blood was running down the side of the nail. I then carried him into the house on a laurel leaf and put him into a glass tumbler. He measured more than four inches in length. He crawled to the edge of the glass and we fed him from a penknife with milk, which he sucked down with great relish through the small triangular opening of the lips, within which lay concealed the sharp teeth that had done the mischief. Having fed at our board we could not straightway deliver him to the executioner, in the shape of a gardener, so the next morning we restored him to his native wilds, far from the haunts of man, with the parting hope that his path and mine should not cross again. It was some days before the sore place in my finger quite healed, a small piece of flesh and skin having been bitten out.

I related the occurrence to several scientific friends, who expressed themselves ignorant of this leech-like propensity in the slug. I can find also no reference to it in Turton's "British Shells," or in Woodward's "Mollusca." Land-soles are all vegetable feeders, though they have been known to devour dead worms and injured individuals of their own species. There is a single exception—the carnivorous habits of the Testacelle, which pursues and feeds on live earth worms, are well known.

This voracity for warm blood shown by cold-blooded animals is very curious, especially so when we consider how few individuals can ever have a chance of indulging it. It can scarcely be called an acquired taste: it seems instinctive. Yet as Prof. Rymer Jones points out in his admirable and comprehensive popular work ("A General Outline of the Animal Kingdom"), the blood gorged by the leech is not by any means suited to its nourishment, and often causes its death.

The lingual teeth of *Arion* make a beautiful and interesting microscopic slide; they are of flinty substance, serrated and tricuspid as in Limax. *Arion empiricorum* has 160 rows with 101 teeth in each. The shell is oval and concave, or represented by irregular calcareous granules. The breathing orifice is near the front of the mantle on the right side; the tail ends in a mucous gland which secretes the glistening trail the animal leaves behind it.

Some slugs climb trees and lower themselves to the ground by a mucous thread drawn from this gland. The eggs, which are from seventy to a hundred in number are laid in the ground between May and September: they hatch in from twenty-four to a hundred days, and the young attain maturity in less than

a year. The eggs of one species (*Arion hortensis*), are phosphorescent for the first fifteen days.

Land snails and slugs have many enemies beside man; they afford food for birds, especially for the thrush tribe, and also for insects, as the predacious beetle and the luminous larva of the glow-worm that lies like a living green spark on our lawns of a dark summer night.

Too wholesale a destruction of slugs would destroy the beautifully adjusted balance of nature, interference with which we have lived to regret too often as the result of man's selfish, thoughtless abuse of his power over the lower animals.

[Mr. Anthony Belt, of Ealing, tells us that he has been the recipient of similar attentions from *Arion ater*, but that the process was one of biting or rasping, rather than sucking. We are inclined to refer it to the ordinary saw-like action of the odontophore exercised upon the soft flesh of the finger, rather than to any sanguinary propensities on the part of the slug; but should be glad to learn the experience of malacologists on the interesting subject to which Miss Buckton has drawn attention.]

SELBORNIANA, DOINGS OF THE MONTH, &c.

THE NEW POEMS OF LORD TENNYSON, PRESIDENT OF THE SELBORNE SOCIETY.—The latest volume of our President, *Demeter, and other Poems*, proves that there is not the slightest falling off in his powers or in his love of Nature. In "Owd Roä" (Old Rover), he tells of a dog's saving a child from death by fire. Maimed and blind the brave brute lives on, and years after his master says of the loyal servant, in words which might bring some shame to those who speak with scorn of what they are pleased to call the "inferior" animals:—

"Sarved me sa well when 'e lived, that Dick, when 'e cooms to be deäd,
I thinks as I'd like fur to hev soom soort of a sarvice reäd,
'Faäithful an' True'—them words be i' Scripture—an' Faäithful an' True
Ull be fun' upo' four short legs ten times fur one upo' two."

The admirable fidelity with which Tennyson has always depicted the details of Nature is shown in the following lines from the "Progress of Spring":—

"The groundflame of the crocus breaks the mould,
Fair Spring slides hither o'er the Southern sea,
Wavers on her thin stem the snowdrop cold
That trembles not to kisses of the bee:
Come, Spring! for now from all the dripping eaves
The spear of ice has wept itself away,
And hour by hour unfolding woodbine leaves
O'er his uncertain shadow droops the day.
She comes! The loosen'd rivulets run;
The frost-bead melts upon her golden hair;
Her mantle, slowly greening in the Sun,
Now wraps her close, now arching leaves her bare
To breaths of balmier air;
Up leaps the lark, gone wild to welcome her,
About her glance the tits, and shriek the jays,
Before her skims the jubilant woodpecker,

The linnet's bosom blushes at her gaze,
While round her brows a woodland culver flits,
Watching her large light eyes and gracious looks,
And in her open palm a halcyon sits
Patient—the secret splendour of the brooks.
Come, Spring! She comes on waste and wood,
On farm and field: but enter also here,
Diffuse thyself at will thro' all my blood,
And, tho' thy violet sicken into sere,
Lodge with me all the year!"

ROBERT BROWNING AS A NATURE PAINTER.—At this moment when

"Dumb is he who waked the world to speak
And voiceless hangs the world beside his bier,"

one instinctively turns to the works of the great master that has gone from us, to find what he too says on this same topic of spring. See what he puts in the mouth of "An Italian Person of Quality," surely crediting that person with a power of word-painting quite beyond such a being:—

"Is it better in May, I ask you? you've summer all at once;
In a day he leaps complete with a few strong April suns!
'Mid the sharp short emerald wheat, scarce risen three fingers well,
The wild tulip, at end of its tube, blows out its great red bell
Like a thin clear bubble of blood, for the children to pick and sell."

And here is an English spring, so different from the Italian, just at those best days of the year, when showery April meets with sunny May,

"And after April, when May follows,
And the white-throat builds, and all the swallows,
Hark! where my blossomed pear-tree in the hedge
Leans to the field and scatters to the clover
Blossoms and dewdrops—at the bent spray's edge—
That's the wise thrush; he sings each song twice over,
Lest you should think he never could recapture
The first fine careless rapture!"

"Having in mind Shakespeare and Shelley, I nevertheless think the last three lines the finest ever written touching the song of a bird." So says Edmund Clarence Stedman in his *Victorian Poets*. Some of us will be ready to admit that the praise, high as it is, is none too high.

Robert Browning, as well as Alfred Tennyson, was one of the earliest patrons of the Selborne Society.

A DAISY IN DECEMBER.—The poetry of Nature once more: the following beautiful lines by Mr. Paget Toynbee are (by permission) extracted from the *Academy* of 23rd December, 1889.

"Sad, solitary daisy, did some dream
Of unknown life and long-desired delight
Flash on thy wintry slumbers like the gleam
Of silent lightning in the summer night?

"What sudden promptings pierced thy tender core,
And thrilled the quivering fibres of thy root?
What secret longing never felt before
Impelled thy leaves thus ere their day to shoot?

"Did'st seem to hear the lark's light love song run
Adown the sky, and fall extinct to earth?
Did'st feel the glow of summer's golden sun
Flush thy pale petals at its rosy birth?

"Wast wooed with whispers by the warm west wind
To dash the trembling dewdrop from thine eye?
Did'st taste the kiss of one of thine own kind,
And, faint with new life, feel content to die?

"How sad to wake and find 'twas but a dream!
To feel the blasts of winter's icy breath,
And shiver 'neath the pale sun's cheerless beam,
To hear no lark, to die a lonely death."

WILD FLOWERS IN WINTER.—Daisies in December are not quite so rare as would appear from the verses just quoted, and it is certainly to be hoped that each one does not go through the mournful process of disillusionment described by the poet. Miss C. R. Little, of Twickenham, and some other young ladies whose enthusiasm for botany leads them to cultivate the study in all seasons, send us the following list of December flowers found in Middlesex—which has probably the poorest flora of any county in England—daisy, wild pansy, primrose, dandelion, red campion, gray procumbent speedwell, field speedwell, shepherd's purse, groundsel, chickweed, ivy, white dead-nettle, red dead-nettle, common ragwort, wild strawberry, meadow buttercup, white clover, mouse-ear chickweed, ivy-leaved toadflax, furze, wood-sage, common mayweed, pimpernel, all-heal, yarrow, wild camomile, tormentil, bramble, cut-leaved geranium, annual meadow-grass (thirty in all). Gilbert White, in the Naturalists' Calendar, only notes about half-a-dozen plants found in bloom in December.

MR. T. F. WAKEFIELD ON COLLECTORS.—The following is an extract from an interesting paper read at a recent meeting of the Lower Thames Valley Branch of the Selborne Society, held at the Star and Garter Hotel, Richmond. Prizes were distributed by Sir Edward Hertslet for some excellent collections of dried plants; and subsequently that genial and enthusiastic Selbornian, Mr. T. F. Wakefield, made the following strictures upon collectors. We shall be glad to hear what those wicked persons, the "scientific botanists," think of the grave charges made against them! "It seems to me that two of the chief objects of the Selborne Society are (1) to foster the love of the beautiful in nature with a view to its preservation, and (2) to teach a reverence for life, whether it be of animals, birds, insects or plants. You can take life, but you cannot give it. Life is a mystery which neither the man of science nor the metaphysician can explain. Familiarity, it is said, breeds contempt, and we are so hedged about with the traditional and commonplace in ordinary life that we are actually hindered from thinking for ourselves, and we are content to call things common and pass them by as unworthy of regard when they are really objects of the most transcendent beauty. The daisy and the buttercup are common in the sense of being plentiful, but in no other sense, for they are flowers of exquisite grace, both of form and colour. In Nature nothing is common. We must open our minds and eyes, and we shall then recognise, as Carlyle says, 'how every object has a divine beauty in it; how every object verily is a window through which we may look into infinitude itself. He that can discern the loveliness of things we call him poet, painter, man of genius, gifted, lovable.' This capacity for discernment is latent in most of us, and can be developed. Let it be our work to develop it, especially in the young. And when we remember that 'all things whatsoever that we look upon are emblems to us of their great Creator,' this work will become not only a pleasure but almost a religious duty. After what I have said we members of the committee will not be expected to apologise for having brought you here merely to see a collection of wild flowers and plants. By your presence here you are rendering a service to the cause of true education. To make a collection of wild flowers, to form an herbarium, is an education in itself; it calls forth the powers of perception and observation, it disciplines the eye to distinguish varieties of form and gradations of shade and colour, it trains the mind to have a due regard for order and arrangement, and above all provides a never-failing source of amusement and instruction, and, I may say, a life-long occupation. But here I would add a word of warning. The Selborne Society has no sympathy with mere collectors, whose object seems to be to catch or pluck up everything that comes in their way and transfer it to their collection. I am not sure, but I speak with trembling lips, that it is at one with the scientific botanist, who does not care about prettiness and neatness in his specimens, but digs up the root of the plant and transfers all of it bodily to his herbarium. Man may be the lord of the creation, but I deny his right to destroy anything unnecessarily; he is only the last link in the

chain of existence, and it is quite certain that it is not for him alone the birds sing and the flowers bloom, for many of them he has never seen; they have the same inherent right to live and enjoy their brief span of existence that he has; the purpose of his life is to increase the amount of happiness and to lessen the amount of misery in the world; his God-like reason is given him to control and subdue Nature, to work with her, to study her, and wrest from her her secrets, and to keep under that proclivity for destruction which shows in him the instinct of the primeval savage, cave man or ape, from which, on the physical plane, he is said by the disciples of Darwin to be descended. Man has a nobler origin, mentally and spiritually, and we vindicate that belief by the sentiments which animate us as good members of the Selborne Society. We plead for the life of things; we say, let them live, let them grow; there is a soul in Nature which will speak to your soul if you only have ears to hear."

THE ETHICS AND LITERATURE OF FASHION-BOOKS.—Lady Fry writes as follows, from 1, Palace Houses, Bayswater Hill, W. :—"Would it be possible to rouse in the minds of those who write such paragraphs as the one I enclose, for fashion books and reviews, any sense of shame at thus treating the beauties of creation and the marvellous glory of beauty and song as mere adjuncts to a tawdry hat, or reliefs to some novelty of colouring? It is difficult to imagine the woman who does not see the grotesqueness, as well as the cruelty and thoughtlessness of such an idea, but if those writers do not see it one would be glad that their vision should be helped in some way. Could you not write an article on 'The Milliner's View of Creation'? Perhaps some of your readers may be inclined to take this up." The following is the enclosed extract from fashion book for December, 1889:—"Birds of all colours are used as garnitures, but the blackbird is voted the leader. The Brazilian humming-bird, clad in a coat of warm-brown plumage, save at the throat, which shows now golden, now emerald, is also a favourite, and the tuneful canary is highly esteemed for the warmth and tone of his colouring. A small white bird known as the Java wren is very beautiful in its purity, and is said, by-the-bye, to be the only all-white bird known, except the pigeon. This little bird looks well on gray, on mauve and on the electric shade that in Paris has lately been known as 'Edison.' A gray cloth toque has a draped brim of velvet the same shade; and in front, where the folds are most intricate, are placed three Java wrens, the velvet separating them so that each is seen to advantage. Of course, a gray-and-white toque can only be assumed by a woman with dark hair, for on a blonde it would have a chilling effect. The low-crowned felt hats with straight, broad brims are generally lined with velvet, for the brims are always turned up either at the back or at the side so that the underfacing shows and exercises a softening influence on the face." We consider Lady Fry's suggestion a very valuable one, and shall be pleased if some lady members of the Selborne Society, who understand the mysteries of fashion books, will discuss their contents from the ethical as well as the æsthetical point of view. To ourselves they have been hitherto "sealed books;" but if the above extract is a fair sample of their usual style, we consider them most saddening literature. In all seriousness, we can hardly believe it possible that any English girl or woman can be so steeped in cynical cruelty as to enjoy the elaborate description of the "tuneful note" of the canary, of the "warm-brown plumage of the humming-bird, with its beautiful breast, now golden, now emerald," and of the little white Java wren "beautiful in its purity" (certainly not typical of its wearer); and at the same time to doom to death the little creatures whose beauties are so dwelt upon. We should certainly have supposed that such deliberate heartlessness would have "exercised" a brutalising, not "a softening influence on the face."

CRUELTY TO KELTS.—This title does *not* imply "Another injustice to Ireland," but indicates a form of reckless and unsportsman-like barbarity, which is occasionally practised towards unclean salmon or kelts. A reviewer of Major Traherne's book on "The Habits of the Salmon," in the *Academy*, thus alludes to it :—"We are wholly with him . . . . above all, in his merciful plea for the kelts, when hooked instead of clean salmon." They are often gaffed without a thought as to whether they are clean fish or kelts, the hook is ruthlessly torn, or cut out of their mouths, or from whatever part of the body it may be fixed in, and

the poor things, bleeding and mutilated, thrown into the river with a kick and a flourish of adjectives. "Fishermen who behave with such wanton cruelty justify the diatribes which those who are not anglers often heap upon the gentle craft."

CORRESPONDENCE.

A Hawk and a Heron—Psha!

TO THE EDITOR OF "NATURE NOTES," THE SELBORNE SOCIETY'S MAGAZINE.

SIR,—I extract the following letter from that excellent provincial journal, the *Western Morning News*, as an illustration of the way in which the Selborne Society is regarded by a gentleman who is not, we trust, a member of the famed Devon and Cornwall Philosophical Society, whose Transactions form such a valuable addition to our scientific literature :—

"THE SHOOTING OF RARE BIRDS.

"SIR,—I very much fear that in the eyes of the sentimentalists who weep over the capture of rare birds and beasts and fishes, I shall appear as 'indeed little better than one of the wicked.' Since I wrote you last on this subject I have compassed the death of a heron, and have eaten it. I have found its flesh dark, better in taste than pheasant or partridge, on a level with woodcock and snipe, but inferior to grouse or harvest curlew ; but I judged from an old receipt-book that it was a dry bird, and I had it cooked with one of the old and somewhat expensive wine sauces. This sauce will probably prove the most effectual means of preserving the bird. I have also compassed the death of a common buzzard, a hawk perfectly well known (as indeed its name imports) in England, and which breeds freely in Cornwall as far west as the cliffs of Tintagel, but of which a specimen has not been procured in this neighbourhood for the last thirty years.

"Yours truly,

"THOS. CORNISH.

"*Penzance*, 15*th December*, 1889."

What useful purpose has Mr. Cornish achieved by eating a stuffy heron and stuffing a common buzzard? Dyspepsia, no doubt, produced by not having previously buried the heron in wood ashes, has made him ready to sneer at those who have long known "a hawk from a hernshaw" and who without "sentimentality," but with honest sentiment, think that science gains more by the preservation of a vermin-killing bird such as the buzzard, which has not appeared in the neighbourhood of Penzance for the last thirty years, than by compassing its death.

As there is an admirable museum in Penzance, surely this rare visitant to the neighbourhood was not wanted for scientific purposes? But could it have been with a view to self-preservation in the cause of science that this ardent naturalist stuffed himself—with heron and "old expensive wine sauce"? I believe that any good taxidermist would assure him that to recommend this method of stuffing, even for that common and valueless bird, *Anser ineptus*, was "all stuff."

Yours truly,

CORNUBIENSIS INDIGNANS.

The Preservation of Sudbrook Park.

TO THE EDITOR OF "NATURE NOTES," THE SELBORNE SOCIETY'S MAGAZINE.

SIR,—Sudbrook Park is a piece of Crown land, beautifully situated in the Vale of Petersham, immediately adjoining Richmond Park. The Lower Thames Valley Branch of the Selborne Society, on finding that this spot was likely to be built over, called a meeting, which was held at the "Star and Garter" Hotel, and

a General Committee was appointed to watch over the matter, and to organise a deputation to wait upon the Commissioners of Woods and Forests to protest against their vandalism, and to advocate that Sudbrook Park should be thrown open to the public and added on to Petersham Park, to which the school children of London, in the summer time, come in shoals, and are allowed to play games and enjoy the beauties of nature. His Grace the Duke of Fife, who has a seat in the neighbourhood, and other noblemen and gentlemen, have joined the Committee: the Kyrle Society, the Commons Preservation Society, and the Metropolitan Gardens Association, have seconded the efforts being made to preserve the park from destruction, and it is hoped that our united efforts will meet with success and will show to other neighbourhoods the value of having an organisation like a branch of the Selborne Society ready at hand to watch over their interests.

T. F. WAKEFIELD,
Hon. Sec. to Committee.

P.S.—We feel that should Sudbrook Park be built over, we should soon lose many of the wild birds which are now to be met with in Richmond Park, close at hand. We have there herons, hawks, night-jars, owls, woodpeckers, wild water fowl, kingfishers, woodpigeons, rooks, nuthatches, &c., &c.

On the same subject the following weighty and interesting letter has been received by the Editor of the *Richmond and Twickenham Times*, from Sir Frederick Leighton, P.R.A., one of the vice-presidents of the Lower Thames Valley Branch of the Selborne Society:—

"DEAR MR. KING,—I have to acknowledge your letter of the 6th instant, informing me that the Lower Thames Valley Branch of the Selborne Society is energetically at work to save Sudbrook Park from the encroachments of the builder. I earnestly wish you success in so good a cause, and one of importance to so many. Your lovely park, with its wide wild spaces, and its sweet fresh air, is—and is daily more and more becoming—a priceless possession to the inhabitants of this black and monstrous metropolis; and it is so in its most frequented part perhaps in great measure from the fact that Sudbrook Park shields it as a bulwark against smoke and bricks and mortar. I sincerely trust it may never lose that protection, for I feel that the breaking down of this barrier would have most mischievous results in many ways. I think public opinion will be warmly in your favour, and will strengthen your hands. Certainly *my* very best wishes follow you in your present endeavours.

"I am, yours faithfully,
"FRED. LEIGHTON.

"2, *Holland Park Road, Kensington, W.*,
"*8th January*, 1890."

OFFICIAL NOTICES.

AT a meeting of the Central Council, held on Wednesday, the 8th instant, Mr. J. L. Otter, the honorary treasurer, presented a statement of accounts, showing that, after all liabilities to the 31st of December, 1889, had been met, there was a small balance in hand. It was estimated that when the accounts were fully made up before the general meeting on the 1st of May, there would be a considerable surplus.

SOME reports of meetings and several other communications sent in have been unavoidably postponed through lack of space. Names of new members and subscriptions paid will appear in this column in future numbers.

COMMUNICATIONS on the general business of the Society ought to be sent to the Secretary of the Selborne Society, 9, Adam Street, Adelphi, W.C.; Editorial communications to the Rev. PERCY MYLES, 1, Argyle Road, Ealing, W.

Nature Notes,

The Selborne Society's Magazine.

No. 2. FEBRUARY 15, 1890. Vol. I.

VANDALISM AT HAMPSTEAD.

MISS AGNES MARTELLI, Hon. Sec. of our Northern Heights Branch, calls our attention to an important letter by Miss Octavia Hill, published in the *Daily Graphic* of January 31, which we had already marked for reference. Miss Hill would herself have communicated with us on the subject, but for a regrettable illness, from which we trust she will speedily recover. She has done as much as any man or woman living to render the objects of the Selborne Society attainable to those living in London. There is not a movement for the preservation and securing of open spaces and public parks for the people which has not been largely indebted to Miss Octavia Hill for its success, and it would ill become us to refuse any support which we may be able to give her in her unselfish and arduous labours.

On the present occasion our sympathy is more than usually hearty; for Miss Hill's object is not to obtain an open space where none at present exists, but to preserve the natural features of ground already secured—features which, once taken away, can never be restored. The 265 acres of land lying between Hampstead and Highgate have been recently secured for the people, and, to a large extent, by the people.

"The land was well-known to hundreds. It was the walk on Saturday afternoons and fine Sundays, and on Bank holidays, of numerous groups of happy pedestrians. There you might see the father leading two little children by the hand, the boys fishing for tadpoles in marsh or pond, the children filling their little hands with buttercups or sorrel. There the overworked professional man would find his quietest walk at sunset; there one might climb the hill—far from the dust of road and noise of wheels—the great city, with all its traffic and noise, lying in the distance below. Certainly the hopes of most of the donors were

that they were preserving a space which should be kept in its rural beauty for those who were least able to get far away into the real country, and who wished for something more unconventional and quieter than the London Park."

A portion of the land, known as East Heath Park, has come into the possession of the London County Council. Before it became public property a wide road had been begun by the proprietor, when he was contemplating the letting of the land for building: but it was never completed, and was covered with grass. "What was the amazement of those who knew the spot to find that the first act of the London County Council was to give orders for carrying this wide road to either extremity of the new land, to prolong it at both ends over the heath, and to widen a small agricultural road—practically little more than a footpath. This road is now daily being continued; it leads to no populous district, it connects not even one group of houses with the Heath. Yet the devastation it is causing is pitiable to see. The wild beauty of nature is destroyed by a formal black, wide road; the soft slopes of turf are cut away—a formal footpath runs parallel to it. Stakes are to be seen across the Heath, marking out where it is proposed to carry even further the ghastly length of desolate road."

It is to be hoped that the strong local protest which is being made may avert what is nothing less than a catastrophe, and certainly the very reverse of what those who subscribed to purchase the ground had in view. We heartily support Miss Octavia Hill in her protest, and only regret that our space will not allow us to reproduce this in full. The following are its concluding sentences.

"At much sacrifice this land has been rescued from building. Let us do what we can to preserve it in its full beauty. It is a mistake to think that rural scenery is enjoyed only by the artist and literary man. Many working people have a keen appreciation of it, even some who would find it hard to put the impression into words. There are plenty of places for those who love broad roads. This land was purchased mainly for the pedestrians of all classes. It is too small to be traversed by roads, which would cut it into fragments."

THE RECORDING OF LOCAL NAMES AND FOLK-LORE.

"NOT only are animals and plants disappearing in various parts of our land, but the quaint old legends concerning them, the ancient superstitions which throw so much light on Comparative Mythology, the fanciful and often poetical Local Names—all these, valuable almost as the subjects they commemorate, are rapidly dying out. We

shall endeavour to secure what still lingers of this mass of old-world tradition, and shall receive with gratitude communications from those who will note down Provincial Names of Birds and Plants and the Folk-lore, perpetually varying, and yet essentially the same, which has clustered round the animal and vegetable kingdom."

We reproduce this paragraph from "Our Programme" because we feel that the work which it recommends is one of the most useful which the Selborne Society can take up. Every dweller in the country can take part in it, and the results cannot fail to be interesting as well as useful.

In order to make the collection of local names—of animals, birds, insects, plants, fossils, or any natural object—as simple and useful as possible, it may be well to say a word or two as to the way in which it should be carried out. The limited space at our disposal, as compared with the extent of the subject, renders brevity essential; and this will be secured if our contributors will record only such names and folk-lore as have been collected by themselves, with, of course, any *local* information tending to the explanation of either, but with a careful avoidance of speculative derivations.*

What is wanted—whether for names or folk-lore—is an actual record of these as they exist. Take an intelligent country child for a walk, and ask it the names of the common birds, flowers, and insects which cross your path; note these down and send them to the Editors, adding place and date. If any name strikes you as especially odd, ask *why* the object is so called. The *usual* answer will be, "I don't know;" but occasionally interesting information will be elicited. If you obtain confirmation of the names from others, note this, especially when a name seems to be in general use locally. Spring and early summer are the best times for collecting names; the revival of natural objects after their winter sleep attracts more attention than the appearance of those which come later.

Do not trouble to quote books, unless they should be of special value as bearing on local dialects. "Dear old Gerard," who is usually cited at second or third hand, must be avoided; and, above all, the well-known and often inexact quotations, of which many volumes of plant and animal lore mainly consist, must be entirely boycotted. In our limited space it is important to publish only what is worthy of permanent record; and if the work indicated is taken up properly by Selbornians, our pages will soon be insufficient to contain the useful information which will be sent in.

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* An excellent illustration of the kind of information required is afforded by the paper printed on p. 23, which was forwarded after these lines were in type.

THE MIGRATION OF BIRDS.

By the Rev. A. RAWSON, M.A.

I READ with much interest Mr. Gordon's article on the "Departure of Birds" in the October number of the Selborne Magazine, and his suggestion that notes should be taken as carefully of the departures as of the arrivals of our migrants. This is no doubt practicable, but I think there is a difficulty, not in compiling the record, but in drawing any conclusions from it. There is a great mystery about the migration of birds. Many theories have been put forth as to its causes and its regularity, but I think there can be no doubt that "food" has much to do with it—at least, with the emigration, if not with the immigration, of our summer birds of passage.

With regard to arrivals in spring, these consist entirely of old birds, which are hardier and more able to take care of themselves than their progeny in autumn. It is doubtful whether these spring migrants are impelled to seek our shores through lack of food in the countries from which they come; but the migratory fever seizes them, and off they set, whatever the cause may be. It is well known that if the early arrivals find it cold here, and *therefore* insect life is kept back, they (the swallow tribe, certainly) disappear again for a time; still they have arrived with regularity, been seen, and noted. With the autumnal departures things are different. Here we have both old and young birds, many of the latter quite incapable of a long flight; and so long as a genial temperature keeps insects from hibernating, the food supply is kept up, and these few remain, though the main body may have gone. The consequence is that the departures extend over a considerable interval, and an observer must be constantly on the watch for a month or more for the "last seen" of any particular bird.

I may instance this in the Swallow tribe. Here they begin to congregate on my house in the last week in August, and have practically gone by the middle of September; but in 1886, I saw one single Swallow on October 22nd, and in 1887, a remarkable year, many were flying about Furness Abbey on October 7th. In 1885, at Bromley, in Kent, I saw Martins as late as November 16th. In the same year, at the same place, the Swift was seen September 8th—a late occurrence, and in the last week of September, 1878, my son shot the Alpine Swift on the north coast of Devon, several of the common species being in company with it.

I have taken the Hirundines as being birds easy of observation, but no doubt the same is true of other migrants; they *must* have food, and owing to some peculiarity in the season, it was there for them, so they remained late. My opinion as to this is confirmed, because, in regard to my note of the very late swal-

lows in 1875, I find I have appended, as a memorandum to the entry: "The weather has been most remarkably mild, and very wet. Wind variable."

Now, to take the other side—the *arrivals* of the spring migrants. Here are a few observations, kept at Bromley Common for fifteen years, of two or three of the ordinary migrants, from which will be seen how extremely regular they are in their appearance. If it was possible for any one observer to catch the *first* arrival, no doubt the regularity would be found more remarkable; but an observer may see, for instance, a nightingale hopping on his lawn, and not see another for a week or ten days. Had he not, by mere accident, seen it then, his entry for arrival would be, for that year, ten days later; but, in spite of this, the list will show how regular these arrivals really are, while the same observer can testify how irregular is the autumnal departure.

I think, therefore, that though any one may jot down in his note-book the date of "the last bird seen," no practical conclusions can be drawn from such observations as to any *average* date for the departure of our summer migrants.

List of Arrivals—1856-1870.

Bromley Common, Kent.

	Earliest.	Latest.
Cuckoo...	April 3 ...	April 25
Martin	April 19 ...	April 28
Nightingale	April 9 ...	April 24
Swallow	April 9 ...	April 25
Whitethroat	April 16 ...	April 28
Wryneck	April 3 ...	April 18

THE INTRODUCTION OF FOREIGN WEEDS.

By GEORGE NICHOLSON, A.L.S.,
Curator of the Royal Gardens, Kew.

(*Concluded from page* 6.)

ERIGERON CANADENSE, the Horse-weed or Butter-weed of the Northern United States, is quite at home in the neighbourhood of Kew, and in many parts of England, and is not at all likely to disappear. This weed is, at the present time, spread over a considerable portion of the earth's surface. It is said that it first found its way to Europe in the middle of the seventeenth century; a single seed discovered in a stuffed bird was sown, and the descendants of this solitary stranger soon distributed themselves throughout Europe, and took possession of places to which they had never been conveyed by man. Another North American plant—a much handsomer one than that which I have just mentioned, and

a more recent arrival (having been first noticed less than half a century ago)—is spreading rapidly along the banks of many of our rivers. This is one of the Balsams, the Spotted Touch-me-not (*Impatiens fulva*).

Probably the most familiar of all the strangers which, in our own portion of the Eastern Hemisphere, have made themselves so thoroughly at home, is the "American Water-weed," *Anacharis canadensis*. Introduced into Ireland about 1836, and first noticed in this country in 1841, this plant rapidly took almost entire possession of thousands of acres of water, choking up slow streams and ponds, and increasing to such an extent in canals as to render necessary the outlay of considerable sums for labour in cutting and removing the dense massy growths. In the neighbourhood of Kew this plant is not nearly so abundant as it was some years ago; and in some places it has—after holding undisputed sway for a long time—almost disappeared. Whether this is due to the exhaustion in the soil of the specific nutriment required by the plant, or to the purely vegetative reproduction which has taken place—the male plant never having been discovered in this country until within the last few years in Edinburgh—it is impossible to say. The piece of ornamental water between the Palm House and the Museum No. 1, at Kew, was, less than twenty years ago, one mass of this weed, and much expense was incurred in the attempt to keep it under. Water fowl were kept there then as they are now, and the late curator, Mr. Smith, did not attribute the total disappearance of the *Anacharis* to the agency of the birds.

If, however, we can charge America with having sent us several unwelcome visitors, that continent, as well as most other temperate parts of the world, can turn the tables on us very successfully. A goodly number of British plants have made themselves thoroughly at home in far distant lands. Some of our thistles have taken possession of immense tracts of land in South America, where they assume proportions unknown in our island home. I quote the following remarks from a lecture on "The Distribution of the North American Flora," delivered at the Royal Institution of Great Britain by Sir Joseph Hooker some years ago.

"Whatever countries beyond the seas we may visit, in the temperate regions of the globe, we find that their vegetation has been invaded, and in many places profoundly modified, by insignificant plants from other countries; and these are, in almost all cases, natives of North-Western Europe. Nearly forty years ago I arrived at night at the Falkland Islands, when a boat was sent ashore to communicate the ship's arrival to the Governor. Being eager to know something of the vegetation of the Islands, I asked the officer in charge of the boat to pluck me any plants he could feel for, as it was too dark to see anything; and the armful he brought to me consisted of nothing but the English Shepherd's Purse. On another occasion, landing on a small un-

inhabited island nearly at the Antipodes—Lord Auckland's Island, south of New Zealand—the first evidence I met with of its having been previously visited by man was the English Chickweed. This I traced to a mound which marked the grave of a British sailor, which was covered with the plant, doubtless the offspring of seed that had adhered to the spade or mattock with which the grave had been dug. It was hence no surprise to me to find myself, on landing at Boston, U.S.A., greeted by Western European plants, that had established themselves as colonists in New England. Of these, the first was the wild Chicory, growing far more luxuriantly than I ever saw it elsewhere, forming a tangled mass of stem and branches, studded with turquoise blue blossoms, and covering acres of ground; the very next plants that attracted my attention were the Ox-eye Daisy and the May-weed, which together whitened the banks in some places, and which I subsequently traced more than half-way across the Continent. These and more than two hundred and fifty other old English plants, which are now peopling New England, were for the most part fellow-emigrants and fellow-colonists with the Anglo-Saxon, having (as seeds) accompanied him across the Atlantic, and having, like him, asserted their supremacy over, and displaced, a certain number of natives of the soil."

HAMPSHIRE LOCAL NAMES.

By W. M. E. FOWLER.

TAKING an interest in local names, I tried during the past year to find out what the children here (Liphook) call the commoner plants, but have not succeeded very well. The following, however are from my list:—

Bread-and-cheese ...	*Malva sylvestris*
Shiver grass	*Briza media*
*Bee-flower	*Scabiosa arvensis*
Hedge lilies or lilies ...	*Convolvulus sepium*
Hurts	*Vaccinium Vitis Idæa*
Ladies' shoes	*Lotus corniculatus*
Penny-winkles... ...	*Vinca minor*
Cats' tails	*Typha latifolia*
Lords-and-Ladies } Bloody fingers } ...	*Arum maculatum*
Cuckoo-sorrow (sorrel)	*Rumex Acetosa*
Shirt-button	*Stellaria Holostea*
*Smell-smock	*Oxalis Acetosella*
*Sailor-button	Any of the Campions
*Yellow-spit..... ...	*Chelidonium majus*
*Morning-star	*Ornithogalum umbellatum*

Vern ...	...	Bracken
*Black-spem ...	...	Black Spleenwort
Bird's-eye ...	...	The larger Veronicas
Weather-glass ...	...	*Anagallis arvensis*
Cuckoo-flower ...	...	*Cardamine pratensis*

The following are the bird, mammal and fish names :—

*Blood lark ...	...	?
*Wet-your-neck	...	?
*Fork-tail ...	...	Swallow
*Brown dove ...	...	?
Furze-chucker ...	...	Win-chat
Bunt or *Bent lark	...	?
*Mudlark ...	...	Skylark
Scutty	...	Wren
Flutter-mouse ...	...	Bat
Seven-sleeper / Sleep-mouse	...	Dormouse
Nine-eyes ...	...	Leach
Stone-rocker / Cheebby-head	...	Lampern
Quid-worm ...	...	Centipede

With regard to "larks," the Mudlark is the Skylark, so called from its nest being lined with mud. The "Blood-lark" is a puzzle. The boys say: "He builds a nest on the ground, he do, and lays eggs most like a Yellow-hammer." Is it a Meadow-pipit? The "Wet-your-neck" is so called because before wet weather it cries, "Wet your neck! Wet your neck!" Can any reader say what bird it is? Can it be a Wood-pecker, which in many parts of England is known as the Wet-bird or Wet-fowl? A Wren's nest, as well as the bird itself, is known as a "scutty."

I once asked a school boy, who is fond of natural history and knows a good deal about the common animals and birds, why a Quid-worm was so named. He looked much astonished, and said: "Why, because they gives he to cows as can't chew the quid; they puts he down their throats."

[This interesting communication contains several names, indicated by a prefixed asterisk, which do not appear in our most complete catalogues of popular nomenclature—the Rev. C. Swainson's "Folk-lore and Provincial Names of British Birds," and Messrs. Britten and Holland's "Dictionary of English Plant-names," two works which we have adopted as our standard of reference.

"Bunt Lark" is applied in Norfolk to the Corn Bunting. The Wren is called "Scutty" in Sussex, and "Cutty" or "Cut" in several counties, from Welsh *cwt*, a short tail. The Quail is called "Weet my feet" (E. Lothian, N. Ireland), and "Wet my lip" (W. Norfolk), but some other bird is no doubt intended in the above list.

"Quidworm" is an interesting name. "Quid" is a form of "cud," and the Cudweed was also called "Quidwort" two hundred years ago from its somewhat similar use. "They bruise [it] small, and put a quantity of fat thereunto, and so convey it 'nto the beast's mouth to swallow, that hath lost his quide, and so he will amend."—(MASCAL, *Government of Cattel*, 1662, pp. 40, 242.)—EDS.]

PROTECTION OF BIRDS ON THE CONTINENT.

By A VICE-PRESIDENT.

(*Continued from page 7.*)

AS a result of the discussions recorded in the previous article, a committee was appointed, and the members sat for four hours on the following day. M. Borggreve proposed, firstly, to beg H.I.H. the Prince to use his influence in obtaining through the diplomatic corps from various governments in Europe and North Africa, a legal protection of birds during the first half of the year, and during the years 1886, 1887 and 1888, for species which were not prejudicial to the interests of agriculture, preservation of game and pisciculture. Secondly, to ask ornithologists to note in a given district, by means of comparative tables, the number of birds nesting in 1884, 1885, 1886 and 1887, and to forward these tables to a second or third Congress. Professor Giglioli (Italy) said that some of the matter submitted by MM. Fatio, De Hayek (Austria), De Tchusi (Austria), De Pelzeln (France) was already included in the agreement between Austria and Italy, and that other proposals would encounter unsurmountable opposition in Italy. It seemed to him impossible to introduce fresh obstacles to the capture of birds in certain parts of his country, where from time immemorial people had been accustomed to go in pursuit of birds.

Dr. Palacky, M. De Hayell, MM. Zeller and Kermenic, Doctors Schier, Schiarazzi, Russ and Pollen discussed M. Fatio's proposal at some length, and finally the following resolution was carried:—

> The first Ornithological Congress of Vienna begs the Minister of Home and Foreign Affairs at Vienna to take the necessary steps towards obtaining the consent of various nations of the globe to the establishment of an international convention, having for its aim the publication of draft legal schemes based on these two principles:—(1) During the first half of the legal year (Kalendjahr) or during the period which corresponds to it, it is forbidden, except to persons duly authorised, to destroy (erlagen) birds with engines other than firearms, to capture them, take their eggs, and trade either with the said birds or their eggs. (2) The capture of the said birds *en masse* is entirely forbidden.

With this vote the business of the first section terminated.

In concluding his report, M. Oustalet begged to draw the attention of the Minister of Agriculture to the following points:—

The increasing war which is waged against birds, and especially insectivorous birds, blackbirds, wrens, fly-catchers, swallows, &c., seriously injures the interests of agriculture by permitting the development of myriads of destructive insects. The result of inquiries made by several Agricultural Societies and by the Acclimatisation Society of Paris is that the existence of various kinds of birds of undisputed utility is seriously threatened, and that certain passeræ, formerly very common

throughout the whole of France, have disappeared from several departments. It is then highly important to bring forward some remedy for a condition of affairs, the dangers of which have been already pointed out in various documents, and especially in the report of M. de la Sicotiere, in the notes by M. Froidefond and Millet, and in the works of M. Lescuyer.

In order to put an end to these hecatombs of birds which cannot be justified by any economic reasons, and which only afford in return a contemptible amount of food, various means may be employed. The most efficacious will doubtless be that adopted by an enormous majority at the Congress. It would amount to the entire prevention, during the whole year, of the capture *en masse* of all birds of any species whatsoever. In specifying that by the capture *en masse*, the taking of enormous quantities of birds by means of nets, draw nets, trammel nets, snares of various kinds and bird lime is meant, all the dodges so dear to the poachers, who annihilate hundreds and thousands of birds in a few hours, will be upset.

M. Oustalet in his report then referred to the resolution with respect to the sole use of firearms as destructive engines during the shooting season, to proper laws, and to the yearly publication of a list of birds to be legally taken during the said season, and further pointed out to the Minister of Agriculture that the rights given to the prefects in France, by the law of 1844, would be curtailed, and would no longer cover the method of capture, nor the formulation of the list of birds to be captured, but would simply empower them to fix the limits of the close season in each department.

As a means of preserving useful birds, it was proposed to place artificial nests in the trees, shrubs and hedges belonging to the state property.

With respect to wild fowl M. Oustalet suggests a restriction in granting shooting licenses on the coast, with the view of giving the migratory birds and the *balayeurs des grèves* a better chance of existence.

M. Oustalet attaches great importance to the advantages to be derived by thorough instruction on important ornithological questions in the agricultural colleges, and also to the diffusion of accurate knowledge of the habits of useful and injurious animals, either by means of popular publications, or by lectures amongst the inhabitants of towns and villages.

This brings us to believe that the establishment of an Alphonse Karr Society on the lines of our Selborne Society, and with the approval and support of the Ministers of Public Instruction and of Agriculture, the authorities of the Acclimatisation Society, &c., would be both popular and useful in France, where sentiment (not sentimentality) and science can go well together hand in hand.

In a future number we hope to be able to refer to the documents quoted by M. Oustalet and our own colonial papers on the subject of bird preservation.

CHILDREN'S COLUMN.

Un Chat Fidèle.

Poor pussy of old was commonly said
To be fawning and fickle, not high bred.
She would mince and strut, and would proudly purr ;
She would arch her back, and stick out her fur,
Selfishly seeking what was to be had.
Though timid, she's sly, and all that is bad !
Thus, all her life is to cupboard-love given ;
To mend her mean ways men in vain have striven.
Still would I tell how *our* tortoise-shell cat,
When "Cyrus" languish'd alone on his mat ;
Often too weak on his legs to get up
Too poorly to bark, to romp, or to sup ;
How to his couch little dainties she brought,
For him to take of her own food she sought ;
Of a bone, or a scrap, or mouse just kill'd,
She would beg his acceptance if he will'd,
Or, best of all, a small morsel of meat :
He would touch with his tongue, but could not eat.
Then with it away she would gently steal,
And so all alone she would make her meal.
By pure instinct taught in Dame Nature's ways
See the high culture here for noblest praise.
Oft might rough hoyden or ruthless young brat,
Learn lessons of love from this courteous cat !

30A, *Wimpole Street.* WILLIAM WHITE, F.S.A.

Mr. Chink, the Chaffinch.—Last Easter I was staying in a village near Oxford, and the morning after my arrival we were sitting at breakfast when my host suddenly said to me: "There's your Chaffinch ; he wants his breakfast. Do get up and give him some." "*My* Chaffinch !" I said in surprise. "What *do* you mean?" They then reminded me that two years before, when I was spending Christmas there, one night during a very heavy snowstorm my cousin and I were sitting up late over the fire in my bedroom, when there was a flapping against the window. Thinking it was the snow, we at first took no notice ; but the second time it came flop against the window, I got up, exclaiming, "It must be a bird wanting to come in," and on our opening the window in flew a very beautiful cock chaffinch, having evidently lost his way in the storm. Quite exhausted he flew straight on to my bed, and after some time the warmth began to revive him and he looked about, not objecting to being gently stroked. We then began to wonder what we should do with him, for to turn him out again that dreadful night was quite impossible, and there were no cages in the house. At last my cousin found a meat safe into which we put him, with some cotton wool, crumbs and water. We were half afraid that he would die in the night, but were next morning delighted to find him quite well and very perky—such a little beauty ! The sun was now shining brightly and the snow melting fast, so we let him out, feeling quite sad at parting with him. I went away that day, but now hear that Mr. Chaffy came back regularly every day to be fed and became very tame. All through the summer and following winter he came, and in the spring he brought his little wife with him, and they would perch on the trees close round the windows calling "Chink, chink !" till they were fed. By this time Mr. Chink became so tame that he would perch close to my cousins at afternoon tea in the garden, when he was always fed. But one day when a piece of cake was given to him he did not take it as usual, but seemed anxious to attract notice to something in a flower border near, flying backwards and forwards and chirping. At last my

cousin said: "He has got something to shew us: I must go and see what it is." She got up and followed Chink to the border, where two little baby chaffinches were sitting sheltered by a plant. Immediately Chaffy flew back and fetched the cake, and proceeded to feed the little ones, evidently satisfied now that his children were noticed and admired. When I was there at Easter he was as constant as ever, and his "Chink, Chink!" would fetch my cousin out of bed at five o'clock to give him his early meal of biscuit from her window, where a box was kept on purpose for Chaffy's use. When I last heard he was still a constant visitor in the Vicarage garden, where his presence would be greatly missed.

B. E. E.

SELBORNIANA.

A Browning Query.—Can any reader tell me what plant Mr. Browning had in view in the following lines?—

"One plant,
Woods have in May, that starts up green
Save a sole streak which, so to speak,
Is spring's blood, spilt the leaves between."—*May and Death.*

The arum or one of the spotted orchids suggest themselves, but neither of these has "a *sole* streak." G. S. R.

The Spelling of Yellow Hammer.—A youthful naturalist friend, recently visiting the Natural History Museum, was especially delighted with the collection of British birds and their nests—a collection which well deserves the attention of all Selbornians. But he was much exercised by what he considered a mistake in the spelling of Yellow "ammer," which, he said, ought to be Yellow Hammer. I, of course, assured him that the Museum authorities would not make a mistake even in such a small matter; and having thus silenced if not convinced him, I proceeded to establish my position. To my surprise, however, I found that Dr. Murray's researches had not enabled him to obtain any authority whatever for Yarrell's introduction of this spelling in 1846; and moreover, on further investigation, I found that Professor Newton, in the fourth edition of Yarrell's work, had pronounced against the proposed correction. The Museum authorities, it may be hoped, will therefore see their way to restoring the usual spelling, when the labels for the cases of birds next come under revision. I append Professor Newton's interesting note.

"In former editions of this work the author strove to restore what he believed to have been the first English name of this bird—Yellow Ammer. As might be expected in such a case, custom, whether right or wrong, would not give way to the proposed amendment, and Yellow Hammer, with its abbreviation Yellow Ham, have been commonly printed from the days of Turner (1544) and Merrett (1667) to the present time. There can indeed be no question of 'Hammer' (in this sense) being strictly cognate with the German *Ammer*, but it would seem that prefixing the letter h to the word is not wholly an English peculiarity, since there is some ground for believing that *Hammer*, which now survives in *Hämmerling*, was equally with *Ammer*, a Teutonic form. Another early spelling of this word in both languages was 'Amber,' used in 1668 by Charleton (Onomasticon Zooicon, p. 80), and by Ray in 1674 (Call. Engl., &c., p. 88). Perhaps the parent form was the old German *Embritz*, whence comes the Latinized modification *Emberiza*, spelt by some ancient authors *Embriza*. Mr. Skeat, in a communication kindly made on this point to the editor, remarks that the letter *h* is seldom wrongly prefixed, and cites among the few examples of the practice, 'hermit,' 'horde' and 'humbles'—the roots of which are probably *eremita*, *ordeu* and *umbilicus* respectively. Mr. J. W. Cartmell has added to these words 'hogshead,' which ought to have been 'oxhead,' from the Dutch *ochshood*, and 'howlet' instead of 'owlet'—the last being almost an exact parallel to 'hammer' in the present bird's name. Dr. Robert Latham's assertion (Dict. Engl. Lang.

ii. p. 1432) that 'the derivation is the A. S. *hama*=skin, clothing, covering' seems to be wholly unsupported by evidence." (Yarrell's Hist. Brit. Birds, ii. 43).

G. S. R.

Note of the Cuckoo.—Mrs. Linley Blathwayt records the following interesting observations made by her at Batheaston :—Before the return of spring, I should like to call attention to the note of the Cuckoo, which is commonly said to be a major or a minor third, Beethoven giving it as the former in his Pastoral Symphony. I have frequently heard it a most decided major second, and sometimes a perfect fourth.

Last May for a few days, I wrote down what I heard, taking the pitch from the Philharmonic tuning fork. On the evening of the 13th it was a major third, F to D flat. On the following morning, when the birds seemed to be answering each other all round, the major thirds were, E to C, and F sharp to D ; the minor, E to C sharp, F to D and G to E. Major second F to E flat. On the 16th I also heard a second, E to D, and on the 19th a fourth F sharp to C sharp.

The Milliner's Scheme of Creation.—We have received the following ingenious speculations on this subject : — Having seen the hint in your magazine suggesting a sketch of what might possibly be a milliner's view of creation, I venture to send you the following which I think would be a plausible theory to account for the deeds of an Anti-Selbornian milliner :—

"Latterly we have heard much from scientific men about a certain theory by which they think they account for many natural phenomena : it is usually known as the doctrine of the 'Survival of the Fittest.' We milliners know a great deal about nature, more perhaps than scientific men generally think. Do we not every season have fresh consignments of birds' skins sent to us from abroad ?—do we not know exactly which wears best, what colours last longest, and how, for instance, to patch up a sea-gull with a few cock's feathers, so that a far superior bird for trimming, than any which can be found in nature, is produced? Our knowledge and experience ought surely to entitle us to an opinion upon these matters.

"Now the theory which these scientific men hold, does not tally with facts, and must therefore be dismissed as untenable. The principle which does hold true throughout the glorious realm of nature, is no other than this—'The Destruction of the Fittest.' What can be a more beautiful theory than this? Every creature—bird, beast or butterfly—is meant for destruction, just in so far as it is beautiful and fitting for the adornment of ladies' dress.

"What is the use of hundreds of birds flitting about aimlessly in some distant forest, or rearing their young on some lonely island, far from the reach of men? Surely such things were never intended to be. Of course such a fate may have been destined for some ill-formed or sadly plumaged birds, but never for the gorgeous humming-bird who flames out so royally from among the velvet trimming, or for the bird of paradise whose exquisite plumes can never shew to as great advantage as when drooping from a gracefully shaped hat. Even the robin redbreast has lately been found to have some claim to destruction, and the great law of nature is therefore taking effect, as is shewn by the frequent appearance of one or even two of these little songsters nestling daintily in a lady's bonnet—a now very familiar natural (?) phenomenon.

"One word more, and I think I shall have made my point clear. Darwin's definition of the term 'Fittest' is somewhat long and complicated. Roughly speaking, he uses it as meaning those animals or plants whose organisms are best calculated to help them in the struggle for existence. Here I must ask the reader to note the difference between Darwin's phraseology and mine. 'The Fittest,' as I use it, means of course—(and this meaning is surely more natural than the scientific one), such animals and birds, more especially the latter, which 'fit' best with the hats, bonnets, and, in fact the whole toilette, in fashion at any given time. 'Fitness' is also shewn in the facility with which a bird may be sewn on to any material—by the way in which it resists the wet—by its general wearing qualities, and by many other smaller details which will readily occur to one who has daily experience of such things, and who . . . &c. . . . ."

But the reader will by this time have had nearly enough of this remarkable argument, and I must leave the scientific naturalist to refute this novel theory as best he may. Z. S.

A Blackbird Story.—The Rev. C. S. Millard writes from Costock Rectory: I feel sure that many of the readers of the Selborne Society's Magazine will be interested in the following account that has been sent me by Mrs. Symonds of Saxelbye Rectory of the strange conduct of a blackbird last spring. "The story of the blackbird is very striking. Two blackbirds built in a hole in the hayrick that had been pulled out by the cows. My man constantly passed by the hen bird while she was sitting, and he noticed that she seemed very tame. At length he stroked her on her nest, and used continually to do so as he passed and repassed her, she seemingly being not the least disconcerted, and once she allowed him to lift her off the nest. Five young birds were hatched and seemed to be thriving, but one morning, when my man was going to milk, he was surprised by the hen blackbird flying to him, making a great noise, almost hitting him in the face, and then flying back to her nest. He suspected something wrong and followed her. On arriving at the nest he found a magpie (I had allowed two to build in a spinny hard by) standing on the cock bird, which he had killed, as he had also killed three of the young blackbirds. Having driven the magpie off, he took the two surviving little birds and put them into the hedge, where the poor hen-bird, who sat by watching the whole proceeding, immediately joined them. I do think that the way in which the bird recognised in my man one who would assist her if solicited, very touching."

Mildness of the Season.—The Rev. W. S. H. Samler, writing from the Vicarage, South Stoke, Bath, sends us the following list of plants in bloom in his garden on the 31st of January:—White Arabis, Violets (purple and white), Primrose, Christmas Rose, Snowdrop, Crocus, Hepatica (blue and pink), Daisy, Laurustinus, Pansy, Polyanthus, Helleborus viridis, Aubrietia græca, Scilla, Anemone (ordinary), Anemone fulgens, Gentian acaulis, Wall Flower, Winter Stock, Yellow Jasmine, three kinds of Berberis, Periwinkle, Pyrus Japonica, China Rose, Hyacinth.

A Bad Example.—Mr. Marcus B. Huish writes from the New University Club: "The Committee has continued to purchase, whenever possible, any rare bird shot in the district." This extract from the Annual Report of the Cardiff Art Library and Museum for the year 1889 is an example of the encouragement held out to ignorant and unenlightened folk by the worshipful the Mayor, a large body of Councillors, and I believe, the Naturalist Society of Cardiff, who form the committee in question. Comment is needless, except that I think it would be well if the Selborne Society would present a few of their pamphlets to the Free Library and so endeavour to counteract the teaching now in vogue at the most important educational establishment in South Wales.

MARCUS B. HUISH.

Holly Berries.—Mr. Manley Hopkins writes from Haslemere: There is, perhaps, no part of England so abundant in holly as West Surrey. The trees and hedge-bushes last year were prolific in berries, and even more so the previous year. This season there are none. In our walks and drives about this neighbourhood we fail to discover a single instance of the scarlet fruit. A farmer in Hertfordshire tells me that his trees are in similar condition with the exception of a single tree, which is loaded with berries. The pious idea that *Deus pascit Corvos*, and provides much food for the small birds against a hard winter, is, we think, groundless; but this winter proves nothing as to its truth or falsity. Probably hollies and also hazelnuts overblew themselves in the late previous years, and that this is the season of rest and recovery.

The Plague of Rats; Cause and Effect.—The Rev. D. W. Barrett, of Barnet, sends us two paragraphs from the *Peterborough Advertiser*, of January 25th, 1890, which well show the wisdom of amateur efforts at the readjustment of the balance of nature:—

STOATS AND WEASLES (*Sic.*)

6s 6d. each will be given for STOATS and 5s. each for WEASLES, and Carriage will be paid from any part of the Country.*

A PLAGUE OF RATS.

A plague of rats is raging in the east of England. The farmers cannot keep their wheat in consequence of the numbers in the stacks, and have to thresh and sell out.

MR. H. G. O. KENDALL, of The Hyde, Hatfield, Herts, also writes, calling attention to the fact that the preservation of "game" often causes the destruction under the name of "vermin" of many natural checks to rat plagues, and thus tends to produce a bread famine.

BOOKS RECEIVED.

WE have received from various authors and publishers books of special interest to Selbornians. Reviews of several of these works have been written for NATURE NOTES, but the demands upon our space are such that we are unable in the present number to do more than give the names and publishers of the following:—

About Robins: Songs, Facts and Legends, collected and illustrated by Lady Lindsay, R.I.: George Routledge and Sons.

Ancient Cures, Charms and Usages of Ireland: Contributions to Irish Lore, by Lady Wilde: Ward and Downey.

Sylvanus Redivivus (Memoirs of the Rev. John Mitford and Edward Jesse), by Mrs. Houston: Sampson Low, Marston, Searle and Rivington.

Science and Scientists, by the Rev. John Gerard, S.J.: Catholic Truth Society.

Idylls of the Field, by F. A. Knight: Elliot Stock.

Haunts of Nature, by Worsley-Benison: Elliot Stock.

The Butterfly, by John Stuttard: Fisher Unwin.

In Tennyson-land, by J. C. Walters: Redway.

OFFICIAL NOTICES, MEETINGS, &c.

THE Hon. Treasurer begs to acknowledge the following surplus funds received from branch Secretaries for the general purposes of the Society:

Atalanta ...	£0	5	8	Kent ...	£2	0	6
Bayswater ...	2	0	0	Liverpool ...	0	18	7½
Bournemouth	1	0	0	Northern Heights ...	1	10	6
Chichester ...	0	11	11	Nottingham ...	0	17	10½
Clapton ...	0	4	3½	Petersfield ...	1	10	7
Haslemere ...	5	0	0	Putney ...	3	0	0
Isle of Wight ...	3	1	0	Southampton ...	1	1	6
Kensington ...	3	0	0	Weybridge ...	0	16	10

AT the Annual Meeting of the Lower Thames Valley Branch of the Society, an important report was submitted showing the large amount of work which had been done by the Branch during the year, in the way of defending the beauties of

* Presumably for New Zealand or Australia.—EDS.

the Thames against the various agencies which threaten their destruction. We should have been glad to quote largely from this valuable report, but can only give the following extract dealing with the preservation of Sudbrook Park. "The last item of news bearing on this important subject is that on January 30th Her Majesty's Commissioners of Woods and Forests received an important deputation, asking them not to take any action in respect to the sale of Sudbrook Park, or the letting of any portion of it for building purposes, until the whole matter had been laid before the House of Commons for their decision. The deputation included the Right Hon. Shaw Lefevre, M.P.; Mr. Bruce, M.P.; Sir J. Whittaker Ellis, M.P.; Mr. Burt (Chairman of the Richmond Vestry), and leading members of the Open Spaces Association, the Metropolitan Playing Grounds Association, the Preservation of Commons Association, the Kyrle Society, &c., &c. Mr. Edward King specially represented the Selborne Society. The interests of landscape and other artists were represented by Mr. M. H. Spielmann (Editor of the *Magazine of Art*). Mr. Skewes-Cox, the Chairman of the Joint Executive Committee for the Preservation of Sudbrook Park, was also present. Without prophesying, your committee venture to express the hope that the result of that interview may influence the future of Sudbrook Park, so far as that it is associated with the permanent preservation of open spaces round London."

We regret that a long list of names of new members is unavoidably crowded out, as the space at our disposal is, as explained below, quite inadequate to the demands upon it.

Subscriptions to the Selborne Society for 1890 were due on January 1st, and if not already paid should be forwarded to the Hon. Treasurer (9, Adam Street, Adelphi, W.C.), or in the case of branch members, to the treasurers of their respective branches.

Letters on the general business of the Society should *not* be forwarded to the Editors of Nature Notes; but to the Secretary of the Selborne Society, 9, Adam Street, Adelphi, W.C., *to whom, or to the Secretary of the nearest Branch, those who are desirous of becoming members should apply.*

EDITORIAL NOTE.

We are happy to be able to report most favourably as to the success of the first number of Nature Notes, the Selborne Society's Magazine. A much larger number of copies have had to be printed than we anticipated, and the third edition is now almost exhausted. Nature Notes has been the subject of many appreciative notices in important papers, expressing in warm terms sympathy with the objects of the Society and approval of its magazine. The members of the Selborne Society have responded with enthusiasm to our request for support in the matter of letters, contributions and cuttings. One result of this is that we are unable to insert a large number of interesting articles and letters, many of which, however, we hope to utilise in future numbers. It is hoped that it may be possible hereafter to enlarge the magazine; in no other manner can justice be done to the large number of communications we have received. Meanwhile we trust that our kind correspondents, whether their contributions have been inserted or not, will accept this expression of gratitude for their assistance, and will continue to supply us with short original articles and items of information on matters Selbornian. It is particularly requested that subscriptions and letters bearing on the general business of the Society should *not* be sent to the Editors. Editorial communications should be forwarded (not later than the 4th of each month, if insertion is desired in the current number) to the Rev. Percy Myles, 1, Argyle Road, Ealing, W.

Nature Notes,

The Selborne Society's Magazine.

No. 3. MARCH 15, 1890. Vol. I.

RIGHT OF WAY ASSERTED AT GLEN DOLL.

THE publication of a statement, showing the amount of the expenses incurred by the Scottish Rights of Way Association in successfully upholding the public right throughout prolonged litigation with the owner of Glen Doll, calls for sympathetic notice from our readers. Glen Doll, in Clova, is one of the richest localities for the botanist, and, at the same time, one of the most beautiful of Highland glens. An old road from Kirkton of Clova to Braemar runs through it. The present owner of the Glen, who purchased it some years ago, closed the road and refused all access, no matter how politely the request for it was made. The Scottish Rights of Way Association promptly challenged this action, and litigation ensued, throughout which the owner of Glen Doll, a Mr. Macpherson, exhausted every resource of which the law is capable in the matter of expense and delay. The case finally terminated in the House of Lords, and the public interest triumphed in every court and on all the points at issue. The only drawback to the success is that a deep encroachment has been made on the funds at the disposal of the Society. "The extra-judicial costs of the litigation have been heavy. The total is £650; and of this sum £250 is taken from the Society's funds, £300 comes out of the pockets of private guarantors, members of the Society, and only £100—between a sixth and a seventh of the whole—has been subscribed by the general public."

This is not as it should be. The road is now open and the gain to the public is a great one. It was worth fighting for, but the public apathy may be explained. After all, what is the gain of a *road* in the Highlands? Dwellers in cities may be surprised at our asking this question. It is not very many

years since anybody was at liberty to roam in any direction among the Scottish mountains, and even to shoot as many birds as he pleased, or rather was able to shoot—grouse were not so plentiful then. It is only since the market value of these "shootings" has been found out that restrictions have been placed on access to mountains. In this matter it is only fair to say that the holders and recent purchasers of shootings are to blame for by far the greater part of the "grabbing" of public rights, and that the older proprietors incur little reprobation. In these circumstances is it to be wondered at that the public are apathetic in the matter of a mere road when what they want is a whole range of mountains, or rather free access to them? Nothing could be more popular than the reception given to Mr. Bryce's "Access to Mountains Bill" of a few years ago. What has become of it? If there is any young politician desirous of the popular canonization so properly bestowed on Sir John Lubbock for a measure of benefit to the people which all feel and recognise, let him take up the "Access to Mountains Bill."

GEORGE MURRAY.

THE MIGRATION OF THE WOODCOCK.*

THE subject of the migration of birds is the most interesting and most amazing in the history of the most fascinating of all animals. What causes a creature ordinarily so domestic, so fond of separate quiet places, so frail as to be in many cases hardly more powerful than a large moth, to dare sea and storm for thousands of miles, and mostly to choose the night for his romantic pilgrimage, the time when his usual wont is to sleep as sound as an alderman of the City of London? What causes the Woodcock, always a solitary don in his habits, to fly singly each one across the German Ocean to our western bowery hollows and forest tangles, and yet to arrive in such long lines as to cover, of course sparsely, 350 miles of English coast in one night (from the Isle of May, Firth of Forth, to Orfordness, Suffolk, opposite Ipswich, in one night, October 12, 1882)? What rules the flight of these over-sea arrivals of myriads of birds which, if they were aerial ships made by man, would collide, and strew the sea with the dead? There is an awe in the subject, however much modern science has enlarged or illuminated it, and to reverent thought

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* From a lecture delivered at Hampstead on behalf of the Selborne Society, on Nov. 21st, 1889.

on the migration of birds, the old words, some of the most stately and onomatopœic in the whole range of English language, come home—"Thy way is in the sea, and Thy paths in the great waters; and Thy footsteps are not known."

The point which I wish on the present occasion to maintain is, that allowing for the impulse Divine for migration in the bird, its immediate incidence is due to heat and cold. As in summer we wear light clothing and in winter warm, so the birds which are our principal migrants choose, at the approach of summer, the coldest quarters that they can occupy, and invariably nest in their highest latitudes, thereby hardening their offspring. In winter—or at its approach—they are driven by the bare breath of the north or east wind to get into moister and warmer air. The spring of 1886 was, at the end of March, warm and almost tropical; that represented great heat in the tropics, driving the birds north before their time, and we had quite a dozen summer migrants a month in advance of their usual dates. The autumn of this year was a summer, and last Sunday, November 17th, I saw a Swallow fly over Harting Church at noon. Two birds had been observed thereabouts on the previous day. In the same way the Swifts of 1889 were a fortnight later in departing than usual; they had enough heat to delay them.

Now take the typical bird for migration, the Woodcock (*Scolopax rusticola*). It is a delicate fragile bird. It nests, among other places, in the Himalayas, and places as far apart from them as Scandinavia; it goes to Persia for warmth and moisture only in the cold season. When we examine a Woodcock's head we find evidence of its timidity. The lustrous jet black eyes largely developed are raised above the line of the long sucker-beak, and look backward angularly; a somewhat similar arrangement is seen in the eyes of flat fish, which are strained to look away upwards in case of danger. The Woodcock's most constant attitude is like the Spoonbill's, with the long sucker-like tube of a bill pressed down into the ooze; and I have seen one in frosty snowy weather help himself up by this beak. The Woodcock's feet and legs are small; he has little development for running, and all his life depends on his wings and the marvellously large retrospect of his eye. His claws are absolutely unarmed, less formidable than a poor Nightjar's, which, though useless for defence, are serrated. From his structure the Woodcock is most timid and vulnerable; one feather displaced by a shot has been known to make him unable to rise from the ground. Accordingly, this bird, like the hare, full of fears, feels keenly the breath of north and east wind packed perhaps in several mile thicknesses, as he is driven across the German Ocean. One year, 1877, Mr. Cordeaux, who has most admirably edited the returns for the East English Coast, remarks, from the British Association reports of nine years, that there was not a single gale or even strong breeze from any northerly or easterly point between the middle of September and the end of November, and so there

were no Woodcocks in England that fateful and disastrous year, save those bred in our own islands. And from no fewer than fifty-five schedules he gives, in a remarkable way, twenty-seven instances at various periods of the Woodcock's greater or more numerous flights.

The first flight of these birds occurs early in October, being mostly of the smaller and ruddier Scandinavian sort, already feeling the approaching gripe of winter; the later and greater flight is of the larger grayer Mes-European (Middle of Europe) birds, before the end of November. But all these visits occur with winds from east and south-east varying to north. As a very interesting instance of the powers of flight possessed by a Woodcock, Mr. Cordeaux estimates that on the 7th October, 1887, a Woodcock left Heligoland at 5 p.m., travelled across Heligoland, S.W., arrived at the Nash Lighthouse, midway in the coast of South Glamorgan (as shown by the British Association Reports on Migration) at 3.30 next day, October 8, having traversed the distance of 550 miles in 10½ hours, at 52 miles an hour, which is about the estimated flight of this bird. Another record of the Woodcock's flight from Sleswig to Whitby Lighthouse, gives 10½ hours for 420 miles, or 40 miles an hour. This was done on November 8th, 1887. The Woodcock seems to be at his best when going up the wind, if it be not too strong.

Enough has been said to show that Woodcocks migrating and sailing at great altitudes in the clear air of the now sun-forsaken North, and feeling the bite of the North and East wind most keenly—for the bird is tender from crown to toe—are guided by the prime considerations of warmth and moisture to winter in England in severe seasons, much as our folk winter at Mentone and in Italy. In warm winters like 1877 they do not need the shelter of our western shores, their further limit west, and the influence of the Gulf Stream, without which England would be a Labrador. When, however, the east winds come, they bring the Woodcock, as the same east winds brought the succulent locusts to Israel in the desert. Too much heat or too much cold drives the birds away to more temperate climes. Thus the Woodcock is the tell-tale of winter heat or cold: and before long it will result that what the magnet-needle is to the navigation of great iron-clads, and to our telegraphs—the running pen of the nineteenth century—that the flight of birds—the dark steel magnet-needle of the heavens—will be to meteorology and the science of climates in the twentieth century.

H. D. Gordon.

THE BEAUTIES OF EPPING FOREST IN DANGER.

EPPING FOREST is situated mainly on the low ridge that forms the watershed between the Lea and the Roding, widening out in parts into a level plateau, but with considerable natural fall over much, if not most, of its area. This upland is capped by patches of gravel of various geological age resting upon London clay, which latter formation is exposed in some of the flat parts and on the middle slopes of both river-valleys, the lower parts of their valleys not being within the Forest. Some parts of the Forest are consequently almost always dry at the surface, while on much of the level central plateau there are numerous stagnant pools and a considerable area of wet ground after rain, the water being held up by the clay. Natural rivulets with considerable current drain the slopes, having, in some cases, as between Great and Little Monk Wood, cut for themselves deep, steep-sided and picturesque valleys. The banks of these streams are always liable to be damaged by the feet of cattle, and their channels to become blocked by fallen leaves. These causes, and in a few cases almost certainly, the existence of surface-springs at the junction of overlying gravel with underlying clay, have in places produced permanent bogs, marked by a luxuriant growth of Marsh Pennywort (*Hydrocotyle*) and occasionally of Sphagnum. Such bogs are undoubtedly, retaining as they do a large amount of stagnant water in the sub-soil, detrimental to the soundness of neighbouring timber trees; and they may, though I have not heard of any fatalities, be a source of danger to the cattle of commoners, or of that larger body of persons who, as Sir T. F. Buxton has pointed out, usurp common rights. Their total area, however, is so small, and that of any one of them so insignificant as to be no serious obstacle to any rational pedestrian. It is not necessary that sound timber should be growing over the whole area of the Forest; and their presence gives diversity to the Forest scenery, and affords many objects of interest to the large numbers of naturalists who enjoy the Forest in an unobtrusive and harmless manner.

The wood of the forest is mainly hornbeam, as pollards and as coppice, with a good deal of beech, including in some areas large trees, birch, holly, as undergrowth, and scattered oaks in some parts. The beech is mostly on dry knolls; but its copious root system requires a good water-supply, though not a stagnant one, in a porous and consequently warm subsoil. The birch is perhaps more accommodating, but grows mostly on level gravel areas. The holly is still less particular, flourishing on dry sand, under the shade of beech or even in a stiff and necessarily somewhat cold loam. Fir-trees are neither indigenous to, characteristic of, or suitable to Epping Forest; and, though there are a few Scotch firs near Fairmead, the spruce is perhaps the only

common fir likely to succeed. Few things more strikingly illustrate the way in which the Conservators persistently act in contravention of the spirit of the Epping Forest Act, which prescribes the maintenance of the natural aspect of the Forest than their (mostly futile) efforts at planting fir to the entire neglect of hornbeam, the most characteristic tree of the Forest. With regard to hornbeam and oak—two, in our opinion, of the most important species from the Epping Forest point of view—it is well to bear in mind the opinion expressed by the late Professor Bagneris, one of the most distinguished of European foresters, writing purely from the standpoint of a practical timber-producer.

As for draining (he says) except in the case of stagnant pools, it must be resorted to with great moderation. A few ditches judiciously dug ensure sufficient drainage, for it must not be forgotten that our most valuable species delight in very moist and even wet soils, *e.g.*, the pedunculate oak, ash, elm, hornbeam, spruce fir and elder. This has been sometimes forgotten. Whenever the water is not stagnant so that the soil does not become actually marshy, draining is a mistake. There is no doubt that the premature decay of the pedunculated oak in many places, and its disappearance in others, are due to over-drainage. This species is the tree *par excellence* of low-lying plains which are subject to floods.

In 1883 the present writer reported "that, seeing the many natural water-courses of the Forest, after the experience of unusually wet seasons, it appears that no more drainage is required, but that the planting of alder, willows, poplars, and other trees, will be a more natural way of rendering the surface drier." There can, I think, be little objection to a few shallow surface drains on level ground, as at Fairmead, to carry off heavy rainfalls, or to ditches by the sides of the high roads, or even by some of the rides; but the clearing of natural channels from leaves and other obstructions, without cutting them into straight, square and bare ditches, as is done at present, seems all that is otherwise necessary. The straight ditch from the high road into the fosse of Ambresbury Banks may be interesting from a military point of view, but it is so from no other: the clean sweep of hawthorn and briar from the banks of the stream between Epping and Theydon manors is surely a needless piece of vandalism; and the ditch-digging in Hang-boy Slade and elsewhere has risked the Sphagnum and the Sundew sharing the fate of that well-nigh exterminated by the unlamented Board of Works at Hampstead. This uncontrolled license of the hedger and ditcher has, it is believed, never had the approval of the verderers—gentlemen better qualified, by their residence on the spot and the permanence of their office, to judge of the interests of the Forest, than are the other members of the Committee. It involves a large amount of expensive labour, for no appreciable benefit to anything or anybody but the labourers employed, and certainly to the great loss of lovers of Nature.

G. S. Boulger.

OSTRICH FARMING.

DURING a visit to the Cape a few years ago, I chanced to spend a fortnight at an ostrich farm belonging to a relative. As the growing of ostrich feathers may be of interest to the readers of the Selborne Society's Magazine, I send a short account of what I there saw and learnt.

To one in search of the picturesque, an ostrich farm is a grievous disappointment. The country around, it is true, is very beautiful; but the farm itself, a one-storied building, surrounded by a number of square enclosures (each containing a pair of birds), some sheds for the incubators and for storing food, does not offer much attraction for the pencil. The native who tends the birds, and goes gaily about, dressed in the cast-off clothes of his master, may be a loveable creature, but is certainly not a lovely one.

The birds themselves, gaunt and ugly, are perhaps the greatest disappointment. They are extremely timid, and when alarmed, will rush at and break through almost any fence, and run for miles. They have the greatest aversion towards dogs; and as a scare may result in the loss of several birds, the farmer has no mercy, and shoots every member of the canine species that comes near his place.

A full-grown ostrich must be handled very cautiously, as a blow from its foot is often fatal. This foot, which looks like one large toe, has a formidable-looking claw at its extremity, and this, added to the enormous strength of the leg, makes it a dangerous weapon. Its neck is weak, so the keepers, profiting by their knowledge, have learned to keep the bird at a safe distance when it approaches by means of a long forked stick, which seizes the neck just below the head, and which the bird has not wit or power to avoid.

The chickens are all hatched in incubators; and to keep their sham mothers at an even temperature is a continual source of anxiety to the "strauss-vogel" boer. Some ten or fifteen years ago, when ostrich-farming was very remunerative, every one who could scrape together enough money bought a pair of birds. Those less pecunious bought a chicken or even an unhatched egg, despite the proverb, and these small growers often reaped a good harvest.

Things were, however, in a very different state when I was at the Cape. A disease was spreading among the farms, with which no one seemed able to cope, and many valuable birds died. In fear and trembling my host would visit his pens of a morning to see what havoc the epidemic had made. As the sums paid for ostriches are considerably larger than what we pay here for carriage-horses, his anxiety was not to be wondered at. Their value is greatly increased when they have paired, for

the female is generally very coy and particular in accepting a suitor. I have heard of as much as £500 being given for one pair of birds; £200 and £300 are not at all uncommon prices. A few hours after the disease had attacked them, they would be no more worth than their feathers.

Dick, the Zulu attendant, would pluck their carcases till they were as naked as a Christmas turkey, and bury them at once, for fear of the infection spreading. In spite of this depressing occupation, he was always ready for a grin some six inches wide, evoked on the smallest provocation, at the most microscopic of jokes.

Gathering the feathers is not in any way a painful operation for the birds, as they are not plucked out, but cut—the stumps being pulled out when the bird would be naturally moulting. It would not do to wait until the moulting time to gather in the feathers, as they are then past their full beauty.

Each bird has a distinguishing name of its own. I was amused to hear the farmer discussing with his Zulu factotum as to whether "Mrs. Langtry" were ripe, or whether "Mr. Gladstone" were fit for gathering. The birds are coaxed into a kind of wooden hutch with no top to it, and sufficiently small to prevent the legs having full play. They can then be approached with ease, and the feathers are safely cut off.

From all that I saw I feel satisfied that ostrich-farming is not cruel. The birds owe a happy and pleasant existence to the fact that their feathers have a commercial value. They are never short of fodder or water, as they too often are in their natural state. They are protected from wild beasts, and their great value secures them from rough handling by their owners, for the better they are kept, the finer the crop of feathers. For all these advantages the only return they have to make, is to lose what nature would every year take from them at the moult.

W. Tyndale.

Since members of the Selborne Society are often questioned as to the humanity of ostrich-farming, it may be worth while to quote a published letter of Mr. Thomas Distin's to Sir Charles Mills, K.C.M.G., in 1886:—

"Dear Sir Charles,—You enquire if ostriches suffer any pain in the process of plucking their feathers. Let me assure you that such is not the case. The ostriches are first driven into a small enclosure, caught, and put in a wooden frame. The feathers are then cut with a pair of scissors, leaving about an inch of stump. The bird is then released, and runs for about six weeks until the stumps are dried up, when they are drawn. If the feathers were pulled at first instead of being cut, then of course the bird would suffer much pain, and the small fibres or nerves attached to the stump of the feather would be injured and the bird would no longer produce good feathers,

and would become of little or no value. If feathers are now drawn and not cut, it is the exception, and could only be done by an inexperienced ostrich farmer."

The Hon. P. L. Van der Byl, M.L.C., writes from the Cape to the same effect. "I beg to state that no cruelty whatever is practised on the birds; the feathers are cut, not plucked (though that word still remains in common parlance.)"

Mr. Evans, of Reitfontein, Cape Colony, in a letter to the *Times* some years ago, says: "I cannot assert that *no* acts of cruelty are committed; even now perhaps a few birds are plucked still. But with my extensive acquaintance with the Colony, I know of *no* breeder anywhere who is guilty of such folly. . . . Plucking reduces both the quantity and value of the feathers, and ultimately leads to ruin."

From Mr. G. Nathan's interesting paper in *Longman's Magazine* some time back, we learn that it was in 1875 that the farmers began first to adopt the plan of cutting the feathers; before that time "they blundered along in their own way, learning their experience." Many of the ostrich camps are over two thousand acres in extent, and afford a wide run for the domesticated birds. Of the general gain of the colony through the rise of ostrich-farming, there can be no doubt. "It has given to large extent of sheep runs, a rest; it has been the means of partially ridding many farms of the prickly pear, a cactus highly palateable to the ostrich, but a pest to the farmer; and it has made farmers fence in large tracts of country. The 'boom' in feathers came when all produce of the Colony was very low, and for the time being saved the farming population from bankruptcy. . . . Many farmers still believe in it as a permanent industry."

Perhaps no bird has been so much noticed by ancient writers as the ostrich. The Arabs have a saying that "Allah gave fortune to the ostrich by touching its wings with his lips." It has been connected from earliest times with sacred symbols and with the state of Kings.

Sir H. Layard tells us that Ostrich feathers appear on the robes of the ancient sculptures of Nimrod and on the Babylonian and Assyrian cylinders. Canon Tristram points out that the word often translated "owl" in the Old Testament, is really the ostrich, to whose "hoarse complaining cry by night, Job compares his lamentations. . . . The same simile occurs in Micah—'mourning as the ostriches.'"

The ostrich feather is used as a symbol of justice on the Egyptian hieroglyphic monuments, because of the even and equally-balanced filaments on each side of the quill. In early days the plumes seem to have been more worn by men than by women. Aristophanes, in his comedy, "Acharnenses," speaks of a General wearing two white ostrich feathers in his helmet; and we have an example in our own royal history, where the Black Prince adopted the three ostrich plumes of the slain King of Bohemia; they have continued ever since the badge of the

Prince of Wales. Mr. J. E. Hating, in his work on "Ostriches and Ostrich Farming," has collected other interesting testimony to their use by both Romans and Greeks. The Egyptian Queen Arsinoe, who lived before the times of Cleopatra, was represented in a statue on Helicon, riding an ostrich, and Roman ladies are said to have kept birds for the same purpose. But though a full-grown ostrich is said to be able to bear the weight of a man, and one has been known to draw a light kind of carriage, it is for its feathers that it will always be prized.

"Ostrich feathers have added grace to womanly loveliness since the days of Cleopatra," says Mr. Nathan; and it is a pleasure to be assured that there is no need from motives of humanity that a fashion, to be measured by so many centuries, should be discarded by the women of the Victorian era.

A. M. Buckton.

THE DAFFODIL: AN ANTHOLOGY.

When daffodils begin to peer,—
With heigh! the doxy over the dale,—
Why, then comes in the sweet o' the year;
For the red blood reigns in the winter's pale.
Winter's Tale, Act iv., Sc. 2.

Daffodils,
That come before the swallow dares, and take
The winds of March with beauty.
Ib., Act iv., Sc. 3.

When a daffodil I see
Hanging down her head t'wards me,
Guess I may what I must be:
First, I shall decline my head;
Secondly, I shall be dead;
Lastly, safely buried.

R. Herrick.

Fair Daffodils, we weep to see
You haste away so soon:
As yet the early rising Sun
Has not attain'd his noon.
Stay, stay,
Until the hasting day
Has run
But to the even-song;
And, having pray'd together, we
Will go with you along.

We have short time to stay as you,
We have as short a Spring;
As quick a growth to meet decay
As you, or any thing.
We die,
As your hours do, and dry
Away
Like to the Summer's rain;
Or as the pearls of morning's dew;
Ne'er to be found again.

R. Herrick.

I wander'd lonely as a cloud
That floats on high o'er vales and hills,
When all at once I saw a crowd,
A host of golden daffodils,
Beside the lake beneath the trees
Fluttering and dancing in the breeze.

Continuous as the stars that shine
And twinkle on the milky-way,
They stretch'd in never-ending line
Along the margin of a bay:
Ten thousand saw I at a glance
Tossing their heads in sprightly dance.

The waves beside them danced, but they
Out-did the sparkling waves in glee:—
A poet could not but be gay
In such a jocund company!
I gazed—and gazed—but little thought
What wealth the show to me had brought;

For oft, when on my couch I lie
In vacant or in pensive mood,
They flash upon that inward eye
Which is the bliss of solitude;
And then my heart with pleasure fills,
And dances with the daffodils.

W. WORDSWORTH.

A thing of beauty is a joy for ever:
. . . . .
and such are daffodils
With the green world they live in.

KEATS, *Endymion*.

Heigh ho! daisies and buttercups,
Fair yellow daffodils stately and tall,
When the wind wakes how they rock in the grasses,
And dance with the cuckoo-buds, slender and small.

JEAN INGELOW.

BOOKS FOR NATURE LOVERS.

OF the many books interesting to nature-lovers which lie upon our table, the fairest to the eye is certainly Lady Lindsay's *About Robins* (Geo. Routledge & Sons). It is the work of a member of the Selborne Society, who seems animated by the true Selbornian spirit of ardent love of nature and righteous wrath against her desecrators. Lady Lindsay not only wields the deft pencil of an accomplished artist for pourtraying in many spirited pictures the beautiful birds she has made the subject of her monograph, but has given us a very interesting anthology of the Robin selected from a number of poets ranging from Chaucer to Christina Rossetti, a quaint collection of nursery rhymes and [Robinical] traditions, and a delightful gathering of old prose legends on the same subject. One cannot imagine a more charming book as a present either for a child or a "grown-up"; and our only regret is that we have not space to transfer to our own pages some of the many beautiful stories which it contains. The following quotation, which accompanies a kindly mention of the Selborne Society's work, shows a distinct refusal to accept "The Milliner's scheme of Creation":—"It is fervently to be hoped that, in time, ladies will altogether give up the habit of wearing these little birds, stuffed, on their hats and gowns. For my own part, I would as lief wear a stuffed village child, or what to many would seem yet more horrible, a carefully-prepared defunct pug dog!"

In *Ancient Cures, Charms and Usages of Ireland, Contributions to Irish Lore* (Ward and Downey), Lady Wilde has made a valuable addition to our knowledge of the folk-lore of the sister island. Charms and cures, fairies, banshees, witches, spectres, games and festivals, with dissertations on the early races of Ireland, Irish minstrelsy, Irish gold, and similar subjects—all find a place in this interesting and readable volume. It is much to be regretted, however, that no arrangement or method of any kind has been observed in its compilation; while, to make matters worse, there is no index—a serious defect which we trust will be supplied in any future edition. Incidentally we find names of plants which are unfamiliar to us, and are not recorded in our books of reference, such as the "Dog-fern "(p. 37), and the "*Crov-Darrig*, or Red Hand" (p. 12), which latter must be drawn from the ground in the same manner as the Mandrakes of old. We suspect the Palmate or Hand Orchis is intended in the latter instance. If *Nature Notes* numbers any Irishmen or Irishwomen among its readers, they may be able to supply information on the subject, and at the same time to tell us what is the English or scientific equivalent of the "lizard called the 'Mankeeper'" (p. 16).

Sylvanus Redivivus (Sampson Low, Marston, &c.) is from the pen of Mrs. M. Houstoun, the prolific authoress of "Recommended to Mercy" and many other novels. In it she deals to some extent with the life of the Rev. John Mitford, much more fully with the biography of "his friend and fellow naturalist," Edward Jesse, and in still greater detail with the principal events in the life of Mrs. M. Houstoun. The book contains a number of amusing anecdotes, many of them on subjects connected with natural history and rural sports; but the *naïveté* of the writer and her strange want of reticence on many subjects of a private nature often produce considerable amusement when the evident intention is to be most solemn and edifying. Perhaps at the present moment the most interesting of the narratives is that describing the grievance of Mrs. Houstoun against the *Times* newspaper, which throws some very interesting light upon the methods and value of literary criticism in that journal. Many incidents occur in the pages of the work which show the kind-hearted nature of Mr. Jesse and his daughter, and their great love of animals. One very touching story tells how Jesse gave up entirely the "sport" of hare hunting, in which he had previously delighted, on hearing his daughter's description of the scene where the "most timid of God's creatures sent up to heaven its death-cry, dreadfully human, for it closely resembled that of a tortured child." We have noticed several misprints in the volume, including the very common blunder of spelling that much-mispronounced as well as misspelt word "fuchsia" as "fuschia."

Dr. Emerson's *English Idyls* (Sampson Low & Co.) is a series of short sketches of East Anglian life, by no means wanting in interest, and containing much information about "all sorts and conditions of men" (and women). The book is somewhat marred, however, by sundry affectations, both in style and typography, which makes it less pleasant to read than would have been the case had these been omitted.

Mr. J. Cuming Walters has given us a pretty as well as an interesting book in *In Tennyson Land* (Redway). Everything connected with our President is of interest not only to Selbornians, but to the world at large; and this "attempt to identify the scenes and to trace the influences of Lincolnshire in his works" has already met with a favourable reception. So far as the first-mentioned "attempt" is concerned, the best possible authority does not admit that Mr. Walters has been successful. He certainly, however, shows the influence of Lincolnshire where we should expect to find it—in the diction of the poet, and if we demur to the statement that "a breath of Lincolnshire lingers about the pictures of Camelot," we may admit that "the repetition of words like ridge, grange, slope, shard, moor, mere, copse, trench, dyke, wattled, beck, flats, gorge, quarry, thicket, dune, fen, reed, creek, cove, holm, barrows (mounds), wold," show, taken together, a Lincolnshire phraseology, although, taken separately, many of them are familiar elsewhere. The illustrations, notably that of Somersby Rectory, the poet's birthplace, add much to the value of this attractive book.

The Field Club (Elliot Stock) is a magazine of general natural history which we would recommend to readers of *Nature Notes* who wish to supplement the information contained in our pages by more technical and specialised study of natural history. The Editor of the *Field Club* is the Rev. Theodore Wood,

whose father was known to all lovers of nature as one of the most humane as well as most enthusiastic of naturalists, and who has himself been always a warm supporter of the Selborne Society. The magazine under notice is evidently conducted on similar principles; and in the February number is a strongly-expressed petition from the Rev. F. O. Morris against the destruction of young birds "under the pretence of bird's-nesting."

Mr. Elliot Stock has attained a well-merited reputation as the publisher of a special class of literature dealing with the æsthetic rather than the scientific aspects of nature. Of these works, which have a considerable family resemblance to each other, *Idylls of the Field*, by Mr. F. A. Knight, the author of *By Leafy Ways*, is a good example. It is a well-printed and beautifully illustrated little book containing a number of pleasant sketches, reprinted from the *Daily News*, on such subjects as "Winter in the Marshes," "A Sea-bird's Haunt," "Cheddar Cliffs," "The Heart of the Forest," &c. Mr. Knight has many times been compared to the late Richard Jefferies, and although we cannot rank him as high as that inimitable observer of nature, it would be hard to mention any writer of the present day who has more closely inherited the spirit of the author of *Wood Magic* and *The Gamekeeper at Home*.

Mr. H. W. Worsley Benison's *Haunts of Nature* is a book issued by the same publisher, with a like "get up," and on similar topics. Mr. Benison, however, as one would expect from a Botanical Lecturer to a Medical School, is somewhat more scientific in his method of dealing with nature. He treats in very pleasant fashion of such subjects as "Protective Mimicry in Insects" and "The Ministry of Leaves;" but is not above saying "A Good Word for the Mole," in which a very good case is made out for that "much-despised natural engineer." The article on "Wake-Robin" is so very like one of Mr. Grant Allen's imaginative evolutionary discourses that it would perhaps have been well to allude to the work of the previous writer. Mr. Allen, however, is certainly not imitated in the very numerous didactic moralisings with which Mr. Benison intersperses his pages. A good example may be found on p. 144, in the series of sentences ending with a note of admiration. "How suggestive . . . !" "How it speaks . . . !" "How it bids us . . . !" "How it tells us . . . !" "How it urges us . . . !" "How it sings . . . !" &c., &c. We had imagined this sort of thing was rather out of date, even in homiletic discourses, but it is plain that some people admire it, and even those who do not must not let it blind them to the many real merits of a pleasant little book.

In connection with Selbornian literature we may remind our readers that in the March Magazines there are two articles of special interest to admirers of Gilbert White. In *Murray's Magazine* the Rev. J. Vaughan writes on "Selborne Past and Present," and the *National Review* contains an article on "The Centenary of White's *Selborne*." Selborniana, notices of the Selborne Society, and of its Magazine are now of frequent occurrence in the journals of the day. The *Daily News* and the *Daily Graphic* are prominent in that respect; but the weekly paper which devotes most space to such matters is certainly the *Richmond and Twickenham Times*. The Editor, Mr. King, to whose energy the Lower Thames Valley Branch of the Selborne Society owes so much, seems to be perpetually on the *qui vive* for "Selborne jottings" to which he devotes a most interesting column.

SELBORNIANA.

A Plea for the Primrose.—Now that "Primrose Day" is within a month's distance, may I call attention to Mr. Britten's remarks in your first number (p. 9), and appeal again to all true Selbornians to use their influence against the wholesale destruction of this lovely ornament of our woods and hedge-banks? It is not, of course, against the *gathering* of Primroses, no matter in what quantity, that we should protest; but against the wholesale uprooting and wanton destruction of plants, which is far too common among those who collect

the flowers for use on April 19th. Whether the late Lord Beaconsfield had any special fondness for Primroses is very doubtful; their association with his death-day is doubtless due to the fact that the Queen inscribed on a wreath of them, sent to his funeral, the words, "*His* favourite flower"—the pronoun referring, not to Lord Beaconsfield, but to Prince Albert. Be that as it may, however, the wearing of the Primrose on April 19th—on which day not only Lord Beaconsfield, but the great naturalist, Mr. Darwin, was taken from us—has become a national observance, and we Selbornians must do all in our power to prevent the immolation of this latest victim at the altar of fashion. G. S. R.

A Browning Query (p. 28).—Mr. F. A. Hort writes: "Surely it is the little Wood sorrel (*Oxalis Acetosella*) that is referred to, and not the arum or an orchid." Miss E. M. Spooner encloses a leaf of a cyclamen (*C. hederæfolium*), and suggests that this may be the plant intended: this, however, could hardly be the case if an English flower was meant, as the cyclamen is of the rarest occurence among us in a wild state. We are not ourselves satisfied that Mr. Hort's solution is the correct one.

The "King Horny."—May I ask for some information concerning the fly (used by anglers, I am told), with large feet and something like a bee in shape, which is called by country people a "King Horny?" I found one in the summer, walking up a window-pane, and was struck by its singular appearance. E. V. B.

Peculiar Blackbirds.—I should like to know if it is common for blackbirds to suffer from delicacy of the chest. There is always at least one blackbird with a cough, who frequents our garden. He coughs when he comes to breakfast under the windows at eight o'clock. The bird looks rather puffy, but seems quite well, and the cough does not affect his appetite. A relative of this blackbird, with the same sort of cough, has been heard about the garden for some years. It may possibly be the same bird, but I think not, as the cough is somewhat different in sound, and I have some recollection of hearing them both cough at the same time. In November there were immense flocks of blackbirds in our orchards and fields, and we suppose it was then they took the opportunity of stripping the mistletoe of its berries; for when Christmas arrived, not a mistletoe could be found that was not quite bare of berries. A pied blackbird has for the last four years made its abode in a woody corner of our grounds. There is, of course, no absolute certainty that this is the same individual bird that we have watched during that space of time; the inference follows from the fact of only one having ever been seen at one time. When first observed, there was only a little white about the wings. The white, however, seems to have increased year by year, until at the present time the whole of the back and breast appear snow white, the head jet black, with rather symmetrical white feathers in wings and tail. The bird seems to be almost conscious of its own peculiarity, for it is scarce ever seen but in the early morning, or at dusk. Even then it flies low, and when disturbed seeks at once the cover of some hedge, or of its own safe corner. Our anxiety is, lest the existence of this beautiful bird should become known to some of the reckless, ruthless bird destroyers who prowl round the hedges and field paths. E. V. B.

Chevisaunce.—Miss C. E. Leycester writes: "I have been for some months seeking light, and finding none, upon the flower 'Chevisaunce,' mentioned by Spenser in his Shepherd's Calendar (April). Was any flower so called? or was it his invention?"

[The *New English Dictionary* adds a second reference to the name, which is found in T. Robinson's *Mary Magdalene*, c. 1620; but the context suggests that Robinson's lines were adapted from those of Spenser. Dr. Prior says the name is "evidently a misprint for *cherisaunce*, comfort, heart's-ease, the *Cheiri* or Wallflower, the plant to which the name of *Heartsease* was originally given. The word occurs in Chaucer's *Romaunt of the Rose*, l. 3337.

"'For I ne knew ne *cherisaunce*.'"

Dr. Prior's derivation may be the correct one, but we do not know on what authority he states that the Wallflower was the original Heartsease. It is true that Turner so applies the name; but Lyte and Tusser assign it to the plant nowadays known as Heartsease.]

Hampshire Local Names.—Mr. Fowler's list in our last issue has elicited the following replies:

The Rev. H. D. Gordon writes from Petersfield: "Mr. Fowler's 'Wet your neck' is the green wood-pecker, though I have heard our foresters apply it to the Wryneck."

Capt. S. G. Reid writes from Otterhead, Honiton: "The name 'blood lark' is given to the tree pipit on the Hants and Surrey border near Farnham, presumably from the not unusual red or pink tint of the eggs. I was much puzzled when I heard the name, but the capture of a 'blood lark' on its nest in my presence settled the question."

Mr. Fowler adds the following Hampshire plant-names, overlooked in writing out his previous list:—

Pussy-cat	Catkin
*Rush-cane	*Typha latifolia*
Dead-men's-hands ...	*Orchis mascula*
*Lavender-snip ...	*Linaria Cymbalaria*
*Hemmin-an'-sewin ...	Yarrow
*Time-table ...	Dandelion
*Canary-seed ...	*Plantago major*
*Virgin Mary ...	*Pulmonaria officinalis*
*Poison-weed ...	*Sedum* (any kind)
*Bugles	*Echium vulgare*
*Devil's-night-cap ...	Larkspur

The names marked with an asterisk are not to be found in the *Dictionary of English Plant Names*. Some of them are explained by comparison with other names of the plants, such as "Bugles," "Time-table," "Canary-weed," "Virgin Mary," &c.; but we should be glad to know if there is any local explanation of "Hemmin'-an'-sewin'" or "Lavender-snip;" or why the Stonecrops are called "Poison-weed."

The Note of the Cuckoo.—Mr. A. Halte Macpherson writes: "I hope Mrs. Blathwayt's interesting remarks on the note of the Cuckoo may stimulate other readers of NATURE NOTES to make similar observations on the songs of birds this coming summer. In the case of birds which have a regular song, as distinguished from a call note, it is practically impossible to reduce the sounds to musical notation. This is owing to the flexibility of the song and the bird touching all sorts of notes intermediate between those we recognise in our scale; the pitch also is frequently extremely high. On the other hand, the cries of such birds as the Cuckoo and Owls and the call notes of many of the smaller species can easily be tested with a tuning fork.

"There seems some doubt as to whether the typical note of the Cuckoo—when it is in full song—should be considered a major or a minor third. From the few observations I have made, I am inclined to think they usually sing the former interval; and Mrs. Blathwayt remarks that Beethoven gives it as a major third in his Pastoral Symphony. But, on the other hand, popular opinion inclines strongly to its being a *minor* third; and Haydn gives it as such in his Toy Symphony (G to E, I think). No doubt the interval, like the pitch, varies in different birds. Later in the season, about the middle of May, the interval gets rather wider; early in June I have heard a distinct and perfect fourth; and a few days after this almost a fifth. But the cry by this time is very unpleasant, the first note being doubled and very ugly, and the second almost inaudible. As the male birds, which alone utter the cry according to the best opinion, rarely move far from the spot where they take up their stations on their arrival in England, a series of valuable observations on the call of an individual bird could be made without much difficulty. It would be most interesting to learn to what extent the pitch as well as the intervals varied during the season."

Appearance of Birds, Flowers, &c.—We have received a large amount of information on this subject, as well as some suggestions for the enlargement of this department of *Nature Notes*. Unfortunately instead of any enlargement, we are obliged grievously to curtail the notes kindly forwarded, for the reasons given in "Notice to Correspondents." Miss Tracey records the appearance of the hawfinch at Bovey Tracey, on Feb. 23rd, and Mr. Manley Hopkins found the same bird at Hasemere on Feb. 17th. A hawfinch was found in St. James's

Park on Jan. 30th, so that the bird seems more common this year than usual. Mr. Herbert King notes missel thrushes pairing on Feb. 14th, robins and sparrows on Feb. 27th, at Nailsworth, Gloucestershire. Mrs. Turner writes to say she had in her garden at Ryde, Isle of Wight, *Celanothus dentatus* blooming in February.

OFFICIAL NOTICES, WORK OF BRANCHES, &c.

THE object of the Selborne Society is to unite lovers of Nature for common study and the defence of natural objects (birds, plants, beautiful landscapes, &c.) against the destruction by which they are constantly menaced. The *minimum* Annual Subscription (which entitles the subscriber to a monthly copy of the Society's Magazine) is 2s. 6d. All particulars as to membership may be obtained from the Secretary of the Selborne Society, 9, Adam Street, Adelphi, W.C.

WE record with much satisfaction the establishment of the first Scottish Branch of the Selborne Society. We have received several queries as to the work of the Society in Scotland, where Selbornian efforts against marauders and confiscators of public rights are sorely needed: and we hope that the "River Forth" Branch is the precursor of many others in various parts of the Scottish kingdom.

THE Hon. Secretary of the Bath Branch wishes to make public the following notice:—"Brigade Surgeon Cockell again offers a prize of half-a-guinea for the best illustration of the objects of the Selborne Society. The subject may be illustrated in black and white, or colour. The sketch must not exceed twelve by eighteen inches, and may be mounted but not framed. This competition is only open to amateurs, who must forward their work to Mrs. Wheatcroft's Studio, Abbey Chambers, Bath, not later than April 25th, 1890. Any queries respecting the same must be accompanied by a stamped envelope."

A NUMBER of letters have reached us with enquiries as to the back numbers of the *Selborne Magazine*, especially the numbers for November and December, 1889. We have tried all official sources in vain, and should be glad to hear from Secretaries of Branches, or others, who hold surplus copies of the *Magazine* for the months named, in order that we may publish the fact. For the present we may mention that the Hon. Secretary of the Haslemere Branch has one whole set of 1888, one of 1889, and single numbers of November and December, 1889. Communications to be addressed to Miss A. M. Buckton, Weycombe, Haslemere. The January No. of *Nature Notes* has now been reprinted, and may be had of the Publishers.

NOTICE TO CORRESPONDENTS.

WE have again to ask for the indulgence of those who have kindly sent us articles and letters; it is impossible to find room for a tithe of the correspondence which reaches us. We find that it would be difficult to increase the size of the Magazine without incurring considerable loss, as we are bound to supply it to the Branches at a very low rate, which precludes the idea of profit. Under these circumstances several members have entertained the idea of starting a special *Magazine Fund*, which would enable increased space to be put at the disposal of contributors. Perhaps those of our readers who look favourably on this suggestion will communicate with us on the subject. May we remind correspondents that *short* communications, legibly written on one side of the paper only, are much more likely to obtain insertion than those which do not comply with these conditions. It is particularly requested that subscriptions and letters bearing on the general business of the Society should *not* be forwarded to the Editors. Editorial communications should be addressed to the Rev. PERCY MYLES, 1, Argyle Road, Ealing, W.

Nature Notes:
The Selborne Society's Magazine.

No. 4. APRIL 15, 1890. Vol. I.

THE MAVIS AND THE MERLE.*

With swiftly broken sentences of song,
'Ere yet the stars had faded to the grey
The Thrush began; he fluted all the day,
And when the sun set, did his tune prolong
In passionate iterations; thro' the throng
Of inexpressible thoughts, from far away
Came a sad voice, a solemn liquid lay,
A silver undercurrent clear and strong;
That was the Blackbird's—he who tho' his bill
Be gold and gay, has never changed his weeds.
For ever, though the crocus flame and die,
And buttercup to daffodil succeeds,
He feels that love is linked with sorrow still,
He knows how soon the little ones will fly.

H. D. Rawnsley.

* "Written after careful listening to the note of Thrush and Blackbird."—*Extract from Author's letter.*

DESTRUCTION OF BIRDS OF PREY IN THE HEBRIDES.

THE true headquarters of the nobler British birds of prey are in Scotland, on the "rock-bound coast and savage islands of the stormy West." Among the islands especially, almost every species is more abundantly represented than anywhere else. The Kite, indeed, is the only common bird of the group that is wanting, though from time to time a straggler has been found in the Isle of Skye.

The Golden Eagle, though still probably more abundant on the outer Hebrides than anywhere on the mainland, has gradually become very scarce. It may, indeed, at times be seen on any one of the Hebrides, but its eyrie is a sight that rarely gladdens the eyes of the most adventurous amateur. The first opportunity I had of really seeing this noble bird was on the slopes of Ben More in the Isle of Lewis. He was about two hundred yards away, standing on a stone by the side of a pool, completely absorbed in his morning bath. By crouching under a friendly boulder I could follow his every movement through a glass. When first observed, he was rapidly darting his head under the surface of the water and throwing great showers of spray over his back and wings. This done, he shook himself vigorously, flapped his wings several times, struck the surface of the water with them violently, then rose in the air with a shrill cry and flew leisurely towards the top of the Ben, round which he floated in great circles, ascending higher and higher each time, till almost out of sight. In a quarter of an hour he came sailing down to his pool again and re-commenced his bath. This was repeated three times, then he left for the day. Several hours afterwards I could just see him a mere speck in the azure sky, slowly circling round the favoured mountain.

The White-tailed Eagle is much more abundant than its royal relative. Its headquarters are in the island of Skye, where it may, as a rule, be found wherever the scenery is peculiarly wild and savage. It breeds regularly too, in Canna, Eigg, and North Uist, and on several other rocky islets of the West. Not unfrequently it may also be seen with half expanded drooping wings sitting motionless on the highest ledges of the tremendous cliffs of Cape Wrath and the Mull of Oe in Islay, though the eyries there seem now to be completely deserted.

It was in one of its favourite haunts in the north-east of Skye that I had an opportunity of seeing the bird close at hand. Its eyrie was built on a triangular ledge on the face of a nearly perpendicular mass of basalt, several hundred feet above the sea, which thundered along the base of the cliff. The ascent was difficult and dangerous, but after many trials, was at length achieved. The female sat on the nest till I was within a few

yards of her, then flew screaming away. The nest was very large, measuring over four feet in diameter and consisted of sticks with branches of fir, juniper, and heather twined closely together. The bottom was scantily lined with sphagnum, rushes, some brown-seaweed and a few feathers, upon which lay the two eggs, one of them quite unstained and probably newly laid. Beside the nest were a large quantity of fish *débris*, some bird claws and the bones of a hare or rabbit.

A few minutes after the departure of the female, she returned with her mate, and both continued circling round at some distance till I descended. Once the female approached courageously and unpleasantly near, but made no attempt to attack me, though I had been assured in the morning before starting that if I went near the nest I should certainly be hurled over the cliff by a well-directed blow from her wings! The male was a splendid bird and must have been of considerable age, as his head and neck were almost white.

Near Loch Lomond in Argyleshire, a curious structure of interwoven sticks and branches in the heart of a tree has been pointed out to me as a deserted eyrie of this bird.

More interesting than the White-tailed Eagle, on account of its amazing dexterity and grace of movement, is the Osprey. Unfortunately, however, it is one of the rarest of our British birds. Only on one occasion in the south of the Sound of Sleat, have I been able to watch it at a distance through a glass, now hovering with motionless wings, now sailing slowly round, or rushing through the air with vigorous beats of its long, powerful wings, suddenly checking itself in its impetuous flight, and darting downwards with the velocity of an arrow to clutch with its strangely adapted claws some unfortunate fish that its piercing eye has detected in the waters beneath.

Probably one of the best known birds amongst our feathered nobility, and notwithstanding the extraordinary persecution to which it has been subjected, still one of the most abundant, is the beautiful Peregrine Falcon. The marvellous rapidity of its flight, the grace of its movements and the magnificent swoop with which it darts upon its prey, have for centuries been celebrated in song and story. Moreover, it is one of the most daring of birds, and by its superior agility and swiftness gives battle successfully to the White-tailed Eagle. Its headquarters are in the Isle of Skye, but it is tolerably abundant in Mull, Inra, Islay, Colonsay and even Arran.

Another graceful bird, almost rivalling the Peregrine in speed, but widely differing from it in the tenacity with which it hunts down its prey, is the Merlin, or Falconet. This bird may be found throughout the whole of Western Scotland. With less tenacity in the chase, but still more incredible rapidity in seizing stationary prey is the Sparrow Hawk, seemingly confined in Western Scotland to Lewis and the North of Harris.

The common Kestril is tolerably abundant over all the

Hebrides. The Buzzard, on the other hand, is either rare or totally a-wanting in the outer islands, though it breeds in Skye, Mull, Inra and probably Islay. The Hen-harrier, last of the common British nobler birds of prey, is found in probably all the larger islands of the Hebrides. On the moors of North Uist I have found four different nests in a single day.

In addition to the birds already named there are, of course, many others belonging to the same group which are certainly British, but they are of too rare occurrence to necessitate special mention at present.

The ceaseless persecution to which our nobler British birds of prey have so long been subjected, has sadly thinned the numbers of all and brought some of them perilously near the verge of extinction.

Save for one or two eyries in the west of Invernesshire the Osprey has now completely disappeared, while our two native Eagles are gradually dwindling in numbers even in their most favourite haunts. Were it not for the extreme shyness of the White-tailed Eagle, and the protection extended to it by many gamekeepers for the sake of its eggs, this noble bird would in all probability have already become extinct. The Hen-harriers, too, will very soon be completely exterminated, unless their shameless massacre be in some way prevented. As this bird returns daily to the same spot to feed, it is the easiest of all the birds of prey to shoot. In one year alone over fifty were, to my personal knowledge, killed in the Outer Hebrides by agents of dealers and so-called "sportsmen." The most generally persecuted bird, however, is the beautiful Peregrine Falcon. Throughout the whole of the west of Scotland it is mercilessly slaughtered. During a holiday tour in Skye, an English clergyman shot thirteen, his plea being, "They do look so beautiful when stuffed!"

Eagles and Hawks, it is true, do occasionally help themselves to a few young lambs and grouse, but the number killed for that reason is very small compared with those destroyed wantonly or for sake of gain.

Lists of prices that will be given for the skins and eggs of various birds are secretly circulated by rapacious dealers among gamekeepers and peasantry. The result of offering as much as £12 to a half-starving villager for a single egg of the Osprey or Golden Eagle, can well be imagined. Such a practice, unless promptly suppressed, must soon lead to the complete extermination of these noble birds.

JAMES CLARK.

YORKSHIRE NAMES.

[The following words and traditions were collected near Wakefield, in the East Riding. Yorkshire dialect has been so well worked that the list contains comparatively little that is new, although the confirmation of previous investigation is always useful. Our readers will add to their kindness if they will mention the year in which the names they may send were collected.—Eds.]

Blue-bottle	*Centaurea Cyanus*
*Black-man-flower ...	*Prunella vulgaris*
*Blag	Blackberry
Bird-eye	*Veronica*
Bird-nests	Seed-heads of *Daucus Carota*
Caw-mumble	*Heracleum Sphondylium*
Cloves or Clove-flowers...	*Dianthus Caryophyllus*
Cleats	*Tussilago Farfara*
Coddle-apple	*Epilobium* (any of the smaller)
Curns	Currants
Cuckoo-flower	*Cardamine pratensis*
Dog-mouth	*Antirrhinum majus*
Dockins	*Rumex* (any)
Daffy-down-dilly ...	*Narcissus Pseudo-narcissus*
Dead-men-fingers ...	*Orchis mascula*
Earthsmoke	*Fumaria pallidiflora*
Eggs and bacon	*Linaria vulgaris*
Flag	*Iris Pseud-acorus*
Fiddle	*Scrophularia nodosa*
*Granny-hood	*Aquilegia vulgaris*
Hard-heads	*Centaurea nigra*
Lad-love-lass / Old man ...	Southern-wood
Lady's-cushion	White garden Saxifrage
*Lady's-tuft	Sweet-William
*Lady's-wedding ...	Early white phlox
*Lady-shakes	*Briza media*
Herb Bennett	*Geum urbanum*
Milkmaid...	*Stellaria Holostea*
Headache	*Papaver Rhoeas*
Parson-i'-t'-pulpit ...	*Arum maculatum*
Tom-thumb	*Lotus corniculatus*
Tongue-bleed	*Galium Aparine*
Sparrow-grass	*Asparagus officinalis*

There are many sayings in reference to the wild flowers such as :—

1. "If bud's-eye be open nar rain 'ill fall."
2. "Caurtin' 'ill cease when t'garse is out o' flower."
3. "Fox-gloves kill all other plants."
4. If an apple tree has flowers and fruit on at the same time, tis a sign of misfortune to the owner.
5. The juice of the sun spurge will cure warts.

6. On finding a plant of Shepherd's Purse open a seed-vessel; if the seed is yellow you will be rich, if green you will be poor.

7. Poppies will give you a headache if you gather them.

8. A bunch of rosemary thrown into a grave will make the spirit rest.

9. If a stranger plants parsley in the garden, great trouble will befall the owner.

10. If Rose-mary flourishes in a garden, the wife will be master; if it dies, the master will?

11. "Dead-men-fingers be bad plants; you mun niver pull 'em."

12. If a child gather "Black-man-flowers," Black man will carry him off in the night.

13. "If t'oäk blaws afore t'esh,
"Then we' reän we'll get a splash.
"If t'esh blaws afore t'oäk,
"Then de-pend we'll heve a soäk."

14. "Many berries make a hard winter."

15. Take a dead "Hard-head" blossom and put it under your pillow. In the morning, if it has sprouted afresh, you will marry your lover; if it has not sprouted you will never marry, or marry some unknown person.

["Bird-nests" for the wild carrot dates back to the time of Gerard, who says: "The whole tuft [of flowers] is drawn togither when the seede is ripe, resembling a birdes' nest, whereupon it hath been named by some bird's nest." "Coddle-apple" (which we have from Lincolnshire and Northamptonshire) was suggested by the smell of the flowers and young shoots of the Willowherb. "Fiddle" [or "Fiddle-wood"] was so-called because children strip the angular stems of their leaves, and produce a squeaking sound by drawing one across the other. "Granny-hood" is new to us for the Columbine, though Monk's-hood has many similar names; is there any confusion here? "Tongue-bleed" is so named because children draw the rough leaves of Cleavers across their tongue, and so draw blood. The name "Tom-thumb" is given to a very similar plant, *Lathyrus pratensis*, in Sussex and Berks.]

BIRD NAMES.

Yeller-bird	Yellow Hammer
Yeller-bill...	Blackbird
Throstle	Song Thrush
Blue tit	Tomtit
Spink	Chaffinch
Shep	Starling
Storm-cock	Missel Thrush
Sand-swallow	Sand Martin
Pee-weep...	Lapwing
Peggy-white-throat ...	White-throat
Nanny dish-washer ...	Water Wag-tail
*Northern Thrush ...	Fieldfare
Green-linnet	Greenfinch
Fire-flitstar†	Redstart

† Mr. Swainson has "Fire-*flirt*," from the continual motion of its tail, which it constantly jerks up and down.

Feather-poke	...	...	Long-tailed-tit
Diggery ...	...	...	Duckling
Dicky-dunkin	...	...	Hedge Sparrow

1. "If a boy "pulls" a robin's nest he will break his leg."
2. "'Tis lucky to have a swallow's nest on the house."

MAMMAL, FISH AND INSECT NAMES.

Askard Eft	...	...	Newt
Bull-head...	...	...	Tad-pole
Bed-mate...	...	...	Bug
Brock ...	...	...	Badger
Buzzard ...	...	...	Blue-bottle fly
Clam ...	...	...	Freshwater mussel
Cushey-cow-lady		...	Lady-bird
Furze-pig	...	...	Hedgehog
Fummit ...	...	...	Weasel
Hairy-man	...	...	Larva of Tiger Moth
Lop ...	...	...	Flea
Molery-warp	...	...	Mole
Ratton ...	...	...	Rat
Kittling ...	...	...	Kitten

1. "If t'cats leäke†
"T' weather 'ill breäk."
2. If a horse rolls it is a sign of rain.
3. If the cattle graze in groups, it is a sign of a thunderstorm.
4. It is unlucky to hear a dog howl.
5. Turn your money for luck when you see your first lamb of the season.
6. Spiders in the house denote rain.
7. It is lucky to see a spider in the house in the morning; but unlucky to see it in the evening.
8. If you swallow a tad-pole it will never die, but go on growing in your inside.
9. It is unluckly for a rabbit to cross your path.
10. It is unlucky for a crow to fly over the house.

I have seen many people in the West Riding of Yorkshire who suppose themselves suffering from animals that had got into them—one with an eft that had crept into his ear and caused him to be deaf; one with a fummit, another with a frog, in their stomachs. Most of these animals were supposed to have effected an entry when too small to attract observation, and then to have grown, until they became too large to be affected by medicine.

W. M. E. FOWLER.

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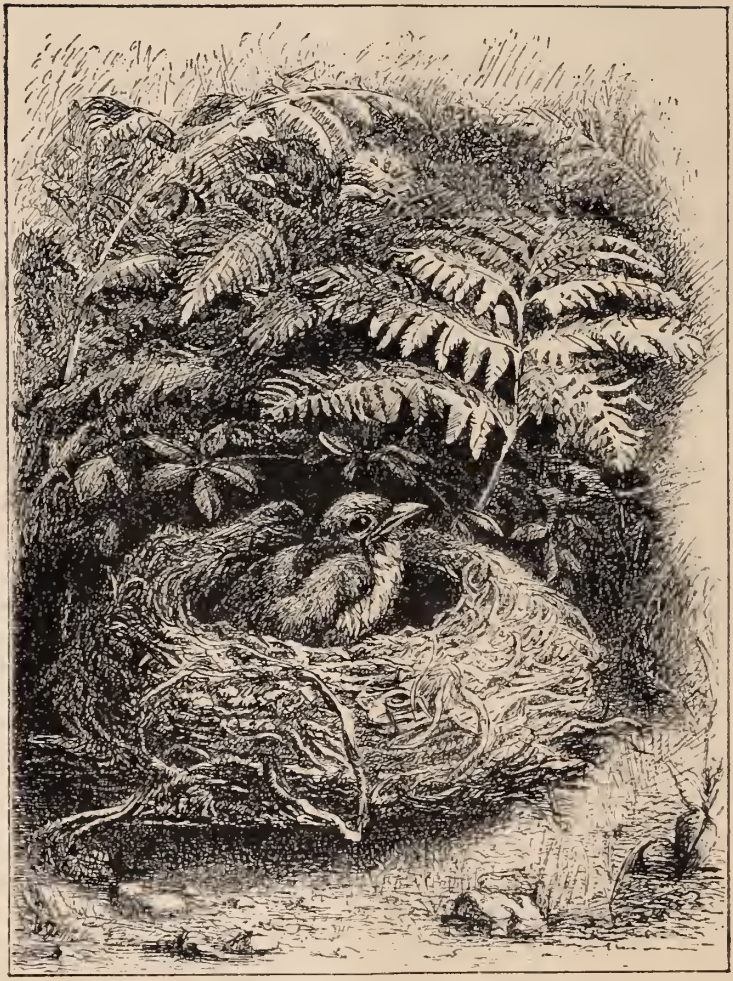
* The names indicated by a prefixed asterisk are those which do not appear in our most complete catalogues of popular nomenclature—the Rev. C. Swainson's "Folk-lore and Provincial Names of British Birds," and Messrs. Britten and Holland's "Dictionary of English Plant-names," two works which we have adopted as our standard of reference.

† Leäke=play.

CHILDREN'S COLUMN.

A Windfall.



A HIGH wind, one day last July, blew down a Thrush's nest from a fine old elm tree. Three young birds were found on the lawn; two were killed by the fall, but the one in the picture looked quite unhurt, so it was brought into the house and fed. Next morning it was put in a cage and hung at an open window. The parent birds soon heard the lonely prisoner's cry and came to feed it; they looked

shy at first when they saw near the cage three smiling faces, but love soon conquered all fear and a worm was placed by them in the little one's open beak. After his repast, Dicky settled his feathers and had a nap, while one of the parents found another worm and rested on the branch of a tree opposite the cage till the little one awoke and chirped, which it did about every half hour. Each day the bright little captive grew stronger and handsomer, and after a ten days' stay with us, the cage with the door open was left on the floor. Dicky's parents, no doubt, found this out and called him away, which was just what its friends wished should happen. A young Thrush sometimes seen near the house was thought to be the little nurseling, but soon its pinions were spread and all traces of it were lost. The writer sat close to the cage to take the prisoner's portrait and was much interested in what she witnessed.

Tower House, Cotham, Bristol. P. A. Fry.

BOOKS FOR NATURE LOVERS.

It would be hard to find a more charming little volume, both externally and internally, than *Days and Hours in a Garden*, by E. V. B. (Elliot Stock), of which the seventh edition has just reached us. Although the authoress gives only her initials on the title page, many Selbornians will at once recognise in them the well-known signature of the Hon. Mrs. R. C. Boyle, one of the earliest and most enthusiastic supporters of the Selborne Society. Many of us, no doubt, are familiar with this delightful, daintily-dressed, beautifully-illustrated little book; but to those who do not yet know it, whether they are lovers of gardens or not, let us heartily recommend it as probably the most beautiful and loving description of a garden ever written. It has the unusual quality of making the trees and flowers spoken of seem to us as if they were real individuals, not merely "fine specimens." By the aid of the exquisite vignettes, we get to know this garden better than we know many gardens we have often visited; we know all its treasures, and delight in them as if they were our own; we know, too, all the living creatures which make it their pleasant home, and wish them well. And so it is with that mingling of joy and sorrow, that comes from hearing in the same letter news of the good and evil fate of old friends, that former readers of "Days and Hours" read in a preface dated February, 1890:—"As to the living frequenters of the garden, whose presence there for the most part enhances our enjoyment of it, the tomtits and the nuthatches are as busy with the cocoa-nuts which hang for their use all winter from the rose-arches, as the mice and the sparrows are with the crocuses; the white pigeons still circle in the air and settle upon the gables, or preen their feathers in the sunshine amongst the yellow stone-crop at the base of the old grey pillar in the parterr; the swallows return year by year to their nests within the porch; but the faithful, satin-coated collie lies still for ever under the turf by the ivied wall, and the earth lies heavy on his noble head. . . . . Already the snowdrops are giving way before impatient hepaticas and primroses, the bare elms are thickening with purple, and we begin to count the gentian buds. Everywhere Nature repairs herself in ceaseless round. Only in our human hives some vacant spots there may be where the grass will not grow green again."

It seems thankless to point out any blemishes in so delightful a volume; but the "Rhadamanthine" reviewer must express his regret that there are still many misprints in the scientific names of plants. We are not pedants in this matter. In a book like that under notice we much prefer English names, if they may be had. We rather like the quaint spelling "parterr," and the revived Spenserian form

"yewen hedge;" we should be quite willing to change "Mrs. Sinkins" into Arethusa or Boule de Neige; we like the fanciful nomenclature by which the beautiful trees of the garden become the knights and ladies of King Arthur's Court —Sir Launcelot, and Sir Bedevere, and Morgan-le-faye—though we are sorry that there is no room found in this earthly paradise for poor guilty Guinevere. But if scientific names are used at all, they ought to be used consistently and spelt correctly. "Phylleria" for "Phillyrea;" "Pavias" for "Pavia;" "Tropœolum" for "Tropæolum;" "chalcedonia" for "chalcedonica;" "Bromus aspen" for "Bromus asper" are misprints which surely ought not to appear in a seventh edition. "Daphne pontifia" (the name given for the spurge laurel on p. 133) is probably a misprint for "Daphne pontica;" but the spurge laurel is really "Daphne Laureola." "Pyrus Malus" is the botanical name for the apple. "Pyrus malus" (p. 123) is merely the Latin for "a bad pear!" So with many others. Doubtless the seventh edition of *Days and Hours in a Garden* will soon be succeeded by our eighth, and then we hope that not even a technical or typographical error will mar the pages of so fair a book.

Science and Scientists, Some Papers on Natural History by the Rev. John Gerard, S. J. (Catholic Truth Society) is a book much more adapted to the tastes of nature-lovers than its somewhat vague and unattractive title suggests. The scientists referred to are those popularisers of science who "stroll out to the fields, or the moors, or the sea-shore, where every object they meet—beast, bird, insect, or weed—furnishes them with a text wherewith to enforce the great creed formulated by exact science and exact thought concerning the origin of the heavens and the earth." From this habit of imparting information while they take their walks abroad, Father Gerard calls them "Neo-peripatetics," or modern walking sages, and he recognises as head "walker" the popular essayist and novelist, Mr. Grant Allen, with whom accordingly he determines to enter the lists. Now Mr. Grant Allen is quite accustomed to being attacked by scientific specialists and learned ecclesiastics; but being nimble and cunning of fence he generally manages to get the best of it, for he can slip beneath their guard and runs them through with a gibe or a good story while they are seeking to crush him with their ponderous weapons of rigid logic and accurate statement of fact. In these wit combats Mr. Grant Allen for the most part continues to secure the sympathy of the spectators; his style, as we all know, is delightful, and above all else his easy familiarity ingratiates him with those who have no pretensions to technical scientific training. "Don't bore yourself with all these dull books and dry technicalities in order to see whether my theories are correct," says he to his readers, "let us go out into the fields and pluck a buttercup, or eat a wild strawberry, or look at an arum, or watch a donkey browsing on the common. And the "general reader," leaving the dull technical treatises on the shelf, arises gladly, accepts the genial invitation and listens eagerly, while the "walking sage" explains to him all about the buttercup, and the arum, and the donkey. And very nice walks they are, too, and very much we enjoy them, readily and unquestioningly we accept the information which our kind guide gives us about the juicy strawberry, who competes with his "chaffy" brethren in the race of life, or about the wicked "lobster-pot-like" Arum (the original criminal "who killed Cock Robin," not with bow and arrow, but basely by poison), and about the aristocratic donkey whose high position irreverent men rudely refuse to recognise, nor will they pay the deference they ought to one of Nature's "unfortunate noblemen."

But Father Gerard refuses to be put on the shelf while our peripatetic tutor is giving us all this valuable and amusing information. "I will put on my hat and come too," says he, "together we will pluck our buttercup and eat our strawberry and watch, &c., &c." The result of these joint expeditions may be found in the pleasant little volume before us. In it the ambulatory method is recognised as the right one; but is turned against its originator with considerable skill. Mr. Grant Allen is in a fashion, hoist with his own petard, and finds he has a very different anatagonist to deal with from those ponderous Dryasdusts who think it wise to conduct a guerilla warfare with an eighty-one ton gun. We learn that we have been a little too hasty, perhaps, in accepting the instruction we had received in our former rambles, that we have often allowed our teacher to do all the looking at nature for us instead of looking ourselves; that we sometimes, under the influence of our accomplished guide, have seen things, apparently of considerable

importance in proving something else, which did not actually exist at all. We learn, too, that we have often taken a plausible theory for an ascertained fact, and that we have listened to "fairy tales of science" as if they were only true stories which nearly everybody knew, while all the time we ought to have gratefully acknowledged that they were private property, being entirely due to the brilliant imagination of the courteous gentleman who personally conducted us. In some respects our second peripatetic lecturer seems even better than the first; he is more logical, if not so "cock-sure about everything;" he has clearer vision, if less imagination; he is much more accurate. if not quite so interesting; last but not least, his lessons are much less expensive, or what comes to the same thing, his book is much cheaper. But the readers of *Nature Notes* had better form their own opinions on the merits of this controversy; we can only advise all those who have read *Vignettes from Nature*, and the *Evolutionist at Large* to carefully compare the conclusions arrived at in these volumes, with the views set forth in *Science and Scientists*.

SHORT NOTICES OF BOOKS.

AMONG the many editions of the *Natural History of Selborne*, none is more attractive than that issued in the "Camelot Classics" (Walter Scott). It has an admirable introduction by Richard Jefferies, the Gilbert White of our own time, is well printed and of a convenient size for the pocket, and would be well nigh perfect if it were blest with an index; but of this there is no trace, not even a "table of contents." By a curious slip Mr. Jefferies speaks of "the little *Surrey* parish of Selborne," whereas the very first sentence in the book is "The parish of Selborne lies in the extreme eastern corner of the county of *Hampshire*." Mr. Walter Scott also sends us a threepenny illustrated pamphlet in a pretty pictorial cover entitled, *The History of the Dicky Bird Society*. Perhaps few of our readers are acquainted with this flourishing forerunner of the Selborne Society, in which case they will thank us for calling their attention to "Uncle Toby's" *brochure*. This excellent personage—a very real entity to some 140,000 boys and girls who have enrolled themselves under his banner—established the Society in the "Children's Corner" of the *Newcastle Chronicle* on the 7th October, 1876. The way in which the "D. B. S." has grown, the work it has done, the influence it has exercised, with many interesting letters and facsimile drawings will be found fully detailed in this small but entertaining pamphlet.

The Field Naturalist's Handbook, by the Revs. J. G. and Theodore Wood (Cassell) offers a convenient summary of what is to be done in each month among insects and plants. Each month is prefaced by some very useful "general hints" as to what to do and how and when to do it. "Lonicer," not "Lonice" (p. 9), is the name of the botanist whom *Lonicera* commemorates.

Messrs. Ward and Lock have conferred a boon upon lovers of nature and travel by producing a cheap and well printed edition of Darwin's classical *Journal of Researches* made during the voyage of the "Beagle" in 1831. Although first published nearly half a century since, it is as fresh as ever, and in its present form will reach many who have hitherto been debarred from getting the work on account of its expense. The illustrations do not add to the attractiveness of the book, and might well have been omitted.

Messrs. Cassell send us their *Concise Natural History*, a handsome volume in small quarto, abounding in illustrations, and containing some 620 pages. The name of Professor Perceval Wright, the editor, guarantees that the work is carefully and accurately done, and, although the descriptions are necessarily condensed, they are readable and clear. This would form an excellent school prize, *apropos* of which it occurs to us to inquire whether the Selborne Society is established in any of the public or private schools, and if not, why not? In addition to its other merits, this Natural History contains an excellent index.

The National Society has done well in republishing selections from Sir John Lubbock's *Natural History*, in the form of a reading book for use in elementary and higher schools. These "Chapters on Natural History" are well suited also for village libraries and private reading; ants, bees, and wasps, the colours of animals, plants, and insects, fruits and seeds are among the subjects dealt with.

There are nearly a hundred illustrations, many of them very good, others (as on pp. 177, 181, 209, 212, about the worst we have ever seen.

The Brook and its Banks. (R.T.S.) "Is one of the last books from the facile pen of the Rev. J. G. Wood," and, the preface further adds, "it will be found in every way worthy of the reputation of the author." We are glad to endorse this approval and to recommend the handsome illustrated volume to lovers of the country as one which will add much to the enjoyment of their rambles, and to those pleasant anticipations or reminiscences which are only less delightful than the rambles themselves. The flowers, which so conspicuously ornament the banks of brooks, are dismissed with somewhat scanty notice; but there are many other books which supply this defect. An index would greatly add to the usefulness of this pleasantly written book.

The Birds in my Garden, by Dr. W. T. Greene (R.T.S.), is a recent addition to a class of literature which is already extensive, and the increase of which gives gratifying testimony to the spread of Selbornian views; for it is to the nature-lover rather than to the scientific observer that such books appeal. This volume contains an account of the feathered visitants of a suburban garden. It is beautifully printed and prettily illustrated, and will doubtless attract a large circle of readers.

Mr. Marshall Ward's *Diseases of Plants* (S.P.C.K.) is a handy technical manual on an important subject, and may be recommended to the more scientific among our readers.

We have received from Messrs. Cassell and Co., The Rev. Theodore Wood's *Life of* his father, *the Rev. J. G. Wood*, which we propose to notice at some length in our next issue.

SELBORNIANA.

Flowers in Hospitals.

"They that can wander at will where the works of the Lord are revealed
Little guess what joy can be got from a cowslip out of the field;
Flowers to these 'spirits in prison' are all they can know of the Spring,
They freshen and sweeten the wards like the waft of an angel's wing."

TENNYSON, *In the Children's Hospital.*

"The Sea-blue Bird of March ("*S. S.*")—We can state on the best possible authority, that the bird thus referred to by Lord Tennyson is the king-fisher.

Kent Names.—I have heard Kent people speak of a Yellow Hambird (or Ambird, for they are not safe with their aspirates). They also speak of the "Willow-tit"; but whether that means one species, or the Paridæ in general I don't know. I have seen the Marsh-tit biting off willow-catkins. F. M. MILLARD.

Sussex Names (Fernhurst).—The common wren is called "Jugger wren." The white narcissus, which is found in meadows in several places in this parish, is called "Primrose Pearls." Stag's horn beetles are "Pincher bobs." S.

["Jugger wren" is not in Mr. Swainson's book. "Primrose Pearls" is no doubt a corruption of "Primrose Peerless," an old name for *Narcissus biflorus* mentioned by Lyte and Gerard. Culpeper has "Primrose Pearls."]

Doncaster Plant Names.

Lady's fingers	...	*Alchemilla vulgaris*
*Periwinkles ...	...	Wood anemone
Cheese-cakes ...	...	Common mallow
Bird's eye	...	Speedwell
Mammy-die	...	(*Veronica chamædrys*)
King-cup ...	...	Lesser celandine.
Water-blob ...	...	Marsh marigold
Blindy-buff ...	...	Field poppy.
Milk-maids ...	...	*Cardamine pratensis*
Cuckoo flower	...	Stitchwort
*Open-mouths	...	*Linaria vulgaris*

* See foot-note (*) on page 55.

Wild tares	... ...	Wood vetch
Palms ...	... ...	Willow blossoms
Lamb's tails	... ...	Hazel catkins
Trembling grass	...	*Briza media*
Sow thistle }	...	Milk thistle
Swine thistle }	...	(*Carduus marianus*)
Bread and cheese	...	First-green leaf buds of the hawthorn

There is still a relic of superstition clinging to the blue speedwell, though the children laugh and tell me they "don't believe it *now*." They say the flower belongs to the birds—and our servants, both country girls, tell me, that when children, they "never durst gather it, lest the birds should fly after them and pick out their eyes." Hence, "Bird's eye." The origin of the name "Mammy-die" is an equally doleful ditty. Our nurse-maids would never allow us to bring the flower into the house, or "surely the mother would sicken and die." Gather it we might, but we were obliged to cast it away before reaching home. The former, however, is the most familiar name. L. HINCHCLIFF.

Gravyes.—The following extract is from Burn's and Nicholson's *History of Cumberland and Westmoreland*:—

"There are on Windermere Lake birds called Gravyes, which are larger than ducks, and build in hollow trees."

Can any of your subscribers or readers tell me what those birds are? The *History* was published at the close of last century, and no one here (Windermere) can tell me to what water fowl the name was applied. A. RAWSON.

The Ladybird.—The Lady-bird, in Kent, is "Fly-golding;" but Norfolk children used to say "Beeshy Barnabee."

"Beeshy, Beeshy, Barnabee,
Tell me when your wedding be;
If ter be to-morrow day,
Take your wings, and fly away.

Let me protest by anticipation, as it were, against any emendation such as "Bishop Barnaby," or (in the lines) "if it be; in classical Norfolk "here it is" is "hutterbe." F. M. MILLARD.

The Plague of Rats.—The plague of rats all over England—also according to the papers in the Laccadive islands (how did they get there?)—will probably attract more and more of public attention. Personally I prefer rats to mice. The noise they make rattling about under the floors and behind the wainscots, appears to me rather cheerful, and a decided improvement on the smell and the mess made by our domestic mouse. The sudden and total disappearance of the house-mice has seemed inexplicable until we found that rats had taken their place. I believe the fact is well known that rats and mice do not agree. Until the last few months our house has been fairly furnished with mice, but quite free of rats. From all parts of the country there are accounts of the great increase of rats; and it is a fact that in Norfolk and in the West of England there live landowners and some preservers who have ordered their keepers to cease from destroying hawks. There can be little doubt that the wholesale destruction of hawks, with cats, owls and other night birds, and of every other living creature that keepers trap or shoot under the name of vermin, has for one result this enormous multiplication of rats. Most persons would probably feel somewhat less annoyed by the knowledge that a few more hawks, &c., are likely to exist unmolested outside their dwellings, than that swarms of rats had taken possession within.

E. V. B.

Miss Mitford's "Spicer."—May I be permitted to ask if the plant which Miss Mitford describes in one of her charming sketches of "Our Village" as a recent introduction there, in her days, has ever been identified?

The passage occurs in the chapter headed "Dr. Tubb." Miss Mitford's descriptions of natural objects are so truthful and accurate, that unlike most of her ideal characters, the weed in question must have flourished in her neighbourhood, and excited the admiration and curiosity she narrates. I should much like to know whether it still survives, and has spread elsewhere. I have transcribed the passage relating to it. A. R. P.

"We found our gardens and all the gardens of this straggling village street, in

which it is situated, filled, peopled, infested by a beautiful flower, which grew in such profusion, and was so difficult to keep under, that (poor pretty thing?), instead of being admired and cherished, and watered, and supported, as it well deserves to be, and would be if it were rare, it is disregarded, affronted, maltreated, cut down, pulled up, hoed out like a weed.

I do not know the name of this elegant plant, nor have I met with anyone who does. We call it the Spicer, after an old naval officer who once inhabited the White House just above, and, according to tradition, first brought the seed from foreign parts. It is a sort of large Veronica, with a profusion of white gauzy flowers, streaked with red, like the apple blossom. Strangers admire it prodigiously, and so do I—everywhere but in my own garden.

* * * * *

I never saw anything prettier than a whole bed of these "Spicers," which had clothed the top of a large heap of earth by the roadside. . . . The plants are thick and close as grass, and covered with delicate red and white blossoms, like a fairy orchard."

[The plant referred to is undoubtedly the Soap wort, *Saponaria officinalis*, which, beautiful as it is, too often becomes a serious pest in gardens to which it has been introduced.]

Voracious Voles.—While walking last week in a narrow Hertfordshire lane, I was struck with the appearance of two bushes in the hedge at some distance from each other, the bark of which had been so generally gnawed off from boughs and twigs that the bushes at a little distance looked white. At the foot of the bushes—some 8 or 10ft. in height—was a small pile of twigs three or four inches in length, from which all the bark had been stripped. A third bush, an elder, had also been attacked, but only partially. My companion hunted in the bank below the hedge and found various small holes and burrows, but nothing that gave us a clue to the author of the damage done.

I afterwards sought information at the National History Museum, and, by the kindness of the official in charge of the Insect Department, found that the creature must have been the meadow Vole. In spite of many years of country life I have not before seen this nibbled bark (specimens of which I enclose) and I shall be glad to learn whether this small Vole is now more common than usual? I met one in a Yorkshire meadow last year hopping among the grass, in search I thought, of earth worms. E. H.

The Shooting of Rare Birds.—An interesting, and in some respects, amusing correspondence has recently been carried on in the columns of the *Western Morning News* under the above title. Our readers will remember that in the January number of NATURE NOTES there was quoted a letter from Mr. Thomas Cornish, of Penzance, in which he gloried in having destroyed two "rare birds," a buzzard and a heron. For this he was severely taken to task by our correspondent, "Cornubiensis Indignans;" but the rebuke he received has had but little effect in producing a reformation in his habits, for in the *Western Morning News* of April 1st, he writes throwing doubt upon a paragraph inserted in that paper, to the effect that the sandmartin and wheatear had been seen near Liskeard, on March 29th, which paragraph he says, "is the best possible proof that rare birds should be shot." He then goes on to make the extraordinary remark that "Had these observed birds been reduced to handling, and so identified, ichthyology (!) would have gained a new experience, and the bird-world would have lost two of its members."

In a later letter from Mr. Cornish, he takes upon himself the fuller responsibility for this absurd mistake, and goes on to make the still more astounding statement, "Except for size, habitat, and a few other trifling variations, an elephant might be a shew (*sic*) mouse, or the mouse might be a whale, or the whale might be a flying-fish, and this latter certainly might be a Northern diver." But for size, habitat, and a few other trifling peculiarities, Mr. Cornish apparently might be a stormy-petrel, judging by the tempest of indignation from observers of nature which he has aroused in the columns of the *W. M. N.* One might suppose that it would have been easy to convince him (1) That a bird is not a fish; (2) That it is very probable, instead of "highly improbable," that wheatears and sandmartins would be found in Cornwall at the end of March; (3) That wheatears and sandmartins are not, properly speaking, "rare birds" at all; (4) That the best way to make any

bird, rare or otherwise, much rarer, is to shoot any specimen observed "at sight." Probably this paradoxical gentleman would deny all these assertions ; but he has a much simpler way than argument, or proof, for silencing controversy : he replies to charges of "lamentable ignorance," by calling his opponents geese, and insinuating they are April fools. As much as we have seen of the discussion is closed by a communication of a very different kind—an admirable letter from the Rev. G. C. Green, of Modbury Vicarage, Ivybridge, South Devon, in which, after correcting several of Mr. Cornish's blunders, he goes on to say, "I can see no possible occasion for shooting these unfortunate little birds immediately on their arrival with us, as no mistake can be made in identifying such easily noticeable birds by any one who would be likely to take any notice of them at all. I am no mere sentimentalist. I have been a keen sportsman for many years of my life. I have made a large collection of birds. But of late years I have taken much greater pleasure in observing their habits out of door without wishing to possess them as specimens, and although I am not opposed to a few being secured for purposes of science, especially such as only visit us in the winter, or only pass our shores on the way to other countries, I do protest strongly against the wanton destruction of life of a common and most useful bird, merely that it may be identified, especially on its first return to our shores for the purpose of breeding. I commend to Mr. Cornish's notice the study of the writings of the Selborne Society, which I think would interest him. I could supply him with several of these if he would care to read them, and should be only too glad if he could be induced to join us." We thank Mr. Green for his wise and humane words, and shall be glad to learn that he has been successful in what seems to be a most difficult task—Mr. Cornish's conversion.

Migration of Birds.—The Rev. A. Rawson, Fallbarrow, Bowness, Windermere, points out that there was a slight error in his article with above title in the February number of NATURE NOTES. In the 9th and 10th lines from the bottom of page 20 the words "last week of September, 1878," should read "first week of October, 1876," and in line 11 from the bottom of the same page the date should be 1875 not 1885. Mr. Rawson's present residence at Windermere should be borne in mind in reading the article, as in some parts of it the observations made at Windermere are contrasted with those at Bromley in Kent. On the same subject we have received the following letter from Mr. T. G. Ward, of Leighton Buzzard : —"As the time for the arrival of the swallow and martin and other of our summer visitors is at hand, I think it may be interesting to readers of NATURE NOTES to give the dates of the arrival and departure of them in this neighbourhood. From four years' observation on the coming and going of the swallow tribe, I find that the swallow, as a general rule, makes its first appearance here about the 15th and 16th of April, and they begin to depart by the end of September, though several remain till the middle of October ; but a few stragglers, of course, can be seen later, thus one was observed on the 31st of October, and another as late as the 25th of November. The sand-martin seems to make its appearance here much about the same time as the swallow. The house-martin does not appear so soon as the above species, there being about a week or ten days difference, but their departure is about the same time as the swallow. The swift is the last of this family to arrive and the first to depart, appearing in this neighbourhood by the first week of May, and departing about the middle of August, though stragglers can be seen a few days later. Of the warblers, the chiff-chaff and willow-wren arrive at the end of March, the lesser and greater white-throat at the beginning of April, while the nightingale, redstart, and grasshopper warbler appear by the middle of the month. The following list is the first appearance and latest departure (from four years' observation) of the summer birds of passage here :—

Earliest Appearance	*Latest Departure*
Chiff-chaff, March 30th	September and October
Willow-wren ,, ...	October 20th
Swallow, April 16th	November 25th
Sand-martin, April 23rd	September
Martin, May 1st	November 1st
Swift, May 6th	September 7th
Whitethroat, April 5th	October 13th
Whitethroat (lesser), April 5th ...	September
Yellow wagtail, April 15th	October 21st
Cuckoo, April 22nd	August and September

Turtledove, April 23rd	August 23rd
Landrail, April	September 19th
Redstart, April 20th...	September 20th
Sedge-warbler, May 3rd	September 7th
Nightingale, April 16th	August
Grasshopper-warbler, April 20th ...	End of Summer
Flycatcher, May	,,
Wheat-ear, April 11th	September
Whinchat, May 4th	October 26th

OFFICIAL NOTICES, &c.

THE object of the Selborne Society is to unite lovers of Nature for common study and the defence of natural objects (birds, plants, beautiful landscapes, &c.) against the destruction by which they are constantly menaced. The *minimum* Annual Subscription (which entitles the subscriber to a monthly copy of the Society's Magazine) is 2s. 6d. All particulars as to membership may be obtained from the Secretary of the Selborne Society, 9, Adam Street, Adelphi, W.C.

THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING of the Society will be held on Thursday, May 1st, at 3 o'clock, at the *Burlington Hall, 23, Savile Row, London, W.* All Subscribing Members of half-a-crown and upwards, who have paid their subscription to a Branch, or to the Honorary Secretary of the Council, are eligible to the offices of the Society, and qualified to vote at the General Meeting.

SEVERAL alterations in the Rules of the Society will be recommended by the Council for adoption by the members at the Annual Meeting. Of these the most important is the following addition to Rule 8 :—"Representatives of Branches shall be elected in the proportion of one Representative to each 50 members ; but every Branch shall have at least one Representative. It shall be allowable for any Representative, not residing in London, to vote by proxy duly authorised in writing."

IN answer to the notice in the last number of NATURE NOTES as to back numbers of the *Selborne Magazine*, Miss Huish has kindly sent us, from Torquay, some copies which we have distributed. Mr. Wakefield, 41, Lancaster Park, Richmond, late honorary secretary of the Lower Thames Valley Branch, and Miss Hope, 14, Airlie Gardens, Campden Hill, hon. secretary of the Kensington Branch, write to say that they have copies of the required numbers for disposal. It is hoped that the whole of the remaining stock of the *Selborne Magazine* will shortly be obtainable by members at the offices of the Society.

WE have received some kind promises of Subscriptions to the proposed Magazine Fund, but they are not as yet sufficient in amount to warrant the proposed enlargement, and indeed it does not seem just that the great mass of Members should accept a boon at the expense of a few liberal ones. The suggestion has been made from several sources, that those Members who are willing to pay an extra shilling in their yearly subscription, for the purpose of providing the increased space desired, should signify the same by means of a post-card. Those who already pay more than the minimum subscription might express their desire to devote a shilling of their subscription to the Magazine Fund. This would be of course a purely voluntary arrangement, but somewhat on the same lines as the decision of the Lower Thames Valley Branch at their Annual Meeting, to send a recommendation to the Council that the minimum Subscription, entitling Members to the receipt of the Magazine, should be 3s. 6d. The objection to the suggestion which has been made of obtaining a revenue by additional advertisements, is that any increase of more than four pages would double the cost of the postage of the Magazine.

ALTHOUGH "Selborniana" takes up this month a much larger proportion of the Magazine than usual, several Letters and Communications are crowded out for want of space. It is particularly requested that subscriptions, and letters bearing on the general business of the Society, should *not* be forwarded to the Editors. Editorial communications should be addressed to the Rev. PERCY MYLES, 1, Argyle Road, Ealing, W.

Nature Notes:

The Selborne Society's Magazine.

No. 5. MAY 15, 1890. Vol. I.

ANNUAL MEETING OF THE SELBORNE SOCIETY.

THE Annual General Meeting of the Society was held at Burlington Hall, Savile Row, on Thursday, May 1st, 1890, Dr. George Harley, F.R.S., in the chair. The following brief report of the Council for the year ending April 30th, 1890, was read and adopted :—

"There has been a very satisfactory increase in the number of members, and new branches have been formed at Chichester, Guildford, Liverpool, Nottingham, Brighton, Bloomsbury (Atalanta), Dorking and Epsom (Evelyn), Southampton and New Forest, Neston, and Forth: the last is the first branch established in Scotland.

"In November the editor of *The Selborne Magazine* withdrew from the management for the Society of that periodical; and the Council thereupon thought it desirable to found a new monthly Magazine. The first number appeared in January under the title of Nature Notes. The Rev. Percy Myles and Mr. James Britten of the British Museum have undertaken the editing of the Magazine, and a standing Committee for the management of all matters other than literary has been appointed. The Council is pleased to be able to announce that Nature Notes has been very favourably received by the public and the press, and that its circulation and influence are increasing with every issue. The scope and purpose of the new Magazine have been fully explained in a circular letter sent to all members of the Society, and copies of a leaflet setting forth its programme and the objects of the Society may be had for distribution on application at the Society's Office."

The following very satisfactory financial statement for the year ending December 31st, 1889, was then read and adopted:—

Dr.	£	s.	d.	Cr.	£	s.	d.
To Balance from 1888 ...	34	16	7	By the Publishers of the "Selborne Magazine"	48	13	11
,, Sale of Prospectuses, Cards, &c.	11	5	7½	,, Messrs. Bale and Sons, (Printers)	28	4	3
,, Annual Subscriptions ...	87	11	9	,, Subscriptions paid to Branches in respect of Members Transferred	2	6	6
,, Donations	2	9	6	,, Rent	30	0	0
,, Credit Balances on Annual Accounts of Branches	39	9	8½	,, Secretary	23	19	6
				,, Stationery, Stamps, and Incidental Expenses of Office	15	9	7
				,, Balance	26	19	5
	£175	13	2		£175	13	2

Balance £26 19 5

J. L. OTTER, *Hon. Treasurer.*

Examined and found correct,

M. WOLRYCHE-WHITMORE,

H.M. Exchequer and Audit Dept.

The proposal that the contributions of the branches to the General Fund should be not less than 10 per cent. of their gross receipts was agreed to.

The following are the more important of the alterations in the General Rules, which were recommended by the Council and approved by the meeting.

"That the officers of the Society, except the Trustees, shall hold office for one year (instead of two as previously).

"That branches be empowered to elect representatives to serve on the Council in the proportion of one representative to fifty members, provided that a branch consisting of less than fifty members shall elect one representative. And—

"That a representative of a branch, not residing in London, may appoint a proxy to serve in his stead at meetings of the Council."

Mr. Musgrave was unanimously elected co-trustee with Sir John Lubbock. Some additional Vice-Presidents and a new Council were also elected.

The new list of the officers of the Society is as follows:—

PATRONESS.

HER ROYAL HIGHNESS PRINCESS CHRISTIAN.

PRESIDENT.

THE LORD TENNYSON.

TRUSTEES.

Sir John Lubbock, Bart., F.R.S., M.P., &c.,
C. A. Musgrave, Esq., F.Z.S., F.R.G.S.

VICE-PRESIDENTS.

The Right Rev. the Lord Bishop of Bath and Wells.
C. T. Beresford-Hope, Esq.
The Hon. Mrs. R. C. Boyle.
Mrs. Brightwen.
The Rev. Stopford A. Brooke, M.A.
James Bryce, Esq., M.P.
F. Dawtrey Drewitt, Esq., M.D.
Professor W. H. Flower, C.B., F.R.S.
The Rev. H. D. Gordon, M.A.
Edmund Gosse, Esq.
George Harley, Esq., M.D., F.R.S.
The Rev. Professor Henslow, M.A., F.L.S.
The Rev. J. Kirkman, M.A.
Sir James D. Linton, Pres. R.I.
Mrs. Martelli.
Mrs. Charles Mathews.
William Morris, Esq.
The Lady Mount-Temple.
Mrs. Musgrave.
R. J. Pead, Esq.
The Rev. H. D. Rawnsley, M.A.
H. D. Skrine, Esq., J.P., D.L.
The Very Rev. The Dean of Westminster.

COUNCIL.

James Britten, Esq., F.L.S.
F. Dillon, Esq., R.I.
Miss H. Hope.
Professor F. E. Hulme, F.L.S.
H. Barry Hyde, Esq.
The Rev. G. E. Mackie, M.A.
A. Halté Macpherson, Esq.
The Rev. Percy Myles, B.A., F.L.S.
J. L. Otter, Esq., *Hon. Treas.*
T. F. Wakefield, Esq.
W. White, Esq., F.S.A.
The Rev. Theodore Wood, F.E.S.

(With Representatives elected by the Branches.)

HON. TREASURER: J. L. Otter, Esq., 3, Dr. Johnson's Buildings, Temple, E.C.
SECRETARY: A. J. Western, Esq., 9, Adam Street, Adelphi, W.C.

We feel bound to congratulate the members of our Society on its present flourishing condition. During the past few months it has developed a greatly increased amount of energy on the part of its officers, and the result has been most satisfactory, both with regard to the growth of the Society in numbers, and the dissemination of its principles far and wide. It has on its side a sympathetic press (most of the leading newspapers giving a hearty support to its platform), and a daily increasing body of public opinion. Although it has lately passed through a period of anxiety which called forth the utmost efforts of all its well-wishers, it is now stronger than ever, and constitutes a powerful body which may have a very real effect in checking the ravages of destroyers, and in educating the public to sound views on the subject of nature-preservation.

ACCESS TO MOUNTAINS BILL.

IN the first article of the March number of NATURE NOTES, Mr. George Murray, dealing with the Glen Doll Right of Way, wrote as follows:—"Nothing could be more popular than the reception given to Mr. Bryce's Access to Mountains Bill of a few years ago. What has become of it? If there is any young politician desirous of the popular canonization so properly bestowed on Sir John Lubbock for a measure of benefit to the people which all feel and recognize, let him take up the Access to Mountains Bill."

It is evident that the legislation suggested by Mr. Murray will not fall to the ground for want of ardent support on the part of some Members of Parliament. Since his article was written, there has been an important division on Mr. Buchanan's Right of Way (Scotland) Bill. The Government has actually been defeated, and the measure carried by 110 votes to 97. Mr. Bryce's Access to Mountains (Scotland) Bill has not been so fortunate. Mr. Bryce's Bill deserves the support of all lovers of Nature, whatever be their nationality. As the *Daily News* says:—"It is by no means a merely Scottish measure. It is of as much importance to Englishmen as to Scotchmen; indeed, it is the tourist and the traveller who are most interested in it. The object of the measure is to keep open the uncultivated mountain and moor lands of Scotland to 'any person walking or being on such lands for purposes of recreation, or scientific, or artistic study.' It is fenced round with careful provisions against abuse, and would secure the rights of the public without injuring those of the landed proprietor." The Bill stood second on the paper in the House of Commons on May 7th; but unfortunately its opponents went on talking on the Charitable Trusts Bill till all the time was gone, and accordingly the opportunity was lost.

In the programme of NATURE NOTES we dwelt on the importance of keeping an eye on legislative measures which affect the objects which we are pledged to support, and expressed a hope that the Selborne Society's Magazine would be "a medium by which supporters may be rallied for the advancement of good measures, and stout resistance offered to bad ones."

The Access to Mountains Bill is an excellent example of the good measures for which we desire to obtain supporters. We hope that all Selbornians will use their utmost efforts to put pressure upon their representatives in Parliament; and we can promise both young and old politicians that if they do not actually attain the "canonization" spoken of by Mr. Murray, they will by their support of this admirable measure earn the gratitude of very many lovers of Nature, no matter to what political party they may belong.

THE REV. J. G. WOOD.*

THE number of scientists is increasing among us. Lord Beaconsfield told us some years since that young ladies "prattled of evolution" in the drawing-room, and the fashion has steadily gained ground ever since. The pens of various versatile writers are never more at home than

* The Rev. J. G. Wood: his Life and Work. By the Rev. Theodore Wood. London: Cassell and Co.; price 10s. 6d.

when narrating "fairy tales of science," unless, it may be, when constructing the theories based upon their fascinating romances. There are many more biologists than there used to be; but, as it seems to us, there are fewer naturalists. "Biology" has taken the place of "Natural History," as we used to understand the term; and there are many who know the minute structure of a plant who would not recognise the plant itself were it placed before them. "What is that beautiful thing?" said a young lady to a venerable professor, pointing to a brilliant scarlet fungus on his table. "That is a Peziza," was the reply. "Oh! a Peziza! Why, I have been working at Peziza for the last three weeks," answered his fair questioner. There be many scientists, but few naturalists, and there is none among them to take the place of the Rev. J. G. Wood, who was taken from us on the 30th of January, 1889, a sketch of whose life, from the pen of his son, is now before us.

John George Wood was born in London on the 21st of July, 1827. He was weak and sickly from his birth, and, from an early age, manifested that fondness of books which is often evinced by children who are debarred from more violent sports, and which lasted throughout his life.

He was not a sharp boy at figures. Whether, like the Beaver in the "Hunting of the Snark," he—

> "Lamented with tears how in earlier years
> He had taken no pains with his sums,"

we cannot say; but his arithmetical knowledge was always rudimentary, although his biographer distinctly tells us that "he did know that two and two make four," while the Beaver, it will be remembered—

> "Fairly lost heart and outgrabe in despair"

when endeavouring unsuccessfully to add two to one. His early boyhood was marked by a fondness for pets, which is not uncommon, but was accompanied in his case by a constant "poking, and probing, and prying here, there, and everywhere, in the endeavour to discover some of the manifold secrets of Nature, and to learn the ways and doings of the multitudinous living creatures that garden and river and woodland afforded." He was, in fact, even as a boy, a follower of that model naturalist, Sir Thomas Ingoldsby, who—

> "Would pore by the hour
> O'er a weed or a flower,
> Or the slugs that come crawling out after a shower;
> Black-beetles and bumble-bees, blue-bottle flies
> And moths, were of no small account in his eyes;
> An industrious flea he'd by no means despise,
> While an old daddy-long-legs, whose long legs and thighs
> Passed the common in shape, or in colour, or size,
> He was wont to consider an absolute prize."

—except, however, that Mr. Wood never seems to have taken

any interest in flowers, a somewhat remarkable feature in so ardent a Nature lover.

Young Wood was fortunate in being much encouraged by his father in his tastes and pursuits. Boys are not always so lucky. I know of one who remembers to this day the reproof with which his admiration of the fronds of duckweed spreading over the dark water in a waterbutt was received by his father. "If you talk like that, people will think you are silly," said the parent. He went with his family to Oxford in 1830, and soon became a constant visitor at the Ashmolean Museum, where he was on the best of terms with the kindhearted old curator. At school, at Ashbourne in Derbyshire, he collected all sorts of "spoil, both living and dead;" and made extremely intimate acquaintance with the domestic flea during a period of confinement to bed, arising from a broken leg. At seventeen he returned to Oxford, and matriculated at Merton College. During his university career he became an accomplished gymnast, and in that capacity was the original of "Little Mr. Bouncer," in the chapters which relate to that gentleman's experiences in the gymnasium in Mr. Bradley's "Verdant Green."

During his Oxford career he in no way relaxed his natural history studies; he bred and dissected insects, and observed their habits. His final scientific training, however, was received under Sir Henry Acland in the Anatomical Museum at Christ Church in 1850-51. "During these two years he went through a complete course of research in comparative anatomy, himself dissecting representatives of all the important families of the animal kingdom, and making numberless careful and valuable preparations, of which many remain in the museum to this day." To these two years we may fairly attribute the accuracy of the scientific portions of his books: for Mr. Wood—more, perhaps, than any writer before or since—possessed the uncommon art of combining a popular style with scientific accuracy, and it is to this combination that his books owe their value.

His first book—the smaller Natural History—was published in 1851; in 1852 he was ordained deacon, and undertook clerical duty in Oxford. From this he retired in 1854, but, after two years' literary work, he came to London as chaplain to St. Bartholomew's Hospital. In 1859 he married, and in 1862 settled down at Belvedere, near Woolwich, where he remained for more than fifteen years. During this period of his life he was extremely active in clerical work; he was a good musician, and devoted himself with much success to choir work, and was at one time Precentor of the Canterbury Diocesan Choral Union. His regular clerical work—the larger portion of which was unpaid—came to an end in 1874.

Various books on Natural History were issued by Mr. Wood before 1857, when the well-known "Common Objects of the Seashore" made its appearance, to be followed in 1858 by the

still more popular "Common Objects of the Country." The success of these two-shilling volumes was phenomenal. Of the latter, the first edition of 100,000 copies was exhausted in a week, and other editions followed in quick succession. One of these early copies is before me as I write, and its well-thumbed pages bring back something of the delight with which they were scanned and consulted thirty years ago. It is to be regretted that the author himself benefited little by this large sale; the copyright was disposed of for thirty pounds, and this was "the actual remuneration which he received for each." With all his excellent qualities, Mr. Wood was not a good business man—evidences of this occur more than once in the story of his life.

His most important work, the "Illustrated Natural History," began to appear in monthly parts in March, 1859. No expense was spared in its preparation; original illustrations were drawn by the best artists, and the work still holds its position as a standard popular Natural History. "Homes without Hands"—the most popular and best known of his larger works—began its serial issue in 1864; and the "Natural History of Man," a companion to the "Illustrated Natural History," succeeded it in 1867. Other works followed, the last of which was noticed in the April number of NATURE NOTES; and a constant stream of contributions to various magazines was kept up.

But a word must be said about Mr. Wood as a lecturer, in which capacity he attained much popularity. He began to lecture about 1856, but it was not until 1879 that he took up lecturing "as a kind of secondary profession." Mr. Wood soon found himself in request, and from 1879 to 1888, inclusive, he delivered lectures in various parts of the country. These were illustrated by sketches drawn on a large and specially constructed black board, and afterwards on a large black screen, in coloured chalks. Mr. Wood was an adept at this method of conveying his ideas, and regretted that he could not illustrate his sermons in a similar manner. Two tours in America, in 1883-4 and the following year, were undertaken—the first was successful, the second a failure. This part of the book is especially interesting, on account of the long extracts from Mr. Wood's letters which it contains; we could wish that even more of these had been printed.

The account of the persevering struggles carried on to the last, when breath was failing and rest was needed, is sad reading. But so steady a worker was not likely to yield until he was constrained by a power stronger than that of his own will; and four days before his death we find him lecturing, revising proof-sheets, and writing home, and, although the lecturer was evidently suffering much pain, "those who were present said that the lecture was as interesting as ever, and the drawings as rapid and exact." And when the end came, it found his intellect clear and his mind calm; in his last letter, two hours before his death, "the writing is as firm and steady as usual." At six o'clock on

Sunday, the 30th of January, 1889, "he turned his head upon one side, and quietly passed away."

Not a great life, or even an eventful one, but a life of useful work, of much happiness both to himself and to others. How far the influence of his work may have extended it is impossible to conjecture; but we may, at least, be sure that for much of the love of Nature and of created things which has grown up among us during the last thirty years, we have to thank the example and the teaching of the Rev. J. G. Wood.

JAMES BRITTEN.

THE STARLING.

You with the yellow bill and tongue unresting,
The mottled neck and breast of iris sheen
That from dark purple glances into green.
Where is your gossip, and your wonted jesting?
Why, with such melancholy loud protesting
So wake the morn? What can your sighing mean?
Does not my roof conveniently lean?
Have you no pleasure in your April nesting?

Ah! little mocker, you but make-believe,
For you have caught my sorrow's trick and know
My grief, and like a fool in motley bent,
To give me back my long-lost merriment.
Lo! with loud chuckle underneath the eave,
You make your muffled laughter overflow.

H. D. RAWNSLEY.

BIRDS IN ART.

"Heard melodies are sweet, but those unheard
Are sweeter."—KEATS.

THE depicture of the human form has so arrogated to itself the primary interest in painting, that the large part that bird-life has played in pictures appears to have received very little notice; and yet we find that, from the earliest ages, the study of birds formed a part of the artist's education, and one which apparently was brought nearer to perfection than that of the figure or landscape. An old traveller speaks of being able to recognise at a glance the different birds executed on one of the great monumental trophies peculiar to the Egyptians, whilst in Assyrian pictures we see birds flying through the air, pecking at the fruit and buds on trees, and seeking shelter beneath a row of conventional trees, which are supposed to represent a dense forest. Among the Greeks the birds were ever present. We all know how the birds in the air flew down to peck at the grapes carried by a boy in the celebrated picture by Zeuxis,

which did *not* win the prize; then we find a bird bringing mortification to that most hard working and laborious of artists, Protogenes, whose painting of a partridge in his beautiful picture of Ialysos and his panting dog, created such a sensation among non-professional spectators, that the artist scraped it out in his anger that it should receive the praises due to the man and the dog.

Dogs appear to have been a very favourite subject with the old Greek artists. Of the many pictures in which they were introduced, the dog before-mentioned, with foam at his mouth, is the most celebrated; but Nikias, who tinted some of Praxiteles' statues, was famous for the life-like expression of his dogs. Horses likewise received their share of admiration, and if, as is generally supposed, the mosaic of the battle of Issos found in the *Casa del Fauno* at Pompeii is a replica, of the time of Vespasian, of an old Greek picture of the fourth century B.C., it shows that the great Greek painters had a very thorough mastery of the drawing of the horse, whereas the life-like truth of their pictures is assured by the well-known story of the horse painted by Apelles at which other horses neighed; indeed, like Vandyke, we find Apelles noted for the beauty of his mounted portraits. All this goes to show that a very affectionate observation must have been bestowed on these birds and beasts which were not considered unworthy of the close study of the greatest of the classic Greek painters. Flowers also received their just share of attention, and Pausias, who painted a picture of Glykera as a seller of garlands, may be said to be the first painter of flowers of any importance. Fruit, flowers, and still life in general soon became a chief feature in Greek painting; whilst all are familiar with the reeds, tendrils, and flowers, which are the *raison d'être* of the whole scheme of decoration generally known as Pompeian.

To return to birds, their part in the daily life of the Græco-Roman period receives strong confirmation from the numerous dove-illustrations, the most beautiful example of which is now known as the Capitoline Doves. This lovely mosaic was found in Hadrian's Villa, at Tivoli, and represents four doves sitting on the edge of an exquisitely modelled bowl filled with water. The action of the birds is exceedingly tender: one bends down her neck to drink, another plumes herself, the other two look round anxiously as if of a less confiding mind. The soft colouring and the remarkable skill with which the glancing lights and shadows on the plumage have been depicted by the artist makes this mosaic well worthy of its great reputation. This subject of doves sunning and pluming themselves on the rim of a vessel containing water appears to have been a very favourite one among the ancients, and one which Pliny's description of the doves, executed by Sosos in Pergamos, has rendered immortal. Fruit, leaves, shells—indeed, all manner of still life—we find depicted in these old mosaics, and not the least interesting is one of those pavements representing the *débris* of a meal, with a little

mouse making a hearty supper on the scraps. As we advance into the Christian era we find birds often introduced into what are known as the Madonna pictures, and in the dawn of the Renaissance, birds were much introduced into the great altar pieces which were so prominent a feature of the new birth of Art in Italy.

I. JULIEN ARMSTRONG.

THE TOOTHWORT

(Lathræa Squamaria).

TOOTHWORT, a parasite rare in the south-east of England, has appeared in great abundance this year in a place where for ten years I had not seen it till 1890. Within the last month I have seen hundreds of these parasites in abundance in an area of 7 miles from west to east of the Down, and at a place 3 miles to the south-west of us, where Mr. Herbert Bull, a prominent member of the Selborne Society, observed for me no less than 179 examples, on one of which a humble bee was regaling itself at 6·17 p.m., April 12th. When you have learnt one habitat of the plant it is sure to guide you by the shelter required, and the bearing of the compass, to another, a land-locked coombe, in most cases lying low down. This plant seems to have been a remainder of the old forest Flora of the Silva Anderida, and it is found at Dorking on the North Downs. In one place opposite to a natural funnel in the hills, formed by a space between two outlying downs, the wind had blown it to the very top of the down surmounting the hanger. In most places it was found low down; but the greater the natural wind-power the higher was the habitat all along the Downs. It is generally stated that this plant is found on hazel-roots, but, although one can often see the grip of the large stem-base of the Lathræa upon the dark roots of the hazel, in this region it certainly prefers the maple and ash. On Easter Monday, April 7th, I learnt this law from four instances in two habitats a mile apart, where it was on small maple clumps. No. 1, maple underwood, consisted of some fine young shoots, the wood being about four years' growth, had five of the Lathræa round the stem; and No. 2, a large thick-stemmed maple camp, 9 feet from any nut growth, was completely surrounded by 22 of the parasites close to the maple stem on all sides. This was unmistakeable, But the most curious point to be observed is that the stems of the trees, whether of nut, or maple, or ash, shewed not the least decadence from the parasitical growth—in fact, if anything, they were stronger than the rest of the very vigorous underwood. Having made two observations to the east, I now was able to take score, after the manner of cricket-matches, in two other habitats to the west and south-west, further apart still. Taking my

chance, and not at all searching closely, the score of the shrubs chosen by the Lathræa, April 10th, was:—Ash, 76; Maple, 44; Hazel, 14; Spindle-tree, 5; total, 139. In the last habitat, April 12th, Mr. Bull, after finding 14 examples in a wood contiguous, counted for me 165 all under maple, in 19 clumps, all of which, except one, were on the sheltered side, and he found one cluster of the Toothwort numbering no less than 25; the largest aggregate that I had found elsewhere was 30 under ash. It is plain that the parasite is more omnivorous than many think.

The Lathræa (so called from its "lying hid") is a wonderful plant, much like the Orobanche, its kinsman, but much more plucky, even during March winds and frosts. It is wonderful that this dainty growth should be able to survive during frosts. It owes much to its deep-set large knotted root-stock, which has been likened to honeycomb, but is more exactly like a humble bee's nest. It creeps in the moss on the sheltered side, and many examples come up with the blade of the stem deflected towards the ground. Its red, vinous-looking anthers (something like those of a blanched gladiolus) on a stem 8½ inches long, as was one that I removed from a maple, are the symbol almost unique among flowers of brave endurance in the winter, which it now has to surmount in bare exposure after its former history of sheltering forest life. It is mentioned in White's *Selborne* among rarities, but in two of our now four habitats it has been known twenty-five years. In the cold spring of this year, on seeing the rare bloom in March, one might wish that one had the constitution of a Toothwort, scales and all! But then the drawback is, one would have to live upon somebody else!

H. D. Gordon.

Harting Vicarage, April 28.

A BOOK FOR NATURE LOVERS.

The Selborne Society must contain a goodly number of authors among its members. In the notices of books specially adapted to the lovers of nature, which have been given in Nature Notes, we have been able each month to head the list with the work of a Selbornian. In this May number we give the place of honour to Professor Hulme's *Wayside Sketches* (Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge). Professor Hulme has done as much as any author of recent times to popularise the study of flowers by his well-known books, in which pen and pencil combine to render that pursuit attractive. In several instances to our own knowledge, the "pictures" in *Familiar Wild Flowers* have first led to the study of botany by those who previously had considered it one of the driest of sciences. In the *Principles of Ornamental Art*, and *Suggestions in Floral Design*, the great value of flowers and leaves to the artistic designer is exemplified by admirable illustrations, and in *Mythland*, Professor Hulme collected a store of those quaint legends concerning plants and animals in which he takes so much delight. But we confess that the present work, called by the modest title of *Wayside Sketches*, is to us the most pleasing of all. It is an enthusiastic plea for Nature-study, and is thoroughly calculated to communicate the author's enthusiasm to his readers. Interesting facts in Natural History, quaint anecdotes,

apposite quotations, and beautiful legends are arranged as a sort of running commentary on the Calendar for the Naturalists' Year. But what will give it special value in the eyes of our readers is this, that it is so thoroughly imbued with the spirit which ought to animate the members of the Selborne Society, that it might be distributed to young naturalists as a "Manual of Selbornian Principles." Take as an example the following pronouncement on collecting, which bears hard on the mere predatory and acquisitive instinct which is by many mistaken for a love of Nature. "The mere mania for collection is a very low ambition indeed, and leads to the ruthless destruction of every rare bird or insect, the uprooting of every rare plant, in order that they may minister to the vanity of the collector. Such an one had far better turn his thoughts towards the collection of crests or postage stamps, or, as one amiable enthusiast we know, make a list of the names of the locomotives on the London and North-Western Railway." On the cruelty of caging birds Professor Hulme writes as follows:—"To anyone who knows what the true home of a lark is, it is a really touching sight to see it shut up with a small piece of turf, and striking itself time after time against the roof of its prison, in the vain attempt to soar upward into what should be the pure heaven, the great vault of cloudless blue. It is one of the few birds that sing on the wing, and no other bird does so to anything like the same extent; imprisonment to the skylark is therefore a peculiar hardship. One of the delights of a spring walk is to see these birds rising from the ground with their peculiar spiral flight, and to hear the burst of song growing richer and richer, until at length the birds are lost to sight altogether, and the sweet notes pouring down to earth seem to issue from the great dome itself. Those who have been entranced with this flood of melody will sympathise with the captive beating its wings against its confining cage, and feel with us how sad the change from the breezy downs to the close city court. No native bird should ever be held in bondage, but least of all the skylark."

Our author is thoroughly sound on the Primrose Question, which has lately been discussed in the pages of NATURE NOTES by G. S. R., Mr. Britten and others:—"Whatever one's political feelings may be, all lovers of Nature will regret that the primrose should have become a party emblem. Its tender beauty should endear it equally to all. The Radical should not feel that he dare but admire it by stealth and under protest, nor the admirer of Lord Beaconsfield feel bound at least one day in the year to wear its delicate blossoms, less for their own attractiveness than as a party symbol. The primrose is a very freely growing plant, fortunately; but even then the amount of the destruction of the roots, as they are recklessly torn up for 'Primrose Day' each year, will tend to ultimately render the plant much scarcer than it is at all pleasant to contemplate."

We regret that considerations of space do not allow us to quote other passages from this charming little book, but we feel bound to call attention to the admirable index with which it is provided, prefaced by a quotation which we would gladly see translated from a "pious aspiration" of Lord Campbell's into an actual ornament of the statute-book. "So essential did I consider an Index to be to every book, that I proposed to bring a Bill into Parliament to deprive any author who published a book without an Index of the privilege of copyright, and, moreover, to subject him to a pecuniary penalty.—CAMPBELL'S *Lives of the Chief Justices of England*."

The Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge is to be congratulated on the admirable manner in which the book under notice is produced, bound and printed. We well remember the time when the stock in trade of that venerable Society consisted of doctrinal treatises frequently dull, and didactic stories not unfrequently dismal. Under its present management it vies with the leading publishers of the day in the interest of its books, and of these some of the most interesting are those which deal with scientific subjects and the study of Nature.

SHORT NOTICES OF BOOKS.

WE have received from Mr. David Douglas one of the pretty little shilling volumes of essays by Mr. John Burroughs, who may be styled the American Jeffries. *Winter Sunshine*, in spite of its name, is not at all confined to wintry

subjects, and the chapters headed "An October Abroad," dealing, as they do, largely with the author's observations in England, give this volume a special interest.

Gleanings in Old Garden Literature, by W. C. Hazlitt (Elliot Stock), is one of those pleasant, chatty volumes which all garden lovers like to read. It contains information about gardening in the days of Elizabeth and Evelyn; talks about Kew in olden days, and the nurseries at Old Brompton, Fulham, Battersea and Deptford; a short bibliography of garden literature; chats about arbours and grottoes, window and cottage gardening, physic gardens and kitchen gardens, and not the least useful feature, a good index. It is unnecessary to say that the printing and binding are first rate of their kind.

Messrs. Cassell send us a selection of the handy little pocket volumes forming their *National Library*, in which collection, by the way, we find singularly few dealing with Natural History. Those before us are *The Natural History of Selborne*, in two volumes; Raleigh's *Discovery of Guiana;* Spenser's *Shepherd's Calendar;* Mungo Park's *Travels in Africa*, two volumes; *Voyagers' Tales*, from Hakluyt; Johnson's *Journey to the Hebrides*, and Waterton's *Wanderings in South America.*

SELBORNIANA.

Destruction of Beautiful Derbyshire Scenery. — Miss Ellen Hibbert, of Godley Vale, Manchester, sends us the following ardent plea for the preservation of a beautiful landscape.

"Permit me to appeal for help from the Selborne Society on behalf of the lovely valley of Miller's Dale, in Derbyshire. It is sad enough to have quarries and limekilns on each side of the valley, with the smoke and disfigurement, but surely the white refuse need not be thrown down the slopes, destroying and burying trees, shrubs and herbage, not in one place only, but anywhere alongside the road that the carters may find most convenient. It seems to outsiders most unnecessary that, in a district of limestone, it should be permitted to erect kilns, and devastate the hillsides in a valley which is one of the glories of the county. The hideous destruction in the Bakewell Road leading out of Buxton is a sight to make one weep. Ruskin fulminated against the construction of the railway years ago in *Fors Clavigera*, and again in the latest number of *Præterita.* I knew Buxton in the old days before the railway was made, and the greatest charm about the place was the first part of the Bakewell Road, a little over a mile, winding alongside the river Wye, between cliffs richly clothed with trees, shrubs, flowers, ferns and mosses. Sad, indeed, it was to any lover of nature, to see the cliff above the river ruthlessly cut away, with its growth of ash, hazel, ivy and yew, that the railway line might run along a terrace half way up. Kind Nature might in a few years have hidden part of the terrible scar with fresh growths, but the windings of the stream had to be bridged over, and this was done, not with stone bridges, which some little vegetation might in time have rendered sightly, but with uncompromising iron, which after a quarter of a century remains bare and hideous as ever. The worst has yet to come. The entrance to a side valley is guarded by a limekiln, and the municipality of Buxton have placed their gas and sewage works at the entrance to the road, so that anyone wishing to enjoy a glimpse of a former paradise, must pass through purgatory to reach it. I suppose it was the *cheapest* plan to arrange these matters so, and yet thousands of pounds have been spent in beautifying Buxton by public gardens, &c., all of which are poor and mean indeed compared with this natural beauty, which it has not been considered worth while to preserve."

"The Bird Protection Act" Farce.—Under the above title an interesting letter from Mr. Charles Dixon appears in the *Standard* of May 1st. As the subject is such an important one, we reproduce the greater part of Mr. Dixon's letter:—

"As the spring days advance, and the country side becomes more attractive,

the lanes and woods and fields are invaded by hosts of ragged rascals bent on the destruction of our wild birds and the plunder of their nests. Not only so, but the birdcatcher and the pot-hunting gunner ply their trade unmolested, with an audacious contempt or a supreme ignorance of the law which is most irritating to behold.

"Only yesterday I passed a costermonger's barrow, in a bye street near Victoria Station, on which were spread some dozens of oyster-catchers, curlews, whimbrels, and lapwings. I was told by their owner that they had come from abroad, but the fresh state of the legs and the brightness of the eyes of many of the poor birds made this statement appear incredible. At a shop close by numbers of partridges and ruffs (the latter birds in their beautiful wedding plumage) were exposed for sale; ringdoves may be seen here and there at other game dealers' establishments, whilst in the current number of a weekly live stock journal I am confronted with advertisements offering cock nightingales and other birds now under the protection of the law for sale. Last week I saw recorded the fact that a hoopoe had been shot in a southern county. This bird is protected by law, and, if the law were enforced, we might soon number the hoopoe among our regular Summer birds of passage.

"All these birds are now just about to breed, or actually breeding; many have eggs, or even nestlings, so that they are quite out of condition and totally unfit for food. 'What is anybody's business is nobody's business' is an old saying, and a true one: but I do most sincerely hope that this massacre of the innocent, helpless birds, now tame and confiding and easy of capture, in the season of their courtship and love, or whilst bringing up their little ones, may be stopped by the hand of the law.

"What we want is a new Bird Protection Act, entirely drawn up by persons who know their business, the eggs as well as the birds being included; and the display for sale of any scheduled species, whether shot abroad or at home, to be held to be an infringement of the law. The enforcement of the law must be invested in persons well able to carry it out, and made directly responsible for its efficient working. The old Act is dead; indeed, it has never been imbued with life, although, perhaps, it is a living monument to the utter ignorance of our legislators of ornithology. Any country schoolboy could have framed a better. England boasts a 'British Ornithologists' Union.' Why are its members not up and doing something for the better protection and preservation of those creatures it is their professed object to admire and lovingly study?"

"Annexation" of Hayes Common.—On this subject several letters have appeared in the daily papers. We take the following from a correspondent of the *Daily News*:—"Hayes Common is only seventeen miles from London, though it takes an hour to reach it by train from Charing Cross. Including the Wickham portion, it is, according to the taste of many people, as attractive as the choicest bits of Epping Forest or Burnham Beeches. The Wickham portion of it contains some fifty ancient and magnificent specimens of pollard oaks, as also the remains of a Roman encampment; and through it runs Lord Chatham's drive. From the mound in the centre of the Roman remains, the visitor looking in the direction of Addington and Croydon obtains one of the most charming views in England. To say nothing of the natural beauty, the mere presence of the Roman remains should be enough to preserve the spot from the grabbers and the builder, 'jerry' or any other. The Wickham portion of Hayes Common is, however, under process of enclosure. Round the choice part of it above-named a tall iron railing, spiked and close set, is being run up. Of course, in putting up this formidable iron railing, the lord of the manor, Sir John Lennard, may be acting within his moral as well as legal rights; the point is that among the Wickhamites there is not sufficient spirit and independence to induce them even to agitate the question; while they are shrugging their shoulders and mildly grumbling, the reddish-yellow iron railing is 'sneaking' its way among the trees and thick bush round the base of Coney Hill, along by Chatham's Drive, round by the Roman remains to the boundary of what is specially known as Hayes Common. Will some Member of Parliament call attention to this matter in the House of Commons?"

Bird List from Torquay.—Mr. G. A. Musgrave sends the following list of birds seen during the year 1889, by Mrs. Currie, at Grey's Lodge, a house in a central position in Torquay:—Great-tit, Blue-tit, Cole-tit, Marsh-

tit, White Wagtail, Pied Wagtail, Sky Lark, Hedge Accentor, Redbreast, Garden Warbler, Willow Warbler, Chiff Chaff, Wren, Goldcrest, Spotted Flycatcher, Swallow, Martin, Chaffinch, Greenfinch, Hawfinch, (?) Bullfinch, Sparrow, Starling, Missel Thrush, Fieldfare, Redwing, Thrush, Blackbird, Nuthatch, Great Shrike, Woodpecker, Jack Daw, Rook, Seagulls, Wood Pigeon, Cuckoo, Yellow Bunting, Creeper.

Sparrows.—I have twice been informed by residents in Leusden, a village near Ashburton, in Devonshire, that no sparrow has been seen there within the memory of man. Can anyone account for this curious fact?

During this spring I have had in my garden, in Torquay, rows of yellow Crocuses quite untouched by the sparrows.

Furzebank, Torquay. THERESA MUSGRAVE.

The Primrose.—The *Whitehall Review* of April 19th has two articles, one on "Primrose Day" and one on "Primroses," in the first of which we are assured that "the Primrose is a purely British species, not found in any other part of Europe," and in the second that it is found "nowhere outside the British Isles, unless it be in some parts of Scandinavia, while our only grounds for presuming its existence there, is the fact that Linnæus christened it *Primula vulgaris*." This statement is emphasised and repeated, so it is perhaps as well to say that it is absolutely devoid of accuracy. It meets my eye on my return from a railway journey through Germany, Switzerland, and Italy, where the Primrose adorned the banks and woods as freely as it does at home; and at Como on "Primrose Day" we gathered a bunch large enough to supply any number of enthusiastic "Leaguers." The second of the articles referred to is throughout an excellent example of the combination of nonsense and misstatement which does duty for "science" in papers of a certain class. G. S. R.

Keswick Notes.—The Rev. H. D. Rawnsley writes from Crosthwaite Vicarage, Keswick, "The first Cuckoo was heard here in the Keswick Valley, on April 2nd. The first Chiff Chaff was seen on April 10th. The first Swallow on April 20th. The corncrake came to us on the first of May. I find that it marvellously sharpens the school children's eyes to look for the coming of the birds, if a sixpenny bit is promised for the first authenticated sight of one of these winged lake visitors. But I also find that old eyes are better than young ones; in each case my little school friends were a day late in first sight of the birds. May I again plead that the May Queen Festivals may have associated with them, as here at Keswick, a public proclamation in proper form of Her Majesty's good will and pleasure towards those who kindly entreat horses, dogs, wild birds, and tame pets, during the coming season. I can send you a copy of our own proclamation, which after duly being read in the ears of all the people in the Keswick Market-place, will be posted on the walls, and in the school-rooms, and in all the cottages. Every little thing that helps in the direction of kindly care for animals I feel must interest the Selborne Society. This is my excuse for writing."

The Note of the Cuckoo.—A. M. H. writes from Bath:—"Having been much interested in the letters upon the note of the cuckoo which have appeared lately in NATURE NOTES, on hearing it for the first time this year, on April 25th, I took particular care to observe the interval. It was a clear, distinct, perfect fifth, A to D, repeated eight or nine times, then ending with a major third, F sharp to D. Once I heard the bird singing the major third, conclude with a distinct perfect fourth, G to D. Another cuckoo at the same time was singing major thirds. I must mention that the pitch by which I took note of the interval was higher than concert pitch, being philharmonic."

While dealing with this subject we may note that Miss Eva Milman, writing from Martin's Heron, Bracknell, Herts, records the appearance of the cuckoo on April 16th. And A. H. writes as follows:—"The cuckoo was first heard in Bramdean, Hampshire, on Tuesday, April 15th, and swallows were first seen the next day. I adopt a plan which I recommend to all who are lovers of birds. I not only feed them through the winter and spring, but I keep a pan of fresh water filled for them. Also I put tufts of cotton wool or wadding near at hand, which in the nesting season soon disappear."

Destruction of Birds of Prey in the Hebrides.—Surely the last paragraph of the article under the above heading in the April number must be a mistake. I have most of the dealers' catalogues; they vary little in price, and

offer eggs of the golden eagle at 25s., and osprey at 4s. The statement going abroad that £12 is given for single eggs of those birds is likely to produce a whole army of half-starved villagers, and so help the destruction our Society tries to prevent. If the owners of shootings could be induced to follow the example of the Duke of Sutherland, and order their keepers not to disturb the breeding places of the larger Raptorial birds, is the true remedy. Perhaps some of our members can bring influence to bear to that end.

THOMAS SIMPSON.

[Dr. Clark's statement was obviously intended to apply only to guaranteed British examples of the eggs in question, which—as every collector knows—have a far higher value than specimens obtained from abroad, which are readily procurable from a dealer. The high prices mentioned by Dr. Clark have long been well known to ornithologists. Mr. Robert Gray, in his "Birds of the West of Scotland" (1871) drew "attention to a fact communicated by Mr. John Batson to the *Times* about a year ago—namely, that printed lists are actually in circulation among keepers and shepherds [in Sutherlandshire], offering large prices for the eggs of birds of prey. . . . . Nothing but the strongest censure can be meted out to such collectors as would bribe a man in humble circumstances to procure eggs of the golden or white-tailed eagles, kite, or osprey, at the price of ten pounds for each specimen" (p. 10).—EDS.]

Miss Mitford's "Spicer."—Mrs. Haweis writes from Queen's House, Cheyne Walk, S.W., as follows:—"I am so much interested by the identification of Miss Mitford's Spicer (the *Saponaria officinalis*) that I write to say how grateful I should be if any correspondent of NATURE NOTES would send me a batch of roots that I may experiment with. I shall not shrink before so pretty a 'pest,' and, if any charitable stranger will so afflict me, I will gladly bear any expense he is put to."

Animal and Plant Names.—We have received lists and communications from the following contributors:—N. S. W.; E. F. P.; R. W.; G. S. D.; E. C. D.; G. C. G.; A. J. H.; T. R. A.; B. E. H.; E. H. Of these we hope to make use in an early number.

OFFICIAL NOTICES, &c.

THE Annual General Meeting of the Society is an event of such importance that we have placed an account of it as the first article for this month. Several matters arising from it will be dealt with in the next number of NATURE NOTES.

THE question of printing the names of new members of the Selborne Society in each number of the Magazine has been raised by several correspondents: but the number of new members is so large, and the space at our disposal so very inadequate to the demands upon it, that we are quite unable to do so at present. At the next meeting of Council the advisability of printing in pamphlet form a fresh list of all the members will be considered. This would, of course, obviate the necessity of printing the names in the Magazine.

WE have received several numbers of the *Selborne Magazine*, and some valuable suggestions, from Mr. Albert Keene, of Hammersmith, who has done much good work for the Society there. The Magazines have been distributed, and the suggestions shall be carefully borne in mind. We are also indebted for Magazines to Miss S. P. Dawes, of Ditchling Hassocks, who is most helpful in sending cuttings, &c.

SEVERAL members express their readiness to give 1s. or more yearly to the Magazine fund. Those intending to do so will please remember that we do not want the money to be sent now, only the names of those upon whom we might depend in case the idea of enlargement were to be carried into practice. It is particularly requested that subscriptions, and letters bearing on the general business of the Society, should *not* be forwarded to the Editors. Editorial communications should be addressed to the Rev. PERCY MYLES, 1, Argyle Road, Ealing, W.

Nature Notes:

The Selborne Society's Magazine.

No. 6. JUNE 14, 1890. Vol. I.

THE PLANT ALLUSIONS IN THE POEMS OF MATTHEW ARNOLD.

IN the early part of the present year, Sir Mountstuart Grant Duff, in a lecture delivered at the Richmond Athenæum on Matthew Arnold, when dwelling upon that eminent writer's careful and conscientious work, illustrated his methods by referring to the great accuracy which he showed in the references to botany in his poems. After explaining that Arnold's delight in flowers became much increased, "passed from its dormant stage into a very vivid life," after 1866, when he was induced to study botany by a friend, the lecturer continued:—"One of the most accurate of our critical botanists, himself a poet of no mean rank, and a most careful student of poetry,* once wrote to me of Mr. Arnold:—'Of all our poets, he does flowers best.'"

This lecture on Matthew Arnold by one who had been his very intimate friend, attracted much attention in many quarters. The passage quoted above specially struck the writer of the following paragraph in the Editorial programme of Nature Notes:—"*The Allusions to Birds and Flowers* which occur in our great poets will be noticed, and a series of articles is planned dealing with some of those masters of song who have found their highest inspiration in the reverent study of natural beauty, 'knowing that Nature never did betray the heart that loved her.'"

As Sir Mountstuart Grant Duff has been one of the principal supporters of the Selborne Society, a suggestion was made to him that he might find it possible to give some account of the allusions to Nature in Arnold's poems for insertion in Nature

* The name of this correspondent is not mentioned in the lecture; but the description given above seems to point to Lord de Tabley, better known perhaps as the Hon. J. Leicester Warren.

NOTES. In spite of very numerous calls upon his time, he has most kindly consented to do so, and we have the pleasure of laying before our readers this month the first instalment of his paper on that subject. Sir Mountstuart Grant Duff writes as follows:—

"In accordance with your wish, I have looked through Mr. Matthew Arnold's poems, with a view to collect for the benefit of your readers the principal passages in which he deals with the vegetable creation. I have had great pleasure in doing so, for there is not one amongst our singers whose allusions to it are more appropriate. The most convenient course will be to take the last edition of his poems, as arranged by himself, and to go through it in order. There are few references to flowers or plants save of the most general kind in the Early Poems, Narrative Poems and Sonnets, which are contained in the first volume. Here is one from *Resignation*:—

" 'The solemn wastes of heathy hill
Sleep in the July sunshine still;
The self-same shadows now, as then,
Play through this grassy upland glen;
The loose dark stones on the green way
Lie strewn, it seems, where then they lay;
On this mild bank above the stream,
(You crush them!) the blue gentians gleam.
Still this wild brook, the rushes cool,
The sailing foam, the shining pool!
These are not changed; and we, you say,
Are scarce more changed, in truth, than they.'

"Here is another from *Sohrab and Rustum*:—

. . . . " 'And he saw that Youth,
Of age and looks to be his own dear son,
Piteous and lovely, lying on the sand,
Like some rich hyacinth which by the scythe
Of an unskilful gardener has been cut,
Mowing the garden grass-plots near its bed,
And lies, a fragrant tower of purple bloom,
On the mown, dying grass—so Sohrab lay,
Lovely in death, upon the common sand.'

"The following is in the same poem:—

. . . " 'all down his cold white side
The crimson torrent ran, dim now and soil'd,
Like the soil'd tissue of white violets
Left, freshly gather'd, on their native bank,
By children whom their nurses call with haste
Indoors from the sun's eye;' . . . .

"The holly and the juniper are delightfully introduced at page 224, in the beautiful description in *Tristram and Iseult* which begins with the words:—

" 'The young surviving Iseult, one bright day,
Had wander'd forth.'

"Those for whom I write will like to have their attention called to the following passages among the lyric poems in the second volume:—

> "'They see the Indian
> Drifting, knife in hand,
> His frail boat moor'd to
> A floating isle thick-matted
> With large-leaved, low-creeping melon-plants,
> And the dark cucumber.
> He reaps, and stows them,
> Drifting—drifting;—round him,
> Round his green harvest-plot,
> Flow the cool lake-waves,
> The mountains ring them.'

"I do not know to what part of India this description refers. Melons in the southern part of that peninsula are much grown in the beds of the great rivers—the fruit coming to maturity just as the hot weather begins; but Mr. Arnold's habits of study were so careful that I am sure he could have produced chapter and verse for the proceedings of the Indian, as well as for those of his more northern brother, who appears in the next extract:—

> "'They see the Scythian
> On the wide stepp, unharnessing
> His wheel'd house at noon.
> He tethers his beast down, and makes his meal—
> Mares' milk, and bread
> Baked on the embers;—all around
> The boundless, waving grass-plains stretch, thick-starr'd
> With saffron and the yellow hollyhock
> And flag-leaved iris-flowers.'

"The transition from this scene to the English Midlands described in the first lines of *Bacchanalia* is complete:—

> "'The evening comes, the fields are still,
> The tinkle of the thirsty rill,
> Unheard all day, ascends again;
> Deserted is the half-mown plain,
> Silent the swaths! the ringing wain,
> The mower's cry, the dog's alarms,
> All housed within the sleeping farms!
> The business of the day is done,
> The last-left haymaker is gone.
> And from the thyme upon the height,
> And from the elder-blossom white
> And pale dog-roses in the hedge,
> And from the mint-plant in the sedge,
> In puffs of balm the night-air blows
> The perfume which the day foregoes.'

"The next passage I shall cite is from the *Youth of Man*, and belongs to the same kind of country:—

> "'Here they stand to-night—
> Here, where this grey balustrade
> Crowns the still valley; behind
> Is the castled house, with its woods,
> Which shelter'd their childhood—the sun

On its ivied windows; a scent
From the grey-walled gardens, a breath
Of the fragrant stock and the pink,
Perfumes the evening air.'

"With the elegiac poems which fill the second half of the second volume our extracts must become more numerous. The following are from the *Scholar Gipsy* :—

" ' Screen'd is this nook o'er the high, half reap'd field,
And here till sun-down, shepherd! will I be;
Through the thick corn the scarlet poppies peep,
And round green roots and yellowing stalks I see
Pale pink* convolvulus in tendrils creep;
And air-swept lindens yield
Their scent, and rustle down their perfumed showers
Of bloom on the bent grass where I am laid,
And bower me from the August sun with shade;
And the eye travels down to Oxford's towers.

. . . . . .

" ' And then they land, and thou art seen no more!
Maidens, who from the distant hamlets come
To dance around the Fyfield elm in May,
Oft through the darkening fields have seen thee roam,
Or cross a stile into the public way.
Oft thou hast given them store
Of flowers—the frail-leaf'd, white anemony,
Dark bluebells drenched with dews of summer eves,
And purple orchises with spotted leaves—
But none hath words she can report of thee.

" ' And, above Godstow Bridge, when hay-time's here
In June, and many a scythe in sunshine flames,
Men who through those wide fields of breezy grass
Where black-wing'd swallows haunt the glittering Thames,
To bathe in the abandon'd lasher pass,
Have often pass'd thee near
Sitting upon the river bank o'ergrown;
Mark'd thine outlandish garb, thy figure spare,
Thy dark vague eyes, and soft abstracted air—
But, when they came from bathing, thou wast gone!

. . . . . .

" ' But what—I dream! Two hundred years are flown
Since first thy story ran through Oxford halls,
And the grave Glanvil did the tale inscribe
That thou wert wander'd from the studious walls
To learn strange arts, and join a gipsy-tribe;
And thou from earth art gone
Long since, and in some quiet churchyard laid—
Some country-nook, where o'er thy unknown grave
Tall grasses and white flowering nettles wave,
Under a dark, red-fruited yew-tree's shade.' "

M. E. GRANT DUFF.

(*To be continued.*)

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* Mr. Arnold first wrote "blue convolvulus," but corrected the slip, as Mr. Keble, his godfather, did in the note in "The Christian Year," which, as originally penned, made the Rhododendron, not the Oleander, grow on the shores of Gennesaret.

A NATURALIST'S WHITSUNTIDE HOLIDAY.

ABOUT a mile north-east of Penmon Point, Anglesea, there rises abruptly from the sea the little island of Priestholm, or S. Seiriol. The bases of its precipitous, weather-beaten, limestone cliffs, are strewn with blocks of all sizes, torn from their faces by wind, frost and wave, their crevices and gullies the home of innumerable sea birds, not the least interesting of which is the puffin, from which the island derives its popular name. On the northern slope stands an old square tower with pointed roof, believed to be the remains of a church of twelfth century date, and at the extreme north-east end on the edge of a sixty-feet cliff a small four-roomed house, once a semaphore station of the Liverpool Dock Board.

The fact that the seas around swarmed with living creatures, and that the shores were carpeted with sea weed, often tempted the biologists of Liverpool to make Anglesea the centre of exploring expeditions, organised specially with the object of gaining a wider acquaintance with the marine fauna and flora of this section of the Irish Sea. That the object of these expeditions was to a certain extent gained has been proved by the issue, under the able editorship of Professor W. A. Herdman, of University College, Liverpool, of a bulky volume, entitled, *The First Report upon the Fauna of Liverpool Bay*.

The need of a permanent observing station somewhere in the neighbourhood and yet out of the reach of the mud and sand of the two great estuaries of the Mersey and the Dee, soon however made itself felt, and many a covetous eye was cast on the firmly-built though dismantled cottage, boldly facing the frequent north-east gales from its lofty perch on the cliffs of Puffin Island. The wish was in the present instance not only father to the thought but grandfather to the acquisition, for by the aid of kind friends, and through the untiring energy of a small band of workers, the forsaken observing station has now been transformed into a marine laboratory, over which proudly waves the blue and white ensign of the "L. M. B. C." A resident keeper takes daily observations, looks after the boats and appliances, and caters for the biologists who from time to time are glad to exchange the lecture room and laboratory for the freedom and sea breezes that are ever to be found on Puffin Island.

The value of a permanent observing station in furthering the work undertaken by the Liverpool Marine Biological Committee soon made itself felt, and a second volume of results was published in 1889, in which large additions to the previously published lists of animals and plants were recorded, and accounts given of many interesting experiments made on the abundant material obtained in the dredge and tow-net and on the shore. A Third Report is now in course of preparation, which promises to be even more valuable and interesting than the two which have preceded it.

Periodically, as the Whitsuntide holiday time comes round,

preparations are made by the local biologists for a general exodus from the city to the shores of Anglesea, and with a thoughtfulness and generosity which well deserve imitation, the expedition is provided with that all-important essential, a steamer, by the Liverpool Salvage Association. The "Hyæna" is a famous craft. She was a Government gun-boat in the Chinese wars, and in command of no less a person than General Gordon. Fitted up as she is with steam winches, electric light, and other apparatus employed in salvage work, she forms an admirable vessel for the peaceful purpose to which she is devoted during the three days the trip usually lasts. If her flat bottom and heavy spars permit of the possibility of *mal de mer* being thrown into the bill of fare, that undesirable sauce is accepted as a necessary evil, or treated with indifference by her passengers; if her not over-brilliant steaming power renders the journey a longer one than the average tourist might wish, there is the yarn and the song and good company to make the hours pass pleasantly until the seat of operation is reached.

On May 23rd a party of some thirty biologists from Liverpool, Sheffield, Manchester, Bangor and Edinburgh took advantage of freedom from engagements and fine weather to revisit the biological station, and carry out dredging and other biological operations on the Welsh coast. Some of the party left by ordinary passenger steamer, and arrived at Puffin Island in time to do some collecting on the shores at low tide. The island was aglow with pink and blue under the rays of the afternoon sun. The wild hyacinth and the sea thrift, safe from the sacrilegious hand of the vandal "Field Clubist," clothe the steep slopes with a variegated garment of blue and pink, lined with a golden fringe of *Teucrium Scorodonia*, and striped with the humble but ever-lovely daisy. Round the corners of the jagged cliffs the old-fashioned red-billed puffins watched us with inquisitive but fearless eyes, knowing right well that they and their nests were as safe as if they were floating in mid-Atlantic, and majestic gulls eyed us with curious interest as we scrambled beneath them, searching for their humbler relatives in each rock-pool and gully. With countless myriads of living forms hidden beneath the waves, or left behind by the tide on the shores, all waiting to be looked for and courting examination, surely the self-styled "naturalist" (!), who gathers but to cast away, might well give poor Mother Earth permission, at least for a few years, to reclothe, if she can, her bosom, torn bare by his selfish ignorance. In what respect is science benefited by the information which greeted me in a daily paper the morning I returned, that "Miss So-and-So had secured the prize of the day by collecting the rare *Lloydia serotina;*" or, that "Mr. Somebody had succeeded in unearthing a very rare fern."

Later in the evening the "Hyæna" arrived, and anchored off the island for the night. The interior of the little kitchen of the station presents a lively scene at these annual reunions.

The entire resources of the establishment are called into service, and deficiencies in accommodation, and entire absence of the luxuries, and occasionally of not a few of the necessities, of life, are only subjects for merriment and good-natured chaff.

On the following morning the "Hyæna" steamed down the Menai Straits, dredging and tow-netting as she went, Carnarvon Bay being reached early in the afternoon. The party then slowly worked their way up the southern coast of Anglesea, anchoring for the night in a sequestered bay known as Porth Dafarth. There, after nightfall, some interesting experiments, tried with great success on a previous occasion, were again made, viz., tow-netting by electric light. A large arc-lamp was hoisted to the mast-head, and tow-nets, each with a small electric light within, were lowered to the bottom. Hosts of the smaller marine Crustacea were thus captured, and it was possible to pull up by hand-net abundant specimens of Amphipoda, Cumacea, and Schizopoda, which were to be seen darting about in the bright path of the electric ray. So enthusiastic were some of those on board that they got up at three a.m., and tow-netted along the surface of the water, with the object of determining whether the animals then to be found were different from those captured by daylight. Their energy was rewarded by securing a plentiful haul of Copepoda in great variety.

The next day was spent in dredging and tow-netting along the coast, the prizes being several rare sponges and ascidians, along with abundance of *Comatula*, Holothurians, Nudibranchs, Zoophytes and Polyzoa. On returning to Porth Dafarth the electric experiments of the previous evening were repeated with success.

Monday morning brought with it the disagreeable knowledge that the holiday was at an end, and that there only remained the journey back to soot and civilization. Such regrets, however, were to a great extent tempered by the consciousness of success following on hard and healthy labour, and the knowledge not only that we were carrying home with us in the numerous collecting-jars in all probability many additions to the fauna and flora of the district, but that our three days' holiday on the sea had given each one of us a fresh stock of health and vigour wherewith to meet the less enjoyable, perhaps, but necessary labours and duties of city life. R. J. Harvey Gibson.

A SEABIRDS' ROCK AND ITS BRUTAL VISITORS.

E have more than once had occasion to mention the good work done by the *Daily Graphic* for the Selbornian cause. There could be no better example of this than the admirable article in that journal for May 31, on "A Visit to a Seabirds' Rock." The rock in question is the island of Grasholm, off Milford Haven, which the writer of the article describes as a spot of the greatest interest to ornithologists, its winged inhabitants including puffins, guillemots, kittiwakes,

razorbills, gannets, and even Solan geese. The *Graphic* correspondent was one of a peaceful party of naturalists and artists, like that which Mr. Harvey Gibson describes in his article on "A Naturalist's Whitsuntide Holiday," in this month's NATURE NOTES, and he was especially struck with the tameness of the birds, and their fearlessness of the human species. Of the events that befell we must give his own admirable description :—

"Every one of the hundred ledges of the orange-lichen covered rocks had its row or crowd of comical puffins watching our every movement and, when one of us was alone, appearing at the door of the tent; even the gannets, shy as they are, except at breeding time, no longer rose from their nest even at our near approach; indeed, when sketching, they would allow me to come as near to them as an artist usually is to his model. On Whit Monday morning I took my book to make a few quite close studies. As I quietly passed towards them, slowly and without any quick gesture, they permitted me to sit down among them and open my book with as little notice as if I were a comrade. Delighted with this foretasting of the millennium, I sat and made several outlines, which I forward, until suddenly I heard the crack of a rifle, and thought something impinged on a crag below. Then I became aware that one of H.M. submarine miners' steamers, named 'Sir Richard Fletcher,' had hove to beside the cliffs, and that some grey-clad young men aboard were indulging in the insensate practice of shooting at the beautiful birds whose snowy plumage offered so clear a mark.

"Presently some six young men landed, and, with the boat's crew, dispersed over the island, began shooting puffins and gulls. The noise and motion soon dispersed the gannets, which fled to sea, upon which some were soon floating dead. On returning over the island in the afternoon, I came upon one of the most brutal scenes I have ever witnessed. The gannet eyries were empty of their innocent population, and, as I sat by one, I saw above me the sailors hunting out the puffins from their holes, and killing them with sticks, while three men, in the costume and with the accent of gentlemen, were wandering along the ledges of the eyrie, taking the eggs of the gannets from every nest; and, not only so, but one man was taking egg after egg, not with any purpose of preservation, but simply flinging them as fast as he could gather them over the cliff, to smash upon the rocks below—a most wanton act, when it is remembered that the gannet only lays one egg. I saw him fling many, then I began to count, and before leaving, he flung over more than thirty, being about a third of the whole number originally upon that rock. The other rock had been despoiled completely before my arrival. I should have thought the man a maniac were it not that his companions were looking on, apparently with complacency, at his doings.

"When after the 'Sir Richard Fletcher' had sailed I visited the gannets' quarters, I found that of 200 nests within reach only two retained their eggs. The eyries are, for the present,

deserted, and over the whole island the birds are so affrighted that hardly any appear where there were this morning myriads, and across the island there is a trail of the marauders; here and there again, groups of little bird-corpses, ending at the landing-place, where a blood-stained dead gannet lies stretched on the rock, left by the slayer, around whose neck I sincerely wish it could be hung, like that of the fateful albatross, beside a sickening pool formed of the shells and contents of a large number of eggs smashed during almost every stage of incubation. Who these chick-smashers were I know not, but they must be followed by the bitterest contempt of every true sportsman and naturalist. If they be in Her Majesty's service, so flagrant an infringement of the Wild Birds' Preservation Act can hardly pass without due notice from the authorities."

This admirable account of a most disgraceful action is made more real to us by a number of illustrations in the *Daily Graphic*, which give a very vivid idea of the disgusting scene of cruel and cowardly slaughter.

The intense indignation which will be excited in every reader of NATURE NOTES at the atrocious conduct described above, must not be allowed to evaporate in stormy feeling or strong language. The Selborne Society would not be worthy of its reputation and would be neglecting its mission, if it failed to do all in its power in assisting to obtain evidence for corroboration of the account given above and to punish the ruffians whose conduct is so strongly and rightly condemned. It is to be hoped that they do not in any way belong to the Royal Navy, but, if unfortunately they do, that will be only a stronger reason for their being sharply taught that it is not allowed to bring disgrace with impunity upon that noble service. The well-deserved fate of the wretched Lieutenant who wantonly dislodged the Logan Rock shows that the Admiralty can sometimes visit such offences with condign punishment. That the miscreants had the costume and accent of gentlemen adds to their guilt, and is another proof, if proof were wanted, of the homely saying that "a well-dressed blackguard is the biggest blackguard of all."

[At the last Council meeting of the Selborne Society, held on June 11th, after the above article was in type, the opinions expressed in it were thoroughly endorsed by the Members of Council present, and unanimous resolutions were passed that communications should be immediately made: (1) to the Admiralty, directing their attention to the incident; (2) to the local constabulary, asking if a prosecution had been instituted; (3) to Mr. Bryce, M.P., Vice-President of the Selborne Society, and other members of Parliament, asking them to bring the matter before the House of Commons at the earliest possible opportunity. We learn that questions have already been placed on the notice paper of the House of Commons by Sir Hussey Vivian and others, of their intention to ask the Secretary of State for War whether he will cause inquiries to be made as to the persons by whom these infractions of the law were perpetrated; and whether, if no power exists to punish them by military law, he will cause prosecutions to be instituted against them.

At the moment of going to press we read the ludicrously inadequate reply of Mr. Brodrick to Mr. Webster's questions on the subject. The offence is admitted, excuses are made for the culprits, and they are to be "reprimanded"! The matter must not end here.—EDS.]

THE WOODLAND SCENERY OF THE NORTHERN HEIGHTS.

ONE by one, all the most beautiful spots round London are falling a prey to the builders, who spare nothing and treat fields, woods and gardens alike.

The "Northern Heights" have long been justly celebrated for the beautiful woodlands and hedgerows that adorn them. The Highgate Woods and Parliament Hill, with the pleasant undulating fields adjoining, have happily been rescued, but only just in time. Extensive as they are, one can but fear that before many years have elapsed, they will be oases in a surrounding wilderness of bricks and mortar; and this fear is more forcibly brought home by what the writer noticed during a recent evening's walk taken from East Finchley to Hampstead Heath. The road by which the walk was taken must be well-known to most dwellers in the district; it is broad and has an iron fence on either side, and has evidently been constructed not so much for the convenience of pedestrians, as to acquaint the public with what is proposed to be done with one of the loveliest stretches of pasture and woodland—almost forest land—near the metropolis. The intimation is, as usual, conveyed by notice-boards placed at intervals along the road, and worded as follows:—"This Land to be Let on Building Leases for the Erection of Residences of Good Class"—joyful news to the speculator and rich capitalist, but distasteful enough to all lovers of nature. For some distance the road passes through fields, then it winds through an oak-wood with patches of undergrowth, the open spaces covered with brake-fern and wild flowers (notice-boards appearing at intervals just the same), till at length we emerge on the Spaniard's Road, close to the inn of the same name. So another stretch of country is to be swept away, and ere long the pick-axe, steam saw and spade will have completed the work of destruction. Of course there is only one remedy—the purchase of this estate as another open space for the benefit of the millions of inhabitants of the "cluster of cities," as London was not long ago aptly described, I think by the Chairman of the London County Council—an expensive remedy indeed, but surely not too expensive, when one thinks of all the abundant wealth existing in the metropolis, wealth too often directed into unprofitable channels. Although the Selborne Society aims at the preservation of woodland and rural scenery for its own sake, and as a protest against insults daily done to Nature all over England, there is not a member of the Society, I feel convinced, who would not rejoice at the rescue of such a spot, not merely for its own beauty, but as another means of giving health and happiness to the numberless dwellers in what Sir Frederick Leighton so well called in the first number of NATURE NOTES, "this black and monstrous metropolis."

ARCHIBALD L. CLARKE.

BOOKS FOR NATURE LOVERS.

Some Bird Books.

He would have no easy task who should undertake to decide whether birds or flowers have the stronger hold upon the affections of the nature-lover. Perhaps, like competitors for Academic honours, on whose relative merits it is impossible to decide, they should be "bracketed equal." It is certain, however, that these two between them occupy a far larger proportion of the literature devoted to natural objects than all the others put together, and the number of volumes is still increasing. Three of the most recent of these are now before us.

The first and most important is the handsome *Manual of British Birds*, by Mr. Howard Saunders (Gurney and Jackson). In a volume of some eight hundred pages we have a complete enumeration, with illustrations of nearly every species, of all the birds having any claim to be considered as British. Only two pages are allowed to each bird, no matter how interesting or varied its history may be; and Mr. Howard Saunders is to be congratulated on the skill with which he has condensed into this small space a complete and readable account of every species. A systematic sketch of the genera is given in an introduction of thirty pages; in this way the appearance of the book is made less terrifying to the ordinary reader than would otherwise be the case, while the student is not deprived of the more technical characters which he may wish to consult for purposes of comparison. The illustrations are the excellent ones which add so much to the attractiveness of Yarrell's great work, supplemented by "woodcuts of many recent wanderers to Great Britain."

The number of our birds is thus summarised:—"The birds considered as British in this work are 367 in number, exclusive of several forms—only noticed—respecting which there are conflicting opinions. The species which have been ascertained to breed within the United Kingdom during the present century may be taken as 200; about 70 non-hardy wanderers have occurred fewer than six times, and 59 others are more or less infrequent visitors; while 38 species annually make their appearance in migration or during the colder months, in some portion of a long, narrow group of islands in the surrounding waters."

Mr. W. Warde Fowler's *Year with the Birds* (Macmillan) has reached a third edition. It first appeared in 1886, and this is sufficient proof of the favour in which it is held. There is no need to comment at length upon a work which has deservedly obtained general approval, but we are glad to bring it to the notice of such Selbornians as may not already know it. The book is thoroughly Selbornian in tone, simple, loving and observant. "For several years past I have contrived, even on the busiest or the rainiest Oxford mornings, to steal out for twenty minutes or half-an-hour, soon after breakfast, to let my senses exercise themselves on things outside me." Thus simply Mr. Fowler begins his narration. The habit began when he was "an ardent fisherman and daily within reach of trout:" now "the rod has given way to a field-glass, and the passion for killing has been displaced by a desire to see and know: a revolution which I consider has been beneficial, not only to the trout, but to myself;" and, we heartily add, to the readers of these records. There are two chapters on Oxford birds, two on those of the Alps, two on those of "A Midland Village," and one—different in style, but equally interesting—on "The Birds of Virgil." Some notes and a good index conclude this capital book, the attractiveness of which is enhanced by Mr. Bryan Hook's illustrations.

Mr. Charles Dixon adds another to his already numerous bird-books, under the title *Stray Feathers from Many Birds* (W. H. Allen and Co.). The title is not an inapt one, for the twenty-four chapters which make up this handsome volume range over a great variety of topics, and have no very intimate connection one with another, except that the main subject of all is the same. The book contains much interesting reading, but we miss from it that personal observation which lends such a charm to Mr. Warde Fowler's volume.

SHORT NOTICES OF BOOKS.

When a family which includes some young Selbornians betakes itself to a marine watering place, a thoughtful paterfamilias will be sure to provide them with some little manual by the aid of which they may systematise and arrange the varied knowledge of nature which they acquire in their rambles by the shore. Even at the present day, when the press teems with popular works on Natural History, it would be difficult to select a better guide than a handbook familiar to the last generation, the *Sea-side Book* of Professor Harvey, the fourth edition of which we have received from Messrs. Gurney and Jackson, the successors of the well-known publishing house of Van Voorst. In this work the famous Irish algologist not only deals with the sea-weeds—his own special subject of study—but discusses the physical laws which cause the motions of the world of waters, and describes at length the various animals which inhabit the rocks and sands of the sea-shore, and gives many interesting details as to the microscopic wonders of the sea. Sea-side plants and birds are also treated of, and a large amount of information is given as to the best method of securing treasure (faunal and floral treasure, not the buried spoil of ancient pirates) by dredging. Professor Harvey follows Mr. Yarrell in assigning all manner of virtues to a fish diet: if you want to be healthy, wealthy, and wise, eat fish; if you wish to immensely increase your intellectual faculties, eat fish; if you desire to properly carry out your religious obligations, eat fish—at certain times. The Irish priests, according to some writers, formerly allowed themselves considerable laxity in this matter, and ate good Solan geese at fast times on the plea that, as they came from barnacles, they must be shell fish, and as the barnacles grew on trees, they were not far removed from vegetables. While Professor Harvey quotes a passage to this effect from an old Dutch book of travels, he is careful to avoid any definite statement which might offend the sensitiveness of his fellow-countrymen. Perhaps the story originated from some witty Father Burke of the seventeenth century, who thought he had a good opportunity of testing the gullibility of a Dutch tourist.

Pond Life: Algæ and allied Forms, by T. Spencer Smithson, is one of a series published by Swan Sonnenschein and Co. This little book is so much better than most of its class that its coming is a pleasant surprise. The author shows a personal acquaintance with the things he writes about, not possessed by the writers of much more ambitious books on the subject. The valuable part of his work is the information he gives to the young collector as to likely places for specific forms of fresh-water Algæ. He is, moreover, well versed in the more scientific aspect of his subject, though perhaps rather daring in the analogies he draws between these low forms and higher plants. Perhaps in a future edition the author may see his way to recommending the one-sixth inch objective for a high power in place of the quarter-inch; to giving directions for more frequent examinations on the ordinary slide or hanging drop rather than in the line box, and for mounting specimens. We heartily wish the book earnest students and many of them.

We continue to receive each month the Field Club (Elliot Stock), ably edited by the Rev. Theodore Wood, who has just been elected a member of the Council of the Selborne Society. Some perfervid Selbornians seem to think the typical "Field Clubman" is a mere greedy spoliator of Nature. Even if this rather uncharitable estimate were true, such a creature could not fail to learn better things from the magazine provided for his benefit.

SELBORNIANA.

"Porriwiggles."—Miss A. M. Buckton writes from Weycombe, Haslemere:—"The following extract from a letter of Lord Tennyson's may be of interest to the readers of Nature Notes:—'Farringford, Feb. 5th, 1890. . . . .

Apropos of your slug anecdote, let me tell you one of the tadpole. Porriwiggles, they call them provincially—a very good name—"porr" for the lumpish head and "iwiggles" for the tail. Once, when a boy, I put my thumb into a little pool that was full of them, and held it there for some time; they swarmed about it and sucked at it, till I took it out, as rough as the finger of an overworked seamstress.'"

"The Sea-blue Bird of March."—The Sea-blue bird of March is, in my judgment, not the Kingfisher. It does not flit from bush to bush, and is not found among larch plantations. *Cf.* the verse in "In Memoriam," xc., i., Anyone who carefully notes the colour of the March hedgerows will observe how their peculiar colour accentuates the green and yellow and blue of the little blue-tit's suit of sea-blue. Readers of Lord Tennyson, and those who know him personally, must have noted how entirely it would fit in with the Laureate's nice observation to speak of the blue-tit as sea-blue. It is veritably the sea-blue bird of March, never again so noticeable as in that month as far as colour goes.

H. D. RAWNSLEY.

[The Editorial statement in the April number of NATURE NOTES was written with a distinct remembrance of having heard from Lord Tennyson himself that the Kingfisher was the bird meant. To make assurance doubly sure, our President was again asked the question, with the result that we can state authoritatively that by the "Sea-blue bird of March" was meant the Kingfisher, which Lord Tennyson used to notice first in that month of the year by the Lincolnshire rivers.—EDS.]

Righteous Indignation.—The Rev. H. D. Rawnsley writes later on:—"Will you raise your protest against the needless rooting-up of ferns and flowers in our Lake District, and elsewhere, as the tourist season is close upon us. The Swiss 'Selborne Society' prints notices to the effect that the Alpine flowers are fast disappearing, and the public are warned that those flowers can be far better propagated from seed than from root, and they are invited to go to the Alpine Gardens at Zurich and obtain what they want. Two other notes of alarm please sound. One against the needless cutting of names on trees. The Knight Wood Oak—the King of the New Forest—is likely to be destroyed by the pernicious practice of taking away small bits of the bark. I counted last week 230 new cuttings at the rind of this remarkable tree's stem. The other note we need sounding again, is against wanton destruction of rare birds. Last week, whilst lunching with Lord Tennyson at Freshwater, I heard the news brought in that a kite, a buzzard, and a hoopoe had been shot in the island. I need not say that very strong indignation was expressed. As good luck would have it, two members of your Society (vice-presidents) were present, and are able to bear witness both to the evil news, and also to the way in which your president was distressed by these barbarous and shortsighted acts of butchery among our feathered visitants. When shall we learn to entertain angels unawares?"

Birds' Sense of Time.—It has often been said that birds cannot count further than five, since the well-worn story of the rooks and the five men with their guns. Has their sense of time ever been tested? We caught last year a young and helpless blackbird on our lawn, and to protect it from cats hung it up in a cage in my balcony. It could not feed itself, and beat itself against the wires till its face was bloody, to our great perplexity and pain. However, in a very short time the parent blackbirds found it out, and began feeding it through the bars. By a careful adaptation of mirrors we were able to watch them easily, though the birds were very wild. The punctuality of the parents was most remarkable, for *every ten minutes*, as the clock-hands pointed, one or other blackbird came back with worm or crumb or grub — how obtained, and at what cost of labour and toil, with such strict regularity is a marvel to me; but this happened for several consecutive days, till the young one was better fledged and ceased to sit all day with his mouth open, so that we judged him fit to go abroad. We scattered some bread crumbs about the cage, to give the parents a little rest, and they were intelligent enough to take the hint and poke them through the wires when they thought themselves unobserved, though the young blackbird had not a notion of picking them up when placed in his cage. At last we let him fly, and for several

days the birds haunted the near trees and sang to us as if gratefully. Perhaps Selbornians will take note of the habits of birds in feeding their young, and make a memorandum of the spells of time which various species require for healthy mastication and digestion. My blackbirds were well able to count ten, but not eleven, in minutes.

M. E. HAWEIS.

The Nightingale in the Thames Valley.—Mr. Albert C. Keen writes from 91, King Street West, Hammersmith :—"Many readers of NATURE NOTES will be agreeably surprised to learn that during the past and some recent early summers a nightingale has been in the habit of singing in two or three of the old-fashioned gardens that lie close to the Middlesex end of Hammersmith Bridge, on the right as you approach the bridge, and within a few hundred yards of busy King Street, Hammersmith. One of the gardens thus honoured is that of Rigby House, once the residence of Sir Charles Wheatstone, the eminent electrician."

On the other hand, Mr. F. C. Hodgson, of Twickenham, writes to the *Times* of May 29th, asking persons who take an interest in such subjects, whether they have observed that the number of nightingales singing is less than usual this year. "In this neighbourhood we generally have a fair number, but this year I have only heard one, and that one very seldom. In most of the favourite haunts of the bird I have heard none this year. During a fortnight I lately spent in the south of the Isle of Wight I heard but one, though I was out of doors at all times in the day and the weather was highly favourable for them. To-day I spent three or four hours out of doors at Horton—Milton's Horton, which ever since his days has been famous for nightingales—but though I heard many other birds singing, I heard not one nightingale. I should be interested to know if the same scarcity has been observed in other parts of the country, particularly in the eastern counties, where they are usually so abundant."

Birds and Bonnets.—We have to acknowledge several extracts kindly sent us by that veteran naturalist and humanitarian, the Rev. F. O. Morris, of Nunburnholme Rectory, Yorkshire. Out of the number we have pleasure in printing the following letter on the use of birds as trimming for ladies' bonnets, which seems to point to the dawning of a new and happier era in the history of the fashion-book :—

"I take the opportunity of the present change to spring fashions to draw the attention of your readers to the almost entire absence of the use of birds as a trimming in hats. This custom is during the coming spring apparently to be, for a time at least, abandoned, the preference being given to imitation flowers, which, regarded merely from an æsthetic point of view, must surely prove as ornaments vastly preferable to that which cannot but convey, at any rate to those whose opinion is of any worth, a repulsive idea of murder—'murder of this best of harmless beings,' as Browning has it. The more I have inquired into the matter the more I am convinced that in many instances the wearers of the remains of the poor tortured birds have not really thought about the subject at all ; at any rate have given to it no thought whatever, with regard to the excessive cruelty necessarily involved. One example alone may convey to the minds of some who have not given the subject even a passing thought, a slight idea of what the wearing of wings may involve. The following is an extract from Yarrell's *History of British Birds* :—'Some years ago, when the plumes of birds were much worn in ladies' hats, the barred wings of the young kittiwake were in great demand for the purpose, and vast numbers were slaughtered at their breeding haunts. . . . Fishing smacks with extra boats and crews used to commence their work of destruction at Lundy Island by daybreak on August 1st, continuing this proceeding for upwards of a fortnight. In many cases *wings were torn off wounded birds before they were dead, the mangled victims being tossed back into the water.* . . . Allowing for the starved nestlings, it is well within the mark to say that at least nine thousand of these inoffensive birds were destroyed during the fortnight.'

"It is most sincerely to be hoped that as now for a brief time this spring's fashion may cause the temporary laying aside of birds as trimmings, all those interested in the suppression of an unwarrantable destruction of bird life will, in every way in their power, endeavour to enlighten the minds of the ignorant and to gain the sympathies of the feeling ; so that when the rapid changes of fashion again tend

to bring with them a recurrence of the bird adornment, there may be so strong an opposition to the re-introduction of this barbarous fashion that a less questionable mode must perforce be adopted, to adorn that part of the human family which should be the first to encourage all that is gentle, humane, and Christian."

The Earliest Cuckoo.—The Rev. A. Rawson writes from Fallbarrow, Windermere:—"In the May number of NATURE NOTES, page 79, Mr. Rawnsley says, 'The first cuckoo was heard here in the Keswick Valley, on April 2nd.' He must surely be mistaken. In their annual migrations to this country the cuckoos probably strike the English coast from Hampshire to Norfolk, and will be heard first within those limits. Nearly forty years' observation of the arrival of migrants in Kent has given April 3rd as the earliest date, and this was most unusual, April 11th being the next earliest, while the 'mean' date was about April 16th. If I remember rightly, this question was discussed in *The Field* not long ago, and the mean date of arrival for this country was given April 12th or 13th. Mr. Rawnsley does not say whether the observation was his own, or of his *paid* observers. The imitation of the note of the cuckoo is of the most simple and easiest kind, and it requires a most practised ear to distinguish between the real and the unreal. I merely write in the interests of ornithology; accurate observers are very much needed, but I question if we can rely on boys who are *paid* for an early (or the earliest) intimation of the appearance of birds whose look they do not know, as I have often practically proved. If Mr. Rawnsley can *verify* the fact, it is worth noting, for if an unusual one in the South-east of England, it is doubly so in the North-West: the occurrence is probably unique."

Outrages in Ireland.—We owe the following extract to the kindness of Mr. John O'Leary, a high authority on all matters relating to Ireland. It is from a letter to the *Daily Express*, by Mr. Allan Ellison, who writes from Trinity College, Dublin, and calls attention to "the wanton slaughter of one of our rarest and most beautiful birds which, in defiance of the law, is carried on within a few miles of our city [Dublin]. The lesser tern (*Sterna minuta*) is a scarce summer visitor to this country from May to September, and breeds in small numbers at a few places along our coasts. It may be found breeding on the coasts of Dublin and Wicklow, in one place within six miles of the General Post Office. Here there were a few years ago about fifty pairs nesting annually, but, owing to ruthless persecution, I doubt if there are this year as many as a dozen. Even of these a good many have been shot within the last fortnight, since their arrival in the country; and a day or two ago ten or twelve fresh specimens were seen in the shop of a Dublin taxidermist, ready mounted for hat-trimming, a use for which, on account of its beauty, this bird has always been a favourite with the fair sex; consequently it fetches a very high price. The public must bear in mind that to shoot these birds, or to have in possession freshly killed specimens at the present season is a breach of the Wild Birds' Protection Act, and that persons doing so are liable to a severe penalty. Before the Act was passed numbers of 'sportsmen' and holiday makers used to visit the breeding places of some of our sea-coast birds, and work an indiscriminate slaughter of the helpless birds and their young on their nesting rocks, simply for the cruel pleasure of killing them. Of late years this practice has almost become obsolete, for the most part without the necessity of enforcing the Act; but surely in a case like the present, when one of our most uncommon birds is still ruthlessly slaughtered for the profit of a few individuals, the law ought to be vindicated and offenders punished."

The Song of Birds.—We have received many communications on this subject. Dr. Francis, of Richmond, sends us the following lines, not so much for their poetical merit, as for the accuracy with which they imitate the note of the American robin—

When the willows gleam along the brooks,
And the grass grows green in sunny nooks,
In the sunshine and the rain
I hear the robin in the lane,
  Singing "cheerily,
    Cheer up, cheer up;
  Cheerily, cheerily,
    Cheer up."

When spring hopes seem to wane,
I hear the joyful strain—
A song at night, a song at morn,
A lesson deep to me is borne,
Hearing "cheerily,
Cheer up, cheer up;
Cheerily, cheerily,
Cheer up."

The lines have no name attached to them, but are taken from *Nehrling's North American Birds*, now being published in parts by Wesley and Son.

The Rev. A. Rawson calls attention to the following extract from White's *Natural History of Selborne*:—"A friend remarks that many of his owls hoot in B flat, but that one went almost 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?"—From quarto edition of 1813, p. 14.

Miss Agnes Martelli sends the following letter from Mr. John James Carey, of Ronceval, Guernsey:—"One night last year I noticed the note of the cuckoo repeated several times. Once I counted 118, and thought this rather unusual, but this year the call far exceeded this number. On the night of the 8th May, a lovely moonlight, a cuckoo, perched on a tree opposite my window, awoke me by constant calls. This was at 1.30 a.m. He ran on an uninterrupted note of 415 times, then ceased for a short time, and, having taken breath, commenced again. I counted up to 600, then, fearing that I might forget the hundreds, I produced paper and pencil, dotting down every hundred. My friend ran up to 2,683, not including the 415 calls. There were short intervals of a few seconds, as if wanting breath, and once or twice he called a single 'cook,' but after two hours (for it was 3.30), I thought I had satisfied my mind on the vocal powers of this bird, and feeling very sleepy I left him still going on."

Albino Birds. — Mr. W. G. Wheatcroft, Secretary of the Bath Branch, writes:—My attention has recently been called to this subject by a lady from Norfolk. Miss Mildred Edwards, of Hardingham Hall, in a letter to my wife of the 14th inst., observes:—"It may interest you to hear that we have just had brought us from one of our plantations an entirely *white* rook. It had been evidently mobbed by the others. It is *extremely* ugly, has white legs and blue eyes, the pupils having a ghastly pinkish tinge in some lights." Selbornians will doubtless call to mind the following passage from *The Natural History of Selborne*:—"A gentleman in this neighbourhood had two milk-white rooks in one nest. A booby of a carter, finding them before they were able to fly, threw them down and destroyed them, to the regret of the owner, who would have been glad to have preserved such a curiosity in his rookery. I saw the birds myself nailed against the end of a barn, and was surprised to find that their bills, legs, feet, and claws were milk-white. I have come across a goodly number of albinos among plants, but only one or two in the animal world."

On this subject Mr. T. G. Ward, of Leighton Buzzard, sends the following notes of albino birds and mammals seen at North Marston:—

"On the 11th of August, 1887, a snow-white specimen of the yellow wagtail was observed by a friend of mine. The next morning he saw it again, and advanced within a few yards of it before it flew away. Its flight and chirrup were quite normal. Several white starlings have been observed at various times by different persons. White sparrows have also been taken in this district. In the winter of 1885, a sparrow was caught in a trap with the crown of its head pure white, and one was seen on the 6th of November, and again on the 18th, with its back and tail quite white. I have been told by a person of good authority that he saw a white blackbird in his orchard a few years ago. One morning as I was out for a walk I saw a pure white stoat; this was in the winter-time. White rabbits have been shot in this neighbourhood."

Home Reading Union.—This Society seems to be one which would be most suitable to many Selbornians who are anxious to carry on their studies of Natural History in a systematic manner and with the co-operation of others. It has been formed for the purpose of developing a taste for recreative and instructive reading among all classes of the community, and directing home study to definite ends, so as on the one hand to check the spread of pernicious literature among the young, and on the other to remedy the waste of energy and lack of purpose so often found among those who have time and opportunity for a considerable amount of reading. Its objects are (1.) To draw up and publish courses of reading adapted to the tastes and requirements of different classes of readers, especially (*a*) young people, (*b*) artisans, (*c*) general readers. (2.) To publish for each class of readers a cheap monthly Magazine giving introduction to the prescribed books, answers to questions, and other helps. The readers will be organised, as far as possible, into local circles under suitable leaders; certificates will be issued to those who have completed regular courses of study; and such further assistance as experience shows to be practicable will be rendered. (3.) To organise summer assemblies at convenient centres, when lectures will be delivered by experienced teachers, social gatherings held, and excursions arranged. Among the works which are selected for reading in the Junior Science Course we find Kirby's *Butterflies, Moths, and Beetles;* Paul Bert's *First Year of Scientific Knowledge;* Bower's *Science of Every-Day Life;* and Humphrey's *Insect Ways on Summer Days*. In the Senior Course, among others recommended, are Darwin's *Voyage of the Beagle*, Huxley's *Crayfish*, and Grant Allen's *Evolutionist at Large*; a selection which shows that those who made it belong to an "advanced" School of Biology. Mrs. Haweis warmly recommends this Society, which is, she says, an admirable one, growing fast and promising much greater things in the days that are to come than it can show at present.

Birds Singing as they Fly.—Looking over some past volumes of the *Spectator* newspaper to-day, I came across a review of a poem called "Mano: a poetical history," by Mr. [now Canon] Richard Watson Dixon, in which occurs the following line, addressed to a lark:—

"Thou only bird that singest as thou flyest."

Is not this a—possibly pardonable—mistake? The cuckoo, about whose claim to be a singing-bird there may be two opinions, certainly "sings as he flies." And the other day I saw a blackbird fly off in the middle of his song, and continue singing as he flew to another perch, there being a curious want of harmony between the movement of his wings and the rhythms of his song. I think I have seen a missel thrush do the same. Perhaps some of your readers may be able to support these instances by others. The subject is rather interesting, as it marks the great difference between the breathing powers of birds and human beings.

F. W. B.

A Singing Mouse.—Some weeks ago a singing mouse was heard and seen every evening in the kitchen of this house. The animal, a very small one, was audible behind the stove, the warbling became more and more clear, and then the songster would come out on the hearth, still continuing to utter the curious sounds, which somewhat resembled the notes of a linnet or wren, only of course they were less powerful. This mouse became very tame, picking up crumbs which were thrown to it, and then resuming its song. Great care was taken to avoid frightening it, but in a month or so its visits became rarer, and finally ceased. Lately the servants have heard two songs at the same time, but the singers have not shown themselves. No doubt some of your correspondents can relate similar experiences. I shall be interested in any information on the subject. Is the phenomenon rare or of frequent occurrence? E. E. P.

[At a recent meeting of the Linnean Society Mr. J. E. Harting exhibited alive a so-called "singing mouse," which had been captured at Maidenhead a week previously, and which uttered sounds like the subdued warbling of a linnet. He desired to be informed whether the cause usually assigned for the phenomenon was correct—namely, some obstruction or malformation of the trachea. Professor Stewart stated that he had observed alive, and dissected when dead, a similar specimen, and had found no trace of any organic disease, or malformation.]

A Brave Comrade.—Miss Harriet Peyton sends us from Cwmrhaiadr, Machynlleth, an account of the following interesting incident:—"In this wild mountainous region from which I write, Buzzard Hawks are not uncommon, and on one occasion our keeper, seeing two of them, shot and wounded one severely, and, in fact, thought he had killed it, as it began to drop. At this moment the other hawk flew under it, supporting it on its back, and carrying it along 200 yards or more at a stretch. As soon as the support was withdrawn, the wounded bird began to fall, and again its friendly mate supported it in the same manner, and actually carried it across a valley, half a mile wide, to some very precipitous rocks, where they were lost sight of."

Footpath Preservation.—We have received the Annual Report of the National Footpath Preservation Society for 1888-9, and gladly call the attention of Selbornians to a body which has a special claim upon their sympathy. "This Society"—we quote its prospectus—was "formed for the preservation of ancient Foot and Bridle Paths, and all other Rights of Way by Land and Water, Fishing, Vacant Spaces, as Village Greens, Roadside slips of Land, &c. It may be remarked that, had such a Society been established fifty years ago, a considerable number of footpaths (which are as much highways as roads) would have been saved to the public. Public footpaths intersect the country in every direction. They are of the utmost use, and afford an unfailing source of healthy recreation and innocent enjoyment to all sections of the community; young and old, rich and poor, are alike interested in their preservation, and yet we know that such public ways have, in innumerable cases, been stopped with impunity. It is, therefore, of the greatest importance that the existence of these rights of way should not be left to chance, or to the casual efforts of individuals, but that they should be fixed on such a basis as would secure them against attacks."

During the past year, ninety-four cases of footpath stopping and encroachments have been brought under the notice of the Society, and, in many instances, the action of the Society has resulted in the removal of the grievance. Twelve local footpaths' societies are affiliated to the central body, as well as twenty-one Local Boards, fifteen Corporations and Ratepayers' Associations, and twenty-seven field clubs, and similar bodies. The report, price 6d., and all information, may be obtained from the Secretary, Mr. H. Allnutt, 42, Essex-street, Strand, W.C. An annual subscription of 5s. entitles to membership.

Wild Birds and Maize.—The Rev. F. M. Millard writes from Otham Parsonage, Maidstone:—"We keep a few Bantams, and we have been in the habit of throwing out wheat for them. But the sparrows used to take so large a share of this that I have now given them maize, unbroken, instead. The results are rather amusing: the sparrows try their best, but can make very little of it. Greenfinches (whom, except in snowy weather, I have not seen so near the windows before) seem to succeed rather better, but not much. But the Blue Tit, though so much smaller, manages much better. He carries off a grain to a rose-bush growing against the wall: he holds it firmly between his little claws and pecks away at the inner side of the grain, much as I have seen a Nuthatch hammer at a nut wedged in the bark of one of our oak-trees. Master Tommy's appetite seems insatiable; but I don't like to grudge him, his ways are so pretty."

WORK OF THE BRANCHES OF THE SELBORNE SOCIETY.

It has been pointed out by several readers that the account of the Selborne Society's work in the last number of NATURE NOTES gives a very inadequate idea of the size, income and importance of the Society, inasmuch as it deals only with the work of the Central Council, and omits all mention of the very numerous and energetic branches, which in their continual increase are covering the whole land.

In order that we might be able to give a complete account of the present position of the branches, circulars have been sent to all the Honorary Secretaries of Branches, asking them to supply information on several definite subjects. Unfortunately this request has not been complied with in some instances, so that we are for the present unable to compile the complete account of branch work, which we had hoped to lay before our readers. Doubtless, however, the whole of the Secretaries will have sent in their reports by next month, when we hope to give the results in NATURE NOTES.

Meanwhile we may mention a most successful meeting held a few days since for the inauguration of the Selborne Society in the New Forest District. It took place at Lymington, and had the advantage of being very fully reported in a well-written paper, the *Lymington Chronicle*. We have often acknowledged the obligations of the Selborne Society to the press; and in the present instance we find that in the newspaper in question not only an interesting account of the proceedings was given, but a leading article was devoted to a vigorous advocacy of the claims upon the public of the Selborne Society. The number of copies of the *Lymington Chronicle* which have been sent to us by various correspondents proves that its goodwill was thoroughly appreciated by local Selbornians.

The following account of the meeting is abridged from that given in the paper mentioned above. The meeting was held in the Lymington Town Hall, the Hon. John Scott Montagu presiding, and there was a large and fashionable attendance, the chief attraction of the meeting being an illustrated lecture on the migration of birds by the Rev. H. D. Gordon, M.A., of Harting, near Petersfield. Mrs. Martelli and Miss Agnes Martelli (secretary to the "Northern Heights" branch of the Selborne Society) came from London to attend the meeting. These ladies are of the family of the illustrious Gilbert White, of Selborne, Mrs. Martelli (*née* Miss White) being daughter of the Rev. F. H. White, Abbots Ann, Andover, Hants. The Rev. H. E. Bull, of Milford, and his sister, Miss Gertrude Bull, of Southampton, were most energetic in making known the objects of the Society, and in creating the interest in its proceedings which resulted in the very influential meeting. The chairman ably advocated Selbornian principles, and said that it would afford Lord Montagu and himself the greatest pleasure to give every help in their power to a movement which was so admirable in its objects. Mr. Gordon's lecture on "The Longevity of Birds in connection with Migration" was a very interesting one, and we much regret that we are unable to reproduce some of it in NATURE NOTES. We must refer our readers to the admirable synopsis given in the *Lymington Chronicle*. Mr. Bull, while referring with pleasure to the presence of the Liberal candidate, Mr. King, side by side with his Conservative opponents, advised those present to put their politics aside for a moment and to join together on the common ground of the furtherance of the objects of the Selborne Society. We commend Mr. Bull's advice to his namesake, John. It is most refreshing to find at Selborne meetings the Liberal lamb and the Tory lion (or *vice versâ*) lying down peaceably together, while the humane principles of the Society forbid any lurking suspicion that this fraternising may terminate in the gentler animal being compelled to take an inside seat.

Another very pleasant gathering which took place during the past month was that of the Lower Thames Valley Branch. This branch probably occupies the premier position with regard to numbers and income. It is composed of three divisions, Richmond, Ealing, and Hammersmith, has a royal duke as its president, and an imposing list of vice-presidents, headed by the name of the Countess Russell. It had last year more than 200 members and an income of over £70, sending a contribution of £7 to the Central Council. But perhaps the most hopeful sign of the Lower Thames Valley Branch is its very efficient juvenile section. One of the reviewers on the staff of NATURE NOTES lately asked if the Selborne Society were established in any public or private schools, "and if not, why not?" That inquiring reviewer would have had his laudable curiosity amply satisfied if he had been present at the last meeting of the Lower Thames Valley Selbornians. Upwards of eighty children, or rather young people, ranging from eighteen to eight, form a most enthusiastic juvenile section, which is the creation of Miss Annie Wallis, the principal of the flourishing Richmond High School. This lady is well known as an educationalist;

she is a warm advocate of the advantages of nature study in the work of education, and she has the secret of communicating her opinions and enthusiasm to others. The youthful Selbornians from the Richmond High School have during the past year shown in various ways their ardour in the pursuit of natural history. They have done some very creditable work in the study of the flora of the Lower Thames Valley, and they have been the originators of a most enjoyable form of amusement in the first Selbornian dance. They have before them for the present year an extensive programme of botanical research. It was for their benefit chiefly that the "May meeting" was held in the extensive gymnasium attached to the High School, which is always placed at the disposal of the Selborne Society for meetings. The whole of the wall space was covered by a collection of valuable natural history specimens lent by various members and friends. Some admirable collections from an educational point of view were displayed, and were much appreciated by a large body of visitors. Much energy was exerted by Mr. F. W. A. Clarke, the hon. secretary, and Mr. T. F. Wakefield in procuring the materials for such a successful exhibition. After the various exhibits had been examined under the guidance of skilled scientific cicerones, a meeting was held, with the Rev. Percy Myles in the chair. A very valuable paper by Dr. Francis and his son Mr. William Francis was read by the latter. It was a concise guide to the admirable type-collection of British Lepidoptera (a selection from his large and well-known general collection), exhibited by Dr. Francis, and forming distinctly the most interesting and instructive portion of the whole exhibition. A paper was also read by Mr. T. F. Wakefield, setting forth in a pleasing manner some of the leading facts of entomology.

At the close of the general meeting there was held a numerously-attended meeting of the Committee, amongst whom it was pleasant to see Mr. King, the "father" of the Lower Thames Valley Branch. The Committee carried into effect for the first time one of the rules of the Selborne Society which empowers any Branch consisting of more than 150 members to elect a Vice-president of the Society. The unanimous choice for the honour fell upon Sir Mountstuart Grant Duff, who has on many occasions shown his warm interest in the Society, the last proof of which is his very interesting communication to the present number of NATURE NOTES.

Whether the Richmond press gives as much attention to Selbornian news as does the "fourth estate" in Lymington we cannot tell, as we have received no newspapers in this case. We think, however, that our readers will be glad to have some account of these two meetings as specimens of the kind of work which is being continually done in all quarters of the land by the many branches of the Selborne Society.

NOTICE TO CORRESPONDENTS.

OWING to the very large number of contributions and letters received, we have been obliged this month to add four pages to the Magazine. In spite of the additional space thus secured, a large amount of matter is unavoidably crowded out. Several interesting communications on Animal and Plant Names are obliged to be postponed, and we are at the last moment very reluctantly obliged to exclude two sonnets we had selected from the great mass of original poetry which reaches us. Indeed for the future, we fear we shall be obliged to put more rigid limits upon this department of the Magazine, as the copy at present in hand would be sufficient to produce a couple of numbers entirely composed of verses. Contributions which reach us immediately after the publication of each number have, *cæteris paribus*, the best claim to a place in the number that follows. May we remind correspondents that *short* communications, legibly written on one side of the paper only, are much more likely to obtain insertion than those which do not comply with these conditions.

It is particularly requested that subscriptions and letters bearing on the general business of the Society, should *not* be forwarded to the editors, but to the Secretary of the Selborne Society, 9, Adam Street, Adelphi. Editorial communications should be addressed to the Rev. PERCY MYLES, 1, Argyle Road, Ealing, W.

Nature Notes:

The Selborne Society's Magazine.

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THE PRESERVATION AND ENJOYMENT OF OPEN SPACES.

I HAVE been asked by the Editors to give some account of the work of the several Societies which have been formed to secure to the public adequate means of enjoying life in the open air.

The oldest of these Societies is the Commons Preservation Society. This body was formed in the autumn of 1865, and was the direct outcome of the attacks which about that time threatened to deprive London of its commons. At Wimbledon, Lord Spencer had proposed to convert two-thirds of the common into a park, and to enclose the rest; Epping Forest had, by gigantic enclosures, been cut down to little more than half its full size; Epsom Common had been in danger of parliamentary enclosure. But these were mere instances of a danger threatening all open land. Before the Committee of the House of Commons, which had held an enquiry on the subject of metropolitan open spaces, the lords of manors and their agents had claimed the right to enclose common land almost at will. Amongst those who were anxious to save the commons some were ready to take the lords at their word, and to embark upon costly schemes of purchase. On the other hand, many held—and the opinion had found advocates before the Committee—that the commons in the neighbourhood of London might be saved without spending a penny in purchase, if the commoners would only watchfully and energetically assert their rights. Enclosure, it was said, could be prevented by litigation, if necessary; and good order could be insured by local management without injury to any legal rights. It was to advocate this view that the Commons Preservation Society was formed. Mr. Shaw Lefevre was the first Chairman of the Committee—a post he has held,

save when a Minister of the Crown, ever since. Mr. John Locke, who had been Chairman of the House of Commons Committee, Mr. Charles Buxton and Mr. John Stuart Mill, were amongst the first members; Mr. Leslie Stephen acted for a short time as honorary secretary; and Mr. Philip Lawrence, to whose efforts it was largely due that the Society was formed, advised and guided the new body with consummate skill and ability in the capacity of honorary solicitor. One is tempted to dwell on the succession of victories the little Society achieved within the next ten years, but we have in this paper to do with the present rather than the past. Suffice it to say that a series of decisions of the Courts, culminating in the judgment of Sir George Jessel, by which the enclosure of some three thousand acres in Epping Forest was declared illegal, amply justified the position assumed by the Society, and established beyond question, that a lord of a manor cannot enclose a common against the will of the Commoners. At the same time the Metropolitan Commons Act of 1866, and the several Acts passed on the basis of its provisions, converted into fact the second thesis of the society, that all that was necessary to complete the work of securing London commons to the public, was local management without prejudice to existing legal rights. By this means nuisances are prevented, order preserved, and improvements made without depriving a common of its distinguishing features.

The work of the Society soon grew beyond its first limits. Some time before the final victory in the Epping Forest case, the late Mr. Fawcett had obtained the support of the Commons Preservation Society in his intrepid stand against the wholesale enclosure of rural commons under the Enclosure Acts. The Society became the vigilant critic of every proposal to enclose a common which came before Parliament. Enclosure was entirely suspended for several years, and in 1876, by passing the Commons Act, the Legislature provided an alternative method of treating rural commons—that of managing them as open spaces, and declared that no common should be enclosed unless it were shown that the interests both of the neighbourhood and of the nation at large would be served; while in these rare cases ample provision of recreation ground and field gardens should be made. The result of this legislation and of the untiring efforts of the Society to ensure attention to its provisions is, that since 1876 30,000 acres of common land have been placed under regulation, that only commons in retired and mountainous parts have been enclosed. Where enclosure has been sanctioned, in some cases large allotments for recreation and field-gardens have been set out, and in others a general right of roaming, except where the land is cultivated or planted, has been reserved to the public. Moreover, proposals to enclose have become fewer and fewer, and have now almost ceased.

It was not long after the passing of the Commons Act that the attention of the Commons Preservation Society was first

turned to those smaller open spaces which are invaluable in crowded towns—square gardens, church-yards, and fields and gardens in private ownership. Miss Octavia Hill commenced this branch of open space work by a vigorous effort to save from the builder some fields in the neighbourhood of the Swiss Cottage at Finchley. In 1881, Mr. Walter James, as a representative of the Society proposed the Metropolitan Open Spaces Act, 1881, and in 1884 Mr. John Hollond piloted through Parliament an Act prohibiting building on disused burial grounds; several other Acts to facilitate the preservation of such open spaces—out-door sitting-rooms, as Miss Octavia Hill has styled them—have since been passed. At the same time the Society, when necessary, has challenged the attempts of railway companies and other promoters of industrial undertakings to obtain special Parliamentary powers to appropriate commons, town gardens and other open spaces; its efforts in this direction have been signally successful.

We have now, however, reached the time when the Commons Preservation Society was to have fellows in its work. The Kyrle Society was founded at the suggestion of Miss Miranda Hill, with the general object of "bringing beauty home to the poor." Its work in the first instance ran in two channels; it busied itself in decorating rooms and halls used by the poorer classes, by the execution of frescoes and the gift or loan of pictures; and it organised a choir to perform good music in churches and other public places without expense to the hearers. In the spring of 1879 the Society determined to establish a Branch to aid the Commons Preservation Society in its battle for open spaces, and a paper on the subject was read to a meeting of the Kyrle Society by the present writer, on the 6th of March.

The Open Spaces Committee of the Kyrle Society soon found a special field for its activities, in laying out gardens in London —disused burial grounds and similar spots—and in supplying seats and aiding local efforts in the improvement of such places. While mainly interesting itself in this branch of the work, it cordially supported the efforts of the Commons Preservation Society both in and out of Parliament, to resist the appropriation of open land; and to this Committee belongs the honour of first calling attention to the threatened sale of Burnham Beeches, and of particularly energetic efforts to prevent the spoliation of the lake country by unnecessary railways.

The Metropolitan Public Gardens Association, the youngest of the Societies having for their express object the preservation of open spaces, was founded by the Earl of Meath, then Lord Brabazon, in October, 1882. Its avowed aim was "to provide breathing and resting places for the old and play-grounds for the young in the midst of densely populated localities, especially in the east and south of London;" and the justification for its existence is stated to be that "the work is of far too vital importance to be dealt with as a mere detail in any general scheme of

philanthropic effort." Lord Meath, in fact, was of opinion that the pace of the Kyrle Society was not quick enough, and that "a special and influential combination of persons" giving its "earnest and considerate attention" to the subject, and acting under his Lordship's guidance, would be able to accomplish greater things. Whether this opinion was a sound one, it would be idle to discuss. As a matter of fact the Metropolitan Gardens Association has done much good work, and any slight feeling of rivalry which may have once existed between it and the older Societies has long since vanished; the three agencies are working together in thoroughly cordial relations. Lord Meath's Association can point to a very long list of church-yards and other gardens laid out or improved by its efforts; while it has done much to force upon the public notice the importance of this particular branch of open space work. The project of forming a public promenade on the main drainage embankment in the East of London, and the placing of flowers in Trafalgar Square show that the action of the Society is by no means a matter of routine, but that it welcomes every suggestion by which increased facilities for out-door recreation may be extended to London.

Such is a brief sketch of the circumstances under which each of the Open Space Societies came into existence and of the character of the work on which they have been mainly engaged. But there have of late years been many developments of the Open Space movement which deserve notice, and upon these and the relations thereto of the Societies I have mentioned, and of other agencies, I shall be glad, with the Editors' permission, to say a few words on another occasion.

ROBERT HUNTER.

THE PLANT ALLUSIONS IN THE POEMS OF MATTHEW ARNOLD.

(*Continued from p.* 84.)

"*Thyrsis* is full of references to flowers. Here are some of them:—

> "'So, some tempestuous morn in early June,
> When the year's primal burst of bloom is o'er,
> Before the roses and the longest day—
> When garden-walks and all the grassy floor
> With blossoms red and white of fallen May
> And chestnut flowers are strewn—
> So have I heard the cuckoo's parting cry,
> From the wet field, through the vext garden trees,
> Come with the volleying rain and tossing breeze:
> *The bloom is gone, and with the bloom go I!*

"'Too quick despairer, wherefore wilt thou go?
Soon will the high Midsummer pomps come on,
Soon will the musk carnations break and swell,
Soon shall we have gold-dusted snapdragon,
Sweet-William with his homely cottage-smell,
And stocks in fragrant blow;
Roses that down the alleys shine afar,
And open, jasmine-muffled lattices,
And groups under the dreaming garden-trees,
And the full moon, and the white evening-star.

. . . . . .

"'O easy access to the hearer's grace
When Dorian shepherds sang to Proserpine!
For she herself had trod Sicilian fields,
She knew the Dorian water's gush divine,
She knew each lily white which Enna yields,
Each rose with blushing face;
She loved the Dorian pipe the Dorian strain.
But ah, of our poor Thames she never heard!
Her foot the Cumner cowslips never stirr'd;
And we should tease her with our plaint in vain!

"'Well! wind-dispersed and vain the words will be,
Yet, Thyrsis, let me give my grief its hour
In the old haunt, and find our tree-topp'd hill!
Who, if not I, for questing here hath power?
I know the wood which hides the daffodil,
I know the Fyfield tree,
I know what white, what purple fritillaries
The grassy harvest of the river-fields,
Above by Ensham, down by Sandford, yields,
And what sedged brooks are Thames's tributaries.'

"In subsequent verses we have amongst other things, the Hawthorn, the Cowslip, the Orchis, the Loose strife, the Meadowsweet, and the Wood Anemone, all set in their characteristic surroundings.

"The next verses are from the poem on *Carnac* in North-Western France:—

"'Behind me on their grassy sweep,
Bearded with lichen, scrawl'd and grey,
The giant stones of Carnac sleep,
In the mild evening of the May.

"'No priestly stern procession now
Moves through their rows of pillars old;
No victims bleed, no Druids bow—
Sheep make the daisied aisles their fold.

"'From bush to bush the cuckoo flies,
The orchis red gleams everywhere;
Gold furze with broom in blossom vies,
The blue-bells perfume all the air.'

"With these we may contrast the following scene from the South-East of the same country:—

"'Dotting the fields of corn and vine,
Like ghosts the huge, gnarl'd olives stand.
Behind, that lovely mountain-line!
While, by the strand,

"'Cette, with its glistening houses white,
Curves with the curving beach away
To where the lighthouse beacons bright
Far in the bay.'

"In *Heine's Grave*, page 199, we have the lines on Montmartre and the 'crisp everlasting-flowers'—the only flowers which Renan, in his magnificent denunciation of pessimism, delivered at the Lycée Louis le Grand, declares to be not beautiful—sharply contrasted with the tall dark firs of the Upper, as with the oaks and beeches of the Lower Hartz :—

"' . . . . and copse
Of hazels green in whose depth
Ilse, the fairy transform'd,
In a thousand water-breaks light
Pours her petulant youth—
Climbing the rock which juts
O'er the valley, the dizzily perch'd
Rock—to its iron cross
Once more thou cling'st ; to the Cross
Clingest ! with smiles, with a sigh !'

"The connection between Montmartre and the German mountain range, is of course the *Reisebilder* of the great poet, who is laid in the Paris cemetery.

"No one who has read it is likely to forget the lovely opening of the stanzas from the *Grande Chartreuse :*—

"'Through Alpine meadows soft-suffused
With rain, where thick the crocus blows,
Past the dark forges long disused,
The mule-track from St. Laurent goes.
The bridge is cross'd, and slow we ride,
Through forest, up the mountain-side.'

Or

"'The strong children of the Alpine wild'

in the same poem.

"The crocus is, I need hardly say, the colchicum so familiar to the Swiss tourist, and the same which is mentioned in *Obermann*, at page 227.

"In "*Obermann once more*" we have the yellow gentian at page 232, and the crocus again at page 244.

"The oleander also appears in *Thyrsis :*—

"' Hear it from thy broad lucent Arno-vale
(For there thine earth-forgetting eyelids keep
The morningless and unawakening sleep
Under the flowery oleanders pale)'—

as it does, with more cheerful association, among the Lyric poems in *The Terrace at Berne :*—

"' Ah, shall I see thee, while a flush
Of startled pleasure floods thy brow,
Quick through the oleanders brush,
And clap thy hands, and cry : 'Tis thou !'

"Mr. Arnold once told me that he took special pains with the references to plants in *Merope;* and they are very correct. See, for instance, the Speech of Æpytus, pages 45-50, and the Chorus at page 96 of Vol. III.; but there is no passage in the play which can be very conveniently detached from its setting for purposes of quotation.

"In *Empedocles* we have the well-known lines which may fitly conclude these extracts :—

> "'The track winds down to the clear stream,
> To cross the sparkling shallows; there
> The cattle love to gather, on their way
> To the high mountain-pastures, and to stay,
> Till the rough cow-herds drive them past,
> Knee-deep in the cool ford; for 'tis the last
> Of all the woody, high, well-watered dells
> On Etna; and the beam
> Of noon is broken there by chestnut-boughs
> Down its steep verdant sides; the air
> Is freshen'd by the leaping stream, which throws
> Eternal showers of spray on the moss'd roots
> Of trees, and veins of turf, and long dark shoots
> Of ivy-plants, and fragrant hanging bells
> Of hyacinths, and on late anemonies,
> That muffle its wet banks; but glade,
> And stream, and sward, and chestnut-trees,
> End here; Etna beyond, in the broad glare
> Of the hot noon, without a shade,
> Slope behind slope, up to the peak, lies bare;
> The peak, round which the white clouds play.'

"A careful reader will find other passages, which will remind him how constant a lover of flowers was the poet we lost two years ago—a poet whose fame will, I think, be greater with posterity than it has been with a generation only too apt to confuse poetry with another very different, though no doubt highly respectable, thing—namely 'thinking in verse.'

"In this letter I have only, in obedience to your commands, put together the most characteristic notices of flowers and plants I can find in Mr. Arnold's volumes, in the hope that they may win a few additional students for some of the wisest and loveliest compositions in the English language."

M. E. Grant Duff.

THE CHEDDAR PINK.

ONE by one the localities for the rarer plants of England are fast diminishing. At one time they are threatened by the heartless rapacity of the "cheap tripper"; at another by the unwise advertisement of a "find" and the consequent incursions of the ruthless plant-dealer; and again by the carrying out of quarrying operations and the setting up of the "devilish enginery" which accompanies them; not to

speak of the general destruction and disfigurement of scenery occasioned by the development of accommodating branch-lines, constructed on the cheapest principle, by the extension of building operations in the vicinity of large towns, and by the erection of gas works, sewage "farms," and limekilns in the outskirts.

There are but four pinks which are really native in this country; they are all only very locally distributed, and one of these is threatened with immediate extinction. The plant here referred to is the Cheddar Pink, *Dianthus cæsius*. This species is mentioned by Ray (1680) under the name of "Armeriæ species flore in summo caule singulari;" also by Dillenius (1732), who refers to it as "Tunica rupestris folio cæsio molli flore carneo." Hudson, in his "Flora Anglica" (1762), calls it *Dianthus glaucus*, a name previously given by Linnæus to a plant which is now considered a form of *D. deltoides*. It is not, therefore, a Linnean species as stated in Sowerby's "English Botany" (third edition), but was given its present name and fully described by Smith in his "English Botany" (1792). The specific name *cæsius* refers to the gray-green appearance produced by the deposit of bloom on the leaves. Its geographical distribution is extremely limited, and the only British locality for the species is the Cheddar cliffs in Somerset. What is also remarkable is that this solitary station marks the northern as well as the western limit of the plant in Europe. In a letter to the *Daily News* of July 15th, 1889, Mr. E. G. Aldridge, of Winscombe, says:—

"Kindly permit me to call attention to the 'inexpressibly saddening thing' which is now in progress at Cheddar. I am aware that it is not long since an article appeared in your paper condemning the quarrying operations which were then being carried out upon the western side of that unparalleled gorge. Latterly, however, these works have been extended in a smaller degree to the eastern or perpendicular face, and, unless at once arrested, will do much to mar, if not in some measure to destroy, the noblest scene of its kind in England. Much might be written concerning the base use to which the cliffs and their surroundings are put by 'cave men,' and others. Loud, inartistic notice-boards and flaming handbills appear at every turn, while paint or whitewash proclaims from lofty heights the doom of the impenitent or the superior attractions of the upper cave. The despicable traffic in the floral specialities of the district still continues, and the beauteous Cheddar Pink has now well nigh disappeared from its accustomed haunts."

It grows at a height of fifty feet among jagged rocks, and is therefore not accessible to all comers: and in the case of the typical cockney excursionist, it is a matter for congratulation, that, after a preliminary meal of Cheddar cheese and native beer, the process of digestion would materially interfere with the comfort attending the extra exertion which any such act of spoliation would entail.

On the Continent, the Cheddar Pink, or Mountain Pink, as it is sometimes called, is very local in its distribution. The following are the countries in which it occurs, with the vernacular names of the plant:—Belgium, *blauwachtige Angelier;* Luxemburg, Switzerland, the east of France, *Œillet bleuâtre;* South and West Germany, *graugrüne Nelke;* North Italy, *Garofano appannato;* Bohemia, *Hwozdik rychlicek;* Moravia and the Tyrol, *graublättrige Bergnelke;* Croatia, *Klincic,* Transylvania, *hegyi Szegfü;* Roumania, *Diant verdiu.*

FREDERIC N. WILLIAMS.

INSECTS AS ORNAMENTS OF THE GARDEN.

DIRT has been defined as "matter in the wrong place," and Southey, in a passage which I cannot for the moment lay my hand on, remarks that we have not taken enough animals into alliance with us, and that the more spiders there were in the stable the less would the horses suffer from the flies. A later writer, Mr. A. R. Wallace, looks forward to the time when the earth will produce only cultivated plants and domesticated animals, and when man's selection shall have supplanted natural selection (Essay on the Action of Natural Selection on Man).

To this pass we are visibly tending in all parts of the world where civilised man has established himself; for the clearing of forests, the draining of marshes, or even the settlement of open country, destroys the native inhabitants of the soil, root and branch. And in the wake of civilised man come the hog, the goat, the rabbit, the thistle, and even the water-weeds, to complete the havoc which he has made.

In England the destruction of native plant-life is the end and object of scientific farming. We hear of one man boasting of having levelled so many yards of old fences, meaning the beautiful hedges, which but a few years ago adorned our English lanes and meadows to a much greater extent than at present. It is recorded to the credit of another successful farmer that if he cannot grow a good crop on poor soil, at all events nothing else is allowed to grow there.

With the plants, the insects which feed on them likewise disappear; and even the destruction of nettles and thistles robs our gardens of the presence of many of our most beautiful English butterflies.

But it is useless to regret the inevitable course of the progress of events, and our only remedy is to march with the times, and improve our present opportunities. Almost the only insects which we domesticate at present are the bee and the silkworm; but why should we not rear insects for their beauty as well as for

their utility? Our wild flowers are doomed; a large number have already disappeared, or become restricted to ever narrowing limits, but our gardens and hot-houses bring together a far larger assemblage of curious and beautiful plants than any single locality in the world, however favourably situated. Why should we not do the same with insects? Insects are as beautiful as flowers, many are perfectly hardy, and might easily be acclimatised, and it would be easy to select species for experiment which could not feed on or endanger our crops in any way. In fact, we might have regular breeding-beds of plants of no value otherwise (in some out-of-the-way corner of the grounds), where butterflies and other insects might be reared to render our gardens as beautiful with innocuous insect-life as with floral treasures. The Insectarium at the Zoological Gardens is a step in the right direction; but who among our rich horticulturists will be first to introduce foreign butterflies on a large scale to compete with his orchids?

W. F. Kirby.

NORTHUMBRIAN PLANT NAMES.

THE following list of local names of plants and flowers, noted by the writer during the last ten years, are yet in common use throughout Alndale and Coquetdale, two remote, and lovely Northumbrian valleys, bordering upon the Cheviot Hills.

D. D. Dixon.

LOCAL NAMES.		BOTANICAL NAMES.
Eel-beds ...	...	*Ranunculus aquatilis*
Gollans ...	...	*Caltha palustris*
Wax dolls ...	...	*Fumaria officinalis*
*Shepherd's pansy	...	*Viola lutea*
*Red Mint drops	...	*Lychnis diurna*
*White Mint drops	...	*Silene inflata*
Gowans ...	...	*Trollius Europæus*
*Stinking Tommy	...	*Ononis arvensis*
*Poor Robin...	...	*Bartsia Odontites*
*Mouse's peas	(seed of)	*Vicia Cracca*
*Cocks and hens	...	*Geum rivale*
*Apple dumplins	...	*Epilobium hirsutum*
Scrab apple	(fruit of)	*Pyrus Malus*
*Poison berry	(fruit of)	*Pyrus Aucuparia*
*Yellow top ...	...	*Senecio Jacobæa*
Craw crook ...	(fruit of)	*Empetrum nigrum*
Ladies' thimbles	...	*Digitalis purpurea*
Cushie-cows ...	(seed of)	*Rumex obtusifolius*
Birds' eyes *Strike fires		*Veronica Chamædrys*

LOCAL NAMES.		BOTANICAL NAMES.
Cain and Abel	...	*Orchis mascula*
†Flea wood ...	...	*Myrica Gale*
Wullies ...	...	Willows
Whickans ..	...	Knot grass
*Lady's soap	...	*Conferva rivularis*
Bagie ...	...	Swede turnip
*Buntins ...	...	Fir cones
Cuddie's lugs	...	*Verbascum Thapsus*

* The names marked thus are not included in the Dictionary of English Plant names.

† Sprigs of Bog Myrtle are frequently placed amongst bed-clothes by the Northumbrian house-wife as a cure for fleas.

SHORT NOTICES OF BOOKS.

The Paradise of Birds, by J. W. Courthope. A new edition of this book appeared some months ago, and should be welcome to Selbornians. It tells, in light and pleasant verses, of the adventures of two Arctic explorers, whose aim is not to gain glory by reaching the Pole, but to penetrate the snowy region surrounding it, and enter the Paradise of Birds, a warm and sunny region, where dwell unmolested the souls of all kinds of feathered fowl. After the destruction of the whole race through the wantonness of mankind, the world is becoming uninhabitable for want of them, and the mission of the two travellers is by humble entreaty to obtain from the happy birds' souls, eggs which they may carry back and hatch for the benefit of the bird-forsaken world. They obtain their request, and promise that in future birds shall not be ill-used, but that great respect shall be paid to them and their requirements. Outside this paradise is a purgatory, where the souls of those who have offended against bird-life are punished ; and here, as is meet, are found the souls of bird-catchers, cooks and —ladies. The birds' songs are delightfully translated into words, and their tributes to Aristophanes—

> "Dearest and best of beakless singers,
> Friend of the linnet, glory of Greece—"

to Chaucer and to Gilbert White are quaintly and gracefully written.

British Fossils and where to Seek Them, by Joseph W. Williams. Young Collector Series. Swan Sonnenschein, London: 1890. *British Fossils* is a work of some ninety-six pages, which purports to give a summary of the leading features of distribution and succession of the fossiliferous rocks of Great Britain. It enumerates the fossils characteristic of each formation, mentions localities where they may be found, and gives hints to the young collector. As a rule, the author keeps too closely to some well-known text books to go seriously astray, but as soon as he strikes out for himself he comes sadly to grief. Thus in the glossary he calls chert a limestone, while mica and garnet are both "rocks." Etymology is apparently the author's strong point, and here he is often strikingly original, as when he derives the "horn" of hornblende from its toughness, instead of from the German for metal. There are a good number of illustrations, but though these well served their purpose in the German text book from which they have been copied, they are quite out of place in a work on British fossils, as so many of them are of foreign species. Thus not one of the twelve species figured on page 46 has been found in the British Isles. Misprints abound in the scientific names, and these sometimes make the words quite unrecognisable. The work contains none of that infectious enthusiasm which makes Taylor's *Common British Fossils* so valuable a book to place in the hands of the young collector, while for accuracy and usefulness the older book is greatly superior.

SELBORNIANA.

A Sea-Bird's Rock and its Brutal Visitors.—Several communications have been received on this subject, which was fully dealt with in the last number of NATURE NOTES, all expressing the greatest indignation at the disgraceful outrage, and most of them demanding that some punishment should be inflicted on the perpetrators. The attempts that are apparently made to screen the offenders have caused several of our correspondents to say very hard things of the authorities for their culpable remissness in this matter. We should be very loth to "speak evil of dignities," but it must be confessed there seems to be some reason for the wrath of those who draw comparisons between the merciless rigour with which the poor ignorant peasant poacher is prosecuted and the complete immunity which apparently awaits the infinitely more culpable criminal who is *supposed* to be an "officer and a gentleman"! "Justitia" says :—"If some poor fellow were to knock over a rabbit to give food to a sick wife or hungry children, a *gentleman* of this 'chick smashing' type, sitting on a bench of county justices, would be the first to send the 'low poaching fellow' to the tread-mill. If some Irish Pat were to 'look crooked' at a constable's cow, the 'chick-smasher' sitting in judgment as a resident magistrate, would hale him off to gaol for four months on the plank bed. Here is a case of aggravated cowardly cruelty, of theft from the national property, and beyond a formal reprimand, at which the offender would probably laugh, not the slightest notice has been taken of the offence. Surely it is an absolute farce to say that in England we have the same law for the rich and for the poor." We believe that the remarks of "Justitia" are considerably too severe, when applied to whole classes, but in this particular instance it must be confessed that the action, or rather inaction, of the authorities, gives ample ground for such criticism. Letters have been written in pursuance of the resolutions passed at the last meeting of the Selborne Society. The answers have not yet been laid before the Council; but we think that we are not betraying any official secrets by saying that these answers are eminently unsatisfactory. There is no vindictive feeling on the part of Selbornians, but it is strongly felt that the least punishment which would satisfy public indignation, would be the publication of names of the culprits.

The Earliest Cuckoo.—I thank Mr. Rawson for his kind note. I have questioned the lads carefully and they are sure that it was a cuckoo, and not a human voice they heard on the date in question. It is quite clear that for some unaccountable reason the cuckoo was earlier this year in the vale than has been generally the case. I heard one in the same neighbourhood, the sunny sheltered side of the valley under Skiddaw, on the 10th of April, and generally we do not look for the cuckoo before the 15th. A cuckoo was, so I was informed, also heard near Carlisle this year on the 10th; but I am not willing to do more in the matter than assert that the boys who heard the bird believe they heard a bird and not a human being or a cuckoo-clock on April 3rd, and that they obtained 3d. each for what I believe was not a false report.

Crosthwaite Vicarage, Keswick. H. D. RAWNSLEY.

Will some of your readers tell us something of the voice mechanism of the corncrake. I have been astonished at the tirelessness of the constant call of the bird. When does it find time for food necessary to support the strain, and how does it escape the weasel and the stoat?

Porriwiggles.—I notice in your "Selborniana" of June 14th, an extract from a letter of Lord Tennyson's mentioning "*porri*wiggles" as a "*provincial* name" of tadpoles. In Book iii., chap. 13, of the *Vulgar Errors*, Sir Thomas Browne has—"that which the ancients called Gyrinus, we a *Porwigle* (*sic*), or Tadpole." (I quote from the second edition.) Any member of the Selborne Society who cares for tadpoles, or for style, will, I am sure, be glad to be reminded of this chapter, and will divide his admiration between "the high curiosity of nature" and the not much lower curiosity of art with which it is described.

Clifton College, Bristol. SIDNEY T. IRWIN.

Sparrows and Mice.—Mrs. Musgrave, of Furze Bank, Torquay, sends the following note she has received in answer to her paragraph in NATURE

NOTES, p. 79 :—"I have not seen one sparrow in my place Dol-llan, Llandepid, since I have lived there, over a year. The crocuses are eaten voraciously by mice, to my disgust. I have great numbers of owls (barn and wood), this may account for absence of sparrows, but they cannot exterminate the mice, they breed so fast." G. W. L'ESTRANGE.

Birds Singing as they Fly.—The meadow lark, *Anthus pratensis*, sings always on the wing, and in the early spring may be seen rising at short intervals to a considerable height and returning again with an arrow-like rapidity of descent to the same spot, singing both in its ascending and descending flight. I have never heard its song on the ground.

In his *British Months*, Bishop Mant, an accurate observer of Nature, writes :—

"The sweetest woodlark round and round
Wide wheeling in his circling flight,
Pours forth his morning, evening song."

and again :—

"High in mid air the woodlark sings."

I have often watched the whitethroat, *Curruca cinerea*, making short zigzag excursions from the willows, and returning always to the same spot, singing loudly while on the wing with the throat distended and the feathers of the crest and head standing erect. The willow wren, *Sylvia trochilus*, also sings on the wing ; and probably, though I have not seen them, some older members of the Sylviadæ.

The Rectory, Clyst St. Mary, Exeter. J. A. KERR.

In addition to the birds that sing flying, mentioned by F. W. B. in last number of NATURE NOTES, the following may be named, viz., the woodlark, tree pipit and marsh pipit, all of which do most of their singing on the wing, and are all nearly related to the skylark. That merry little bird the sedge warbler also frequently sings flying, and so does the green linnet. I have seen the blackbird do so, but only from one tree to another close by. I cannot remember ever hearing the song or missel thrushes, but think it is very likely both may do so. I scarcely think that the cuckoo can be termed a singing bird, its *song* being a *call* of the same nature as that of the landrail and quail. The sweet twitterings of the house martin and chimney swallow on the wing may fairly entitle them to the name of song birds.

Dundee. GEORGE URE.

The paragraph in this month's NATURE NOTES referring to birds singing as they fly seems to invite further remarks. The following birds have been observed by me performing their lovesong on the wing : the whinchat, nightingale, tree pipit, whitethroat, wren, swallow, hedge accentor or dunnock, in addition to the lark and cuckoo mentioned by F. W. B.

If the singing of birds on the wing consists in the mere production of musical sounds from the throat while flying, many other species than the above possess the same power ; there are the laughing cry of the gull, the quack of the heron, the call of the peewit, the scape, scape of the snipe, the caw of the rook and jackdaw, the harsh screech of the jay, the scream of the swift, the chirp of the kingfisher and water ouzel, the chatter of the magpie and others, all of which I have heard singing to the best of their ability, the dipper, however, having in addition to the chirp a pretty little song which he sings when perched on a stone or tree stump.

Richmond. J. LYDDON PRING.

Tame Birds and Beasts.—The Rev. F. O. Morris sends us the following letter received by him from Mrs. Cole, of Condover Hall, Shrewsbury :—"I am so glad to see a letter from you in to-day's *Morning Post*, and venture to think you may be interested to hear about a few tame birds and beasts we have here now, notably of a kestrel. I see in your book on *British Birds*, you state that the kestrel is easily tamed. Our bird was taken from a nest last year, and put into a cage out of doors for a few days only, until fledged ; he was then turned out and flew across the park into the woods, and was seen no more for some days, when he returned, found his way into the house, and has never voluntarily left it since. We often turn him out, and see him a mile or more from the house, but soon after

find him searching for an open window by which he may reach the dining-room, where he lives by preference, perching on a picture-frame, but always coming on to my husband's arm when called, even though with thirty people at dinner, and through the glare of lamps and candles. He invariably twitters a sort of soft song when we speak to him. He is a grand bird in perfect plumage.

"*Age of birds.*—A small half-bred game bantam we have here is hatching her usual sitting of eggs in a hat in the entrance hall, where for the last *nine* years she has always done so. We bought her in 1881 to sit on pheasants' eggs, being then no more than a pullet.

"*Rook.*—I have an old bird whom I found on the roadside, three years ago, with a gunshot wound in his side, and one wing quite blown off. He seemed very old and wild, but I brought him home, and though left completely at liberty in a tree in the garden, he has never failed to eat out of my hand there *at once*, and ever since, and shows the most extraordinary devotion and great intelligence.

"*Rat.*—I have a white rat, who lives, as all our pets do, entirely loose in the house or garden, perfectly free to leave us if they choose. The rat was given to me, as old and worthless, two years ago, then quite wild. He gradually became extremely tame, and during a severe illness I had last year he took it into his head to sit on my pillow to guard me. Ever since then he has continued to sleep there; he runs upstairs with me, and follows me to bed, sleeping always on the bolster or pillow by my head. He is very plucky, and defended himself during one whole night when he was shut up accidentally in the same room with a large and savage cat. He was found sitting up with teeth and claws ready, and was perfectly overjoyed when his human friends took him up. Though six months have elapsed, nothing will induce him to enter that room again. Our dogs are perfect friends with him. He uses his left paw always when drinking, 'ladling' the water up to his mouth, even from the bottom of a tumbler, and is quite 'left-handed.'"

Continental Selborniana.—We have received several enquiries as to the Swiss Selborne Society, mentioned by the Rev. H. D. Rawnsley in the last number of NATURE NOTES. The following communication (received a good while ago) from Lieut.-Colonel Linley Blathwayt, of Batheaston, fully answers the queries of our correspondents:—"Probably many members of the Selborne Society may not be aware that one somewhat similar, the 'Association pour la protection des Plantes,' exists in Switzerland. It was founded at Geneva in 1883 (England, France, Italy and Belgium being well represented among its members), and it is now striving hard to check the wholesale destruction of Alpine plants. Our own countrymen are, I fear, not quite free from blame, for one of its members writes that the worst offenders are those who are '*séduits par les guinées de John Bull*, pour les expedier en masse à l'adresse de l'un ou de l'autre horticulteur Anglais.' The Swiss themselves are thoroughly alive to the danger, for the Conseil d'Etat of Fribourg has placed one Alpine plant—the Edelweiss—under the protection of the police; and at Pontresina, in the Engadine, there was a notice that anyone destroying any of these plants would be fined. The President of the Association is, however, of opinion that there are other plants, such as ladies' slipper (*Cypripedium Calceolus*), which need protection far more than the Edelweiss."

Musical Mice.—Mr. R. Goodwin Mumbray, of Richmond, writes as follows:—"That mice and several other animals are 'moved by the concord of sweet sounds' is a well-known fact. I have known several instances in which mice have been lured from their crannies by a lovely female voice, or by the sound of a piano when played softly in a minor (which is said to be the natural) key, or the 'tiny din' of a flute; but I only remember one instance of a veritable singing mouse. My maternal grandfather, a very aged man, who attained his 96th year, was sitting by the fireside one evening, when a small mouse of a light fawn colour, made its appearance, and began playing with the tie of the old gentleman's shoe, frisking about apparently in high glee, and interspersing its gambols by a song resembling that of the linnet. It usually appeared about 7 p.m., and would remain for the space of an hour, when it quietly stole away. These visits were continued for the space of six or eight weeks, when they suddenly ceased; the presence of visitors did not seem to disturb the little creature, although he never *took to* any-

one but his ancient friend, who used to reward the little musician with Savoy biscuit. Much interest was excited amongst our acquaintances, one old lady shook her head ominously, intimating that the *wee leastie* was sent as a 'warning that called away,' but the ancient mariner (he was an old sea captain) regarded it as a 'friendly greeting' and out-lived the prophecy five years. The doctor, however, volunteered an authoritative explanation of the phenomenon. *The mouse had a diseased liver!* but then he had no 'music in *his* soul.' To the regret of all, the visits of Tommy suddenly ceased—whether he succumbed to liver complaint or fell a victim to the claws and jaws of Grimalkin was never known, but the memory of the singing mouse lingered for many years in the family."

Children as Collectors.—In the *Co-operative News*, some letters have lately appeared strongly protesting against classes being arranged and prizes offered for the best collection of birds' eggs and stuffed birds in connection with the forthcoming (Co-operative) Home Industries Exhibition at the Crystal Palace. The Rev. Oswald Birchall, Rector of Buscot, Lechlade—an ever-active Selbornian—and Mr. E. A. Sanderson, founder of the "Junior Co-operative Humane Society" denounce such exhibitions, as a direct inducement to lads and others to engage in bird-slaughter and nest-robbing. On the other hand, in the *Richmond and Twickenham Times* of July 5th, we find the following enthusiastic plea for children's collections of wild flowers:—"Among the many pleasing features of the flower-shows recently held in this neighbourhood, is the number of wild flower bouquets sent by children of the poorer class. When it was first proposed to offer prizes for these exhibits, there were many who pooh-poohed the idea as ridiculous and urged that the show would be vulgarised by the introduction of a crowd of ill-assorted blossoms, hastily culled and tied in bunches, regardless of form or colour. However, the children's friends had their way, the experiment was tried, proved a success, and now the children's corner is a familiar object in the cut flower tent at almost every horticultural show. True, there may be crude combinations of colour, and in some instances quantity may be superior to quality; but Rome was not built in a day, and if the little ones are by this means learning to know the manifold beauties lying in field and hedgerow, awakening perception will teach them, later on, how to combine varied hues into a harmonious and graceful bouquet. It has been truly said that to know Nature is to love her and such a pure and wholesome affection cannot but have a beneficial effect upon the character. In the demoralising conditions under which so many poor children live, anything that brightens their joyless lives and influences them for good should be encouraged; above all a pursuit which—who can tell?—may lead them from Nature up to Nature's God."

OFFICIAL NOTICES, WORK OF BRANCHES, &c.

THE object of the Selborne Society is to unite lovers of Nature for common study and the defence of natural objects (birds, plants, beautiful landscapes, &c.) against the destruction by which they are constantly menaced. The *minimum* Annual Subscription (which entitles the subscriber to a monthly copy of the Society's Magazine) is 2s. 6d. All particulars as to membership may be obtained from the Secretary of the Selborne Society, 9, Adam Street, Adelphi, W.C.

WE are still unable to give the promised information as to the statistics of branches and their officials, as some secretaries have not yet sent in replies to the circulars issued. Among the defaulters are the Bath, Lower Thames Valley, Midhurst and Neston Branches. Some interesting accounts of work done have, however, been forwarded from the branches in pursuance of a resolution at the last meeting of the Council that such accounts should be sent to the editors of NATURE NOTES for insertion, when possible. The Birmingham and Midland Branch has had a very successful and largely attended meeting. The hon. sec., Mrs. W. Arthur Smith writes:—"The report stated what had been done during the year in the direction of posters about the destruction of plants and ferns, &c.,

in the districts visited by excursionists, also as to the wearing of plumage, which was taken up and discussed in the public press (with very good results), and again, as to the distribution of leaflets among the school children. This is now being largely emphasised by the distribution of 20,000 copies of the enclosed leaflet among all the leading Board and other schools, the masters and mistresses having kindly undertaken to speak to their pupils about its contents at the time of distribution. Our number of members is now 130, and we hope soon to raise it to a sufficient total to enable us to elect a vice-president of the society."

THE Hon. Secretary of the Bath Branch, Mr. Wheatcroft, sends papers with an account of the annual "At Home" of the Branch at Clarendon Manor, the president, Mr. H. D. Skrine, and Mrs. Skrine, receiving the visitors. There was a large attendance of members who displayed much enthusiasm. We extract the following remarks from the president's address for the guidance of other branches in carrying out the suggestions made in our last number. "I will name one point that has been mentioned in the last number of NATURE NOTES, viz., the desire on the part of the Central Council to have reports of progress and general work from the rural branches, in order to compare notes and draw some definite conclusions as to the best way of carrying on the business of the Society. I have no doubt Mr. Wheatcroft will be able to do this as often as is required, and probably has done so already, but *the space in* NATURE NOTES *is limited, and no very voluminous reports are admissible.*. Another point suggested was the utilisation of a local newspaper for the purpose of circulating information on subjects of interest in Natural History, or otherwise. We have a Selborne column at our service in the *Bath Chronicle*, and I hope some of our more scientific members will now and then send an article to the editor, and others who do not profess any scientific knowledge may be able to relate matters that have come under their observation that would interest us or influence the public in favour of the protection of birds, plants, and pleasant places." Mr. Wheatcroft drew attention to the outrage described in the last number of NATURE NOTES, under the title of "A Seabird's Rock and its Brutal Visitors," and the greatest part of the meeting was occupied in the discussion of this subject, which excited the greatest indignation on the part of the members. The following resolution was proposed by the president and was carried unanimously: "That this meeting hereby expresses its indignation at the cruel and heartless conduct, in the wanton destruction of sea birds and their eggs, of certain persons said to have landed from the *Sir Richard Fletcher* steamer, on the island of Grasholm, off Milford Haven, reported in the *Daily Graphic* of the 31st May last, whilst it heartily approves of the action taken by the Council of this Society in bringing the matter before Parliament, with a view to securing the punishment of the wrongdoers and preventing the recurrence of such misconduct." On the proposition of Professor Earle it was resolved that the Committee be requested to make the necessary arrangements for a series of lectures on natural history and science, or other appropriate subjects, to be given at the Institution or elsewhere during the ensuing winter months. The president, in acknowledging a hearty vote of thanks, said that he should like to see more members: he believed the Thames Valley Branch was the largest, numbering 200, while they had only about 125. He trusted they would show they were not a sentimental and fanciful association, but one worthy of the objects it professed to support.

The metropolitan and suburban branches are not a whit behind their provincial brethren in activity. We see from newspapers sent by Miss Agnes Martelli, hon. sec. of the flourishing Northern Heights Branch, and Mr. R. Marshman Wattson, hon. sec. of the rapidly increasing Clapton (Lower Lea Valley) Branch, that these two portions of the Society have extended to each other mutual invitations, and had some very enjoyable first excursions. We commend their example to other neighbouring branches.

It is particularly requested that subscriptions and letters bearing on the general business of the Society, should *not* be forwarded to the editors, but to the Secretary of the Selborne Society, 9, Adam Street, Adelphi. Editorial communications should be addressed to the Rev. PERCY MYLES, 1, Argyle Road, Ealing, W.

Nature Notes:

The Selborne Society's Magazine.

No. 8. AUGUST 15, 1890. Vol. I.

THE SEQUEL TO "A SEA-BIRDS' ROCK AND ITS BRUTAL VISITORS."

OUR readers will remember that articles with the above title appeared in the June and July numbers of Nature Notes dealing with the disgraceful conduct of certain officers of Her Majesty's Army and Navy at the Island of Grassholm, and giving some account of the efforts made by the Selborne Society to bring the culprits to justice. Until quite recently this appeared to be hopeless; the Admiralty, the War Office, and the representatives of the Government all returned evasive answers; and all the resources of the circumlocution office seemed to have been called into requisition for the purpose of screening from their due punishment these aristocratic offenders against the law.

We are now happy in being able to state that through the energy and persistence of Mr. John Colam, the well-known Secretary of the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, justice has been vindicated and the criminals not only exposed but punished.

The trial took place on last Saturday at Haverford West. The offences were classified into four divisions, (1) for using a boat to take birds, (2) for using guns to take birds, (3) for taking wild birds, and (4) for shooting wild birds.

The offenders were *Colonel Henry Saurin, J.P., Captain H. D. Haig Haig, Captain Harvey, Lieutenants Dickson, Caulfield, Molesworth and Shakersley;* and the name of the boat, commissioned in Her Majesty's Navy and used by them was the "Sir Richard Fletcher." The worst offender appears to have been Colonel Saurin, who confessed to having used a thick stick to slaughter the birds with as they came from their nests, which he said he considered better fun than shooting them. The evidence showed

that scores of birds were maimed, shot and killed, and their bodies were left lying about the island. The accused were defended by advocates who pleaded guilty, in the hope of preventing the full facts from coming before the bench, in which, however, they did not succeed, as Mr. Colam, junior, counsel for the prosecution, made a statement showing the nature and extent of the proceedings of the defendants. The magistrates fined them in the maximum penalty of £22 17s., including costs, or £3 5s. 4d. each.

All Selbornians will heartily rejoice at this vindication of the cause of nature and humanity, against senseless and unsportsmanlike brutality, and will congratulate Mr. Colam and the Society whose work he so vigorously conducts, on their triumph over the inaction and evasion on the part of the authorities, which threatened at one time to secure entire impunity for the perpetrators of the outrage. We have had an opportunity of seeing the various steps taken by the R.S.P.C.A. in this matter, and it has increased our admiration for the wisdom and energy with which it conducts its never-ceasing crusade against cruelty. At a meeting of the Council on Monday last, hearty votes of thanks were passed to Mr. Colam for his action in the matter, and to Mr. Thomas, the local correspondent of the *Daily Graphic*, who was the first to call attention to the occurrence. More than one member present expressed the intention of sending an increased subscription to the R.S.P.C.A., as a practical mode of showing appreciation of its work. Those who desire a fuller account of the trial will find it in the forthcoming issue of the *Animal World*, to which, doubtless, a large number of our readers subscribe. It is probable that we may also recur to the subject in our own columns.

One hardly likes to dwell upon the abominable behaviour of the offenders in this case. In addition to the money fine, they have suffered the ignominy of public exposure and conviction, and if they have any sense of decency at all, they will have very great difficulty in reconciling their conduct with that which one would expect from "officers and gentlemen." In this connection we believe that we owe some apology to our correspondent, "Justitia," for our remarks in the last number of NATURE NOTES. He pointed out that the magistrates who on the English and Irish bench so severely treat the offences of peasants, especially with regard to poaching, are taken from the very class, some members of which were guilty of these outrages. He was, unfortunately, more than right. Incredible as it seems, we believe that some of the offenders in this case were actually magistrates themselves. One of these, a County Councillor and County Magistrate, has, unhappily, escaped conviction owing to a conspiracy of silence on the part of his fellow criminals; another was the very worst of the whole gang, inclined apparently to glory in his shame, and having no idea of the brutal and unmanly nature of the offence. We have been told that Colonel Henry

Saurin, J.P., is a member of a well-known Dublin family, and an Irish magistrate. If this statement is correct, we trust that members of both political parties will make efforts for his removal from the bench. It would be utterly impossible for any person to have the slightest respect for sentences delivered by one who had himself been convicted of such a disgraceful action. But we are still of opinion that such conduct as this is of extremely rare occurrence, not only among magistrates, or gentlemen bearing Her Majesty's Commission, but among respectable men of any class whatever. The outrage was just as unsportsmanlike as it was cruel and cowardly; and it must be one of the severest punishments of the culprits in this case that they will feel they are exposed to the contempt of every humane and honourable man, even among their own associates.

"MUMMY WHEAT."

THE popular error of confounding "Mummy wheat" with "Egyptian wheat" has lasted for at least half a century, and is not extinct yet! Perhaps, therefore, a brief *resumé* of the subject may not be uninteresting to our readers. In 1840, Mr. M. Farquhar Tupper received twelve grains from Sir G. Wilkinson, who, *it was said*, took them with his own hands out of a vase in an Egyptian tomb. Of these twelve Mr. Tupper asserted that he raised one plant, which bore two poor ears, one of which was figured in *The Gardeners' Chronicle*, (1843, p. 787). Mr. Tupper's account was reported in the *Times* (Sept., 1840). In the second and third years the wheat was described as having recovered its vigour, so that it bore ears seven and a-half inches long, and was so like a good sample of Col. Le Couteur's variety called "Bellevue Talavera," that even the experienced eye of that gentleman was unable to detect any difference. The eminent botanist, Dr. Lindley, then editor of the *Gardeners' Chronicle*, in a leading article expressed his belief in the truth of the survival of the wheat after some 3,000 years.

Suspicions, however, were raised; and a writer, signing himself, "Este," suggested that there had probably been some tampering by the Arabs (*Gardener's Chronicle*, p. 805).

In 1846, Sir W. Colebroke is said to have raised several plants from "two grains of mummy wheat, received in 1842;" but it is not stated whether they were of the original sample, or of the produce of those raised by Mr. Tupper. After cultivating them, Sir W. Colebroke remarks:—"I cannot resist the impression that this is a *winter wheat;* and if so, it cannot be a production of the soil of Egypt; for whence could the ancient

Egyptians draw their supply of this grain?" In 1846 the late Professor J. S. Henslow received six grains from Mr. Tupper, from the plant raised by him. He grew them with several other varieties of wheat in an experimental border in his garden; the following are his observations:—"This variety was specially remarkable for its exceeding length of straw and for flowering much earlier than any of the other varieties in my garden. In this and in all other particulars I could not observe the slightest difference between an ear of the Bellevue Talavera, and that of the supposed mummy wheat. Both were also attacked more vigorously than others by rust and mildew." Suspecting some flaw in the testimony, application was made to Sir G. Wilkinson himself for a genuine sample, that it might be tried among a series of experiments on the vitality of seeds, which were at that time in progress under the superintendence of a committee of the British Association.

On receipt of the sample, great surprise was felt at the discovery of fragments of grains of maize (of American origin) intermixed with the grains of mummy wheat! This, of course, led to further inquiry; and the conclusion arrived at was that the sample had most certainly been vitiated by the wheat having been placed in the common corn jars of Cairo!

It may be added that whenever on other occasions the actual grains of true mummy wheat have been carefully sown, they have *never* germinated. Thus, M. Denon, who accompanied Buonaparte's expedition to Egypt, tried to raise them in many ways, but he never succeeded. A Dr. Steele also utterly failed in 1857. In fact a microscopic examination proves that the embryo is always destroyed, a section crumbling to powder under the microscope, though the starch grains are not decomposed, and still colour violet as usual with iodine.

The popular confusion between "Mummy" wheat and "Egyptian" wheat is easily explained. There is a not very rare variety of "Revets'" wheat, which is "proliferous," that is to say, it bears two or more additional smaller ears at the base, in consequence of the lower "spikelets" growing out and becoming supplementary ears. This is supposed to resemble the ears described in Genesis (xli. 5), and has consequently received the popular name of "Egyptian" wheat. The reports of "mummy" wheat from Egypt having been grown in this country has thus given rise to the idea that this variety of Revets' was actually raised from the old grains brought from the tombs of Egypt. But as Prof. Henslow remarked, if Mr. Tupper's experiments were trustworthy, the old Egyptian wheat must have been identical with the Bellevue Talavera, and not at all like our modern "Egyptian" or the proliferous variety of Revets'.

Finally, it may be noticed that wheat, in this country at least, is well-known to agriculturalists to be particularly short lived. "An old farmer" writing to the *Gardeners' Chronicle*

(1848, p. 787), remarks that—"We all know that the seed of the year is always preferred for sowing; that the seed of the year before would never be equally productive, and that if seed five or six years old were sown, not half of it would come up." And I can add, that of apparently sound grains seventeen years old, not one germinated.

GEORGE HENSLOW.

FEATHER PAINTING.

OVER and over again I have been asked: "why, instead of using the skins and wings of birds on screens and fans, a painting of them in decorative combination should not be acceptable to the public?" In Japan, careful studies of birds in flight are constantly found on screens, and as far as artistic effect goes, leave nothing to be desired. Here in England the hand-painting for the trade is, as Miss Beale has pointed out, so utterly execrable that it can only find a market amongst persons unable to distinguish between a coloured map and one of Vicat Cole's views in Surrey. That work can be specially produced in this country, quite comparable with the best Japanese, is not so well known as it should be. Not long ago a professional artist, a Miss Emily Murray, of 80, Eaton Terrace, London, S. W. (one of the "Atholl" Murrays) showed me some drawings of birds' wings, which struck me as admirable examples of perfect workmanship, and peculiarly adapted to the purpose indicated by me. Thinking that some of the subscribers to the Selborne Society might like to know a few more details concerning Miss Murray's speciality, I prevailed upon her to allow me to publish two or three extracts from letters received by her from persons whose opinions are in every way valuable. To give the first place to our revered art critic, John Ruskin writes thus:—"Your work is quite the best I have ever seen in its kind—just what I have always wanted to get done, and never could! Quite *beyond* price to me just now, when I am trying finally to organise a school of natural history. . . . . The prime and rare gift is your love of the truth and the insight that comes of it—and the patience. Your lovely book must not be broken up—the drawings will eventually be worth much more than they are at present to a dealer—if you keep them till you have name as a bird painter. I am certain your eyes will recover all the strength needful for the noblest bird drawing." Miss Marianne North, herself an admirable transcriber of Nature says:—"I think the bird wings are exquisite. . . . Such accurate drawing is not often met with; if I do not mistake it, the colouring of those dull bronze and greys is most beautifully rendered." The Secretary of the Ray Society writes:—"Yesterday I placed your very beautiful paintings before the Council of the

Ray Society. In reply I am desired by the Council to express their thanks for the opportunity of inspecting these most careful illustrations."

Besides these written expressions of approval, I may add when Mr. Stacy Marks saw Miss Murray's paintings he declared that for fidelity to Nature and accuracy, they might be compared to those of Albert Dürer. Personally, I wish that I could persuade the public that such faithful work as this and much that is to be found in the Arts and Crafts Exhibitions, and amongst the so-called "sketches" by young artists, made from the *love* of painting, is worth buying and that the same amount of money spent in the purchase of gaudy daubs produced by people whose attainments are on the level of those of the pavement artist in chalks—is absolutely frittered away njuriously.

If there were no market for daubs, the daubers would be forced to obtain subsistence by honest work and the skilled artists would have a better reward for their painful labour and the public would gain by an investment in works of art, although they may be only fans and screens, rather than lose by the possession of trash.

GEORGE A. MUSGRAVE.

Furzebank, Torquay.

THE PLANT ALLUSIONS IN THE POEMS OF ROBERT HERRICK.

A HUMBLE lover of Nature and an earnest Selbornian, I have found much pleasure and profit in reading the admirable essay by Sir Mountstuart Grant Duff, which has lately appeared in the pages of NATURE NOTES, upon the allusions to plants which occur in the poems of Matthew Arnold. I think it will be found that the writings of Robert Herrick are fuller of references to plants, and especially to flowers, than are those of any other English poet. May I be allowed to draw the attention of my fellow Selbornians to some of the beautiful passages in which these references occur? Herrick belonged to a Leicestershire family, and he was born in the year 1591. He graduated in arts at Cambridge, and in the year 1629 he took holy orders in the Church of England, and was appointed soon afterwards to the vicariate of Dean Prior, a quiet little rural village on the borders of Dartmoor, in what he called "his dull Devonshire." Herrick, when he was fifty-six years old, in the year 1647, when the unfortunate King Charles and his cavaliers were defending the royal crown of England against the pikes of the Puritans, printed in London the first of the two sections of his poems, made up of his "pious pieces," under the title of "Noble Numbers." In the

next year following, his larger collection, the secular division of his writings, was printed. In honour of the west country in which the verses were written, in his Devonshire vicarage, the whole collection was entitled "Hesperides; or Works both Human and Divine." Professor Henry Morley, from whose admirable edition of Herrick's poems I propose to make a few quotations, calls Herrick "one of Nature's poets," and says, very truly, "the love of flowers runs through all his verse." In the poetical introduction of his book Herrick himself says:—

"I sing of brooks, of blossoms, birds, and bowers."

And again:—

. . . . "I write
How roses first came red, and lilies white."

Herrick's collection of poems is made up of a very large number of short lyrical pieces, full of melody, in which he tries nearly every cast of rhyme and metre. Many of his songs are love songs, written in honour of his ideal Julia, and in these pretty ditties are to be found many beautiful references to flowers. The serious object of his book seems to be to set forth in verse every mood, passion, and moral experience of human life, and to blend into the whole the teachings of his Christian faith, his love of Nature, and his loyalty to his unhappy king. His references to flowers are not made in the scientific spirit of the naturalist, but rather with the lofty sensuousness of the poet, who sees in the beauties of bud and blossom, in their colours, scents, and forms, the types and illustrations of all else in the world that is pure, and fair, and lovely. Upon his Julia's recovery from sickness he writes:—

"Droop, droop no more, or hang the head,
Ye roses almost withered;
New strength and newer purple get,
Each here declining violet.
O primroses! let this day be
A resurrection unto ye;
And to all flowers allied in blood,
Or sworn to that sweet sisterhood,
For health on Julia's cheek" . . .

Then he dreams of a parliament of roses, when

. . . . . "all those powers
Voted the Rose the queen of flowers."

In his sadder moods Herrick wrote of his death, and of what men would think of him when he had passed away. He chose a laurel tree to mark his grave:—

"A funeral stone or verse, I covet none:
But only crave of you that I may have
A sacred laurel springing from my grave."

In one of his longer poems, dedicated to his brother, Her-

rick gives some charming pictures of the joys of a country life. He describes the "damasked meadows" and tells us how

> "The purling springs, groves, birds, and well-weaved bowers,
> With fields enamelled with flowers,
> Present their shapes."

Herrick had some fanciful and curious conceits about flowers. He sings a plaintive melody of an unlucky girl who was turned into a wall-flower. He jokes rather sadly about "divination by a daffodil," thus :—

> "When a daffodil I see
> Hanging down his head towards me,
> Guess I may what I must be ;
> First, I shall decline my head ;
> Secondly, I shall be dead ;
> Lastly, safely buried."

Then we have some more pleasing verses in the same quaint strain, telling "how lilies came white," "how violets came blue," "how roses came red," and "how marigolds came yellow." As I turn over the leaves of Herrick's delightful book, I find there is scarcely a page which does not speak of flowers. Some of these references I must leave for others to find. Herrick's gentle lyrics, now two centuries and a half old, will be remembered when newer rhymes are forgotten, and they will live not alone by their own bright charms, but also because the beautiful objects of nature upon which they rest abide with us always. One of his sweet old songs "Cherry Ripe," has long fixed his fame wherever joy can spring to speech in English words.

JAMES SAWYER.

THE FUTURE OF THE BOTANIC GARDEN AT CHELSEA.

THE hand of Time has wrought many changes on the banks of the Thames in and about London. Docks, quays and warehouses have succeeded the thickets and reed beds of centuries ago, and now, more happily, where twenty years since only reaches of mud at low tide and slimy walls met the eye of the passenger by boat up the river, there may be seen spacious embankments planted with avenues of lime and sycamore. But although these embankments have been the means of abolishing much that was unlovely, in one instance at least they have helped to efface and obscure from view an old landmark on the river bank which forms the subject of this note.

Once a conspicuous object to those passing up and down the Thames, the old Botanic Garden of Chelsea is now hidden from view by the flourishing avenue of sycamores on the embank-

ment.* It is hemmed in on one side by lofty red-bricked mansions, and on the other by humbler, yet densely-packed tenements. The trees, too, hide the ancient cedar, survivor of its fellow blown down in 1845, and "the embankment has robbed the garden of the water-stairs given by Sir Hans Sloane."

Like the parterre of a deserted mansion, sequestered and barred to the public, no wonder such a spot, lonely amidst the turmoil of London, is forgotten, and to all but the surrounding inhabitants, almost unknown. Yet in former days, before the foundation of the more celebrated garden at Kew, it must have been a notable place, for "Evelyn used to walk in the Apothecaries' Garden and admire 'besides many rare annuals, the tree-bearing Jesuit's bark which has done such wonders in quartan ague.'"

Quite lately some degree of public interest has been aroused in this long-forgotten spot. The ever restless sea of bricks and mortar now seeks to inundate this island of green, and ere long the builder hopes to be making havoc of its shady walks and flower-beds. Not many weeks ago a meeting was held at the Chelsea Town Hall, under the presidency of Lord Meath, to protest against the sale of the garden by the Apothecaries' Company, and a resolution, modified into a declaration, was passed, that an effort should be made to preserve it as an open space. Now better far than that the garden should pass into the hands of the builders, would be that it were kept as an open space; but, we would add, not exactly in the sense of the other numerous, though not too numerous, recreation grounds of the metropolis. If secured to the use of the public for ever, it is difficult to see why it should not, all the same, be devoted to the use for which it was designed by its founder, namely, for the study of botany as a means of learning the medicinal and noxious properties of plants; of promoting healthy relaxation to those engaged in manual or sedentary employment, and of teaching observant habits of mind. With the sole exception of medicine, more especially in its clinical aspect, no science is easier to be demonstrated, and learnt by demonstration, than is botany. It was his never being content with mere book-learning, but believing that botany could only be grasped as a science by actual field observation that gave the late Professor Henslow such success with his pupils at Cambridge, and with those in his village school.

If such an object as now suggested, were attained, no doubt there would be found plenty of botanists, whose knowledge and position would enable them to do so, ready and willing to give lectures and demonstrations on summer evenings and at other times in the garden.

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* This is the only old Botanical Garden in London left, "Gerard's at Holborn and Tradescant's at Lambeth having perished." (Hare's "Walks about London.")

It would be idle to suppose that such a garden could in any sense become a rival to that of Kew, but everyone in London who has a desire to learn structural botany, by observation of plants while in a growing state, has by no means the time and money to be frequently going to Kew, much less into the open country, receding as the latter does, further and further from the metropolis every year. The principle of localisation, as opposed to centralisation, is now happily becoming a leading feature in politics, as we see in the establishment of County Councils; also in education, as the University Extension Scheme has most successfully shown. Could not the same principle be applied with regard to the study of botany? If this garden were to be kept up for the purpose originally intended, doubtless other gardens would be employed for the same useful purpose. The Botanic Gardens of Regent's Park, of Kensington, and of Battersea Park (the latter exactly opposite the Chelsea Garden), would then become centres of botanical learning, and form valuable auxiliaries to Kew.

To some who might be inclined to suggest the difficulty of getting the various kinds of wild plants to flourish, it may be answered that it is astonishing to see the number of our wild flowers and field plants that *do* grow and luxuriate in the naturalized parts of the Zoological Gardens in Regent's Park, such as the large aviaries formed of recent years.

Lastly, although in the winter months, when of necessity it could not be used much for the purpose here advocated, the garden might be employed more generally as a recreation ground; in the spring and summer months there would not be the same need, owing to the Embankment with its leafy avenue being close at hand, also the far larger expanses of Battersea Park, easily accessible on the other side of the water. If only secured, and the writer trusts he is echoing the wish of every member of the Selborne Society that it may be so, let the garden be kept as near as possible to the original purposes of its donor—"for the manifestation of the power and wisdom and goodness of GOD in creation, and that the apprentices might learn to distinguish good and useful plants from hurtful ones."

ARCHIBALD L. CLARKE.

SOME BOOKS FOR HOLIDAY-MAKERS.

AMONG the thousands of readers of NATURE NOTES, many are doubtless already on their travels for the annual vacation; others are preparing for flitting, or engaged in the selection of a route. It is, therefore, an opportune moment to call attention to a number of guide-books, which have been sent to us by different publishers. Of these the most important is *Ireland*, by H. J. B. Baddeley and C. S. Ward, in the admirable and well-known "Thorough Guide Series," published by Dulau and Co., Soho-Square. Ireland as a resort for tourists has been well

to the fore this summer. We have hardly yet ceased laughing at the school-boy's delightful description of "that beautiful country, which is chiefly noted for three principal classes of things, which is, namely, its great greenness, its big bogness, and its little shamrocks," and we feel that we should like a little more definite information about the inhabitants of that island than the statement that "The hearts of the Irish are all very warm. If you was walking out in the country and you met a poor man, you could easy tell whether he was an Irishman, for if he was an Irishman he would perhaps be in a pashion and have a pig with him." Holiday Ireland, too, has wrought up one of the morning papers into a state of ecstasy, which finds vent rather in glowing prose-poetry than in details likely to be of use to the average tourist. Our old friend, "Adolescens Leo," Esq., of the *D. T.*, is left many Irish miles behind in passages like this:—"It is no exaggeration to say that Cork county and her neighbour Kerry are a microcosm of all that is beautiful and grand in natural scenery river scenery, mountain scenery, sea scenery. Has not Cork her 'Irish Rhine,' a storied stream; its ruined castles, telling of 'unhappy far-off things and battles long ago?' The 'Irish Rhine' land is a slowly-changing kaleidoscopic vision of emerald-green retreating meadows, wooded cliffs, and mountain masses." What a come-down from this picturesque word-painting to the humiliating confession couched in ordinary language, that "Not one English tourist in a hundred thousand has ever seen or heard of the Irish Rhine!" Reviving from his depressing bit of actual fact, the prose poet soars upward again and informs us that "The balmy summer air of these Irish regions is life itself; the skies are, in dry weather, like the pearly-blue, dreamy sky of Italy." One can imagine a cynical anti-Irishman asserting that the whole force of this passage lay in the three words, "in dry weather," and gravely inquiring how many instances of this peculiar meteorological combination have been known in historical times. But the cynical objector would be quite wrong, and the gushing describer, despite his gush, is very nearly right. It is a fact acknowledged by all those who have been able to compare Irish scenery with the very best that the Continent can show, that we far too often hurry abroad at great expense in search of beauties inferior to those which may be seen in the Sister Island, within a small compass and at a small cost. This is now recognised and acted on by a gradually-increasing stream of tourists, who on their return fill the papers with praises of the beauty of the country and the invariable courtesy of the people. It is quite impossible for those who intend to "try Ireland" to have a better guide book, as far as practical advice for travelling goes, than that of Messrs. Ward and Baddeley, although it certainly cannot pretend to vie in style with the beautiful passages we have given above. The writer of this notice knows Ireland well. He has special acquaintance with two large Irish districts, one in the North and another in the South, which he has travelled over on foot, on horseback, and by carriage; and he has been astonished by the accuracy, even in the minutest particulars, of the accounts given in the present guide-book. He cannot say, however, of this, as has been said by a high authority about some of the other books in the "Thorough Guide" Series, that "it is not possible to suggest an improvement." The historical and archæological portion of the book is not on a level with the topographical. There are omissions, misprints, and sometimes distinct errors in the historical statements. The writers, too, have been too prone to give gratuitous hints on matters political, a very great mistake in a subject which divides men's minds so sharply as Irish politics. It is clearly not an advantage in a guide-book that it should offend either section of those who use it. On the whole the "Thorough Guide" to Ireland is a work which reflects very great credit on the industry and accuracy of its authors; it is very much the best practical guide for the Irish tourist in existence; and if it were submitted to the revision of some one with a competent knowledge of Irish history, and had all allusions showing political bias expunged, it would be very difficult to find in it any fault whatever.

We cannot afford so much space to the other books on our list. The *Thorough Guide to Scotland*, by the same authors, reaches us in its sixth edition, and is in some respects a better book than the companion "Ireland." The coloured contour maps, especially, are not excelled by anything in British cartography and give an idea of the relative altitudes of the various localities which it is impossible to obtain in any other way.

Messrs. Dulau and Co. also send us a new edition (the fifth) of *North Devon and North Cornwall*, by Mr. C. S. Ward. We once practically tested this book very severely in an expedition along the sea coast from Clifton to the Land's End, and found that it was most admirable in its practical utility. The new edition is distinctly improved, some new and excellent maps are supplied, and in many instances the results of the recent survey are given in advance of the much wanted 1-inch revised Ordnance maps. We cannot leave these "Thorough Guide" series of Messrs. Dulau without giving the result of our own experience of many years; whenever we have broken new ground in the British Isles, we have always enquired first of all whether there was a "Thorough Guide" for the locality. If there was, we have invariably found it much superior to any other which came into our hands.

A most careful manual, which ought to sell by tens of thousands to the British paterfamilias when he is engaged on the solution of his annually recurring problem of "Where shall we go this autumn?" is *Seaside Watering Places* (L. Upcott Gill). The book is cheap, comprehensive, and so far as we have tested it, wonderfully accurate, considering the very large amount of information conveyed. In some cases interesting information as to the fauna and flora of the locality makes the work doubly useful to Selbornians. The name of the editor of *Seaside Watering Places* is not given, but he deserves high praise for the industry and ability displayed in the compilation of what is practically a cyclopædia of the watering places on the English coast, dealing impartially with their often conflicting claims for supremacy.

We have also received the *Tourist's Guide to Derbyshire*, by R. N. Worth, one of a very useful series of county guide issued by Edward Stanford. Useful summaries are given of the botany, palæontology, and geology of the county, and attention is directed to all the spots of special interest and beauty which abound in Derbyshire, as, for example, the Valley of Miller's Dale, a plea for the protection of which, by Miss Ellen Hibbert, appeared in the May number of NATURE NOTES. The map which accompanies the guide is on too small a scale, and we have failed to find in it several places for which we looked.

We have been gradually approaching the metropolis in our selection of localities for holiday makers. The last book on our list only comes in that place because it deals with a spot which is practically part of London itself. *Hampstead Hill*, by Professor J. Logan Lobley is a very pretty, nicely illustrated book, and one which is sure to be most useful to all nature-lovers who are not too grand to "spend a 'appy day at 'Ampstead," in the study of the natural history of that beautiful suburban spot. To most Londoners it will be a startling surprise to find that they may, almost at their own doors, find material for the discussion of interesting geological problems, and for very varied exploration both in the zoological and botanical domains. Mr. Lobley himself deals ably with the structure, materials and sculpturing of the Hill, and gives us much incidental information on the fossils of the London clay. Mr. J. E. Harting, an eminent ornithological authority, supplies a thoroughly trustworthy account of the birds of Hampstead, founded to some extent upon that given in his well-known *Birds of Middlesex*. The Rev. F. A. Walker and Mr. H. T. Wharton are responsible for less valuable guides to the insect fauna, and the flora of Hampstead. The book is an example of a really good idea well carried out, and we should be glad to see similar works published with reference to many similar localities in the neighbourhood of London.

BOOKS RECEIVED.

Wild Nature Won by Kindness, by Mrs. Brightwen, Vice-President of the Selborne Society: T. Fisher Unwin. [A notice of this work, which is for many reasons most interesting to Selbornians, is, for the present, unfortunately crowded out on account of the great pressure on our space. Reviews of several other works have been for some time in type.]

Studies in Evolution and Biology, by Alice Bodington : Elliot Stock.
Half-Hours in the Green Lanes, by Dr. J. E. Taylor : W. H. Allen and Co.
Wild Flowers Worth Notice, by Mrs. Lankester : W. H. Allen and Co.
Glimpses into Nature's Secrets, by Edward Alfred Martin : Elliot Stock.
The Human Epic, by J. F. Rowbotham : Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner and Co.
Mendreva ; a Dream, by Edward G. Aldridge, F.G.S., &c. : Simpkin, Marshall, Hamilton, Kent and Co.
Our Cats, and all about them, by Harrison Weir : Simpkin and Marshall.
The Cat, Past and Present, by Mrs. Cashel Hoey : Bell and Sons.
Father Perry, the Jesuit Astronomer, by the Rev. A. L. Cortie : Catholic Truth Society.

CHILDREN'S COLUMN.

A Letter from Switzerland.—Miss Wallis, of Richmond, who has established there by far the largest and most flourishing juvenile section of the Selborne Society, sends the following letter, primarily for the junior members of her own branch ; but it will doubtless be read with interest by many other young Selbornians :—"Hotel Rigi-Scheideck, August, 1890. Dear Children,—We are spending a few weeks in one of the loveliest parts of Switzerland, at the top of Mount Rigi, on Lake Lucerne. Our hotel is 5,400 feet above the level of the sea ; it is very difficult to imagine such a height, but you will understand it better when I tell you that the clouds, which are so high above your heads, are often very, very far beneath our feet. You will think we must have been very tired when we reached the top of the mountain ; not at all, for, impossible as it may seem, there is actually a railway the whole way up. Each train consists of only one carriage with an engine below it, and the wheels have cogs which catch in the lines to prevent the train from slipping backwards. The day after we came we went out for a climb, and saw so many lovely flowers that we determined to try how many we could find. We gathered sixty-four different kinds, many of which were old friends, such as daisies, buttercups, eyebright, monkshood, speedwell, sweet briar, sweet william, pinks, blue bells, honeysuckle, ragged robin, forget-me-not, geranium, thyme, orchis, azalea, and strawberry, all of which we found growing wild. The colours of these were much brighter than in England, and some of them were very large indeed—the blue-bells are twice as large as ours, and one ox-eye daisy which we measured was eight and three-quarter inches round. We also found a great many beautiful mosses, ferns, and grasses. You would have been amused to see us laden with our spoils standing on the line waving a red flag to make the train stop for us. Imagine anyone standing on the railway lines in London waving a flag to stop the train !

"Besides these, there are some beautiful Alpine flowers. We have found three kinds of gentian—yellow, purple-red and brilliant blue, and also the Alpine rose, which is very pretty, but not at all like our rose : it grows close to the ground and has several blossoms, which are bright red, close together at the top of the stalk. The edelweiss and ice-plant we have not found, as they grow amongst the ice and snow where we have not yet been. Some beautiful flowers were given to our hostess last Saturday, arranged to form the pattern of the Swiss arms—a white cross of daisies on a red ground of Alpine roses, with a wreath of other flowers all round it. Though there are so many flowers, we see and hear very few birds, but those there are seem wonderfully tame. We have also recognised seven or eight kinds of butterflies, but there are not nearly so many as in England. It is impossible to describe all the beauties of the place in this short letter, but I hope when you are older you will be able to come here and see them for yourselves.

"With best wishes for a happy holiday to you all, I am, your affectionate friend, "ANNIE WALLIS."

SELBORNIANA.

Strange Instance of Nest-building.—Mrs. Brightwen, Vice-President of the Selborne Society, sends us the following interesting notes on birds' nests:—"In a shed at Oxhey Grange Farm the implements had been stowed away at the end of the haymaking season last year, amongst them a broken wooden rake, which was thrown behind an elevator, teeth upwards. Between these teeth four thrushes' nests have been built side by side, and in each nest were eggs—all of which have been unfortunately taken and the nests damaged, it is supposed by a labourer, much to the annoyance of the occupier of the Grange Farm, Mr. Bone. On the same farm while one of the men was clearing away some rubbish, a robin's nest with eggs in was found in an old kettle; the man took the kettle and showed it to several people, but was persuaded to replace it where it was found, and the mother has taken to it again, and is now nestling the young ones."

Pheasants as Fowl-Rearers.—Mr. H. D. Skrine, President of the Bath Branch, writes to us from Claverton Manor:—"It may interest some of your readers to know that a hen pheasant in my woods has reared two chickens this season, whose parent must have laid her eggs in the pheasant's nest. That there should be only two birds hatched out is explained by the fact that the hen pheasant's eggs take several days longer than hen's eggs to hatch, and as a pheasant is not so good a sitter as a hen, it would seem that finding two live chicks under her she did not wait for the others to arrive in due course, and must have left them to spoil. In all probability these chickens will become as wild as the pheasants, and eventually a cross breed may be established in my woods. Have any of your readers had a similar experience?

The Cheddar Pink.—Selbornians will be pleased to learn that, notwithstanding the tendency to destroy this interesting native plant, preservative instincts are also at work. About two years ago, whilst walking from Maesbury to Wells, in this county, I observed on the top of a high wall, a plant which looked very like the Cheddar pink. I managed to secure a small piece of the plant by the aid of my walking stick; I then discovered that my first impression was correct, and that *Dianthus cæsius* was not only growing, but looked quite at home on this old garden wall. A person who lives on the opposite side of the road had noticed my doings. He accosted me, and asked whether I knew the name of the plant I had been taking so much trouble about. Upon my answering that I believed it to be the Cheddar pink, he replied, "So it is, I brought the seed from Cheddar myself, and sowed it on that wall." Some few years ago this rare plant was to be found on the walls of Prior Park, near Bath. I have sought for it in vain of late. A few days ago one of the courteous professors of Prior Park College showed me some flowers of a pink, and asked me whether I recognised them. I was afterwards informed that they had been sent from Scotland by a former pupil of the college, and that the seed which produced them had been gathered from plants which once grew on the park walls. The Northern habitat seemed to have suited the plant, for the flowers looked healthy and strong, whilst the colour of the petals was of a deeper hue than I had hitherto seen. About a week ago, whilst attending a garden party, given by one of the founders of the Bath Branch of the Selborne Society, I was delighted to find, on the inner side of one of the garden walls, a large clump of *Dianthus cæsius*. Several of our members were admiring the plant, and a question arose about its dimensions. I applied my foot rule, and found them to be close upon five feet by four feet. This clump is evidently the product of many years' growth. I feel sure that our host of Monday last would allow any Selbornian who wishes to assist in preserving this interesting species, to have some of the seed. Such a delightful garden of "old fashioned" flowers I have not seen for a long time, *Thalictrum flavum*, *L.* and *Aristolochia Clematitis*, *L.*, amongst other plants, find a place in this charming old garden.

Bath, July 21st, 1890. W. G. Wheatcroft.

"Insects as Ornaments in Gardens."—It is to be hoped that all members of the Selborne Society who are entomologists, even in the most super-

ficial degree, will act upon Mr. Kirby's suggestion, and endeavour to entice harmless insects to breed in their gardens.

In the *Selborne Magazine*, for March, 1889, I advocated the growing of nettles and rearing of butterflies in the town gardens, and should be glad to hear of any member who has succeeded. For my part, I must admit that I find the insects easier to rear than the nettles, which do not flourish in the confined "gardens" of this semi-suburban district, as do the various lilies, purple clematis, &c., which, if permitted, would soon crowd them out.

This year I have been trying as garden ornaments another order of insects. viz., dragon flies, a much neglected family, and yet one of the most beautiful and interesting. Having prepared three or four small pools, I placed the larvæ in them, giving them occasionally minute worms, maggots, &c., the larger species finding sufficient food in the small earth worms that fall into the water, or on some tadpoles already hatched there.

A newly emerged dragon fly, clinging to a blade of grass or watercress, is a lovely sight on a sunny morning, much prettier than the blooms of "geraniums," of which we have far too many in our gardens.

Upper Clapton. R. MARSHMAN WATTSON.

Another London Oasis Disappearing.—Can nothing be done to prevent the destruction of a little-known but very interesting spot in the South-west of London? At present it possesses not only some delightful old architecture but a plot of greenery which is invaluable in the closely-packed neighbourhood of Victoria, opposite the Soldiers' Home, lately opened in a narrow street. Near Buckingham Gate stand Lady Daire's Alms Houses; old red brick buildings round three sides of a quadrangle, which on the fourth is enclosed by fine iron-work gates. This space is now open to the public, but it is doomed in the near future. The Charity Commissioners have said it must go, and the site will be used for building, and so another lung will be lost to London and another historic memento swept away. I have heard that the Lord Mayor has some influence in this matter; if so, possibly some of your readers may prevail on him to use it, and to save a little more breathing room for our crowded city.

MARGARET BELL.

Papyrophagous Slugs.—Is it a common occurrence for slugs to eat paper? I have never heard of it before, but yesterday I went into my room, and on the table where a few books and plants were, I saw, on taking up last month's NATURE NOTES, that the leaves were eaten into along the top edge; on looking more carefully at the book, I found it covered with slime, so concluded that it must have been the work of a snail or a slug. I then searched for some time hoping to find the perpetrator, but my search was in vain.

AGNES M. PARMENTER.

A Bellicose Duck.—Mr. Arthur T. King, of High Barnet, sends us a note of the following amusing incident:—"We have on the long water at the end of the recreation ground, a brood of eight little ducklings, which are periodically paraded by an admiring mother duck, conscious of the attractions of her little charges, especially in the evening, when they are out as little flycatchers, and are very quick and clever in their movements. The mother duck on these occasions generally parades on dry land to guard the little ones against intruders, and very bold she is against any who would dare to interfere with her progeny. On Thursday evening she more than once deliberately attacked a fox terrier prowling around on mischief bent. Fortunately the dog was muzzled, or I am not prepared to say the manœuvre of the old lady would have been exactly discreet. As it was, the dog swooped down upon her several times, and it was most laughable to see how on each occasion she 'went for' the dog in the boldest fashion, ejaculating sundry and divers 'quacks,' which, if translated, might mean something of a pæan of victory, or perchance bad language at the unseemly interruption!"

Memorial to Richard Jefferies.—Miss Agnes Martelli, hon. secretary of the Northern Heights Branch of the Selborne Society, calls our attention to the following extract from a letter of Mr. Arthur Kinglake:—"July 21st, 1890. A wish has been expressed of late by many, that some memorial of Richard.

Jefferies should be erected, and inasmuch as he was a native of Wilts and fond of his county, Salisbury Cathedral appeared to be the most appropriate spot for that purpose. Mr. Charles Longman, an attached friend of Richard Jefferies, and Mr. Walter Besant, the happy author of the "Eulogy," regarding the proposal with favour, a committee has been formed for placing a marble bust of the Prose Poet of the Wiltshire Downs in this grand old cathedral, the Bishop of Salisbury and the Dean having most cordially given their assent to this project. The estimated cost of this work will be about £150. It is believed that little difficulty will be experienced in raising this small fund among the admirers and readers of the most remarkable man produced in the diocese of Salisbury for many years."

The Wiltshire folk do not seem to have responded as generously to the appeal as was anticipated by Mr. Kinglake, and Miss Martelli suggests that some of the readers of NATURE NOTES would probably be glad to show by subscribing to this memorial bust, how much they appreciate the boon conferred upon all Nature lovers by Richard Jefferies.

L'Association pour la Protection des Plantes.—Mr. R. Goodwin Mumbray, of Richmond, has kindly sent us the *Bulletin de l'Association pour la Protection des Plantes* for 1890, and advises that the Selborne Society should become one of the "Sociétés qui sont Membres de l'Association." This has already been done at the suggestion of Mr. T. F. Wakefield. In the 1890 *Bulletin* we find a very kindly notice of the Selborne Society. Evidently our existence was unknown to the Editor in 1889, for the *Bulletin* for that year has an article on "British Plants" by A. D. Webbster, in which he deplores the fact (or rather the fiction) that no such society has been founded in England. M. Webbster's article is very well-intentioned, but the Genevan printers have so utterly mangled it that it forms one of the most amusing examples of "English as She is Wrote" that we have ever come across.

ANSWERS TO QUERIES.

As nobody has answered two queries inserted in the early part of the year by E. V. B., I should like to suggest that the blackbird at Huntercombe is getting yearly more grey from *old age*, and that the bee-like fly is the Drone Fly, whose proboscis forms one of the most interesting common objects of the microscope.

G. A. M.

OFFICIAL NOTICES.

AT the last meeting of the Magazine Committee, the account of the Magazine expenses and receipts was presented by Mr. Otter, the Hon. Treasurer, and the Committee were pleased to find that, in spite of the large initial expenses connected with NATURE NOTES, it is already in a flourishing financial condition. This will be very pleasing intelligence to the gentlemen on whose advice the venture was determined on to meet an emergency, and specially to Mr. Edward King, of Richmond, who was the warmest advocate of the course which has been pursued. Meanwhile the difficulty of limited space is becoming more pressing than ever. This month a very large number of communications which we would gladly print, have been reluctantly set aside; and it has not been possible to use some pages of matter already in type. Many correspondents recommend the raising of the price to 3d., but we should much prefer to be able to permanently increase the size without departing from the present price. To be able to do this with perfect safety we must either have more subscribers or special contributions to the Magazine Fund.

To those members who will help us to obtain additional subscribers, we shall gladly send programmes of NATURE NOTES for distribution, and we shall be glad to have the names of those who are willing to contribute to the Magazine Fund. During the last month we have received the following:—Wm. Whitwell, 5s.; C. R. L., 5s.; G. A. Musgrave, 5s.; J. S., 5s.; Tom Brown, 10s.; Mrs. General Smith, 1s. 6d.

It is particularly requested that subscriptions and letters bearing on the general business of the Society, should *not* be forwarded to the editors, but to the Secretary of the Selborne Society, 9, Adam Street, Adelphi. Editorial communications should be addressed to the Rev. PERCY MYLES, 1, Argyle Road, Ealing, W.

Nature Notes:

The Selborne Society's Magazine.

No. 9. SEPTEMBER 15, 1890. Vol. I.

THE PROTECTION OF PLANTS IN SWITZERLAND.

THAT there is a necessity for some action in the direction of protecting the wild flowers of the Alps, no one who has visited those regions can doubt. And this is specially true of the plants which grow at moderate elevations, such as are well within the reach of the average tourist. Down below in the valleys, and even some way up the mountains, the flowers can be gathered without injury to the plants, and there is little danger of any mischief being done; but when the sub-alpine and alpine flora is reached, the case is altogether different. The plants are small and grow among loose stones, and it is difficult to gather the flowers without pulling up the roots at the same time. And as they are all the more bright and tempting from their dull surroundings, and more attractive on account of their novelty to the traveller, it follows only too often that large masses are wantonly torn from their haunts and left to perish after they have been admired for a few moments.

It is not the botanist who is chiefly to blame, although he is often supposed to be so. He is usually content to select a few good specimens for his collecting-case, and to pass on in search of other novelties. Judging from my own observations in Switzerland this year and last, I fear ladies are most guilty. Coming down from the Faulhorn last month I passed a young lady—I am afraid she was English—with a basket and handkerchief crammed with flowers, among which I could see Gentians, Forget-me-nots, Androsaces, and a host of other characteristic plants. Now if one such visitor ascended the Faulhorn every day during the season, and brought away a like quantity, the botany of that mountain, varied and beautiful as it still is, would soon be despoiled of its chief treasures.

As was mentioned in the last two numbers of NATURE NOTES, an Association for the Protection of Plants, having its head-quarters at Geneva, is doing a good work. This it does by discouraging as much as possible the collection of roots for the garden, and by supplying, on reasonable terms, plants and seeds which are not only far more likely to grow, but which have been raised in cultivation for the purpose. Since 1883 this excellent Society, so kindred in spirit to our own, has been carrying on its work under the direction of M. Henri Correvon, its active and enthusiastic President. I was fortunate in finding him at home when I visited the garden of the Association, and had the pleasure of his company in a walk round the grounds.

The garden is not very extensive, but contains many plants of interest, in addition to the tiny Alpines for the propagation of which it was established. Here we saw any quantity of little pots containing small but healthy specimens of Edelweiss and other treasures of the Alps; and, while selecting from the extensive seed list, I chatted with M. Correvon about his Society and our own, and exchanged good wishes for the prosperity of each. It was pleasant to learn that it was from the Selborne Society, whose leaflet was reproduced in the last "Bulletin" of the Association, that M. Correvon took the idea of issuing similar appeals. A translation of the Swiss Society's leaflet is appended to this notice.

The "Bulletin" of the Association is issued yearly, and contains interesting papers upon the work and the necessity which exists for it. To the issue for 1890 is appended a list of members, among whom I am glad to notice a large number of English names, including Sir Joseph Hooker, Mr. William Robinson, Mr. J. G. Baker, Mr. Nicholson, Sir Trevor Lawrence, Mr. Wilson, and others.

The annual subscription to the Association pour la Protection des Plantes is only two shillings, and I hope that many of the readers of NATURE NOTES will forward this amount to the Treasurer, M. Louis Lang, 23, Glacis de Rive, Genève.

JAMES BRITTEN.

The following is the leaflet referred to above:—

"PROTECT THE PLANTS!

"A Spanish proverb says, 'If you would understand the importance of plants, imagine a world without them, and the comparison will terrify you, because the idea of death will immediately arise.'

"Friends of plants and flowers, have you ever reflected what our vegetable carpet would be if it were despoiled of the graceful corollas which adorn it? Have you considered what our mountains would be if the flowery clusters which brighten their slopes were suppressed, if the pastures were flowerless, the rocks without verdure, the forests stripped of those myriads of stars which shine on the sombre surface of the ground? Have you ever reflected that there are species of plants, rare or sought after for their beauty, which may disappear from the flora of a country in the same way that certain animals have disappeared from its fauna; that the treasures of nature are not inexhaustible, and that, however slightly destruction exceeds reproduction, the species is threatened with extinction?

"These fears are unhappily not chimerical; they are founded on facts. Several species of rare, interesting, or beautiful plants have disappeared from Swiss territory, either in consequence of the ravages caused by collectors and hawkers, or as a result of breaking up the land for cultivation, or by amateurs or horticulturists who introduce these plants into their gardens. The Association for the Protection of Plants has undertaken to protect the threatened species and recommends: 1st, To botanists and tourists not to devastate the habitats of rare plants, and to limit themselves in the event of their desiring to obtain specimens for their herbaria, to the plant without its root, and to take as few specimens as possible. 2nd, To amateurs to raise rare and choice plants by means of seeds, or to buy them of horticulturists who raise them by that means. 3rd, To public authorities, professors, and cultured people generally to see that a habitat of rare plants be not surrendered to cultivation without compensation having been given to Nature by replanting the threatened species in the neighbourhood, if possible, in a place safe from future clearings. It recommends also the forming and the support of protective gardens in threatened territories. 4th, To all persons generally the Association recommends the adhesion to this society, of which any person may become a member by the annual payment of two francs. The "Bulletin" of the Association is sent gratis to all persons whom the subject may interest.

"For all information apply to M. H. Correvon, President of the Association for the Protection of Plants in Geneva, or to M. Alex. Claparède, Secretary, in the same city."

BOOKS OF FEATHERS.

I HAVE often thought that lovers of nature would like to be told of the great interest there is in making a collection of birds' feathers grouped artistically on the pages of a large album. Possibly such books have often been made, but I have never seen any except my own, and they seem always to give pleasure to young and old, and form a useful resource on wet days or at odd times when friends are needing something to chat about for half an hour. I will therefore describe how simply they are made, in the hope that others will share my pleasure and learn, as I have done, many most interesting facts about the lovely plumage of birds.

The book should be a blank album of about fifty pages, eleven inches wide by sixteen, so as to make an upright page which will take in long tail feathers. Cartridge paper of various pale tints is best, as one can choose the ground that will best set off the colours of the feathers. Every other page may be white, and about three black sheets will be useful for swan, albatross and other white-plumaged birds.

The only working tools required are sharp scissors and a razor, some very thick strong gum arabic, a little water and a duster in case of fingers becoming sticky. One needs a clear space on a large table which will not have to be disturbed, as we shall see presently the feathers must be carefully sorted if the group is to have a good effect.

Each page is to receive the feathers of only one bird; then they are sure to harmonize, however you may combine them.

Should any one wish to experiment on this point let him place a green parrot's feather on the wild duck page, or mix pheasant's and guinea fowl's plumage, and note the jarring result. One learns a lesson as to the exquisite harmony of tints in bird plumage which would teach many a fashionable lady how to combine colours to the best advantage.

A common wood-pigeon is an easy bird to begin with, and readily obtained at any poulterer's. Draw out the tail feathers and place them quite flat in some paper till required; do the same with the right wing and the left, keeping each separate and putting a mark on the papers that you may know which each contains; the back, the breast, the fluffy feathers beneath —all should be neatly folded in paper and marked, and this can be done in the evening or at odd times, but placing the feathers on the pages ought to be daylight work that the colours may be studied. Now open the tail feather packet, and with the razor carefully pare away the quill at the back of each feather; this requires much practice, but at last it is quickly done and only the soft web is left which will be perfectly flat when gummed upon the page. When all the packets are thus prepared (it is only the quill feathers that require the razor), then we may begin.

I will describe a specimen page, but the arrangement can be varied endlessly, and therein lies one of the charms of the work. One never does two pages alike—there is such scope for taste and ingenuity—and it becomes at last a most fascinating occupation. Towards the top of the page place a thin streak of gum, lay upon it a tail feather (the quill end downwards), and put one on either side. The best feathers of one wing may be put down, one after the other, till one has sufficiently covered the page, then the other wing feathers may be placed down the other side; the centre may be filled in with the fluffy feathers, and the bottom can be finished off with some breast feathers neatly placed so as to cover all quill ends. When one works with small plumage a wreath looks very pretty, or a curved spray beginning at the top with the very smallest feathers and gradually increasing in size to the bottom of the page.

Butterflies or moths made of tiny feathers add much to the effect, and they are made thus. Cut out the shape of the butterfly in note paper and cover both sides with thick gum. When quite dry, moisten one wing and lay the small feathers on, like tiles on a house roof, one over the other, in any pattern desired; when the second wing is done lay a suitable feather along to form the body and let all become dry. Then moisten the gum on the under side and press the butterfly firmly on the page—the legs and antennæ can be added very delicately with a pen afterwards. I made a butterfly of the prismatic hues of the pigeon's neck and placed it in the middle of the fluffy feathers of the pigeon page, where it looks charming. A small parrakeet may be shown in the act of flying if the page is large enough to

take it in, but there great care must be taken to place the wing feathers as they would be in nature—the primaries, secondaries, &c., in their right order, else the effect will be unnatural. The beak, eye and legs must be painted on the page; a drop of gum on the eye will give brightness, only it must be very thick and allowed to become quite dry before closing the page. It is best, I find, to fill a wide-mouthed bottle with dry gum, and just cover the gum with water, allow it to melt, keep stirring and adding a few drops of water till just right—no bought liquid gum equals one's own preparation. In arranging a woodcock the two artist's feathers (one at the tip of each wing), should be specially shown; they are small and very stiff, and are used in miniature painting. The tail should be reversed to show the lovely white satin tip to each feather—the only contrast nature has permitted to the exquisite russet browns of the rest of the plumage. To make the book complete there should be a careful water-colour study of the bird on the opposite page, its Latin and English name, and a drawing of the egg.

It may interest some to know how I obtained the ninety-one birds which fill my books. Some were the dried skins of foreign birds either given me by kind friends or purchased at bird-stuffers. The woodpecker and nuthatch were picked up dead in the garden. The dove and budgerigars were moulted feathers saved up until there were sufficient to make a page. Years after the death of our favourite parrot I found his wings had been preserved, so they appear as a memento of an old friend who lived as a cheery presence in my childhood's home for thirty years. It is a pleasure to me to be able to say no bird was ever killed to enrich my books. The birds used for food supply an immense variety of kinds, such as wild ducks, pheasants, partridges, and all the species of wild fowl that can be purchased throughout the winter and spring would keep one busily occupied. Some birds have come to me in odd ways: I bought a heron which was hanging at a poulterer's in an out-of-the-way street in London; I picked up a fine white barn owl in a wood in Cornwall, a dead gull at Brighton, and a guillemot on the beach at Bournemouth, and a still rarer find was a stormy petrel lying near it—a bird only met with there once in two or three years. If it is once known that one is making a feather-book, sportsmen will often kindly reserve some rare bird to add to one's store.

It has often occurred to me that if the sportsmen themselves could be induced thus to preserve the feathers of their victims they would be so struck with the beauty of their plumage, the adaptation of colour to the habitat of the bird, the winter changes of colour—as in the ptarmigan and others—that more thought would be given to these marvellous creatures, and in time a more tender feeling of pity might arise, and instead of the useless slaughter of uneatable birds which is so constantly going on, the sportsman might in time be changed into the kindly

naturalist who would love to watch the living bird and learn its ways and curious instincts—surely a far higher and more noble use of time and energy than simply levelling the murderous gun at every living thing that ventures within reach. This it is which effectually prevents our fauna ever being enriched by rare birds settling and breeding in England. It is touching to think that the little foreigners arrive again and again, weary from their long journey across the sea, always to receive the same inhospitable treatment. If only others felt as strongly on this subject as I do they would be ashamed to appear in the newspapers as murderers of rare specimens. I earnestly wish each such notice could bring down the severest censure on the so-called sportsmen. If Selbornians will but have the courage to boldly express their opinions on this matter we may be able to gradually create such a reaction that, instead of being pained by such tales of cruel slaughter as in the recent case of the gannet massacre, we may be gladdened by reading of rare birds, *noticed*, *let alone*, and breeding in various places.

ELIZA BRIGHTWEN.

P.S.—It is well to have a Russia leather cover for the feather book to keep away moths; such a cover has protected my books for more than twenty years; the feathers are as fresh to-day as when first arranged. I hope I may hear that many readers of NATURE NOTES have been led to begin this artistic and pleasant employment for leisure hours.

FIELD PATHS.

MISS OCTAVIA HILL, who takes much interest in the work of the Selborne Society, has kindly sent us (through Miss Agnes Martelli) the following extracts from William Howitt's *Book of the Seasons*, first published in 1830. They are very interesting, as showing how sixty years ago, long before the starting of any of the Societies which Mr. Hunter has lately described in our columns, the need for such organizations was keenly felt. Miss Octavia Hill tells us that it is to the enthusiasm of Mrs. Hill, her mother, that we are indebted for the selection and transcription of these extracts and several others which we have not, unfortunately, sufficient space to insert:—

"I love our real old English footpaths. I love those rustic and picturesque stiles opening their pleasant escapes from frequented places and dusty highways into the solitudes of nature. It is delightful to catch a glimpse of one on the old village green, under the old elder-tree by some ancient cottage, or half hidden by the over-hanging boughs of a wood. I love to see

the smooth, dry track, winding away in easy curves, along some green slope to the churchyard, to the forest grange, or to the embowered cottage."

* * * * * *

"Stiles and footpaths are vanishing everywhere. There is nothing upon which the advance of wealth and population has made so serious an inroad. As land has increased in value, wastes and heaths have been parcelled out and enclosed, but seldom have footpaths been left. The poet and the naturalist, who before had, perhaps, the greatest real property in them, have had no allotment. They have been totally driven out of the promised land."

* * * * * *

"Those are commonly the most jealous of pedestrian trespassers who seldom visit their own estates, but permit the seasons to scatter their charms around their villas and rural possessions without the heart to enjoy, or even the presence to behold them. How often have I myself been arrested in some long-frequented dale—in some spot endeared by its own beauties and the fascinations of memory, by a board exhibiting in giant characters 'Stopped by an Order of Sessions,' and denouncing the terrors of the law upon trespassers!"

* * * * * *

"When the path of immemorial usage is closed—when the little streak, almost as fine as a mathematical line, along the wealthy man's ample field is grudgingly erased—it is impossible not to feel indignant at the pitiful monopoly. Is there no village champion to be found bold enough to put in his protest against these encroachments, to assert the public right? For a right it is as authentic as that by which the land itself is held and as clearly acknowledged by the laws. Is there no local 'Hampden with dauntless breast' to 'withstand the petty tyrants of the fields,' and to save our good old footpaths? If not, we shall in a few years be doomed to the highways and the hedges; to look, like Dives, from a sultry region of turnpikes, into a pleasant one of verdure and foliage which we may not approach."

* * * * * *

"It is when I see unnecessary and arbitrary encroachment upon the rural privileges of the public that I grieve. Exactly in the same proportion as our population and commercial habits gain upon us do we need all possible opportunities to keep alive in us the spirit of Nature.

> The world is too much with us; late and soon,
> Getting and spending we lay waste our powers;
> Little there is in nature that is ours.

We give ourselves up to the artificial habits and objects of ambition till we endanger the higher and better feelings and

capacities of our being, and it is alone to the united influence of religion, literature and nature that we must look for the preservation of our moral nobility. Whenever, therefore, I behold one of our old field-paths closed, I regard it as another link in the chain which Mammon is winding around us, another avenue cut off by which we might fly to the lofty sanctuary of Nature for power to withstand him."

THE BLACK-HEADED GULL.

DURING the last week in April, I was fortunate enough to obtain an order enabling me to visit Twigmore, the place in North Lincolnshire where the black-headed gulls breed—here strictly preserved, and in private grounds. As many of the readers of this Magazine will know, the black-headed gull only frequents the sea-shore during the winter months, and for the spring and summer comes inland, feeds as do the rooks, and breeds in great colonies at a few places, Twigmore being one of the most important. The bird is about the size of a rook, but grey, and in Lindsey is called the White Crow. The head feathers (after the second year) are black during summer, but in winter become white. The breeding place at Twigmore is a marsh, surrounded by rushes, situated in a wood some little distance from the Brigg and Messingham high road. The gulls are there in thousands, flying overhead, swimming in the water, or running about the margin, and their screaming can be heard more than a mile away. The nests among the rushes, and all about the edge of the water, are little more than hollows in the ground, and so close together that it is difficult to walk without treading in them. To keep down the number of birds several thousand eggs are taken yearly. They are, it is rather remarkable, a great delicacy, not unlike those of the plover, only somewhat larger. Each hen bird lays three, which vary considerably both in colour and markings, some being quite blue or green, others of the darkest brown. The birds fly great distances from home, and there is hardly a field in North Lincolnshire which has not during spring one or more gulls feeding in it. It is a lovely sight to see them following the plough on the red iron soil in company with the rooks. They may be easily domesticated, and will live happily in a garden, where, in a few days, they become tame enough to sit on the gardener's spade, and almost troublesome in the way they dodge about his feet, picking out the worms he digs up. We had a young one once which died from over-eating itself in this way, but during its lifetime it was a most amusing pet. It would swim in the water-butt, or follow us about the garden like a dog, and was a general favourite.

W. M. E. Fowler.

ENGLISH PLANT NAMES.

SEVERAL lists of these have been received from various correspondents, from which we select the following. We have eliminated certain names which are in frequent use; those not found in the *Dictionary of English Plant Names* have an asterisk prefixed.

From Swaffham, Norfolk: sent by the Miss Harrisons:—

†Ascension	*Senecio vulgaris*
Needleweed	*Geranium columbinum*
Lords and Ladies	*Plantago media* and *lanceolata*, *Arum maculatum*
Cockles...	*Lychnis vespertina*
*Creepers	*Convolvulus arvensis*
*White-fluff	*Menyanthus trifoliata*
Bird's eye	Germander speedwell
*Gipsies' daisy	*Chrysanthemum Leucanthemum.*
Pick cheeses	*Malva sylvestris*
Ginger	*Sedum acre*

From North Marston, Bucks: sent by Mr. T. G. Ward, of Leighton Buzzard:—

Cuckoo	Early purple orchis
Smell-smock	Ladysmock
Crazies	Marsh marigold / Lesser celandine
Bindweed and Cornbine ...	Large and small convolvulus
Blind eyes	Scarlet poppy
Cows and calfs...	Cuckoo pint
King fingers	Bird's-foot trefoil
*Celery (or salery)	Common sorrel
§Jewel-run-the-ground... ...	Ground-ivy
Burweed	Goosegrass or cleavers

From Appleby, Westmoreland: collected by Miss N. J. Heelis, April, 1890:—

Lockety-gowans	Globe-flower
King-cup	Marsh marigold
Whin	Gorse
*Smere	Clover
Bumble-kites	Blackberries
‡Jupes	Fruit of wild rose

From Burscough, near Ormskirk, Lancashire; sent by Dr. T. R. Allinson:—

Paddocks	Fungi of toadstools
Damsels	Damsons
*God's-stockings	Campions

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† "*Ascension.*" This is a variant of *Sencion*, a Norfolk name given by Halliand others: cfr. Latin *Senecio*, French *Seneçon.*

‡ "*Jupes.*" This is more usually written "Choop" or "Choops."

§ No doubt a corruption of Gill-run-the-ground.

†Jinny Green Teeth	Duckweed
Sour-docks	Wild sorrel
Rabbits' food	Wood sorrel
Thousand leaf	Yarrow
Kissing bush	Holly in winter
Wicks	Roots of couch grass
Mares' tails	*Equisetaceæ*
Spuds	Potatoes
Sprats	Small Potatoes

From Skipton in Craven, Yorkshire :—

Cleats	Colts'-foot
Primrose-pearl	White narcissus
Lads'-love	Southern-wood.
Blue buttons	Scabious
Wackering-grass	Trembling-grass
May-flower	*Cardamine pratensis*
Bublicans or publicans ...	Marsh marigold

TWO BOOKS ABOUT CATS.

MR. HARRISON WEIR, an old and tried friend of animals of all kinds, to whose graphic pencil we owe many hundreds of studies of our four-footed friends, has a special affection for the cats, and he has devoted to his pets an extremely interesting and beautifully illustrated volume which he calls *Our Cats, and all about them* (Simpkin and Marshall). Mr. Weir is no niggard in the praise he bestows on his favourites : "among animals," he says, "possibly the most perfect, and certainly the most domestic, is the cat." He is President of the National Cat Club, and founder of the now familiar "Cat Shows," the first of which was held at the Crystal Palace in July, 1871 ; and most of his pictures are portraits of cats which distinguished themselves on one or other of these occasions.

The author, in this little volume, gives us a varied and interesting collection of facts and fancies connected with cats. Anecdotes of their intelligence, as evinced by his own pets ; descriptions of the different kinds ; notes on their management and breeding ; the points by which cats are judged ; their diseases and folklore, proverbs, traditions, performing and fishing cats, loves of cats, stories about cats—almost everything connected with cats is to be found in this interesting volume. We miss the well-known folk-tale about "the King of the Cats," and the clever punning poem entitled "Poor Pussy," which is,

† Mothers told their children it would pull them in the ponds and drown them if they went too near.

we believe, of transatlantic origin; and the folk-lore and plant-names connected with the subject of the book might easily be extended—the latter, indeed, need revision in some cases. But, on the whole, Mr. Weir's book is singularly complete, and it is made more useful by the addition of a fairly good index.

Mrs. Cashel Hoey's *The Cat, Past and Present* (London, Bell and Sons), is a translation from the French of M. Champfleury, and is an excellent companion to Mr. Weir's volume. The same ground is, to some extent, occupied by each, and yet there is very little that is common to the two volumes. The artists of cats (including the Japanese painter, Fo-Kow-Say, whose charming little studies appear as tail-pieces to chapters); the early history of cats in Egypt, Greece and Rome, as well as in heraldry and on signs; their friends and foes; their good and bad qualities—all these and much more are duly set forth in this attractive volume. The translator has added some interesting supplementary notes, notably the selections from Théophile Gautier's "Ménagerie Intime." Some of the illustrations are very curious—notably the popular Russian picture of the accompanying of a cat to the grave by a *cortège* of rats; this, we are told, "derives its origin from a very interesting Russian legend," which, to our regret, is not given. Those who possess Mr. Harrison Weir's volume should not delay to obtain Mrs. Cashel Hoey's book; while those already familiar with the latter should supplement their knowledge by purchasing the former.

SHORT NOTICES OF BOOKS.

Messrs. W. H. Allen and Co. send us new editions of Dr. J. E. Taylor's *Half-hours in the Green Lanes* and Mrs. Lankester's *Wild Flowers worth Notice.* The former is one of a class which always commands readers; it contains 262 figures of no great excellence, and a good deal of miscellaneous information. We can commend neither the letterpress nor the illustrations of Mrs. Lankester's book, which, as it has gone through "various forms," should not contain such errors as "palustr*us*" and "Galium a*s*sarine," which are twice repeated. The author's use of capital letters is also extremely erratic.

We have been very much pleased by the writings of two gentlemen who have only recently joined the Selborne Society, but who have evidently long been Selbornians at heart. Mr. D. Andrew has for the last three years contributed to the *Dumbarton Herald* a series of letters headed, with a curious anticipation of our own title, "Nature Notes." In these he shows a keen sense of what is beautiful in nature, and a considerable amount of literary skill—one of his poems, a "Scottish sang" entitled "Robin's Return," is particularly pleasing; and they are imbued with the true Selbornian spirit.

Mr. W. Whitwell in *A Bachelor's Christmas Day*, gives a delightful little sketch of the many pleasures which a botanist can derive from nature, even at the season when he is supposed to have the least opportunity for observation and study. It is wonderful what an interesting and instructive narrative Mr. Whitwell has constructed out of what would seem unpromising materials. He has evidently unusual power in detecting the "tongues in trees," indeed all plants seem to speak

to him eloquently of "the untold and untellable richness of Nature—or rather of the Divine thoughts and their expression in the world around us." Mr. Whitwell has very kindly said, that if any reader of NATURE NOTES would wish for a copy of his tiny booklet, he will be glad to send it—"as a Selbornian." We are inclined to think that there will be many applications for the charming little sketch which is gracefully written, and the work of a well-informed, loving and reverent student of nature. Mr. Whitwell's address is 4, Thurleigh Road, Balham, S.W.

SELBORNIANA.

The Grassholm Outrage.—The excitement caused by the trial and conviction of the offenders in this case has not at all subsided. We have received several letters of congratulation and approval of the course taken by the Selborne Society in the matter. Some of our correspondents regret that the penalty inflicted is so disproportionate to the crime; it has been pointed out that if Col. Saurin and his associates were to destroy some rare vase in the British Museum, the penalty would be a flogging and a severe term of imprisonment, while such an offence is, in reality, a much less heinous one than that of destroying some of the rarest of our bird treasures, of far more value than some archæological curiosities. Among the letters received there is only one which disagrees with the line we have adopted, and that is signed by "An Englishwoman." This lady is moved to compassion, strangely enough, not by the poor birds, whose peaceful settlement was turned into a scene of slaughter, but by our strictures on these gentle (?) "men of good position." Our fair correspondent thinks that it would have been much better, instead of drawing attention to their conduct, to "invite them to join the Selborne Society." We cannot make out whether this is said in jest or earnest. If in earnest, the writer must have a far less vivid sense of humour than most of her sex. She would apparently apply to a band of hawks to join a society for the protection of pigeons. If she is in jest, we fear that her small joke would be entirely lost on the gentlemen in question. The very worst part of their conduct is that they have not shown the slightest sense of shame or regret for the outrage committed by them, and seemed only able to see "the fun" of the thing, until the fun ended in their own conviction. Ample proof of this will be seen in the article in the *Animal World*, to which we directed the attention of our readers. Every new detail which comes to light makes the whole story a worse one. The episode of the Magistrate and County Councillor, who was one of the chief offenders, and *before whom they were anxious the case should be heard*, is irresistible in its sublime impudence.

It is the fact of this want of all contrition on the part of the detected evil-doers which makes it necessary to pursue the matter farther. The Selborne Society made several applications to the Admiralty and the War Office, and to their representatives in the House of Commons; these applications were in each case answered in an evasive and unsatisfactory manner. What was the reason of all this? Why was it that such great pains were taken to stifle enquiry and to screen the offenders? We must obtain an answer to these questions. We entirely concur with the appeal of the *Animal World*:—"Will no member of the House of Commons interrogate the Government next November on the above details, and particularly on the false view which they took of the case and gave to the House, as shown by the facts obtained by the Society; and *will they ask the Lord Chancellor to do his duty?*"

[The Council of the Selborne Society at its last meeting, held since the above was in type, passed a unanimous resolution that Mr. Bryce, the only M.P. on our Council, should be requested to bring the matter before the House of Commons as soon as possible.]

"Sky Signs."—A little time ago, who had ever heard of a "Sky Sign"? Who is there now who does not, unfortunately, know not only the name but the

thing? For the last few weeks a fierce crusade has been carried on in the papers against this barbarous mode of advertisement. Among the foremost in this good work has been Mr. J. B. Hilditch, of Richmond, a member of the Lower Thames Valley Branch of the Selborne Society, who has been active in the agitation conducted by that branch respecting Sudbrook Park and other matters of local importance. In one of his letters to the *Times*, Mr. Hilditch appeals to the Selborne Society to take steps for legislation in order to prevent such outrages on the picturesque; and meanwhile he offers "in such a good cause to take charge of correspondence, and receive the names of sympathisers and supporters until a public meeting can be called, or some concerted action taken." The Lower Thames Valley Branch has already passed a strong resolution in support of Mr. Hilditch's scheme, and the Central Council, on the motion of Mr. T. F. Wakefield, has expressed its sympathy with the movement, and determined to do all in its power to support the opposition to this new species of Vandalism.

Lovers of the beautiful will not require urging to use every effort in their power for the removal of these abominations, which threaten to vulgarise the whole country, and obscure the beauties which are still left in our island. Mr. *Punch* has come valiantly to the aid of the right side in this matter, and we trust that there are many Selbornians who will do battle against the vulgar and greedy spirit which would gladly see the Pyramids placarded over with "Puffer's Peerless Paint," the Castle of Chillon covered with "Clutterbuck's Corn-plasters," and Stonehenge with "Snooks's Soap," in the spirit of the smart Yankee advertisement agent, who yearned to paste an announcement of "Bouncer's patent Bug-killer" across an unusually beautiful sunset.

Papyrophagous Slugs.—In reference to the paragraph under this heading in the current number of NATURE NOTES, I may say that I have undoubted proof that *snails* eat paper. Some time since I left a roll of unmounted photographs on the drawing-room table, in the centre of which was a bowl of flowers; when opening them a day or two afterwards to my surprise a small snail fell out, and I found one of the photos eaten through three thicknesses of the paper, the hole being about the size of a pea. The snail had, I suppose, come out of the flowers, but why it should prefer a photograph to its natural dietary remains a mystery.

Apropos of snails, we have one residing under a heavy bookcase in our dining room, which is seldom moved. Every now and then it leaves its track all over the carpet for two or three nights in succession, the track always starting from, and ending again, at the edge of the bookcase; then we shall not see it for days or weeks, when it will again appear to have been all over the room. This has been going on for more than a year, and we have tried every device to catch it, but all to no purpose. Now, occasionally, as a matter of charity, we put a cabbage leaf or something of the sort to give it a meal; a very little seems to satisfy it, and it has always disappeared before anyone is about in the morning, so that it also may well be called a mysterious snail. HANNAH F. WHITE.

In reply to Miss (or Mrs.) A. M. Parmenter's enquiry as to the paper-eating propensities of slugs, I take the following from Turton's *British Shells*:—"I have often observed the common garden snail (*H. aspersa*) eating the posting-bill from the walls of the environs of London, after a shower."

R. MARSHMAN WATTSON.

Sluggish Gymnastics.—On August 9th, whilst ascending the zigzag path which commences the Susten Pass at the upper end of the Gadmenthal, I noticed something suspended in mid-air from the branch of a pine tree, which extended across the track at about eight feet from the ground. On going to see what it was I found, to my surprise, a large brown slug, about three inches long, and probably weighing over an ounce, hanging from the branch by a fine thread formed of slime, which copiously covered the whole surface of the foot, and was being drawn out from the posterior extremity much in the same way that treacle or viscid honey is drawn out from a spoon. The slug appeared to be greatly enjoying this novel mode of descent, curving its body in various directions, and often twisting round upon the axis of the thread. Its progress being at the somewhat slow rate of one inch in two minutes, this apparently risky adventure could not have been undertaken with any idea of saving time in reaching the ground, and,

therefore, if not purely a pleasure excursion, I could only suppose it to have originated in some accidental loss of hold upon the branch having offered no alternative between this method of descent and an uncomfortable fall upon the rocks below.

Mount Park Crescent, Ealing. R. T. LEWIS.

[Mr. Lewis's letter bears upon the following query by Mr. Stanley Morris, which appears in the current number of *The Field Club*:—"Is it a fact generally known that the common garden slug can descend from a height by means of a fine thread, which is given out by the animal as it lets itself down? I have watched a slug thus descend from a height of nearly five feet, the time occupied in the descent being about thirteen minutes. There was a strong breeze blowing at the time, which swayed it to and fro in such a manner that it seemed as though the thread must give way beneath its burden, but it was very elastic, and the slug was borne in safety to the ground, when the thread was snapped in an instant." Just as we are going to press Mr. Lewis kindly sends the following additional references to slug threads—*Science Gossip*, vol. xi. (1875), pp. 190 and 206: "In the former, R. S. Terry describes the descent of a small white slug, and in the latter, J. E. Daniel specifies two kinds of slugs—out of eleven native species—which are known to be able to perform similar feats, viz., *Limax Arborum* and *Limax Cinereus* (the *L. Maximus* of Linnæus). The one I saw was certainly neither of these."]

The Cheddar Pink.—Mr. Wheatcroft will be pleased to know that the Cheddar Pink grows freely on garden walls at Corston, and at the Rectory here, where it forms wide-spreading patches. Many years ago I planted several slips on the walls of my garden, and these have flourished exceedingly, but I have never known a single plant grown from seed. I do not think that a single seed of the many thousands that are annually ripened on my walls ever germinates. I cannot explain this, as I understand the plant grows from seed in other places. I have observed the same with regard to common broom (*Cytisus scoparius*), which when rooted here becomes unusually large, but, though its seeds ripen freely, never produce a single seedling. I am almost certain that I saw the Cheddar Pink growing on the walls at the southern side of Fountains Abbey, about the beginning of July last. I could not make a close examination, as it was more than twenty feet above me, but from the appearance of the leaves, and the size and colour of the flowers, I had little doubt but that it was *Dianthus cæsius*. If so, it must have been planted there.

Stanton Prior Rectory, Bath. W. S. BROWNE.

The Cheddar Pink grows readily on any rough wall amongst mortar and lime-stone. It sows itself, and spreads year by year on my garden wall, and so does *Linaria alpina*, with various other weeds, including a lilac and a cherry tree, sown by birds, and blossoming freely every year. I should be glad to send a few seeds, or seedlings, of the Cheddar pink to any member of the Selborne Society, if the supply is equal to the demand.

Winscombe, Somerset. THEODORE COMPTON.

Birds and Bonnets.—Perhaps a woman may be allowed to say that it seems that *men* do not grasp the fact that when May comes artificial flowers come in with a rush, and that when October comes, feathers come in with a rush; so these men think in summer, "How many women are wearing flowers, and how few are wearing birds. What a good thing the fashion has changed." Meanwhile, I suppose, the slayers of birds are doing their work, and then before the winter season sets in the spoil is brought out.

Now comes the difficult part of the subject. First: what feathers may we wear? Secondly: if we do not wear feathers in winter, what are we to wear instead? Suppose an ardent Selbornian wishes to discourage the wearing of feathers of many kinds, is it not incumbent on him to propose some good substitute? If the strong temperance folk prohibit such and such pleasant drinks, we might say that they ought to provide substitutes for what they have taken away. Again, many ladies, I suppose, do not know to what bird a wing or plume belongs, nor do the girls in the milliners' shops, nor, perhaps, the men; and if ladies do

not, women of a lower class cannot be supposed to know. Those who see fit can take refuge in total abstinence. The fact remains that ostrich feathers are not suitable for every-day wear in our climate, nor cheap enough for many women. Silk tufts, *pompons*, do not stand weather as hard plumage does, I think. Artificial flowers, generally, are not so suitable for winter wear as a stronger ornament —I will not say feathers! Let me hasten to assure you that I do not wear birds, or feathers, or wings.

In conclusion, let me show by an extract from the letter of a member of our Society, what ignorance and thoughtlessness exist in the less educated class of girls. Writing in December, 1889, Mrs. D— says:—"Yesterday, when I was explaining about birds' wings and Selborne Society to Matilda, she said, 'Oh! do they kill them, then, ma'am? I thought they died of themselves.' Probably many people think just as little about it." SUSAN P. HAWES.

[The Editors, not feeling competent to advise in this matter, invite the assistance of lady contributors.]

Insects as Ornaments of the Garden.—NATURE NOTES has evidently readers in many lands. Señor Don Hugo Rowlatt, Bella Vista, Minas de Rio Tinto, Provincia de Huelva, Spain, writes to us as follows:—"The interesting article by Mr. W. F. Kirby in the July issue has attracted my attention, partly because insects, more especially butterflies (of which this article principally treats) have been my hobby for years, and also because I have been brought into contact with that gentleman and his kindness, when visiting the splendid entomological collection at South Kensington.

"The destruction of the grand old English hedges is indeed to be deplored, as also the clearing of forests with their own peculiar flora and fauna, but, as he observes, it is useless to regret. However, it does not seem to me that we should be improving our opportunities by introducing foreign insects as he suggests; doubtless they could be acclimatised, and would please the eye, but is it not liable to result in a hopeless tangle?

"He quotes the various beautiful plants brought from foreign climes, but is not this promiscuous importation daily engendering confusion in the localizing of both native and foreign specimens? It cannot be denied that most brilliant and vivid forms of insect life contribute greatly to the attractions of the warmer countries, and the Insectarium at the Zoological Gardens is certainly a step in the right direction, as showing and instructing us in the insect forms and products of other lands, but nothing more. Let it cease there. Why upset the balance of nature? No, rather let us form breeding beds (as suggested), but let them be of native plants for rearing native insects, which are daily decreasing for want of their proper food plant. Then may we hope to see the beautiful Peacock (*Vanessa Io*), the lordly Red Admiral (*Pyrameis Atalanta*), and that magnificent insect, the Swallow-tail (*Papilio Machaon*), which cannot be surpassed, once more proudly sailing through the sylvan glades or o'er the downy meadows."

Imitations of the Notes of Birds.—The Rev. Robert Hudson sends us the following communication from Brighton:—"Dr. Francis, of Richmond, has sent you some lines in which the song of the American robin is imitated. Have any of your correspondents referred to the Birds of Aristophanes, where the notes of birds appear to be wonderfully reproduced? I copy the following if you care to print them:—Epopopopopopoi; Io io ito ito ito ito: Trioto trioto totobrix; Toro toro toro toro tix; Kikkabau kikkabau; Toro toro toro lililix."

The trilling of the song of small birds is represented, and was no doubt very effectively produced on the Athenian stage.

Perhaps some classical scholar might collect a few passages from the Greek poets, which would interest modern readers. In Euripides' play of "Ion," there is a beautiful hymn of the young priest of Diana, when he goes to his duties at early morning to cleanse the building and drive away the birds, this office being esteemed not a menial one, but conveying much honour and distinction. He sees the flocks of birds rising from the plains, the marshes and the sea; some swans fly close and seem about to settle in the temple area, and to each the priest in his enthusiasm appeals, not to desecrate the temple of his divine mistress.

OFFICIAL NOTICES, &c.

THE object of the Selborne Society is to unite lovers of Nature for common study and the defence of natural objects (birds, plants, beautiful landscapes, &c.) against the destruction by which they are constantly menaced. The *minimum* Annual Subscription (which entitles the subscriber to a monthly copy of the Society's Magazine) is 2s. 6d. All particulars as to membership may be obtained from the Secretary of the Selborne Society, 9, Adam Street, Adelphi, W.C.

AT the last three meetings of the Council of the Selborne Society the subject of leaflets and placards has been under discussion. As our readers know, a very large number of leaflets have been issued by the Society and also many broadsides or notices in large type protesting against wanton destruction of plants and animals. These have been very successful both in arresting injury and in procuring new members for the Society. But many of the leaflets and notices are out of print, and others are for various reasons obsolete. A sub-committee has been appointed for the purpose of producing new leaflets and re-issuing some of the old ones, bringing them, where necessary, up to date. The sub-committee will be pleased to receive from members suggestions for leaflets to be issued, and from the branches copies of any local leaflets or notices protesting against destruction, which may have been found useful. MSS. or printed matter (not necessarily to be published) bearing on this subject may be sent either to the Secretary of the Society or to the editorial department of NATURE NOTES.

SOME of our readers have enquired as to cases for binding the vols. of NATURE NOTES. The question has been considered, but before finally deciding on the expense, we should be glad if those who would like to have such cases would be kind enough to send post cards to that effect, so that we might have some idea of the number required.

THE difficulty, or rather impossibility, of printing the many contributions which are kindly sent to us still continues. We have received several queries from contributors as to the fate of their MSS. In many cases the articles have been retained in the hope of utilising them in some future number; but the continual supply of new matter has frustrated our intention. We have determined, therefore, to return most of the postponed contributions to those who were good enough to supply them. We shall try in future to acknowledge and, when necessary, return contributions in all cases; as we should be very sorry that the influx of interesting communications which have reached us should be checked by the impossibility of printing them *all*. Much more could be done in this way if the Magazine were enlarged; but the subscriptions to the Magazine Fund do not warrant this.

WE find it necessary to remind our correspondents again how necessary it is that their MSS. should be *legible*, especially in the case of proper names and scientific terms. We should also be glad if correspondents would write only on one side of the paper, and if they would carefully distinguish private advice and admonitions to the Editors from the matter which they are desirous of seeing inserted in NATURE NOTES.

IT is particularly requested that subscriptions and letters bearing on the general business of the Society, should *not* be forwarded to the Editors, but to the Secretary of the Selborne Society, 9, Adam Street, Adelphi. Editorial communications should be addressed to the Rev. PERCY MYLES, 1, Argyle Road, Ealing, W.

Nature Notes:

The Selborne Society's Magazine.

No. 10. OCTOBER 15, 1890. Vol. I.

OCTOBER.

THE ever-shortening days remind us distinctly that the days of summer are being rapidly left behind us, and that winter is coming on apace. The boisterous vigour of March; April smiling through its tears; May so full of promise; the glorious months of June, July, and August, the fruitful September—have all received at many hands due recognition of their charms, while December brings with it year after year the joys of home life, the reunion of the family, the angels' song of peace and goodwill to men. As to January and February, October and November, the general feeling appears to be that they are periods to be lived through as endurably as may be, but that toleration is as much as they may hope for: the lyre of the poet is unstrung and as effectually packed away till the longer days as the cricket bats and lawn tennis paraphernalia.

This lack of appreciation springs we think, from the fact that so many of the writers and others who mould public opinion are dwellers in the town. No one who has not lived the year round far from the smoke, busy traffic and bustle of city life, can at all realize that the sky may be as blue in January as in June; while the snow, instead of being the foul mixture that is such an unmitigated nuisance in big towns, is spread over everything in a broad sheet of glittering whiteness that is almost dazzling in its purity, while at other times in the clear atmosphere of the country, when every twig of tree and bush is laden with hoar frost, it is a peep into veritable fairyland.

The nature-lover finds that no season of the year is without its attractiveness, and the autumn days, as they merge through October into winter, bring with them their special charm. The keener "bite" in the air has a tonic power of exhilaration that makes the sharp exercise at least as pleasant as the more leisurely stroll beneath the burning sun of July, and on every side we may still encounter objects of interest.

Though we may find various species of fungi all through the summer, they are especially characteristic of autumn, and no one who has allowed indifference or prejudice to blind his eyes can have any notion of the variety and beauty of the forms they assume: some are purely white, and like branching coral; others have their branches an intense orange yellow; others again have their disks as strong a scarlet as a guardsman's tunic; while the great majority are of more subdued colour and of every possible tint of yellow, russet, purple, and brown to black. Far more of these than is at all generally realized have edible value, and tons of despised "toadstools" that would supply wholesome food, perish unregarded each recurring autumn. The white coral-like Clavaria, for instance, that we have referred to is not "a thing of beauty" alone, but is, when stewed with a little ham and parsley, and seasoned with a touch of pepper and salt, as dainty a dish as need be set before the most exacting of gourmands. Fungi vary in form and size as much as in colour, and may be looked for in almost every possible position—some nestling among the long grass and dying bracken, some standing boldly erect on the open ground, others springing from decayed wood and fallen timber, and others again on lofty tree trunks. Almost all quickly perish and lose their beauty after gathering, and though there is no more charming ornament in a country house than a large plateau laden with various kinds embedded in moss, the charm is a very short-lived one.

October, again, is the time when the changing tints of autumn foliage are in perfection. The strength of colour in a beech wood is something entirely beyond representation or description; no pigments in the artist's box can reach the intensity of its orange in the sunlight, no descriptive epithet convey any idea of its wonderful beauty. The autumn tints of many trees are suggestive of decay and a falling away from their summer charm, but the beech, instead of fading tamely out, is even more beautiful in October than when clothed in its robe of summer verdure. The variation of tint in the woodlands is very great; each tree, each shrub, each plant has its own colour. The maple will be found a mass of tawny yellow, the black bryony a trail of bronzed purple, the herb Robert a clump of crimson. We do not of course imply that no two different plants we can find are of the same tint, nor that each plant always has its own livery. The maple does not vary to purple any more than the ripening wheat does, and anyone who has noticed the matter carefully could name all the trees and bushes in a hedgerow half a mile away by their differences of autumnal tint. While the nuts and blackberries have been mostly sought out, the hedges of October are laden with other fruit—the rich hips of the wild roses, the clustering berries of the hawthorn, the dark purple bunches of elderberries, the long festoons of the hop and of the red-berried bryony, the fruits of the guelder rose, holly, privet, the dogwood and many others, and even when the frost and the

wind together have stripped the foliage away, the fruits ordinarily remain undisturbed, and here and there the curious teazel-heads, dried and dead, stand boldly out from the lower herbage.

Though the fields yellow with charlock and scarlet with poppies are now but memories of the past sunny days, and even the graceful foxglove has expended itself to its last bell, a botanical ramble in October is not by any means a hopeless quest. To say nothing of the beautiful meadow saffron, or autumn crocus, that may occasionally be found—and which if found at all will generally be in profusion—there are many of the summer flowers that still linger on, flowers perhaps that when in their summer abundance we passed by almost unheeded, but which now are fully appreciated. In looking over past records we find amongst many other October gatherings the upright crowfoot, the creeping crowfoot, the ordinary red poppy and the wild mignonette, the rock rose, the white and red campions, the meadow crane's bill, the dove's foot and the herb Robert, furze, the purple clover, the burnet-saxifrage, the fools' parsley, lady's bedstraw, field scabious, bur-marigold, mallow, chamomile, pimpernel, eyebright, forget-me-not, borage, hare-bell, fumitory, shepherd's purse, wood violet, avens, stork's bill, bush vetch, agrimony, daisy, meadowsweet, silverweed, tormentil, honeysuckle, milfoil, nipplewort, dandelion, white and purple dead nettle, groundsel, ragwort, black knapweed, sowthistle, clustered bell flower, centaury, bindweed, comfrey, mullein, and toad flax. To these many others could readily be added, and only a feeling of respect for the patience of our readers prevents our multiplying examples in this catalogue of names. We have even found a belated dog-rose flower now and then—we see note of a specimen gathered on October 23rd one year—while an occasional primrose at times anticipates the far-off spring, and may already be found in flower; our earliest record, we see, is September 15th. Of course many of these flowers are found only very exceptionally, and even when found in most sheltered positions are often wanting in the sturdiness of growth and brilliancy of colour that we should expect to find at a more seasonable time.

The swallows will mostly have gone south, but occasional specimens may be seen well into October, and while many of our birds will have left us their places will be taken by the winter migrants. We must remember that it is not emigration merely, but immigration as well—that "we welcome the coming" as well as "speed the parting guest."

The bright sunshine also brings out several of our old summer favourites, who naturally regard hibernation as a thing that need not yet be troubled about while the days continue so pleasant, and the gardens and hedgerows so bright and attractive. The brilliant clouded-yellow butterfly, in its rich colouring of deep yellow and black, may often be seen in October, as may also the equally beautiful red admiral, the peacock, and the delicate sulphur yellow brimstone butterfly, as they flit along the hedgerows,

hover over the flower beds, and generally make the best of the mid-day warmth.

Even when, towards the end of the month, the trees grow barer and are finally stripped of their foliage, a new interest arises in the study of their ramification. Each tree is as distinct in the character of its branching as in the form of its leaves, and an oak, a beech, an ash, or an elm, are as recognisable in January as in July.

An old writer declares that "he who in all things eyes a Providence shall never lack a Providence to eye," and we may say equally that he who goes out to seek interest and beauty in nature shall never fail in his quest. As the year travels its appointed round each recurring season brings with it interest and beauty of its own.

"Could we but open and intend our eyes
We each, like Moses, should espy
E'en in a bush the radiant Deity."

The commonest weed contains within itself enough study for a lifetime, and is an epitome of all the laws of plant-growth, an autograph from the hand of the Creator, and as perfect in its fitness for its work, and in its obedience to law, as the mighty planets circling through infinite space. All times, all places, contain abundant evidence of Divine wisdom, and even the pebble at our feet, could we but unlock all the history wrapped up in it, would carry us back to the childhood of the world, and reveal to us mighty changes in progress some few millions of years before the sons of men sprang into existence at all. Those who wander forth and find nothing to interest them, owe the loss not to nature but to themselves, while the love of nature is one of the most lasting of pleasures. In fifty years one's tastes change in many ways, and of the things that fascinated at the beginning few remain unimpaired at the end of that period; but an appreciative love and study of nature only deepens as time goes on, and an interest once developed in this direction is ordinarily a possession that endures and brightens the whole life.

F. E. Hulme.

"RESTORATION."

[We have much pleasure in printing the following letter from Mr. Thackeray Turner, who has done so much good work as Secretary of the Society for the Preservation of Ancient Buildings. In the programme of Nature Notes we referred to this Society as being "in spirit closely akin to our own. We have the same foes to contend with, and many tastes in common. The man who loves every stone of the old abbey, beautiful even in its ruins, and reverently garners the legends of its ancient fame,

will strive to preserve also the trees and flowers that gather round its walls, and the birds that have found in its desecrated altars 'a nest where they may lay their young.'" This paragraph was written in accordance with a suggestion of Mr. G. A. Musgrave, to whom the Selborne Society owes its being. Mr. Musgrave has always contended that our Society should number among its objects the preservation for the reasonable use of the public of spots endeared to memory by beauty or association, and the protection of objects of antiquarian interest. At the suggestion of Mr. Musgrave (who is now co-trustee of the Society with Sir John Lubbock) words to that effect were inserted in the Rules of the Selborne Society at the last Annual Meeting. But while we are in thorough sympathy with the general aims of the Society for the Preservation of Ancient Buildings, we cannot, of course, always endorse its action in the case of individual buildings, nor be responsible for the strong opinions which it sometimes expresses concerning erring "restorers."]

It appears to me that one of the chief reasons why so many ancient buildings have been and are being destroyed throughout the country, by what is called "restoration," is that the people concerned are completely ignorant of the point of view held by the members of your most excellent Society. They fail to see the wonderful effect which nature has had upon such buildings; how she has taken them and clothed them, and made them belong to their surroundings, and become a part of the earth, giving them a delicacy and variety of colouring, and softening crude forms and textures in a manner which must make any modern builder feel that his work ought not to be judged until Time has laid his hand upon it.

How charming it is when rambling through the country to come upon a well-wooded churchyard, with its church, which has been growing under the hand of man from the time of the Conquest, or possibly long before, all covered with lichens and mosses, and the windows filled with horny-looking old glass; and on the other hand, what a shock one receives upon entering an old churchyard, such as that at Selborne, to find that the ancient church has been "restored," and in the place of lichen-covered walls and roofs, are to be found walls of newly dressed stones all neatly pointed with black mortar, new glass in all the windows, and blue or purple slates on the roofs, with perhaps a bright-red jagged tile ridge to finish the agony.

What would Gilbert White have said if he had seen this noble church in its latter days! And as far as I know, there is not left an ancient church in his neighbourhood which has not been "restored." I should like to induce Selbornians to study our ancient buildings, both ecclesiastical and domestic. So little effort is needed to make a beginning, and when once started, it will be found a most fascinating study. Let them but learn sufficient to enable them to date the different portions of a build-

ing within, say fifty years, and they will soon find themselves tracing the history of the building and seeing its different stages of growth; and this will bring them to raise their voices and pens in protest when a "restoration" is proposed, for they will know after studying "restored" and unrestored buildings what the process means. They will prefer the damaged but veritable Norman capitals on the north side of the nave of the church of Christchurch, Hants, to those on the south side which are the work of the carver of to-day. They represent his view of what he believes Norman carving was like. He may have been interested in the work, but certainly we are not; and are we not justified in grieving over the original work which has gone to make way for his new?

Ancient buildings are undying records of the past. It is always sad to see them dwindling away under the hand of Time, but it is maddening to see them being destroyed and falsified, and left as lying records, through the ignorance and folly of mankind. How it is that more have not listened to the telling words of Ruskin on the subject is strange, and yet this is so, and it is proved by the fact that the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings only numbers about four hundred members. It may be that its work is not known, and therefore I will as its Secretary, and one who does know, explain that the Society's committee—composed of hard-working professional men — meet every week, and so long as its funds hold out they are prepared to send down and survey any ancient building, and give its custodians a careful, written report explaining how the building in question can be repaired, saved from decay, and rendered fit for use, without entailing the inevitable destruction which follows upon "restoration." The Committee often has plans and specifications for church repairs sent for them to give an opinion upon, and when I say that in spite of no time being lost the weekly Committee meetings seldom last for less than two hours, it will be seen that the Society has undertaken no light task. Indeed I am often astonished at the perseverance of some of its members, who have clung to it and worked for it for over thirteen years.

THACKERAY TURNER.

9, *Buckingham Street*,
Adelphi, *London*, *W.C.*

THE EDUCATIONAL INFLUENCE OF THE SELBORNE SOCIETY.

THERE is only a step between the sublime and the ridiculous, and I cannot but think that many people take this backward step in considering the aims of the Selborne Society, who, if they would but look closer at it, would see that, if not sublime, it is at any rate

very far from the infatuated, windy institution which from their point of view it seems to be. This false idea would be often dissipated, I believe, if the principles upon which the Society works were more understood, and for this reason I shall try to state plainly what I understand these principles to be. Before I do this, I must mention briefly what are the recognised objects of the Society, as the principles may seem vague and intangible without some practical realisation of this kind. It is our endeavour:—(1) To preserve from unnecessary destruction such wild birds, animals, and plants as are harmless, beautiful, or rare. (2) To discourage the wearing, and use for ornament, of birds and their plumage; except when the birds are killed for food or reared for their plumage. (3) To protect places and objects of natural beauty or antiquarian interest from ill-treatment or destruction; and (4) to promote the study of Natural History.

The need and advantages of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, the Commons Preservation Society, and other kindred institutions, are disputed by few even of those who pride themselves on their sound common-sense and freedom from sentimentality; but it is not at all so easy to realise that there is a gap between these which needs to be filled, and which, if less evident, is hardly less important. The work of these Societies often consists in defending legal rights and claims; whereas it is the small pieces of thoughtlessness and Philistinism—which are too insignificant in themselves to be punishable by law, and which yet, combined, constitute a real (though too often unappreciated) evil—to which the Selborne Society chiefly devotes its attention. It strives to supplement and amplify the work of others by arousing a sense of individual responsibility, care, and consideration.

In this nineteenth century in which we live, the world is too full of men and only too empty of all that man needs and desires; and it is a mere truism to say that this state of things is becoming daily more oppressively apparent and universal. Unless we, who are able to enjoy Nature—still more or less perfect and unspoiled—can make up our minds to forego those strange pleasures of destruction and possession (which latter pleasure, unfortunately, frequently necessitates the former) we must acknowledge to ourselves the sad fact that every succeeding generation will have less to enjoy and more for which to blame those who have preceded them. Against this blindly selfish tendency of human nature the Selborne Society earnestly protests. Much of its work in this direction is confessedly prophetic—if I may coin such an expression—and aims at preserving to later times some of the pleasures of our own. It is evident that this work of preservation must be very largely due to individual effort, for no Society as such can ever produce the desired effect; and therefore it is that each member of the Selborne Society is in himself and by himself a distinct addition to the power of the Society for good.

I have already said that to many minds the mere act of destruction seems to give pleasure. To others, the motive for destroying may be fear or fashion, but, whatever be the cause, it is certain that in man's relation to the rest of creation, the economy of nature is grievously neglected. To the majority of people it seems little short of folly to use carefully that which seems to be so liberally provided. It is so difficult to realise the worth and value, the expense—to translate the idea into the language which is most readily understood—of life, that many of us fail to see the waste which we are causing. Especially with regard to birds and flowers is the waste most dangerous and useless; and the Selborne Society endeavours to draw public attention to this fact, and so to check the disease of wastefulness from which we are already suffering.

The birds' lives which are sacrificed, neither for utility nor comfort, but to satisfy woman's craving for adornment, are legion, and by their destruction man and nature often sustain a double loss, for not only are the birds' lives taken, but the crops, of which they are the natural protectors, are sacrificed. Truly some lives are saved by this system, those of the Hessian fly and the maggot, for example. Perhaps we ought to be thankful for these!

Briefly, the Selborne Society may be said to be humanitarian, economical and humane. Humanitarian, because it tries to provide happiness and pleasure for the greatest possible number of men; economical, because it discourages that wastefulness which is so natural among men and so contrary to their own interests; and humane, because it considers the lower creation as too valuable to be sacrificed to man's lowest passions and desires.

ISABEL FRY.

[In an accompanying letter Miss Fry says, that as she has dwelt almost exclusively on the cultivation of individual right feeling, with a view to the formation of a sound state of public opinion, she hopes some one else will before long deal with the more active work of the society in its corporate capacity. We hope soon to avail ourselves of her suggestion.]

ENGLISH BIRD NAMES.

THE following lists have been sent by various correspondents. We have omitted from them certain names which seem to be in general use, and have prefixed an asterisk to those not in Mr. Swainson's *Folk Lore of British Birds*.

From South-West Surrey; sent by the Rev. Gerald S. Davies, Godalming:—

*Puckeridge†	Nightjar
*Bloodlark	Tree pipit
Titlark	Meadow pipit
*Longpod	Longtailed tit
*Chaffey	Chaffinch
Nettlecreeper	Whitethroat
Galley bird	Green woodpecker

From North Marston, Bucks; sent by Mr. H. G. Ward, Leighton Buzzard:—

*Redwing felt	Redwing
Gor-crow	Carrion crow
*Thresher	Song thrush
*Thin thresher	Missel thrush
*Water washdisher	Water wagtail
*Yellow washdisher	Yellow wagtail
*Chink, and *Chink chawdy ...	Chaffinch
*Dicky	Wren
*Heckle or Heekle	Green woodpecker
Redtail	Redstart
Molly-herne	Heron
Bum-barrel	Long-tailed tit
Green linnet	Greenfinch

From Appleby, Westmoreland; sent by Miss A. J. Heelis:—

Spinkie	Yellow-hammer
*Tinny oolet	Owl
Dawp	Carrion crow
*Dykie	Hedge sparrow
*Mountain throstle	Missel Thrush
*Long-neck...	Heron
Teuht	Plover
Bessie - ducker (pronounced "dooker")	Water ouzel

Norfolk names sent by "J. W. M":—

Dow	Wood pigeon
Fulfer	Fieldfare
*Dow-fulfer...	Missel-thrush

From Swaffham, Norfolk; sent by the Miss Harrisons:—

Bloodalf or Bloodelf	Bullfinch
King Harry / Draw-water	Goldfinch
Golder	Yellow-hammer
*Billy owl	Barn owl
*Hedge creeper	Hedge sparrow
*Denshman...	Carrion crow

† Mr. Swainson says: "In many places (*e.g.*, in the South of England and in some parts of Ireland) it is considered that animals either become blind or are infected with disease after being sucked (as they are supposed to be by the night-jar—hence its name, goat-sucker). The country people in West Sussex call this complaint 'puck' or 'puckeridge'—perhaps from Puck, a malignant sprite—and the bird itself 'puck-bird.'"

From the Rev. G. C. Green, Ivybridge, South Devon :—

Hickmal or Hickymall	Blue tit, Great tit, Marsh tit, or Cole tit
Tiddletope	Wren
*Gray bird	Either Song Thrush or Redwing
Hoop	Bullfinch

"This name was the only name by which this bird was known to the common people about here until within the last thirty years. I have an old churchwarden's book of two hundred years old or more in which there constantly appears the entry of money paid for Hoops' heads during the last century and earlier."

Miss Isabel Fry writes :—

"A member of the Bayswater Branch of the Selborne Society informs me that the Peewit in Ireland is called by the country people 'Phillip a weeke.'

E. H. writes :—

"Board Schools will prove the destruction of so many interesting local forms of speech and nomenclature that the suggestion of recording in NATURE NOTES some still surviving peculiar names of animals and plants seems very valuable.

"The Hampshire 'Blood-lark' resembles the Leicestershire 'Scriveling-lark' (the Yellow-hammer), not only in not being a lark at all, but also in the name being given with reference to the eggs, which in the case of the 'Scriveling-lark' look as if they were *scribbled* over by the finest of steel pens. The bird itself, apart from its eggs, is (or rather was) known as the Goldfinch; while the Goldfinch itself was called the 'Proud Tailor' (pronounced 'teeler').

"The Swift was always the 'Deviling,' and was mysteriously spoken of as 'one of the Seven Whistlers.' Other Leicestershire names were—

Whinchat	Utick
Green woodpecker	Roin (or rind) tabberer, Rain-bird or Wood spite

"I cannot identify the various 'jugs'; Bank-jug, Hedge-jug, and Bottle-jug, but the name referred to the form of the nest."

N. S. W. writes :—

"In Gloucestershire the Longtailed Titmouse is called a 'Mum-ruffin'; the Hedge-sparrow a Blue Isook (? Isaac)†—can any of your readers tell me why? The reason for the Chaffinch being called a Twink one can see, or rather hear, for he says 'Twink' continually."

[In the article in our last number on "English Plant Names," the following initials were wrongly given :—Miss N. J. Heelis ought to have been Miss A. J. Heelis, and Mr. T. G. Ward ought to have been Mr. H. G. Ward. The names from Craven in Yorkshire were sent by Miss Isabel Brown.]

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† Mr. Swainson gives "Blue Isaac" for Gloucestershire; "Isaac," or "Hazook" for Worcestershire, and "Segge" for Devon. These names, he says, "are from the Old English *heisugge*—see Chaucer, 'Assemblie of Fowles,' 612, where the cuckoo is called the

'Murdrer of the *heysugge* on the braunch
That brought thee forth.'"

A BOOK FOR NATURE LOVERS.

Wild Nature Won by Kindness, by Mrs. Brightwen, Vice-President of the Selborne Society. London (T. Fisher Unwin). In a recent issue of NATURE NOTES we drew attention to the number of members of the Selborne Society who are at the present time writing books inculcating the principles which we all desire to uphold and disseminate. There is not one of these publications more likely to give pleasure to all true Selbornians than the volume before us. Mrs. Brightwen is well known as an ardent supporter of many good causes; but there can hardly be any into which she throws her heart so thoroughly as she does into the work of our own Society. The fact that she mentions her connection with it on the title-page of her delightful little book is some evidence of this; but far stronger proof is found in the contents of the work. She tells us that for twenty years of variable health, the companionship of the animal world has been her constant solace and joy, and she now wishes to convey to others a little of the happiness she has enjoyed all through her life in the study of Natural History. This indeed she does most effectually. She gives us a series of biographies of wild creatures which in various ways have come into her hands, and tells of their habits and adventures in a bright, easy style; so that it is almost impossible not to become interested in their fates—indeed, often to take much more interest than we find in the careers of those "featherless bipeds" who are generally the sole subjects of biography. To be a pet of Mrs. Brightwen's does not necessarily entail captivity. She seems to live amidst beautiful surroundings, where every harmless winged, and fourfooted, and creeping thing is not only unmolested but cherished. And she is evidently rewarded by an amount of tameness and confidence in her protection which we often read of in legend or history, but which in our times is so rare that too incredulous sceptics declare it to be impossible.

The most remarkable instance of this power of attraction is seen in the story of the snake who glided in through the window of the drawing-room in which she sat, and coiled itself round upon her dress, where it seemed to go to sleep. It made no objection to being stroked and handled, but when taken outside and placed upon the lawn returned again and again to the friend whom it had chosen.

Some of Mrs. Brightwen's favourites were denizens of her garden, who through constant attention and kindness became almost domesticated. The titmice, robins and squirrels thus became members of the family, all behaving with marvellous docility to their mistress, although occasionally they fought fiercely with each other, Robin meeting Robin in sanguinary duel, Tits flying at each other sometimes like feathered furies, while one Squirrel thrashed another so severely that the conquered one lost half his ear, and had to be sponged and doctored as if he had come off second best in the prize-ring.

Starlings, Wild Ducks, Jays, Cuckoos and many others became pets on account of some accident or loss of parents, which would have caused their deaths had there not been some friend to come forward and substitute artificial for natural nurture. Of all these very interesting anecdotes are told, and the different birds are invested to a remarkable degree with an individuality which shows how carefully their habits were studied. But Mrs. Brightwen was on familiar terms with many creatures which seem much more unlikely to be tamed than those mentioned. Roman Snails, Egyptian Beetles, Butterflies, Spiders, and even an Earwig (!) shared her interest, and behaved with wonderful propriety during their pleasant imprisonment. Some really startling instances of intelligence and attachment are given of animals from whom no one would have expected such qualities. There is only one creature upon whom Mrs. Brightwen never succeeded in making any impression—Fluff, the Guinea-pig. "He is the only instance of an animal I have ever known who seemed to be literally without a single habit, apparently without affection, without a temper good or bad, with no wishes or desires except to be let alone to doze away his aimless life."

The sketch we have given leaves but a very faint impression of the varied beauties of the book. The account of the cat who carefully tended a young starling; the sensational adventures of the delightfully pugnacious "Rab Minor"—he would have been dear to the author of the greater "Rab"—are exactly the things to delight youngsters. Indeed we know of few books better suited for a

children's library or for a prize given by those admirable institutions, the *Bands of Mercy*. There is one reason for which this work will be much more acceptable to young people than many similar ones. Although it is written in a spirit of deep religious feeling, there is none of that obtrusive sermonic element which makes many children's books so very distasteful to those for whom they are intended. "Why, it's only a big 'track,' with a lot of pictures shoved in!" said an unappreciative boy lately of an illustrated book on Natural History in which the narrative element was very distinctly subordinated to the didactic. "I wish people wouldn't tell you the good things you ought to think when you see anything pretty," said a little girl surfeited with perpetual drawing of morals, "it would be ever so much nicer to think things yourself." We have much sympathy with these juvenile critics, and we can assure them that they will find in *Wild Nature Won by Kindness* a real book of charming (though true) stories, with plenty of fun here and there. Almost every chapter has some humorous incident in it. The story of the American lady who boasted that "her tame oysters followed her up and downstairs" is delicious; so also the account of how Rab Minor buried the hymn-book in the garden, whereupon the cook remarked that he had more religion in him than half the Christians—though indeed, as our authoress adds, "that reasoning was not apparent to anyone but herself." But the funniest story is of the irreverent non-Sabbatarian bees, who swarmed on Sunday evening, and then sought to make amends for their offence by accompanying their owner to church, where she sat in mute agony lest they might commit a violent assault upon the minister and congregation.

There are three chapters in the book—"Taming of Our Pets," "Feeding Birds in Summer and Winter," and "How to Observe Nature"—which we would gladly see reprinted as separate pamphlets and distributed by the Selborne Society. They are full of practical wisdom, and would prevent much thoughtless cruelty. But indeed the whole book is one which cannot but make both young and old have more love for all God's creatures, who are *all* (what is so often forgotten) their own fellow creatures, and think with more wonder and reverence of Him "who made all these."

BIRDS AND BONNETS: A LADIES' SYMPOSIUM.

IN response to the invitation given in last month's NATURE NOTES, we have received several letters from lady contributors on this subject, which is of peculiar importance just at this season of the year, when ladies have not yet selected their winter bonnets. We append extracts from this correspondence in the order in which they have been received.

"Joan of Arc" says:—"Your correspondent, Susan P. Hawes' question—'If we do not wear feathers in winter, what are we to wear instead?' irresistibly reminds me of a question once asked me by a young officer, whose regiment was then leaving the country town in which we lived—'What will the M— people do when the —th have gone away?' I considered for a moment, and then replied innocently enough, 'I suppose they will have to do as they did before the —th came here.' I had no intention of laughing at him, though the hearers gave me credit for doing so, I am afraid.

"Now I suppose that twenty years ago ladies were able to manage without birds in their hats, for I do not think the (to me) ugly fashion had begun then. Surely with all the variety of leaves, berries, and flowers—the making of which gives employment to so many poor women and girls—to say nothing of velvet and ribbons—which wear very well—we could again contrive to get through our winters without this profusion of birds—I counted seven in one hat in a shop window the other day.

"As to the other part of the subject, as to what feathers are allowable, surely it would not take us long to learn which birds are used for food, and if we prefer

eathers to flowers, those of such birds as we see at the poulterer's ought to satisfy us. Nobody imagines that the tiny humming birds, goldfinches, or birds of paradise are killed for anything but their plumage ; and in these days of 'higher education for women'—of which we *hear* more than we *see*—the better educated amongst us ought to set their faces against this heartless fashion, thus doing something to remove the stigma of thoughtlessness so often attached to our sex.

"In the *Daily News*, which is always in sympathy with the Selborne Society, I read only the other day, that unless measures were speedily taken to stop the wholesale slaughter in India of the paddy birds, shiploads of which are sent to Europe for the use of milliners, there is serious danger of the total destruction of the rice crops—'paddy'— by insects which are the natural food of these birds. If this happens then of course famine follows, with dreadful loss of life. Surely if these things were properly understood, educated Englishwomen would have few doubts about the question 'What shall we wear in our bonnets?' but would determine at any rate *not* to wear what might lead to such terrible results. Some of us may be thoughtless or blind followers of fashion, but I cannot believe that we should be so utterly heartless."

The following is the paragraph referred to by "Joan of Arc":—"It is the opinion of local authorities that nothing can save the beautiful birds of India from complete destruction but a prohibitive tax upon the export of their skins and feathers. Such is the demand for the adornment of ladies' caps, bonnets, and even dresses in Europe, America and elsewhere, that the time is believed to be ripe for this decisive remedy if India is not to be deprived of its feathered songsters or the crops of the ryot left to the mercy of the insects on which they feed. In the Punjab, in Bengal and in Madras the harmless paddy bird, the oriole, the roller and the little sunbird, with wings flashing with metallic hues, are all being exterminated for the sake of their wings and tails, and birds' feathers, closely packed, are going away from Indian ports in shiploads."

A letter on this subject was written to the Council of the Selborne Society at its last meeting by Miss Ada Smith, Secretary of the Wimbledon Branch.

A Bird Lover writes: "I maintain feathers may be worn, and without the slaughter of the birds. I have just had a black felt hat trimmed with black ribbons and two wings, the colours of which are emerald green, prussian blue and scarlet, all natural colours and blended and softened as only nature can blend, and all from my 'double-fronted amazon parrot,' who discarded them last autumn when he put on his new suit. I collected the feathers and then arranged them, the right wing and left wing feathers in proper order, laying them overlapping each other as a wing does, dropped Judson's liquid glue between each quill, let them remain until quite dry with a light weight on them to keep them in place, and then mounted them with a thin bit of cardboard glued behind the quills and bound over with a bit of soft dark cloth. The milliner I took mine to was surprised at the beauty of the feathers and wondered where I got such lovely wings—very much more lovely, certainly, to my mind than some poor little distorted, mis-shapen goldfinches (?) she had for sale ; and there is the pleasure of knowing that my parrot will be able to furnish many more such wings, instead of being once killed and done for, besides the far deeper satisfaction

> "'Never to blend our pleasure or our pain
> With sorrow to the meanest thing that feels.'

"Could not our Zoological Gardens and many bird fanciers and aviarists furnish quantities of moulted feathers to be thus made up, besides the hosts of private people who keep pet birds and could thus save their feathers? Amongst our poultry there are lovely feathers—guinea fowl, the fancy water fowl, Egyptian geese, &c."

A. O. H. writes to the same effect:—"Could not many feathers now wasted be utilized, without any cruelty to the original owners, by simply keeping them when the bird moulted? How many persons keep rare, foreign birds, and their beautiful feathers are cast away with the waste seed and sand. I have a box full of feathers, beautiful bright greens, blues and yellow, belonging to a small parrot still living. I keep 'Joseph's' cast-off finery, because it is too beautiful to destroy, but it is useless to me. I tried to dispose once of them to a milliner,

thinking real colours would be of more use than painted sham feathers, but she said it was not her work. So the 'coat of many colours,' lies in a box upstairs, as I know not how to use it, and am unwilling to toss it into the dust-hole. I tried to dispose of them in *The Bazaar* but got no answer, yet fan-makers and others use feathers!"

"A Lady Milliner (member of the Selborne Society)" leads us to suppose that the methods suggested by the last two writers are already in use among bonnet-makers. She writes as follows:—"Miss Susan P. Hawes has apparently forgotten that one of the chief objects of the Selborne Society is to promote the study of Natural History amongst the very people whose ignorance she deplores. It takes much time and money to educate 'smart' people, their friends and their milliners up to the pitch of being able to distinguish between the wing of an albatross and that of an Aylesbury duck, but we are confident from our knowledge of past successes that this may be done. Most of the small birds now exhibited in the milliners' shops are built up out of the plumage of birds used for food in this country, and much credit is due to those persons who have introduced this industry, and the thanks of the Selborne Society are certainly owing to the ladies conducting the 'Ladies' Columns' in our illustrated and other journals, as well as to the editors and proprietors of such monthlies as the *Queen*, *Lady*, *Ladies' Pictorial*, *Le Follet*, *&c.*—all of whom have expressed strong opinions against the wearing of plumage obtained by wasteful or cruel means. Many ladies of acknowledged beauty and of great mental power in the little world of London manage to dress in the most perfect taste without running up bills for 'osprey,' robins, kingfishers, terns and humming birds. Will not they tell their puzzled sisters 'How its done'?"

Miss L. Hinchcliff says:—"Considering the high attainments of science and art combined, as exhibited in all the lovely colourings and varieties of shades in ribbons and velvets, surely a substitute for birds or their plumage is hardly a necessity! I am very fond of pretty things, and by no means an advocate for 'sombre tints' alone, still I do not think our hats and bonnets need suffer one iota, or be any the less charming for the absence of either birds or feathers. Flowers certainly have had a good run during the spring and summer months, but though *many* of these would hardly be considered suitable for the coming season, I do not think for that reason we need banish them *all*. Only the other day I saw on a milliner's table a lovely spray of barberries; their rich purple bloom in contrast to the rather stiff, autumnal green leaves, struck me as charming, and looking at them from a practical standpoint, I certainly thought they had a much more 'weather-proof' air about them than many of the feathers and birds with which they were surrounded."

The most practical suggestions on this subject come from Miss Agnes Fry, Treasurer of the Bayswater Branch: "As this is a question which requires some discernment and knowledge of the hat-trimming trade, and milliners are, if not the most discerning, certainly the best informed people on this subject, would it not be well to refer this question to them? And would it not be possible for the Selborne Society to offer a money prize for the most satisfactory and *novel* solution of this difficulty? London milliners might not be unwilling to send specimens of their skill to a small exhibition, as it would be a sort of advertisement of their wares, and the prize might be awarded either by some of the ladies on the Committee of the Selborne Society, or by some experienced milliners, or a committee of both. Though the competition would have to be made known by sending circulars to as many shops as possible, I do not see that the necessary expenses would be great, and I think that many members of the Society would, if necessary, be willing to contribute to such an object. It may, however, be of more immediate utility to state that I believe that Hamilton & Co., in Regent Street, have resolved to use no bird trimmings in the hats they sell, and as this shop is well known for taste and elegance, ladies who wish to keep to the principles of the Selborne Society, and at the same time to have pretty hats, might safely be recommended to go there."

Mrs. Brightwen sends us the following extract from a letter to her by Mrs. Knight, of All Saints' Vicarage, Derby, who very rightly wishes that the information should be verified. We can hardly believe that such revolting barbarity is actually practised. If the account can be corroborated, we cannot

think that any one worthy of the name of woman would degrade herself by wearing ornaments procured in so horrible a manner.

"You know those bright red little birds (whole birds) which they put in ladies' hats? They are dyed sparrows(!!) mostly prepared in France. But the point is this—that in order to preserve the feathers in the best possible condition the birds are killed in the most horridly cruel way. They are put in a cool oven, which is gradually heated till they are dead. This was told us by a woman who sells the birds and hats! Now, can anything be done first to verify the fact and then to make it public, with a view to putting a stop to such terrible cruelty?"

SELBORNIANA.

Books of Feathers.—Much interest has been shown in Mrs. Brightwen's article on this subject in our last number. So many wishes have been expressed to see the books referred to, that Mrs. Brightwen has consented to allow them to be exhibited at the Annual Conversazione of the Ealing Natural History Society, to be held on the 25th of this month. One of our correspondents, Mr. Edward Simpson, suggests that the idea of such books may lead to results far different from those intended by its originator:—"Much though Mrs. Brightwen may deprecate the slaughter of rare visitors and native birds, all ladies may not be so careful to inquire whether the birds were 'picked up dead in the garden,' or 'found lying on the sea shore.' They will find it easier to 'ask no questions for conscience' sake.'" Mr. Simpson is perfectly right to warn us against an evil which may possibly arise; and we would add our strong protest against any such abuse of Mrs. Brightwen's suggestion, which would, we feel sure, cause her the greatest pain. But we do not feel as much apprehension on the matter as he does. Only those bird lovers who have a considerable amount of skill and knowledge could attempt such designs successfully; and it is not such persons that would be base enough to destroy the things they love for the purpose of displaying their knowledge and skill.

Partly to assuage Mr. Simpson's fears, and partly for our own gratification, we reprint the following paragraph on the subject from the *Daily News*. We may take this opportunity of saying that the *Daily News* (as is incidentally noticed by a correspondent on another page) is conspicuous among the daily papers for its "soundness" on all matters connected with the love and study of nature, and has always given the most valuable aid to the Selborne Society in its work:—

"A lady ornithologist has come forward to tell us how she has been accustomed to make up 'books of feathers' somewhat after the fashion in which enthusiasts for botany compile a hortus siccus. As her communication is addressed to that zealous friend of the animal world, the Selborne Society's NATURE NOTES, we need hardly say that the practice, as here explained, involves no wanton destruction of the birds. Thus, the woodpecker and nuthatch, who contribute feathers to the pages of the lady's album, were picked up dead in her garden. The samples from the dove and budgerigars were simply moulted feathers. The birds having done with them, the album-maker felt at liberty to turn them to her own uses. A favourite parrot died, and ever since then a tribute from his wings has furnished a welcome memento of an old companion. Birds used for food again supply a great variety. Of these are wild ducks, pheasants, partridges, and all species of wild fowl. Then the lady picked up a fine white barn owl in a wood in Cornwall, a dead sea-gull at Brighton, a guillemot on the beach at Bournemouth, and, still rarer, a stormy petrel lying near it. Thus was the blank album gradually filled with interesting examples of the plumage of British birds, without hurt to the conscience of an enthusiastic disciple of Gilbert White. There is surely many a worse way to 'help waste a sullen day' than that of making a feather book' in accordance with this lady's practical directions."

Removal of Sky Signs.—This subject also has aroused much attention, and several cuttings from newspapers relating to it have been sent to us. From these we select the following received from Miss Agnes Martelli. Luckily we are not called upon to discuss either the ethics or the expediency of boycotting; but it is curious to note with what a light heart the *Queen* recommends it as a punishment for contumacious sky-signers in England:—"The excitement and indignation aroused by the erection of sky signs has not been expressed too soon. The public have been informed by a well-known writer—Luke Limner—that a soap-selling firm had already contemplated disfiguring the beautiful scenery of the glens, mountains and lakes of Scotland with these hideous erections, thus destroying the beauty that attracts and gives pleasure to tens of thousands of tourists, and profit to thousands of residents. Our most beautiful buildings have already been disfigured. St. Paul's was apparently the first of our grand national buildings to suffer; but Messrs. Hudson, with an amount of graceful courtesy which does infinite credit to their good taste, and we have no doubt will do the greatest benefit to their business, have, in deference to the strongly-expressed wishes of the public, ordered the sign to be taken down—a praiseworthy proceeding, which has been followed by Messrs. Carrick and Coles, the well-known outfitters at Uxbridge, whose sign, raised forty feet above the roof, dominated over the town and destroyed its picturesque appearance from every point of view. This, though costing £169 to erect, they have courteously ordered to be removed, candidly stating that its erection was an error in judgment on their part, and that they wish to be in accord with public opinion—a graceful act which, we have no doubt, will be much more to the advantage of their business than the offensive sign, which would have been a perpetual annoyance to the inhabitants of the town and surrounding district. Other tradesmen are neither so courteous nor so wise. A flaring-red sky-sign, marring the beautiful view with its hideous outline, has been erected close to Lincoln Cathedral, and although the supports have been destroyed by some indignant inhabitant, it has been re-erected by the proprietor. To the persons who so persistently outrage public taste by disfiguring the sky and the views which are the common property of all, ordinary arguments are addressed in vain; any appeal to that courteous consideration for the comfort of others, which is the true characteristic of a gentleman, is thrown away on people who have not even the conception of such a character. One argument, however, is infallible—it is that which is addressed to the pocket. If the public persistently refuse to deal with those persons who disfigure all that is beautiful in our cities and our country, the whole of these outrages on good taste will soon be removed. In some instances this has already been done, and the proceeding has been anything but satisfactory to the offenders. It only requires a continuance of the pressure to ensure the removal of these disfigurements. If all those persons whose good taste is outraged will indicate to the offenders that their support and custom will be withdrawn as long as the objectionable signs are employed, the matter is at an end. In the meantime we may announce that Mr. J. B. Hilditch, of 11 and 12, Cheapside, suggests the active co-operation of all interested, and is willing to take charge of any correspondence and receive the names of supporters until some concerted action can be organised to abolish the evil."

Devastation at Cheddar Cliffs.—Just as we are going to press we have received a letter calling our attention to this matter from Miss Dangar, Lyndhurst, Ealing. She encloses the following letter from the *Globe* which had escaped our notice:—"Is there none to preserve the Cheddar Cliffs from the brutal destruction that is going on in their midst? Already a hideous scar has been made by the removal of the beautiful weather-worn grey surface. These cliffs are almost unparalleled in England in sublime grandeur and majesty, and it seems they will be sacrificed merely for the sake of some paltry gain from the possession of the stone for building purposes. Where is our sense for the beautiful and sublime in Nature, that we can calmly sit still, and suffer the grandest gorge in our country to be mutilated in this shameful manner, merely for the sake of filthy lucre? Where is the Selborne Society in this matter? Have they no influence to bring to bear on the author of such an outrage on Nature? Or do they not include the preservation of beautiful scenery among their other efforts? May I appeal, Sir, through your columns for the preservation of the ever famous

Cheddar Cliffs from the profane touch of the workman's tool?—E. W. S.-W." It is much to be wished that E. W. S.-W., and other such persons, instead of (or, at any rate, in addition to) writing to the papers complaining that the Selborne Society does nothing, would themselves write to the Selborne Society and ask it to do something. Every one who knows anything of the work of the Society is aware that the preservation of beautiful scenery is one of the distinctive features of its programme, and has been the subject of several articles in NATURE NOTES. The Selborne Society has often been successful in saving, by timely interposition, beautiful objects from threatened danger. But it is impossible to take cognisance of *all* the "brutal destruction" that goes on, unless instances of it are brought to the notice of the Society, and particulars given of the outrages complained of. We are much obliged to Miss Dangar for having brought to our knowledge the impassioned, and, we hope, exaggerated, wail of woe uttered by E. W. S.-W. It shall be laid before the Council of the Selborne Society at its next meeting—two or three days from the time of writing—and steps will doubtless be taken to enquire into the nature of the injuries done to the cliffs, and, if possible, to avert further devastation.

Unkindness of Jackdaws to their kind.—On June 14th, 1890, I found on the Freshwater Down, near the Beacon, a young jackdaw, apparently friendless. It could not fly, but fluttered about helplessly. The wind was blowing strongly from the cliff, and it was that, probably, which had carried little Jack so far from his nest. I brought him to the house, and the footman fitted up a box for him, into which I put some raw meat, a snail, and some bread, and adding a cup of water, I said "Goodnight" to little Jack. Early next morning I found that he had eaten nothing, so I opened his beak and fed him with soaked bread and some fish, which I had been advised to try. Poor little Jack looked so miserable that I thought he would be happier on the cliff; I took him back accordingly, putting him down as near to the place where I found him as I could remember. We then walked about three hundred yards away and watched. It was not long before a jackdaw appeared from the cliff, and hopping cautiously close to Jack had a good look at him, and flew back again. Very soon several others appeared—in all fifteen; they formed a circle round the unhappy little bird, but not one of them would approach nearer than ten yards. There was something about his appearance that they evidently did not approve of, and at length they all flew away, leaving their friendless little comrade to his fate. I then carried Jack further, and put him down in another place, but no one came or took notice of him, so I was obliged to take him home. On the 16th we took him once more to the Down to give his relatives one more chance of making friends with him, but they would not go near him, so I decided to try to rear him myself, and yet let him enjoy his freedom almost as much as he would on the Downs. When we went out for a walk little Jack, who was fast becoming tame, perched on my shoulder or wrist, and thence took *his* view of the world and things in general. I fed him freely with raw beef—too freely, I fear, for one day he became sick and rejected some little bits of meat. I had left him, as usual, in the housekeeper's room after our walk, when the housekeeper cried out that little Jack was in a fit. We gave him brandy and water, also a pepper-corn, then applied cold water to his beak, but all in vain. The poor, wise-looking birdie died, and I buried him alone among the flowers, where the jackdaws skim nightly athwart the sky to their home in the cliff. E. DURHAM.

Imitations of the Notes of Birds.—Miss Blanche Pechelé writes from San Souci, Bellagio, Italy:—"I hasten to send you a French verse, which imitates the notes of the lark's song wonderfully. I copied the verse several years ago from a review of a book called 'The Letters of a Betrothed':—

> "'La gentille alouette avec son tire-lire,
> Tire-lire et lire, et tire-lire et lire;
> Vers la voute du ciel, puis son val vers ce lieu
> Vire;—et desire dire
> Adieu Dieu! adieu Dieu!'"

Tom-Tits.—Is it known whether these birds keep to one mate? I cannot help thinking so. I always keep a bone or piece of fat tied close to my window, and the blue-tits and major-tits come constantly to feed there. A short time ago the cock major-tit alighted on the bone and began to eat, then the hen came and sat on the window sill, whereupon the cock pulled pieces of meat off the bone and threw them down to the hen—there was not room for two on the bone. I see the cock and hen constantly together, winter and summer.

N. S. W.

A Browning Query (p. 28).—Mr. A. J. Western sends us a communication from Mr. E. E. Davies, Hon. Secretary of the Browning Society, on this subject. "The following reply to a similar question is printed in the Browning Society's Papers for 1885 and 1886:—'Surely the *Polygonum Persicaria*, or spotted persicaria, is the plant alluded to. It is a common weed, with purple stains on its rather large leaves; these spots varying in size and vividness of colour according to the nature of the soil where it grows. A legend attaches to the plant, which attributes these stains to the blood of Christ having fallen on its leaves, growing below the cross.'" [To this suggestion it must be objected that the Persicaria does not grow in woods, and that its leaves are hardly developed so early as May. A better solution is much to be desired.]

Bibliography of Gilbert White.—The Rev. Percy Myles is preparing an annotated bibliography of all editions of Gilbert White's works, and of books, reviews, magazine articles, &c., referring to White or to Selborne. He will be much obliged to any members of the Selborne Society who will be kind enough to help in this matter. All communications will be duly acknowledged.

OFFICIAL NOTICES, &c.

Selborne Society.

The objects of the Society are:—

(*a*) to preserve from unnecessary destruction such wild birds, animals and plants as are harmless, beautiful or rare.

(*b*) to discourage the wearing and use for ornament of birds and their plumage; except when the birds are killed for food or reared for their plumage.

(*c*) to protect places and objects of natural beauty or antiquarian interest from ill-treatment or destruction.

(*d*) to promote the study of natural history.

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It was hoped that a full account of the Branches of the Selborne Society might be given in NATURE NOTES with particulars of their officers, number of members, income and work during the year; but although circulars asking for such information were sent out several months ago, some of the Branch Secretaries have not yet sent in returns, and we cannot do more at present than print the above list. With regard to members, the Lower Thames Valley Branch still holds the highest place. It has more than 200 members. Next in order come the Northern Heights, Birmingham, Haslemere, Bath and the Rape of Lewes, all above 100, while Rother Valley, Kensington and Wimbledon very nearly reach that figure. The Council would be very glad to hear from members who would undertake to fill the vacant Honorary Secretaryships for Dublin, Isle of Wight and Kent. The first Scotch and the first Continental Branch have been started during the year. The Forth Branch is already in active operation, and we hope soon to hear similar tidings of that at Rome. It is hoped that before long branches will be started for Birkenhead, Bristol and the important county of Devon, where we have many members, but no local organisation.

The only branches which have sent in accounts of meetings or excursions are: in the Metropolitan district, Lower Thames Valley, Northern Heights and Clapton; in the provinces, Birmingham, Bath, Southampton and Tudor, which last is a recently started and apparently very promising branch. Short notices of this kind for insertion in NATURE NOTES would always be very welcome, but we should be glad if Hon. Secretaries would bear in mind the excellent advice of Mr. Skrine in our July number (p. 116), and remembering the very limited space in NATURE NOTES, would enlist the sympathy of the local press. We shall be pleased to print a list of local newspapers who are willing to set apart a Selborne column, and we should be still more pleased if local Secretaries would undertake to supply us regularly with such papers, carefully marking the portions of interest to Selbornians. We find that the press does service to us (and we hope to themselves) in another way, by reprinting articles from NATURE NOTES. The article of Professor Henslow on "Mummy Wheat," for example, was reprinted in several papers, sometimes with, and sometimes (such is even editorial frailty) without acknowledgment. We need hardly say that we prefer the former.

On account of the large space occupied by the list of Officers and by the Ladies' Symposium on "Birds and Bonnets," we are obliged this month to enlarge the size of the Magazine, giving four additional pages. In spite of this it has been found necessary to postpone several interesting communications, notably an important article on "Environment," by Professor Henslow. Those contributors whose letters we have not been able to insert, will kindly take this apology.

IT is particularly requested that subscriptions and letters bearing on the general business of the Society should *not* be forwarded to the Editors, but to the Secretary of the Selborne Society, 9, Adam Street, Adelphi. Editorial communications should be addressed to the Rev. PERCY MYLES, 1, Argyle Road, Ealing, W.

Nature Notes:

The Selborne Society's Magazine.

No. 11. NOVEMBER 15, 1890. Vol. I.

THE INFLUENCE OF THE ENVIRONMENT UPON PLANTS.

IN the first number of the *Selborne Magazine* I very briefly sketched a theory of the Evolution of Plants, differing widely from that which is connected with the name of Mr. Darwin. Since that time I have published a volume in the International Scientific Series on the subject, and have secured the adhesion of a large number of naturalists in our own country and abroad. I now lay the following account of my views before the readers of Nature Notes with the hope that some of the many Selbornians who are in the habit of carefully studying nature, may be able to supply some facts which will confirm the hypothesis I have suggested. I shall be equally obliged to those who will give an account of observations which appear to contradict it; as my object is not to defend a theory at all hazards, but by continual investigation to ascertain the truth.

Let me first give in a sentence or two the main points on which all evolutionists are agreed; I shall refer only to the vegetable kingdom. Concerning it the evolutionary belief may be briefly summed up as follows: it was thought at one time that all species of plants were fixed entities, and admitted of no, or at least very little change; so that "varieties" were restricted and never transcended the limits of the characters by which the species was recognisable—that the latter were, in fact, specific creations. A more extended study of plant life has shown that these views are quite untenable, and that all plants have descended from pre-existing ones by "descent with modification," as it is called.

Now, if one has become satisfied that evolution is the only interpretation of existing life, the question arises: How have plants become changed? A very obvious phenomenon is that

plant-structures are in adaptation to their needs. For when one studies the structures and functions of roots, stems, leaves, flowers and fruits, it becomes perfectly clear that these structures and their functions are in harmony with their surroundings; that is to say, *e.g.*, the root is adapted for absorbing water, mineral, and other matters from the soil; that the stem is adapted to support the plant or tree and convey the fluids upwards; that the leaves are adapted to imbibe carbonic acid from the air and to decompose it and then convert it into starch, as well as to transpire or exhale large quantities of superfluous moisture; also to respire, as we do; for it is as necessary for plants to breathe as much as animals, and if they be prevented doing so they will be asphyxiated too. Then, again, all the minute details of the structure of flowers are so many adaptations to the requirements of setting seed, by which the plant can be reproduced.

Hence we can recognise two "ends" in plant-life, viz., a healthy vigorous growth of the individual, and the production of plenty of good seed on the event of its death. We soon see, therefore, how every phase of its existence is in harmony with, or "correlated" to its environment, and under that term is included soil and its ingredients, air, moisture, temperature, light, &c.; and in the case of flowers, the visits of particular insects, if they be required, as is often the case, if not, then it is the wind, or else the flowers are so formed as to be independent of both wind and insects, and are specially constructed to be able to fertilise themselves. Such is the environment taken in its widest sense, and we repeat the question: How has any plant become adapted to its environment, so that all its various organs can perform their several functions in perfect harmony with the various features of this environment?

There are two ways of answering this question. First, to examine plants in nature which can, and often do, live under very different conditions or surroundings; as, *e.g.*, under water or on land and in air, and watch them to see how they change. These might be called natural experiments. We may also cultivate plants in very different and artificially prepared soils, &c., from those in which they naturally grow in the wild state. Such will be artificial experiments.

Secondly, there is a line of argument of great value, which will be emphasized further on by illustrations. It is, that when innumerable cases occur of certain phenomena always re-appearing under similar circumstances or conditions, we are justified in drawing the conclusion that there is a distinct cause and effect, even though we may not be able to verify our inference or deduction by actual experiment. In many cases we can, it is true, supply the conditions, and then we discover that we can produce at will the same effects as those we see appearing in nature under similar circumstances. This of course greatly strengthens the argument, but it is not absolutely necessary for the establishment of the truth.

As a good example of one of Nature's experiments, let us take the water Crowfoot (*Ranunculus aquatilis*). This plant grows in ponds and rivers, &c. In still water it produces very finely divided leaves with almost thread-like divisions, all of which are always entirely submerged; but when the stem grows to near the surface of the water, it develops ordinary leaves, heart-shaped or rounded with a scolloped edge. These float on the surface.

When we examine the tissues of these leaves microscopically, there are the following differences: in the floating leaves there is a superficial cellular skin or epidermis, which is composed of a layer of colourless cells like flat boxes, with a wavy contour all fitting tightly together like the pieces of a map-puzzle. At intervals there are an abundance of "breathing-holes," or stomata. They are composed of two oblong cells, rounded at the ends and curved towards each other, leaving a space between them for the circulation of air within and without the leaf. The stomata are on the upper epidermis exposed to the air. There are none, or at least very rarely one or two, here and there on the lower epidermis in contact with the water. The intermediate tissue contains the green granules called chlorophyll grains.

In the submerged leaves there is no true epidermis; the outermost layer of cells, which represents it, is full of green chlorophyll, and there are no stomata at all.

There are, indeed, several other differences which need not be specified. The conclusion is that the one kind of leaf is adapted to water, the other to float on the surface and to have at least one epidermis adapted to air.

Now suppose the pond to dry up gradually during a hot summer, so that the water all goes, leaving nothing but mud, which is in the course of drying up too. What happens? Our Ranunculus becomes a terrestrial plant. It produces an abundance of "dissected" leaves, very similar in appearance to the submerged ones, but not at all identical in structure. The little thread-like divisions now grow stouter and can stand erect in air. They are a little flattened instead of being circular in a cross section. They develop plenty of stomata, and possess a true epidermis, which, as is usual with aërial leaves, has no chlorophyll except in the cells of the stomata.

Here, then, we recognise two facts. One, that heredity compels the plant to produce leaves like the submerged ones, but the new environment compels it to construct the leaves for an aërial existence. Sometimes only this sort of leaf is produced, and the Ranunculus then carpets the ground with a kind of soft green pile. Sometimes it produces a certain number of dissected leaves, and then suddenly changes and bears the form of leaf which floats. Its habit was too strong to be lost. As these leaves are already partially adapted to air, they do not alter, their structure being just the same as when floating.

Here, again, heredity comes into play, for ordinary leaves of plants and trees have stomata chiefly or only on the lower and not the upper side. Hence the fact that the water Crowfoot has them on the upper and not the lower is clearly an adaptation to their floating on water, because the latter element prevents their formation on the lower side.

If the aërial plant be now transformed back again to water and submerged, all the "aërial" leaves perish, but it throws out fresh "aquatic" leaves instead. Hence one cannot avoid the conclusion that in some way or other an aquatic medium is the direct cause of one set of structures, and the aërial that of another set. Of course it is not only the difference between water and air, but all the concomitant circumstances associated with these two media respectively, which make up the environment and take effect upon plants. Thus the greater amount of light in air than in water acts most powerfully in regulating the structure of the tissues; the difference in the amount of carbonic acid, &c., all, no doubt, assert their influence; so that the different effects produced in plants are the result of the combination of several phenomena acting together.

In the continuation of this subject I propose to deal with a theoretical origin of Floral Structures.

GEORGE HENSLOW.

(To be continued.)

[We have much pleasure in inserting the foregoing able article from Professor Henslow, who is an eminent scientific authority, and a valued supporter from its foundation of the Selborne Society, of which he is a Vice-President. It must not, however, be supposed that NATURE NOTES is in any way committed to Evolutionist principles. An article on the other side, written with equal knowledge and a similar absence of the polemical spirit, would be just as willingly inserted in our columns.]

THE PRESERVATION AND ENJOYMENT OF OPEN SPACES.

IN the July number of NATURE NOTES I gave a short account of the functions of the three Societies having for their object to promote the preservation and enjoyment of open spaces—the Commons Preservation Society, the Kyrle Society, and the Metropolitan Public Gardens Association. The movement took its rise in the necessity of securing for public use the beautiful commons which lie on the outskirts of London, but it has taken effect in many directions since the formation of the Commons Preservation Society in 1865. I will briefly indicate the several questions which have arisen from time to time.

And first as to common land. Commons are beset by three dangers. They may be arbitrarily inclosed by the lord of the manor

under some claim of right. In this case the fight must be fought in the Law Courts, and it must be fought by local champions and with local weapons. The Open Space Societies cannot appear as litigants, but they all, and particularly the Commons Preservation Society, give advice and aid to the commoners in such case. Secondly, commons may be inclosed on the recommendation of the Board of Agriculture (Successors to the Inclosure Commisioners). Here the sanction of Parliament must be obtained, and the Commons Preservation Society carefully watches every proposal of the kind, with the result, as I have already stated, that inclosure is practically at an end. Thirdly, commons may be appropriated by railway companies, promoters of water-works and other industrial undertakings. Some years ago a railway engineer eagerly sought for common land in the country he had to traverse, and took his line through every tract of open waste he could find, for it was cheaper to buy such land than inclosed land. Many commons round London have been sliced and marred by railways—Wandsworth and Tooting Commons and Banstead Downs are notable sufferers. Wimbledon, Clapham and Hampstead have been saved from a like fate only by strenuous opposition. In those days the public generally had no notice of the intention to carry a line through common land; it was only by accident that the proposal was discovered before it was too late. Now, in consequence of an alteration in the standing orders of Parliament—made at the instance of Mr. Shaw Lefevre and the Commons Preservation Society—promoters of railways must give notice in the *London Gazette* of every proposal to take common land. Since this change every attempt seriously to encroach has been defeated, and railway engineers are recognising that it is a dangerous and costly step to threaten land which is open to the use and enjoyment of the public.

The principle has indeed been extended far beyond common land. Disused burial grounds and square gardens have been brought within its scope. Only this year the London and North Western Railway Company were defeated in an attempt to take part of Euston Square, and in 1889 the Midland Company were allowed to acquire a small piece of a burial ground at St. Pancras only on condition that they gave the County Council an equivalent in land, or in money to be spent in acquiring other land. Whole districts also have been protected from disfigurement by railway companies. Several attempts have been made to carry railways through the Lake district, but at the instance of the Open Space Societies they have been defeated, and similar protection has been accorded to the New Forest.

This is only one instance of the broad and at the same time reasonable spirit in which the Open Space Societies have interpreted their duties. The Commons Preservation Society, moved to the work and aided by the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings, a few years since defeated an endeavour to demolish

the interesting and venerable buildings of the London Charterhouse, and to build over the gardens and quadrangles with which Thackeray familiarised all England. Staple Inn, again, and Barnard's Inn—two of the Inns of Chancery which once played an important part in the education of lawyers—have been, so far, saved from the hand of the destroyer mainly through the exertions of the same Societies. And at the present moment the Open Space and Ancient Building Societies are seeking to prevent the sacrifice of Emanuel Hospital, Westminster—Lady Dacre's kindly foundation—to that spirit of false utilitarianism which sometimes intrudes into the management of ancient charities.

The attempt to manage Crown lands with a view to pecuniary profit alone has also been stoutly opposed by the Open Space Societies. Mr. Fawcett was the first boldly to lay down the principle that in such a case as the New Forest the interests of the nation were better served by the preservation of a national pleasure-ground than by the slight increase of revenue which might possibly arise from enclosure and tillage. At the present moment it is sought to apply this principle to Sudbrook Park, Richmond, an appanage to Richmond Park, to the full enjoyment of which its preservation intact largely conduces.

Sometimes, however, there is nothing for it but to buy the land which is required for the public enjoyment. In such cases the first move is generally made by one or other of the Open Space Societies, and a special committee is subsequently formed. The splendid tract of land lying between Hampstead Heath, and Highgate, Clissold Park, Stoke Newington, and the Lawn at South Lambeth—for some years the home of the late Mr. Fawcett—have thus been rescued from the builder, while a similar movement respecting the Hilly Fields at Lewisham is not yet assured of success. In these cases the rates, metropolitan and local, the funds of the City parochial charities, and private purses have all alike been laid under contribution, and skill and judgment were required to adjust means to ends, and conduct the purchase to a successful issue. ROBERT HUNTER.

(*To be continued*).

SYMPATHY OF BIRDS WITH THEIR KIND.

THERE is no doubt as to the cruelty shown by wild birds and beasts to suffering and feeble members of their own kind. It is a factor, not to be ignored, in the all-important law of the survival of the fittest. We read an instance of it in Miss Durham's interesting little account of the deserted jackdaw in last month's magazine. But, as Schrader well shows in his *Prehistoric Antiquities of the Aryan Peoples*, we must not forget that man himself in his primitive barbarous state did not scruple to kill (and often eat) useless infants, and feeble individuals of his own tribe.

From several facts, however, which have come under my notice I am inclined to think that cruelty is less common among domesticated creatures—that they are even capable of showing between themselves remarkable powers of sympathy.

I have two caged birds, a canary and a goldfinch, both cocks, which are allowed to fly freely about the room by the hour together. One day the goldfinch half stunned himself against the window-pane, and became suddenly quiet. The canary flew from a picture-frame across the room, saw at once that something was wrong, and, perching itself on a flower-pot near to its companion, looked at him with its black, bright, anxious eye, and puffing out its feathers like a sick bird, moped disconsolately—apparently out of pure sympathy.

A friend of mine, living near here, has a large aviary for birds, and has told me many stories of their mutual affection, even between birds of different tribes, and from widely distant parts of the world. I give her own words:—"I was living in town a short time ago, and bought in February a pair of Java sparrows (natives of Melanesia, China and Japan) and a pair of avadavats (natives of Central Africa). I put them into a large cage with some canaries. On looking at them all in the evening, I missed the avadavats, and on closer inspection found that the two Java sparrows were sitting close together, and had each taken under its outer wing one of the avadavats for shelter. For many nights I noticed that the little avadavats sought the same kindly protection, and even in the day-time would creep under the wings of the Java sparrows when the weather was very bitter. . . . Zebra finches and silver-bills (natives of Australia and of Africa respectively) are most affectionate to each other, and will also take up with any other little forlorn foreigner in the aviary, though often coming from quite different parts of the world. I had a pheasant finch (from West Coast of Africa and St. Helena) and a silver-bill who lived happily together for three years, roosting always in the same nest at night and often sitting on the same perch by day, pruning each other's feathers. . . . The silver-bill would often stand and sing, whilst the pheasant finch sat beside, listening apparently with great pleasure. Both these birds had lost their mates. When the pheasant finch died, the silver-bill transferred its affections to a lonely Indian spice-bird—also a widower. . . ."

Another friend of mine has a small aviary of birds in London, in which lives a silver-bill which has long been without one foot. It hops about cheerfully all day, but every night a little friend, in the shape of an avadavat, roosts close beside it on the same perch, to give it the support its injured leg is incapable of doing.

These facts are, I think, interesting, and quite beyond mere stories of pets. Perhaps they may elicit others from other lovers of living things, to prove that even among dumb creatures, adversity sometimes breeds kindness.

A. M. Buckton.

MISS MARIANNE NORTH.

ALL nature-lovers owe a debt of gratitude to the lady who devoted great part of a lifetime to the production of the extensive series of plant-drawings now accommodated, at her expense, in a gallery in Kew Gardens, and presented by her to the public. Miss Marianne North, a member of the Selborne Society, died on the 30th of last August, and a lengthened notice of her life and work, from the pen of her coadjutor, Mr. W. B. Hemsley, appears in the *Journal of Botany* for the current month. From this we condense the following sketch.

Miss North was born at Hastings in 1830, and early developed the great skill in painting flowers that has rendered her name famous. Frequent travel gave her opportunities for exercising this talent, until it grew into an all-absorbing passion. Her father died in 1869, and from that time painting was Miss North's chief occupation. In 1871 or 1872 she visited North America and the West Indies, and painted assiduously, spending more than two months in solitude in a lonely house amongst the hills of Jamaica. Her next voyage was to Brazil, where she was received with much distinction by the Emperor; yet she lived the greater part of the time in a deserted hut in the forest, and her provisions were taken to her from a distance of eight miles by a slave woman, who is commemorated in one of the paintings at Kew. On the return journey Miss North called at Teneriffe. Then followed a trip round the world, with stoppages for work in California, Japan, Borneo, Java, Singapore, and Ceylon, and thence homeward again. The same year she returned to India, visiting the forests of the Himalayas, the chief places of note on the Ganges, and Bombay; and during her absence some five hundred of her paintings were exhibited at South Kensington.

It was after her return from India that she first broached the idea of presenting her collection to the nation, and arrangements were made for the erection of a suitable building in Kew Gardens at her expense. In order to render the collection more nearly representative of the flora of the world, Miss North next proceeded to Australia, Tasmania, and New Zealand, and the fruits of this long journey are perhaps the finest of the collection, very fully illustrating the most striking features of the marvellous Australasian flora.

During the hanging of the pictures in the gallery provided for them, Miss North was there almost daily, superintending alterations, painting the doors, the panels in the upper gallery, or helping Mr. Hemsley in identifying the plants for the catalogue which he prepared to accompany the drawings. The gallery was opened in July, 1882, and shortly afterwards Miss North began to make arrangements to visit South Africa, Mada-

gascar, Mauritius, &c. She returned to England in the spring of 1883, enfeebled by an attack of fever; but, after a few months' comparative repose, proceeded to the Seychelles, where she painted the peculiar palms, screw-pines, and other characteristic plants. In the meantime she had set the builders to work on a new wing to the gallery at Kew to receive the new paintings. In the autumn of 1884 she went to Chili. On her return, in 1885, Miss North at once commenced hanging the new paintings, which, including those from South Africa and the Seychelles, are some two hundred in number.

Every London Selbornian doubtless knows the North Gallery; we trust that these brief remarks may bring it under the notice of dwellers in the country, and induce them to make a point of visiting it when they are next in town. Beautiful as the drawings are, they are rendered additionally interesting by the very excellent catalogue prepared by Mr. Hemsley, which can be purchased in the gallery at a nominal sum.

It may be interesting to give some statistics of the contents of the gallery. Out of about 200 natural orders of flowering plants, as limited in Bentham and Hooker's *Genera Plantarum*, 146 are represented in this collection of paintings, and the plants depicted belong to no fewer than 727 different genera. With regard to species, the number actually named is under 900; but as specific names have only been given to such as could be identified with ease or without too great an expenditure of time, this is considerably below the total number painted. They are included in 848 paintings; and when we know that they were all painted between 1872 and 1885, and that they by no means represent all the painting done during that period, we can realise to some extent the intense application of the artist. Miss North's rapidity of execution was as marvellous as her fidelity to nature.

BIRDS AND BONNETS: THE LADIES IN PARLIAMENT.

So large a number of lady Selbornians have been anxious to speak on this subject that we are loath to consign to oblivion the eloquence of our fair contributors, although after the present number we fear we shall be reluctantly compelled to apply the closure. In the communications that have reached us there has been a general consensus of opinion in condemnation of the artificial birds whose use has been advocated by some members of the Selborne Society.

Miss Rosa Little, Baronshalt, Twickenham, puts the arguments against them in a practical and forcible manner. She says:—"When I was ordering a hat in Richmond the other day the milliner said, 'Of course you will let me trim it with Selborne birds?' I do not know if this is the name by which these birds are generally known, or whether she coined the name knowing me to be a member of the Selborne Society; but at any rate she meant by the term 'Selborne birds,' to express that they were 'made' ones, not real. At first sight these 'made' birds may appear to be a way out of the difficulty so often discussed, as to what to wear in winter hats and bonnets in place of real birds and wings, but a moment's reflection will show, I believe, that these 'Selborne birds,' if considered

allowable by Selbornians, will prove to be the thin end of the wedge, will undo much of the good that the Society has done, and will lead to a far greater destruction of small birds for millinery purposes than is, unhappily, the case at present. I suppose there are very few persons with any taste who would care to wear a bird so badly made that it is obviously an imitation. If, on the other hand, the bird is made so like nature as to be mistaken for it (I heard two ladies arguing the point in the milliner's shop whether the birds were real or not), one might just as well wear the real thing so far as example is concerned, unless indeed the bird could carry a scroll in its mouth with the inscription for all to read, 'I am a Selborne bird!'

"Then there is the danger that people who at first were careful that the birds worn should be 'made' ones, would become lax or indifferent. If the fashion became general would the makers be content to use only the feathers of those birds which are used as food? As the demand for 'made' birds increased the demand for variety would almost certainly increase also, and birds of brilliant plumage would be slaughtered and re-'made' under the name of 'Selborne birds.' I can hardly understand how anyone with the smallest love for nature and the beautiful can see anything to admire in a poor little dead bird, or (what is even worse from a merely æsthetic point of view), a bird made to imitate a dead one, spread out on the top of a hat or bonnet. To put it on that ground alone, who would wish to encourage so inartistic a fashion?

"When in Paris last winter I was struck by the comparatively small number of birds and wings shown in the milliners' windows, and on enquiring the reason at one of the principal shops in the Rue de la Paix, was told there was very little demand for them, and that many of the English and Americans belonged to a Society which was against the wearing of birds and wings. Why cannot the English and Americans in this country show a like spirit?"

A. M. H., a member of the Bath Branch, is more intense in her denunciation of artificial birds. She writes as follows:—"In reading the letters in last month's NATURE NOTES on birds and bonnets, I am astonished that the writers of some of them have not seen what a great mistake they are making. By their ingenious devices to procure sham birds and wings, they are doing almost as much harm as if they were wearing real ones. They are lending their influence to promote the very fashion, which, as we are told in the very same issue, it is one of our objects as members of the Selborne Society to discourage. If we could label this made-up plumage 'Sham,' we should be all right, but the writers of the letters for the most part congratulate themselves on the impossibility of distinguishing them [the birds, presumably] from real ones. I shall be glad if you will kindly insert this letter in your next issue, as surely the lady members of the Selborne Society will be willing to renounce *all birds and plumage* when they see how they are promoting a cruel and wicked fashion."

M.F.L.S.W., Bidboro', near Tunbridge Wells, condemns the use of artificial birds, and suggests the following substitutes for Selbornians:—

"Nothing could be more appropriate and pretty in a hat or bonnet than berries or flowers of the wintry season. Mountain ash berries, holly, haws, are all suitable for winter wear, and what can be prettier than the rosy hips when a good imitation? Then there are the white snowberries, bright elderberries, and many others, well-known in our gardens. Chrysanthemums of various colours could well be worn, Christmas roses, snowdrops, and other winter flowers, and if the milliners were repeatedly asked for such articles not always kept in stock, the constant demand would result in the perfect manufacture of such novel and pretty ornaments."

A lady who is well known for her interest in this matter veils her identity under the pseudonym of "Asphodel," and sends the following

"*Lines by a Person of Quality, written in the days of Electric Wire,*

"Stiffly spread thy pointed pinions,
Steel-blue swallow, o'er my hat;
Thou art one of Fashion's minions—
Not alive—but what of that?"

We presume that the advocates of artificial birds would prefer the last line of

the first stanza of the "Song by a Person of Quality, written in the year 1733," since it lays down the canon that

"Nature must give way to Art."

"Another Lady Milliner (member of the Selborne Society)" entirely disapproves of birds, whether real or artificial, as decorations for ladies' headgear. She says:—"I have been quite horrified to see during my visits to the wholesale houses the myriads of dead birds of all sizes and kinds which are exposed for sale. The practice seems to be *increasing*, instead of, as some fondly hoped, on the wane. In one house a large room was completely filled with little corpses. Putting all questions of humanity aside, I find the decoration altogether wrong from an artistic point of view. Birds are in most instances only beautiful when on the wing; when distorted and twisted into all kinds of shapes they are sometimes actually *ugly*, and certainly always out of place. Were a fashionable young lady to have a live bird perch on her hat she would as likely as not swoon with fright. I use no birds or wings, but find that feathers of poultry and game and ostrich feathers make up most charming hats and bonnets."

We hope we may be pardoned for publishing the fact that the writer of the foregoing letter is Mrs. Browning, of 39, North Audley Street, who did such good service for the Selborne Society as Hon. Secretary and Treasurer of the Branch at Dublin, where she has unfortunately no successor. Mrs. Browning, who is now, we regret to say, a widow with several young children, has adopted what has become a fashionable profession—that of lady milliner and dressmaker. Mrs. Joachim, Miss Buckton, and others of the most active supporters of the Selborne Society take a great interest in the success of their fellow-member, and have written to us on the subject. From what we hear from them we would most cordially recommend all ladies who belong to the Selborne Society to consult Mrs. Browning on the subject at present under discussion.

Of the other letters on this subject which have reached us we can only print the following most welcome announcement, which we have received from Miss Ada Smith, Hon. Secretary of the Wimbledon Branch:—"If you could find room in November NATURE NOTES, for the following little paragraph which I have seen in a newspaper to-day, I think it might have weight, as the example of the Princess of Wales is of great value. 'The use of feather trimming for winter dresses has been decreed by the magnates of fashion. It is gratifying to know in connection with this matter that the Princess of Wales has given orders that nothing need be submitted for her inspection or that of her daughters in which birds are used as trimming.'"

With this cheering "royal message" we are reluctantly compelled to finish the debate, which has evidently had much interest for our lady readers, and for which we are considerably indebted to that energetic Selbornian, Miss S. P. Hawes, whose letter in the September number of NATURE NOTES gave rise to it.

SELBORNIANA.

Mr. G. A. Musgrave on "Selbornian Propaganda."—In your note on a recent article on "Restoration" I see that you attribute to me, instead of rightly to Mr. C. Roberts, F.R.C.S., the original introduction of the protection of objects of antiquarian interest. In the extension of the aims of the Selborne Society, it has always been necessary to avoid trenching upon the sphere of older societies having special objects. By degrees it became possible to the Selborne Society to secure the sympathy of these older societies, and assure them of any assistance which might be possible through its increase in influential and numerical strength.

I should like to take this opportunity of pointing out to many of our members, who do not devote themselves to enlisting other members, that our success depends mainly on our numerical strength, and on the extent of the area under our influence. A few members in a village, and, as Lord Wolseley once said to me, "*in every regiment*" would insure a constant and intelligent (because the

guardians would be instructed through literature approved by experts in our Councils) protection of the objects which certain sections of all classes of the community seem ever willing to destroy. For a few paltry pounds, village greens, open spaces in towns, commons, pleasant groves, time-honoured trees lovingly protected by our ancestors through many a troublous time, are handed over to the tender mercies of that brigand, the jerry builder, who, with his brick-thick houses and his tinfoil pipes, preying on the savings of the working man, has the audacity to prate of the improvements wrought by him in his own neighbourhood —a neighbourhood in which, within the memory of man, country lanes and paths and real stiles, hedgerows with flower-strewn banks, and trees with live birds in them, existed and contributed to the wholesome recreation of townspeople.

All we have to do in the Selborne Society is, having good reasons for the truth that is in us, to strive unceasingly to increase our numerical strength, and then use it firmly, but with judgment. As long as we can get good volunteer guardians it does not matter twopence whether they subscribe or not. We want Selbornites everywhere, ever on the watch, always striving to prevent unnecessary destruction, and ready to call in the aid of the Society, and through it, other societies able to accomplish that which a few protestants, however earnest, cannot succeed in doing.

Now is the time for enlisting subscribers to the Selborne Society for 1891. The subscriptions will be due on New Year's Day. Non-subscribers are not entitled to receive the organ of the Society, therefore it is desirable that full members should circulate NATURE NOTES and other literature published by the authority of the Society amongst them.

Furzebank, Torquay. GEORGE A. MUSGRAVE.

The Bird-Pictures of H. Stacy Marks, R.A.—All lovers of birds—and what true Selbornian is not fond of birds?—should visit Mr. Stacy Marks's "poultry show"—as his exhibition of bird pictures is sometimes irreverently called. To those who went to the exhibition of last year it will be sufficient to say that this, as a whole, is in no wise inferior. The popularity of these little pictures is evinced by the large number of them to which is affixed already the legend "sold." The various humorous groups of penguins will be found to be amongst the popular favourites. The wonderful amount of individual character and expression that the painter is capable of imparting to his presentments of these birds must be seen to be believed. One of the best of these is, perhaps, the picture entitled "Romeo and Juliet." The comical figures of the gentle Romeo below and the tender Juliet on her balcony are delicious in the extreme. In "The Cut Direct" the title accurately describes the contemptuous indifference shown by one of these birds to his fellow. "A Peace Maker" depicts a trio of penguins, the centre figure obviously interposing between the other two in the interests of peace. Some of the portraits are so wonderfully human in their expression that they resemble people we all know. One, for instance, purporting to be an eagle, is a particularly striking likeness of the "grand old man," as characteristic as any Mr. Furniss has given us in the pages of *Punch*. Whether the Banksian cockatoo was purposely hung by the side of the old gentleman revelling in a rare edition on ornithology I know not, but the facial resemblance is very noticeable. No 96, "The New Neighbour," is more highly finished than the majority. The inquiring attitude of the Adjutant gazing inquisitively at the Cape sea lion, newly introduced into the neighbouring enclosure, is very provocative of mirth. The sea lion, rather alarmed, is keeping well out of the reach of the investigating beak of his neighbour. No. 48, "Pallas's Sand Grouse" will give those who have not seen this rare visitor to our shores an opportunity of making his acquaintance. As before, Mr. Stacy Marks has painted for us in all their glory, some of the more brightly coloured of the birds. The skilled artist revels in rendering these rich-plumaged gems of the air. Take, for example, the vivid colouring of the red and yellow macaws (primary colours, O South Kensington!) or No. 111 "Heads, Military, Hyacinthine, and Blue and Orange Macaws." In a most interesting and racy preface to the catalogue Mr. Stacy Marks, while showing that he is no rabid sentimentalist, takes occasion to refer to the wholesale destruction of rare birds caused by the demand for the adornment of ladies' caps, bonnets and even dresses.

The readers of NATURE NOTES may be glad to know that Mr. Stacy Marks is an active member of the Selborne Society, and has been instrumental in adding to our ranks some influential members, amongst the number being Mr. Justice Denman and Mr. Justice North. A. J. WESTERN.

Guinea Pigs Rampant.—A most amusing "tempest in a tea-pot" has been raging on this subject during the last month. It took its rise in a ludicrous misapprehension of a passage in Mrs. Brightwen's charming book, *Wild Nature won by Kindness*, which we are much pleased to hear has attained a very wide circulation. As everyone who has read the book knows, it does not contain a description of classes of animals, but a series of charming biographies of individual pets of the writer. Two guinea pigs, Jamrach and Fluff, are mentioned therein. Under peculiar circumstances of confinement, Fluff led a most inactive life, and was about as amusing as a stuffed animal would be. Of him, and him only, Mrs. Brightwen says:—"He is the only instance of any animal I ever knew who seemed to be literally without a single habit, apparently without affection, without a temper, good or bad, with no wishes or desires except to be let alone to doze away his aimless life." This sentence (with its proper limitation to the individual Fluff) we quoted last month in a review of *Wild Nature* in NATURE NOTES. This review had the honour of being made the basis of one of the delightful paragraphs in the *Daily News* which are so dear to Nature lovers. The *D. N.* paragrapher clothed its dry bones with flesh and breathed into it his own spirit; but in the process possibly some of the precision of the original was lost, and the imperfections of the unfortunate Fluff seemed to careless readers as if they were set down as the badge of all his tribe. At any rate at once the din of war arose on all sides; letters poured in from outraged "guinea-piggers," who fiercely protested that cavies in general had been grossly libelled. For many days members of the National Cavy Club inundated the columns of the *Daily News* and other papers with details of their pets. Many striking instances were given of their qualities, which assuredly prove that they have habits—some of them most unpleasant habits; they are not without temper—for the tempers of many of them are horribly bad. On the authority of a leading Cavian, we ar assured that "they will fight tooth and nail with their dearest friend; they will take a piece out of your finger without the slightest provocation." Of a guinea pig with the innocent name of "Babe" it is asserted that she will "bite you sharply and spring up into the air with a comical twist of her little body and loud squeaks." A Rugby Schoolboy hastens to announce that he possesses a guinea pig who can when necessary "make a delightful noise after the manner of the cat!" None of these statements appear to us to go very far in the rehabilitation of the guinea pig as an amiable member of society, but even if it could be proved that he was possessed of the highest intellect and all the virtues under heaven, it would have nothing whatever to do with Mrs. Brightwen's statement. She had two guinea pigs; one of them happened to be an extremely dull and uninteresting little beast, and Mrs. Brightwen, with her usual candour, mentions the fact. The construing of this statement into an "attack upon guinea pigs" is one of the most absurd misapplications of *ex uno disce omnes* we have ever heard. Just imagine what results this mode of argument would lead to if acted upon in other cases. In one of Mr. Black's novels there is represented a rollicking Scotchman who has the greatest objection to be paid for his pictures, and who, when the money is forced upon him, displays quite a profligate anxiety to lend it to others. In the same book there is a calm, philosophical, water-drinking Irishman, who cultivates literature on a little oatmeal, and spurns with disdain the offer of a loan from the aforesaid Scotchman. We have never heard that Mr. Black has been violently attacked for his misrepresentation of national character, or has been persecuted with indignant letters assuring him that there were other Irishmen and other Scotchmen who did not answer to the description given in his book. To take a humbler instance: did it happen (we are of course perfectly certain it never could happen) that some one member of the National Guinea Pig Association had fallen so far below the N. G. P. A.'s standard of propriety as to eat peas with his knife or to pull his mother-in-law's nose, can we suppose that all the other members of the Association would consider it their duty to write letters to the paper immediately to assert that *they* understood the use of their forks, and that *their* mother-in-laws' noses were still intact?

But it is perhaps hardly fair to jest upon a subject of such national importance as guinea pigs, and to speak lightly of a correspondence which conveys so serious a moral. The moral is that before rushing wildly into print to repel imaginary attacks it would be well to ascertain whether the attacks had ever been made. We do not grudge the members of the N. G. P. A. the gratuitous advertisement which they have manufactured for themselves; but we think the least they can do now is to procure Mrs. Brightwen's book, to read what is written therein (which they plainly have not done hitherto), and thus see for themselves how absolutely without foundation is the charge by which they have gained a brief notoriety. As it is evident that they have not learned to look before they leap, we trust that before they enter into any similar causeless crusades they will remember a word of warning, which might well be the motto of their society—"*Cave.*" THE WRITER OF THE REVIEW IN NATURE NOTES.

Sea and Sky Signs.—We congratulate all lovers of Nature on the action of the London County Council in the matter of sky signs. It will doubtless lead to early legislation for the suppression of these horrors. Miss Agnes Martelli sends us a quotation which shows to what dire results sky signs may lead from utilitarian, as well as æsthetic point of view: "The terrible danger of these structures in case of fire is apparent, and it is easy to imagine how the horrors of the fire of a day or two ago would have been increased had a tottering, swaying sky-sign threatened at any moment to crash down among victims and rescuers. The likelihood of lightning being attracted by their many angles is another very obvious peril, while their staunchest defenders—the makers and inventors—have not ventured to deny in the least degree the supreme hideousness of the cumbrous constructions." Miss Martelli also calls our attention to an equal, if not greater, abomination—the signs which are now displayed upon the sails of many fishing and pleasure boats, and so make the ocean, instead of a thing of beauty to the dwellers at our watering places, a hideous remembrancer of all the ills that flesh is heir to, by bearing on its bosom innumerable advertisements of quack medicines. Miss Martelli sends us an amusing correspondence from the *Times* newspaper, between Mr. Arthur Severn, the well-known painter, and Mr. Beecham, the far too well-known purveyor of patent pills. From it we extract the following pathetic appeal from Mr. Severn:—"Nature belongs to me quite as much as to Mr. Beecham—indeed, more to me, as I am a painter of nature. A sail (as every one knows) is one of the most beautiful objects the eye can rest on, especially that of the dear old fishing boat. How am I, or any other artist, to tell its story, its wonderful story, of trial and strength and colour, if Mr. Beecham insists on telling his ugly story of suggested stomach ache and pills? If the nuisance of this kind of advertisement is not stopped, there is no saying where it will end. Nothing will be sacred; our rocks, our houses, our streets, our sky—all are being spoiled; and soon, I suppose, a way will be found to advertise on the clouds! Then, indeed, my occupation as a sunset painter will be gone, and my children perhaps crying out for bread."

Cheddar Cliffs.—If Miss Dangar, or any other member of the Selborne Society, would care to see commercial enterprise triumphant, I should advise a visit to that stretch of the Wye known as the Long Reach, about a mile above Chepstow Castle. The left bank of the river is here formed by a lofty range of gray limestone cliffs, from the base of which a steep wood formerly sloped down to the water's edge. The rocks were once the home of the buzzard, the raven, and the kestrel, and the wood gave shelter to numerous plants, including such rarities as *Geranium sanguineum*, *Sedum rupestre* and *Carex digitata*. A secluded path used by the boatmen, and hence called the Fisherman's Walk, led through the wood to the church of the tiny parish of Llancant, where Sunday evening service was still held in summer till about twenty years since. This wood has now almost entirely disappeared under the hands of the same agent of civilization, whose advent at Cheddar is apprehended—the quarryman. I may add that the artist will find a pleasing contrast of colour between the uncompromising reds of the recent excavations, and the sombre grays of the untouched cliff above them.

Westward Ho, Devon. H. A. EVANS.

[We have been informed that "E. D. S.-W.," whose letter on the above subject we quoted last month, is a constant reader of this magazine. It is all the

more wonderful that he was unaware that the Selborne Society "included the preservation of beautiful scenery among their other efforts." If in future he will address any complaints on the subject to the Editorial Department of NATURE NOTES, we can promise that his views will be fully ventilated. It was only by chance that we heard from Miss Dangar of his letter to the *Globe* last month. The matter was, as we promised, laid before the Council of the Selborne Society at its last meeting, and has been taken up by the Bath branch. *See* next page.]

A Correction.—We find that the name in the paragraph, "Imitations of the Notes of Birds" last month, which we read as "Blanche Pechele" was that of Mrs. Hervey Pechell, a member of the Rape of Lewes Branch.

WORK OF BRANCHES, OFFICIAL NOTICES, &c.

THE object of the Selborne Society is to unite lovers of Nature for common study and the defence of natural objects (birds, plants, beautiful landscapes, &c.) against the destruction by which they are constantly menaced. The *minimum* Annual Subscription (which entitles the subscriber to a monthly copy of the Society's Magazine) is 2s. 6d. All particulars as to membership may be obtained from the Secretary of the Selborne Society, 9, Adam Street, Adelphi, W.C.

The List of Branches given in the last number of NATURE NOTES shows how widespread are the ramifications of the Selborne Society, but shows also how many districts are, as yet, without organisation. We have since received, as the result of the appeal for new organisers and secretaries, some kind offers from volunteers, which will be laid before the Council, and in most cases, no doubt, gladly accepted.

It is the earnest desire of the Council that the Branches should be represented at its meetings, and that they should communicate accounts of the work which is going on in many quarters, for insertion in the Society's organ. It would be of immense advantage to the Selbornian cause if many of our Branches would imitate the example of the Rev. Herbert Bull, of the Southampton and New Forest Branch. When kindly sending us an account of the combined concert and lecture arranged by him, he says, "It was a parochial affair and the audience were Milford people only, but we hope to extend the 'Plan of Campaign' to other villages in the district comprised by our Branch." We heartily wish Mr. Bull's "Plan" every success, and hope that it may be carried out in hundreds of parishes, and that many other clergymen in various counties may be found to follow the example of those at Milford, who are plainly animated by the same enthusiastic love of Nature which was apparent in the Hampshire worthies, Gilbert White, Keble, and Gilpin.

The meeting was admirably reported both in the *Lymington Chronicle* and *Hampshire Independent*. From these papers we condense the following account, a much fuller one than could usually be given in NATURE NOTES, as it may be useful for those who wish to set about similar undertakings :—

"A concert was given at Milford on Thursday, October 30th, in connection with the local branch of the Selborne Society. The schoolroom was crowded some time before the hour announced for the commencement, and among the audience were Rev. H. M. Wilkinson, Vicar (in the chair), Mrs. Wilkinson, Lady Ann Cosserat, Colonel Jennins, Rev. H. Bull, the Rev. A. R. Miles, and large parties from Mrs. Banks' school and the Rev. R. B. Matson's. Between the two parts a very interesting and practical address was given by the Rev. A. R. Miles. He commenced by speaking of the special claim which the Selborne Society had upon this county of Hants, for amongst Hampshire names we reckon Gilbert White, of Selborne, from whose village the Society takes its name; Gilpin, of Boldre, the author of *Forest Scenery;* Keble, whose sacred poems are so full of beautiful illustrations from natural objects, and whose work at Hursley is so well known. All these three were, like the lecturer himself, in Holy Orders. With such names as patterns this county ought to strive to keep up a reputation for the love of nature. It seemed a disgrace to civilisation that such a Society

should be needed, but civilisation is a great factor in the work of destruction continually going on. 'Civilisation' was doing away with many rare plants and animals. Great harm had been done even in that neighbourhood, and the Selborne Society wanted to preserve such objects not for the few, but for the many. The late Mr. Wise in writing his history of the New Forest was assisted by the Rev. H. M. Wilkinson. The book was published about 1862, and since then the peregrine falcon, then not uncommon, had become scarce. This was only an instance of how birds then common had now become uncommon. The honey buzzard was getting very scarce. The British public was always offering a great deal for rare birds' eggs, and he was afraid that the temptation put in the way of the Forest keepers to make money easily that way was sometimes too strong for them. The common buzzard was also now scarce. The kingfisher used to be frequently found at Queen's Bower, but was now seldom seen. The British public had invaded that part of the Forest, and possibly that had something to do with it. The osprey and the heron were less frequently seen. We should all do what we could to prevent them becoming rarer.

"With regard to the preservation of old buildings, ruins, &c., there were many interesting places in the neighbourhood well deserving of the attention of every Selbornian, notably Christchurch Priory, Beaulieu, Netley, and Romsey Abbeys. So far as concerned Beaulieu Abbey, that is in good hands, for the owner, Lord Montagu, is the President of the Selborne Society in this district. But no one can tell when such places may change hands or be threatened with destruction. Should such an event come to pass the Selborne Society must be up and doing."

Judging from the account given in the local papers the large audience was most enthusiastic in its applause of the speakers and of an excellent musical entertainment. We commend this account to the notice of the very large number of clergymen who are members of the Selborne Society. They will find that such meetings will not only further a good cause, but afford pleasure and instruction to their parishioners. In connection with this subject, we would warmly recommend to our readers the important letter of Mr. Musgrave in another column on "The Selbornian Propaganda."

From Bath we often receive interesting communications. It is one of the oldest, most active, and influential of the Branches of the Selborne Society, which always heartily co-operates with the Central Council in any good work that has to be done. A resolution of that Branch has recently been received expressing its entire concurrence with, and approval of, the action taken by the Council with regard to what has come to be known as the "Grassholm outrage." At the last meeting of the Council the question of the devastation of Cheddar Cliffs was, on the principle of devolution, relegated to the Bath Branch, as being most capable of bringing local influence to bear on the matter. Mr. Wheatcroft, the Hon. Secretary, has already taken the matter up, and we have no doubt that every thing that it is possible to do in such a difficult matter will be done.

We may state here that we have received copies of the *Bath Chronicle*, containing the first of a series of papers on "Ornithology in connection with Agriculture and Horticulture," by C. Parkinson, F.G.S. The idea is a good one, and the present specimen on "Hawks and Falcons" is most interesting to Selbornians, and well shows the utter folly of gamekeepers in their destruction of the kestrel hawk.

We frequently receive applications concerning back numbers of the *Selborne Magazine;* in many cases we have been able to supply our correspondents with the numbers required, but have not been able to secure a copy for January, 1888, which is asked for by Dr. Evans, Treasurer of the Royal Society. Perhaps some of our readers may be able to help in this matter. It may be useful to state that Miss A. M. Buckton, Weycombe, Haslemere, has for sale two complete copies of the volume for 1889, and one copy each of February, September, and November, in the same year.

It is particularly requested that subscriptions and letters bearing on the general business of the Society should *not* be forwarded to the Editors, but to the Secretary of the Selborne Society, 9, Adam Street, Adelphi. Editorial communications should be addressed to the Rev. Percy Myles, 1, Argyle Road, Ealing, W.

Nature Notes:

The Selborne Society's Magazine.

No. 12. DECEMBER 15, 1890. Vol. I.

THOREAU.

THOREAU has been derided as a man of affectations and egregious egotism. Certainly some of his acts and words suggest the *poseur*. A man who sets up as hermit less than two miles from his native town, and near a highway, who aggressively declares his personal relations with Nature to be of more interest than his relations with human society, is liable to the charge of playing for effect.

He was, however, in the main lines of his conduct, of singular sincerity. Incidentally (by self-confession an uncurbed lover of paradox) it may be allowed it pleased him to make people stare. As for his egotism, it must be remembered that the only certainty which a transcendentalist recognises is "the ego."

Henry David Thoreau was born at Concord, Massachusetts, in 1817. He was of mixed French, Scotch, and English ancestry. His father was a pencil maker. He himself learned how to make pencils, and after his father's death carried on the business in a fashion. He also practised surveying. But his attention to business was occasional only. He, early in life, definitely decided that Nature was the mistress he must serve, and as a few peas and beans and water sufficed his bodily desires, his mistress had little cause for jealousy. Thoreau maintained that six weeks' labour produced enough for a year's need.

He habitually avoided the society of his fellow-men and was under little obligation to others for his intellectual equipment. To this, however, an (exception, and it is a large one), must be made. He and Emerson were great friends, and the seed of Emerson's sowing fell on friendly soil. For some time in his earlier manhood he lived in Emerson's house. During this visit Emerson wrote to Carlyle: "Henry Thoreau is full of melodies and inventions."

By some curious process the pupil unconsciously acquired the manners and tone of voice of his master. But Emerson's main influence was in waking the hidden fires of Thoreau's own deep and self-sufficient nature. Emerson was in turn himself impressed, for we are told that "he delighted in being led to the very inner shrines of the wood god by this man, clear-eyed and true, and stern enough to be trusted with their secrets." Then was the time of the New England transcendentalists. Thoreau hated systems and the labelling of men, but in the essential principles of transcendentalism—the inward guiding light and the spiritual symbolism of natural phenomena—was his faith fixed:

> "I hear beyond the range of sound,
> I see beyond the range of sight,"

he sings. The practical teaching of the transcendentalists was simplicity of life, and that each should think for himself and labour with his own hands; the political teaching, the exaltation of the individual and depression of the state in its controlling power.

Thoreau loved the country round Concord, and believed that it contained all of wild life sufficient for the interpretation of nature. So Richard Jefferies believed of Wiltshire. The Concord district was an epitome of nature's presentments, and Thoreau's desires stretched no further. Once he went to Canada. This was his grand tour.

The experiment of seclusion at Walden pond was made in 1845. His purpose was "to front only the essential facts of life. To reduce it to its lowest terms, and if it proved to be mean, why then to get the whole and genuine meanness of it and publish its meanness to the world, or if it were sublime to know it by experience." It will be observed that the relationship of man to man was an irrelevant factor in forming a true estimate of the value of life.

So he built his hut by Walden pond, sowed his beans (hoed them too), and let his "consciousness" ferment. Every morning he bathed. He cultivated about two-and-a-half acres, and "when my hoe tinkled against the stones that music echoed to the woods and the sky, and was an accompaniment to my labour which yielded an instant and immeasurable crop."

He took long walks in all weathers, and in the deep snow would "keep an appointment" with a birch tree ten miles off. But some days he devoted entirely to contemplation, when he could not afford "to sacrifice the bloom of the present moment to any work whether of the head or hands." He would then sit in his doorway rapt in reverie. At such times he said (contesting the charge of idleness) that he "grew like corn in the night."

His food was almost strictly vegetarian, his drink water, nor did he use tobacco. "Simplify, simplify," was his cry. His motive, however, was not ascetic, not to mortify the flesh, but

to improve and sharpen the senses. His keenest pleasures were sensuous, and his faculties of sight, smell and touch abnormally acute. But there was a deeper meaning in sensuous perception. "I have been thrilled to think that I owed a mental perception to the commonly gross sense of taste, that I have been inspired through the palate, that some berries which I had eaten on a hillside had fed my genius."

Thoreau's life at Walden was not strictly secluded. He received a few visitors and sometimes went to Concord to get a little work. Of misanthropy he made no profession, though he "never found the companion that was so companionable as solitude." His hut was supposed to be a station on "the great under ground railway" for runaway slaves. The only political question which stirred him was abolitionism. After two years of hermit life Thoreau believed that its purpose was satisfied. He was no longer a "parcel of vain strivings," but had evolved a theory that life is not a hardship but a pastime if one lives simply, and that life it was which gave him content. The chief points in this theory were that the maintenance of life to advance in the direction of one's dreams brings peace.

His love of nature was absorbing. In wildness he saw the preservation of the world. His power over animals seemed magical, and only matched by that of St. Francis of Assisi. He did not regard animals as aliens, but as possessing "the character and importance of another order of men." Human sympathy and innocence many animals readily perceive, presumably from minute characteristics of behaviour, and for this reason, perhaps, his presence was not disturbing. Thoreau also knew how to sit still. Birds, reptiles, and fish would transact their business round him. One of his most surprising feats was to thrust his hand in the water and bring up fish, which lay placidly therein. His hermitage was inhabited by birds, squirrels, hares and moles. Snakes coiled round his leg. Often he rescued and protected foxes from the hunt.

His fascination over children (probably for the same reasons) was as complete as over wild animals, and one of his great delights was to lead a band of boys and girls to pick huckleberries. A boy who stumbles and scatters his fruit he consoles by the explanation that nature provides such losses for next year's crop.

His view of nature was optimistic. Everything is working to some wise and gracious end. Joy is the condition of life. No man living in the midst of nature with average senses should be melancholy. "Nothing can rightly compel a simple and brave man to a vulgar sadness. While I enjoy the friendship of the seasons I trust that nothing can make life a burden to me." Each individual should develop in his own place and under the natural conditions of that place. "I think nothing is to be hoped from you," he says, "if this bit of mould under your feet is not sweeter to you than any other in this world or in any world."

Of Thoreau's writings, "Walden," is perhaps the most interesting. But all his writings, and the story of the manner of his life, however great dissent from his doctrines may be, have a deep psychological interest.

His life was short. The Poet-Naturalist died in his forty-fifth spring.

I would end with these words of his: "I think the most important requisite in describing an animal is to be sure that you give its character and spirit, for in that you have, without error, the sum and effect of all its parts known and unknown."

J. L. Otter.

A VILLAGE NATURALIST.*

In Memoriam: William Greenip (rural postman), a close observer of Nature: obiit November 1st, at Keswick.]

God sometimes fills a poor man's patient heart
With His own reverent love and constant care
For all the things He hath created fair,—
Birds, flowers, the wings that fly, the fins that dart,—
And therewithal by Nature's winsome art
Leads him to heights of philosophic air
Where clamour dies, Heaven's ether is so rare,
And bids him walk with gentleness apart.
Friend! such wert thou: the Newlands valley dew,
The star o'er Grisedale's purple head that shone,
Were not more silent, but each stream and glade,
Each bird that flashed, all dusky moths that flew,
All flowers, held commune with thee. Thou art gone:
And Nature mourns the tender heart she made.

H. D. Rawnsley.

THE PRESERVATION AND ENJOYMENT OF OPEN SPACES.

(*Continued from p.* 174.)

THERE is a branch of the open space movement which still remains to be noticed. It has been well remarked that footpaths convert all rural England into one great open space. It is not surprising then that the Commons Preservation Society, at a recent meeting, formally determined to bring footpaths within the scope of its work. After carefully

* Although the following has already appeared in the *Spectator* of November 15th, we reprint it in our columns by kind permission of the author, a well-known Selbornian.

considering the law on the subject, and the points in which it may advantageously be amended, it has drafted a Bill which will no doubt, sooner or later, furnish matter for discussion in the House of Commons. The main object in view is to emphasize the duty of local authorities to put the law in motion wherever a footpath, reputed to be a public way, is shut up or obstructed. At present the duty usually falls upon individuals, and as the existence of a public right of way depends mainly upon the extent and nature of its use, in case of litigation many witnesses must be called, and the expenses are considerable. There are moreover one or two highly technical doctrines on the subject of footpaths which are often abused to the public detriment, and which the Society seek to abrogate. Hitherto, however, it has been found that more is done for the protection of public rights by quietly enforcing the law as it is, and thus educating public opinion, than by new legislation; and perhaps the most important advance in the protection of footpaths is that which was first suggested by the Kyrle Society. A local society is formed, the ordnance maps of the districts are obtained, and every footpath is carefully walked and examined, and its course traced on the map, while a record is made of the state of the path and the character of the gates and stiles. Application is then made to the local authority to restore stiles and put up guide-posts, and generally to assist the public in the assertion of its rights of way. A very good example of such a society is the Northern Heights Footpath Association, which has its head-quarters at Hampstead and meets at the house of Mr. Edmund Maurice. Without being driven to actual litigation in a single instance, the Association has restored to the public many paths which were rapidly falling into disuse, and the series of maps which it will shortly publish will probably induce at the same time both a larger use and a more vigilant guardianship of the rural ways of the neighbourhood.

I should not omit to say that there is a National Foot-path Preservation Society, which like the Commons Preservation Society, gives advice and aid in the protection of footpaths. I am not personally acquainted with the nature of its work, which, however, has been already described in the June number of NATURE NOTES.

Closely akin to foot-paths in the pleasure they afford to the wayfarer, are the green strips by the road-side, still happily common in rural England. In many places these have been inclosed through a spirit of greed on the side of the landlord, and through ignorance and supineness on the part of the public. As a rule the right of way of the public extends from hedge to hedge, and though certain summary remedies against encroachment apply only to the distance of fifteen feet from the crown of the road, any inclosure or obstruction on the green sward by the side is unlawful, and may be prevented by the proper legal procedure. There have been some notable cases in which this

area has been enforced—*e.g.*, on the great road near Ascot, and on the road from Southampton to Salisbury in the neighbourhood of the New Forest. It is, however, desirable to simplify the procedure and to put roadside strips, so far as obstructions are concerned, on the same footing as metalled roads. This object the Commons Preservation Society hope to attain by legislation at the first convenient opportunity.

In towns the equivalent of the wayside strip is a line of trees edging the street, and a movement, fostered by all the Open Space Societies and headed by Mr. Shaw Lefevre, has recently taken shape to supply London with suitable boulevards. A means of doing this exists in the rule that in a metropolitan thoroughfare no projection beyond the general line of buildings can take place without the consent of the London County Council. The Metropolitan Board carelessly threw away this great power of improving London, and allowed one-storey shops to be run out in many places. The County Council are not likely thus to betray their trust. The front courts or gardens between the house line and the road being valueless property, could at a trifling expense be acquired for the public and converted into avenues and tree-planted side-ways. A committee to further such a treatment of the great thoroughfares of the Pentonville, Euston and Marylebone Roads has lately been formed.

Another movement of a different kind has arisen during the last year. Those working amongst the poor have been struck by the lack of cricket and football grounds, and the consequent difficulty of popularising healthy outdoor games amongst the wage-earning population of London. Captain John Sinclair, of the County Council, has with great perseverance and tact got together a representative body under the name of the London Playing Fields Committee, and much information as to the demand for, and supply of, playing fields has been collected. So far as the Committee succeed merely in forming cricket grounds on existing open spaces, the Open Space Societies have little direct interest in the matter—indeed it may be their duty to oppose an excessive application of such a treatment ; but as a new argument for the necessity of ample open spaces round London the movement may be warmly welcomed.

At the extreme opposite wing of the army marches the Selborne Society. That it is warmly interested in the preservation of open spaces it would be waste of time to prove; the movement for saving Sudbrook Park from the builder originated in the Lower Thames Valley Branch of the Selborne Society. But it views open spaces less as affording means of exercise and as reservoirs of fresh air than as store-houses of natural beauty. Its object is to prevent the disappearance of wild nature before the drill-sergeant of tillage and building. An open common, where the very grouping of furze, turf and heather is the unconscious work of centuries of use, a wild wood where natural forces are allowed undisturbed sway, even a great park where tree-

forms may be studied in unrestrained development, is a bit of nature which the Selborne Society would preserve, as it would preserve a rare fern or a bird visitor to our shores. It is entirely at one, therefore, with the Open Space Societies in such work as the exclusion of railways from the Lake District, the protection of the New Forest, and the guardianship of foot-paths and roadside strips. Each of the Societies we have named—the Commons Preservation Society, the Kyrle Society, the Metropolitan Gardens Association and the Selborne Society—is an expression of the need of man to be in touch with nature, and it is a striking testimony to the reality of that need that it should have expressed itself in so many different forms. It would perhaps be a mistake to sink the individuality of each agency in the attempt to produce one large and powerful body. But there can be no doubt that constant intercourse between the several Societies would be most beneficial, and NATURE NOTES might perhaps be made the means of communication. Every "interest" now-a-days has its organ in the Press. The Open Space Societies have hitherto relied on the popularity of their work to command sufficient attention from the general newspaper. They have not been disappointed. But it is worth consideration, whether there should not be something like an official record of the progress made in the work of preserving open spaces and natural objects, now that that work has so many branches. Not only would such a publication chronicle results, but it would afford a convenient means of discussing and furthering new projects. ROBERT HUNTER.

NOTE.—In the foregoing paper my design has been to give a general view of the movement for securing to the public the enjoyment of open spaces and natural beauty, and I have naturally only alluded to societies which have worked on national or, at least, Metropolitan lines. I am far, however, from under-rating the valuable work of local societies: in some cases the central bodies have acted as the advisers, in others as the allies, of such societies. Foremost among them may be mentioned two societies formed to protect the New Forest: one consisting entirely of land-owners and commoners, the other of wider scope more recently founded by Mr. Auberon Herbert. Of equal importance is the Lake District Defence Society, which has played an important part in saving the mountains and valleys dear to poets and painters from profanation at the hands of railway promotors and other speculators. Then, in former days the Wimbledon Common Committee and the Hampstead Heath Committee, and more recently the Heath Extension Committee and the Banstead Common Committee, have raised large funds and fought hard fights; and many other committees formed to protect particular commons might be named. Local effort is essential to the protection of open spaces, and local effort is seldom of much value unless it takes the definite shape of a society or committee.—R. H.

A VISIT TO LAKELAND.

AS I have recently spent seven weeks in the English Lake District, it has occurred to me that Selbornians may be interested in hearing the result of my observation as to plant destruction in the portions of Lakeland which I visited. I may mention that I divided my visits into

three periods, spending a little over a fortnight at Ambleside, Keswick and Glen Ridding (Ullswater), respectively.

I had heard a great deal about fern destruction in the Lake Country, and had been led to believe that I should have great difficulty in finding anything like rare plants in the neighbourhood of the ordinary tourist routes. As upwards of twenty years had passed since my former visit to the district, I provided myself with Mr. Baker's admirable *Flora*, and determined to see for myself whether some of the rare plants were to be found at the stations mentioned in the *Flora*. I am pleased to be able to say that I found nearly every plant I sought for in the locality indicated by Mr. Baker. It must be admitted that this affords tolerable evidence that no very serious amount of plant destruction has been going on since the date of publication, 1885. I believe it is the ferns only that have suffered in any appreciable degree, and that the fern destroyers are chiefly the fern dealers. It is the rarer species, such as the Flowering Fern (*Osmunda regalis* L.), and the Forked Spleenwort (*Asplenium septentrionale* Hull), that are most preyed upon. I found two favourite lake ferns, the Oak Fern (*Polypodium Dryopteris*, L.), and the Beech Fern (*Polypodium Phegopteris*, L.), in tolerable plenty, the Parsley Fern (*Allosorus crispus*, Bernh) in abundance. I also found that lovely little Filmy Fern (*Hymenophyllum Wilsoni*, Hook.), in, at least, half-a-dozen localities. I happened to be at Ambleside on the August Bank Holiday, when some three or four thousand "excursionists" visited that easily accessible town. I observed these "excursionists" closely; I am pleased to be able to record the fact that I saw no plant destroyers amongst them.

I made a point of paying a visit to "Stock Ghyll" (the favourite resort of excursionists) on the following day. I found that graceful little plant, the Wild Balsam (*Impatiens Noli-me-tangere*, L.), and the White Foxglove or Giant Bell-flower (*Campanula latifolia*, L.), growing within a few yards of the path the tourists must have trodden to get a view of the Stock Ghyll Force, in full bloom and apparently unmolested. I have often heard that there are many plant lovers among the artisans of Lancashire. Perhaps this may in some way account for their conduct towards the Lake Flora on this Bank holiday, for doubtless the majority of these "excursionists" hailed from Lancashire. Be this as it may, for one fact, and that alone, I can vouch, which is that very little, if any, plant destruction took place at Ambleside on the day named. I think you will agree with me that the facts I have related are encouraging, and that Selbornians may take heart and persevere with the good work they have begun. One word as to the "trade" of the fern dealer. A friend, who resides in the neighbourhood of Windermere, informed me that the fern dealer's business is not nearly so "brisk" as it was a few years ago, and that some are even lamenting over the fact that their occupation is fast going. Has the Selborne Society had anything to do with this? This is a

question which naturally arises. I have no data upon which to found an answer. I shall be delighted to receive one from some one who resides in the Lake District.

Before I close this rather lengthy letter, I feel that I must inform such of our members as are not acquainted with the fact, that, thanks mainly to the exertions of two of our members, Miss Frances Power Cobbe, and the Rev. H. D. Rawnsley, a memorial is about to be (perhaps by this time has been) erected on Helvellyn, to the memory of that faithful dog, "a sort of *yallar tarrier*," as I heard him described in Lakeland language, who guarded his master's body for some three months after the life had passed out of it, owing to a fall from one of the Helvellyn cliffs. The following quotation from Wordsworth's poem, "Fidelity," will best recall the incident to the minds of your readers:—

"But hear a wonder, for whose sake,
This lamentable tale I tell!
A lasting monument of words
This wonder merits well.
The dog, which still was hovering nigh,
Repeating the same timid cry,
This dog had been through three months' space
A dweller in that savage place.

"Yes, proof was plain that since the day
On which the traveller thus had died,
The dog had watched about the spot,
Or by his master's side:
How nourished here through such long time
He knows Who gave that love sublime,
And gave that strength of feeling great
Above all human estimate."

W. G. Wheatcroft.

Bath, 17th November, 1890.

PUGNACITY IN MALE BIRDS.

IN "Darwinism" Dr. Wallace pronounces against that branch of Darwin's theory of sexual selection which depends upon the display of decorative plumage by the males and the choice of the most beautiful by the females. The display by the males is undoubted, as all observers will testify. That of the goldfinch is a good typical example, and I believe that it is customary with most of the species of our birds whose males are differently coloured to the females. And where the colours are alike in both sexes the display is often of the vocal accomplishments of the male, which might afford a field for choice. But if sexual selection depends primarily upon the struggles of the males, there is, as Dr. Wallace shows, very little room for the theory of choice by the females.

I am sorry that this theory should have to be relegated to the background, for it is a very pretty theory and appeals to our civilized human nature. But it is undoubtedly true that all the male birds, whether polygamous or not, fight when occasion arises, and the strongest wins.

As one of the many instances which I have observed of this fighting between otherwise gentle and peaceable birds, I will give a short description from my note-book of a disgraceful scene I witnessed between two males of our smallest British bird:—

"April 15th, 1889.—I have just been watching two golden-crested wrens fighting. They first attracted my attention by getting up from the ground almost under my feet, and engaging again and falling to the ground. Then rising again one chased the other into a yew tree near, where I had a good close view of them as they challenged each other, ruffling their feathers, shaking their bodies, singing and dancing about with crests erected, the sun shining on the orange-coloured crests—such a pretty sight. After they had been talking big at each other for some minutes the hen arrived on the scene, and a desperate fight ensued, the two cocks falling to the ground in fierce embrace, rolling over each other occasionally, but for the most part lying still on the ground with their claws buried in each other's feathers for about a minute.

"The hen was close by them on the ground, moving about and looking very much concerned at the affray. Her pale yellow crest contrasted notably with the rich orange of the males. After getting up, renewing the combat in a currant bush, falling again and struggling on the ground, they rose and had a chase round the yew trees, the hen following to see the fun, and presently went off and were lost to view."

AUBREY EDWARDS.

THE BOOKS OF RICHARD JEFFERIES.

THE re-issue in cheaper form of Mr. Richard Jefferies' works will introduce them to a fresh class of readers, and in this way will tend to the spread of the principles which animate the Selborne Society. We are glad, therefore, to call attention to the most recent additions to the series—not with any intention of noticing them at the length to which they would be entitled if new, but to remind our readers of their existence and to suggest their suitability for Christmas-boxes. This is especially the case with *Bevis: The Story of a Boy*, of which Messrs. Sampson, Low & Co. have issued a handsome illustrated edition in one volume. It is just the book for an intelligent country lad, or for boys who, although living in towns, have nevertheless strong country sympathies. The adventures of Bevis and his companion are not, indeed, of the kind usually clear to the writer and reader of "boys' books"; but they are not on that account less interesting—indeed, we think the possibility and *vraisemblance* will in many cases render them additionally attractive. Readers of Mark Twain will be reminded from time to time of the adventures of Tom

Sawyer and Huck Finn; and, although the experiences of Bevis and Mark are less broadly comic, they are nevertheless not wanting in quiet humour.

Messrs. Longmans have done well to bring out at a moderate price these essays—the last we shall ever have from his pen—of Richard Jefferies.* It is unnecessary to describe or criticise them: they differ in no respect, save perhaps in the wide range of subjects, from other volumes by the same author, and, like them, are reprinted from various magazines. Here, as in his former works, we have the same almost photographic representation of country scenes; the same faultlessly accurate rendering into words of country sights and sounds. He has no theory to propound, no pet ideas to be supported. "The more thoroughly the artificial system of natural history ethics is dismissed from the mind," he says, "the more interesting wild creatures will be found, because while it is adhered to a veil is held before the eyes, and nothing useful can ever be discovered." Unlike many preachers, Mr. Jefferies follows his own advice, and it is this that gives his books their peculiar charm; many have imitated him, but none successfully.

Jefferies was a true Selbornian; evidences of this are of frequent occurrence, scattered up and down the pages of this and his former books. "The wild flowers go to London from all parts of the country, bushels and bushels of them. Nearly two hundred miles away, in Somerset, a friend writes that he has been obliged to put up notice-boards to stay the people from tearing up his violets and primroses, not only gathering them but making the flowery banks waste; and notice-boards have proved no safeguard. The worst is that the roots are taken, so that years will be required to repair the loss" (p. 200).

One or two slips in names may be noted for correction in a later edition. "The white cotton of the *plane tree*" (p. 178), the poplar is evidently intended; and for "the blue *comfrey* to which the bees and humble-bees come in such numbers" (p. 218), borage should be substituted. Such mistakes are so rare in Mr. Jefferies' writings that they attract immediate attention. Every lover of nature should add this volume to his collection.

Messrs. Smith, Elder & Co. have re-issued the illustrated edition of what is perhaps the author's best-known work, *The Gamekeeper at Home*, in a five-shilling volume; and also, at a somewhat higher price, his *Hodge and his Masters*. This is a less known work, and deals with a somewhat wider range of subjects than Mr. Jefferies' other books. The author deals with the landowner and the agricultural labourer from a social, not from a political, standpoint; and he writes with one who has intimate knowledge of the classes he depicts. The picture he gives us is not a pleasant one, although it is not characterised by the entire absence of any lighter shades which marked that powerful but hopeless story, *A Village Tragedy*, but it is full of interest, and deserves to be read carefully by those who would obtain a knowledge of the agricultural outlook at the present day.

We would gladly dwell longer upon these interesting volumes did space permit, but we must be content with advising our readers to obtain them for themselves.

CHILDREN'S COLUMN.

Natural History Society for Children.—Miss R. C. Chichester, of Arlington Court, Barnstaple, writes:—"Having noticed among children, even in a part of England where nature is more attractive than elsewhere, great ignorance in the simplest subject of natural history, I determined to start a Natural History Society for the girls of our village school. I think some of your young readers may like to hear how it has, so far, succeeded. The Society is not yet a year old, but already the children seem to take a greater interest in the banks and hedges around them. The parish being a thinly populated one, our members are few, but, notwithstanding the distance that some have to come, scarcely any missed regularly attending the fortnightly meetings held last summer. Weather permit-

* *Field and Hedgerow*, being the last essays of Richard Jefferies: London, Longmans.

ting, I usually take them for a walk, pointing out various objects in the lanes and fields, and they are told to gather a certain number of flowers, which are subsequently dried, and on wet days are arranged in a book which each child has given them. Already there is a noticeable improvement in the neatness of their books—they now never forget to gather a leaf as well as the flower. I never allow the whole plant to be taken, not wishing to exterminate rare species, as might be the case if the children were allowed to take the root as well. By writing the names under each specimen the children soon learn what to call them. Not only botany, but geology, or any other subject, when explained to the girls in a simple attractive way, interests them, especially when they can be illustrated by things that they see in their walks. A peep through the microscope is a great treat, and they are always eager to bring an object to examine. But I think even if the children look to the meetings for amusement rather than instruction, still in time they will grow to take more interest in natural history for its own sake, and will appreciate the many beauties of nature to be found in their native Devon. This year I hope to give the elder ones books in which to write the first blossoming of plants, the appearance of migratory birds, &c., so that each may compare notes, and I hope by and by if our Society continues, and is as successful as it promises to be, to arrange for lectures during the winter months. I may add that each child is given, on joining the Society, a card of admission which contains a promise to abide by the rules. These rules are obliged to be short and simple, but they strictly forbid the wanton destruction of any living creature, and the taking of birds' nests by any member of the society."

A Musical Cat.—I have lately become acquainted with a musical cat, about whom I thought the children would like to hear. It is a black and white tom cat, and very large for his age, which is nine months. A very musical gentleman and his wife often visit the house, and Imp is very fond of them, and keeps as near them as he can. If they do not begin playing very soon after their arrival, he runs to the place where the violins are kept, and scratches the cases until some one gets them out. Once when the music had stopped for some while, and Imp had not had enough, he got on the keyboard of the piano and attracted attention by the noise he made walking over it. His favourite place when listening to the music is in his mistress's lap, with his head usually towards the performer; the whole time his ears go backwards and forwards, and he seems to be perfectly wrapped up in it. Once he had caught a mouse and was playing with it when he heard the violin beginning, and rushed off, leaving mousie to escape. He found the door of the room closed, so he sat on the mat with his ear close to the door, until some one finding him so let him in. JAKE.

SELBORNIANA.

Destruction of Ferns.—We are much gladdened by Mr. Wheatcroft's cheering news from the North, contained in his article "Visit to Lakeland," p. 191, and much inclined to answer in the affirmative his question—Has the Selborne Society had anything to do with this? Mr. Wheatcroft, writing later, says, "My friend, writing from Ambleside, observes, 'You are quite right in regard to the business of the fern dealers not being so brisk as formerly. The old man who used to deal in them largely has told me several times that the trade was not worth the trouble. Of course at one time it was very profitable. He has now left the district, but I believe gave up the fern business entirely some time before leaving. Two days ago I had some conversation with a man who is much interested in ferns and he told me the same thing. Some years ago there were three or four persons at least who gave their whole time during summer to the business. Now we have not one. The excursionist is content to take home a handful of some common variety of plant, and the botanist, unless he has some one to show him the habitat of the rare kinds, has not time, as a rule, to hunt for himself.' This

is the experience of a man who has, I believe, spent the whole of his life in the Lake District and is a close observer."

Unfortunately we have a very different account of the operations of the fern stealers of the South. The Rev. H. D. Gordon, who never ceases in his efforts to protect the birds and plants of Sussex, sends us the following letter, addressed to him by Miss Richards, the Hon. Sec. at Midhurst (Rother Valley) Branch of the Selborne Society :—"Can you do anything to save our poor ferns? Last Monday I saw on the high road between Trotton and Terwick a man, who looked like a London rough, with a cart containing three enormous hampers. The cart was drawn up to the side of the road, and the man was *in* the hedge pulling up ferns as fast as he could; and I have no doubt that in the course of the afternoon he filled his baskets (each one of which was as large as the baskets they use for gathering hops in) and sent them off to London, while he himself went off to 'fresh woods and pastures new.' It is sad, especially when one knows how very little chance there is of *one* of those ferns living for more than a few weeks. All round Midhurst the hedges have been stripped of ferns, though I hear that rare varieties were formerly to be found in the neighbourhood." Mr. Gordon fully corroborates Miss Richards' account of devastation, and reiterates her query, "What is to be done?" To this question it is very hard to give a direct reply. We fear it is hopeless to apply coercive measures to these depredators in most cases. Judging from Mr. Wheatcroft's statement, it seems that the best method of averting such spoliation would be to extend the influence of the Selborne Society. It would be well, also, if our members would resolutely refuse to patronise the itinerant hawkers who make desolate so many spots and exterminate some of our most beautiful plants.

Wanton Destruction of Rare Birds.—Mr. G. T. Rope, from whom we often receive valuable communications as to the evil deeds of bird destroyers, writes that in the district round Wickham Market, in Suffolk, the Wild Birds' Preservation Act is almost a dead letter. The same tidings reaches us from several other quarters. Perhaps one reason why legislation in this direction is so inoperative is the fact that those whose duty it is to carry out the laws are sometimes to be counted among the most active law-breakers themselves. Correspondents often remind us that the "magistrates, officers and gentlemen," who are entitled to fix the hardly honourable appendage "late of Grassholme," to their names, are not by any means such unique specimens as we had at first fondly supposed. In other cases, while not breaking the letter of the law, they set an evil example in their efforts to exterminate some of our rarest and most beautiful birds. For example, Lieut.-Colonel Watson writes to the *Field* as follows :—"A *gentleman* possessing large farms on Lavington Downs, boasted to me that he had shot two 'beautiful wild peregrines' last October, and two more last spring. These were destroyed, not because they were suspected of doing harm to the hares and few partridges concealed in roots and deep covert, nor for the purpose of being put in a glass case, but simply to be cast aside into the nearest hedge. In Ireland a *gentleman* living at Cappoquin, and a *magistrate*, ravages the coast for miles for peregrines' eggs, and those of that beautiful and rare bird the Cornish chough, only for the ignoble purpose of sending them to an egg dealer in York for sale." On the other hand, we hear of several instances in which the spread of Selbornian principles has proved a check to such wanton and cruel destructiveness. For example, Mr. R. M. Watson, the Hon. Sec. of the Lea Valley Branch of the Selborne Society, tells us of a gentleman residing in his district, who on hearing of a white sparrow having been seen on his grounds, took the peremptory and prohibitive step of locking up all the guns in his establishment, and thus securing for the little albino comparative immunity from attack. It may be mentioned that a plump and perky albino hedge sparrow has for several days presented himself among the crowds of starlings, blackbirds, thrushes and robins who are in receipt of out-door relief at the windows of The Grove, Great Stanmore. Contrary to the usual belief that birds so markedly peculiar in colour are persecuted by their fellows of orthodox hue on account of their unconventional garb, this plucky little bird holds his own most defiantly, and refuses to be repelled by any of his more powerful brethren.

A Sociable Kingfisher.—Is the kingfisher a shy bird? I always considered it to be so until some time ago whilst seeking for larva of the elephant hawk moth, the food of which (willow herb and ladies bed straw) is to be found growing on the banks of streams in various parts of the country. Having finished my search, I sat down on the bank of the stream, the vicinity of which abounded with dragon flies and various other insects. It being a glorious day I was tempted to linger, so for amusement I converted the telescope handle of my insect-net into a fishing rod and tried my luck. I had been seated but a few minutes, and my attention was absorbed in watching a pair of green sandpipers, when a fine large kingfisher came flying up the stream towards where I was sitting. I expected on seeing me it would dart aside and regain the stream higher up; but on it came, and to my surprise and pleasure actually alighted on the rod I held in my hand over the stream. (I may state the stream was not more than four to five feet at its widest part.) I scarcely breathed for fear the slightest motion should frighten it away, wondering how long it would remain in its novel position. It looked at me in a friendly sort of way, as much as to say, "I am not at all frightened: we understand each other"; and began to plume its feathers with its long pointed bill, the lovely hues glistening in the sunshine metallic green, merging into blue, then into a beautiful golden bronze, more like a visitor fresh from the tropics than an inhabitant of our northern isle. Having leisurely cleaned and stroked out its feathers with its long beak, it gave itself a shake, then with another finishing pluming, it resumed its flight up stream, alighting on the stump of an old pollard willow overhanging the brook; almost directly after I noticed it plunge into the stream, then in a moment bring up a small fish, which it soon disposed of. It then flew further up, where I lost sight of it round a bend in the stream.

JAMES E. WHITING.

Bees or Flies?—I was walking in the Lake District one hot August day watching the numerous insects that were busy with the flowers. I had been speaking at breakfast of the Grass of Parnassus (*Parnassia palustris*) and some one had suggested that the so-called false stamens, with their fan-like groups of filaments, giving to the flower the appearance of having as numerous stamens as a ranunculus, were for the purpose of deceiving the bees. But the question now occurred to me: "Is the flower fertilised by bees or by flies?" I began to examine the flowers by the wayside and to notice which were visited by bees and which by flies. I soon found that colour had something to do with it. There were harebells, foxgloves, knapweed and other blue or red flowers, and these were exclusively taken up by the bees—the flies keeping away from them, while the hawkweeds and other yellow flowers had only flies as their guests; so that it would seem that bees, which visit yellow flowers when there are no others, prefer blue and red flowers when these latter are present, and that the flies, unable to compete, have to confine themselves to the yellow flowers. But what about white flowers? These seemed at first to be visited by both, but further investigation shewed that while the meadowsweet and other scented white flowers attract the bees, they leave those without scent, such as yarrow, to the flies. I thus formed the generalisation that blue, red and scented white flowers are fertilised by bees, but that yellow or scentless white flowers are chiefly fertilised by flies, and it seemed to me probable that the scentless white parnassia would be found to be visited rather by flies than bees. I soon came to a swamp where the flower grew in profusion, and was greatly pleased to find that nearly every blossom had a black fly nestling among its stamen-like filaments. I have since often seen bees visiting yellow flowers, but it has always been when there were no blue or red flowers in the neighbourhood.

H. A. NESBITT.

Frogs and Toads.—In this neighbourhood (Liphook) toads and frogs are not regarded with as much horror as they are in many places. True it is that some of the villagers do not quite like touching them, not because they fear the poor reptiles spitting fire, but that "folks *does* say they *might* poison you." There are many stories told of them, on which many superstitions are founded. They are supposed to be great weather prophets, and not only to foretell rain and fine, but also heat or cold. If a frog looks a brown colour it is a sign of a wet

day ; if it is green then a fine day may be expected. If they spawn in the middle of ponds, a good harvest and favourable hay season may be looked for ; if at the edge of the water it denotes a wet, cold summer. If when walking over the commons you hear "t' toads quirkin' 'mid t' bushes," be certain the morrow will bring a hot, sunny day. There are a few who do believe in poison of frogs and toads, and they account for it in this way. It is because the frogs "take in" all the poison from water. If one be placed in impure water, it will, in a short time, render it pure and even fit to drink, although it itself becomes more poisonous from having absorbed so much, and will harm anything it spits upon. Everyone must know the white froth which surrounds the lava of *Cicada spumaria*, and which was so plentiful in our gardens and hedges this summer. This is known by the name of "toad-spit," and it is by many firmly believed to be such ; therefore any plant, or part of the plant on which it occurs, "had best not be touched." One report states that a frog's mouth is "made up," or fastened, for half the year ; and another saying is, that if a person holds a little frog between their hands until it dies (which the poor thing would soon do), the said person's hands will never perspire again. Frogs are also used medicinally in Yorkshire, for if a child with whooping cough be allowed to suck a small one for a few moments, it will at once be cured, but a piece of thread must first be fastened to the creature's hind leg to prevent it slipping down the patient's throat ; because *if* a frog got into anyone's inside it would never die but continue to grow until it reached a fabulous size.

W. M. E. Fowler.

A New British Snail.—A field in Isleworth produces a variety of *Helix cantiana*, differing from the type only in size, the greatest diameter being about fourteen millimetres. This form is the var. *minor*, of Westerlund (definable as similar to the type, but maximum diameter fifteen millimetres or less), but the name *minor* being preoccupied by Moquin-Tandon (1855) the Isleworth form, which has not hitherto been recorded for Britain, may be called var. *nana*.

Syon Lodge, Isleworth. Annie S. Fenn.

WORK OF BRANCHES, OFFICIAL NOTICES, &c.

The object of the Selborne Society is to unite lovers of Nature for common study and the defence of natural objects (birds, plants, beautiful landscapes, &c.) against the destruction by which they are constantly menaced. The *minimum* Annual Subscription (which entitles the subscriber to a monthly copy of the Society's Magazine) is 2s. 6d. All particulars as to membership may be obtained from the Secretary of the Selborne Society, 9, Adam Street, Adelphi, W.C.

Miss A. B. Harrison, Whitmores, Beckenham, Kent, has kindly undertaken the Secretaryship of the Kent Branch, and we hope that it will before long be re-organized on a firm footing. May we take this opportunity of pointing out to the Hon. Secs. that now is the time to hand over to their respective Branches any outlying members that they may have acquired during the year.

From various quarters news reaches us that Selbornians are not inactive during winter time. The lecture season has (as some irreverent foreigner said of the English summer) set in with its usual severity, and the various Branches of the Selborne Society seem determined to add their quota to that of the other organizations by which the British public is enlightened and amused during the long winter evenings. The Bath Branch of the Selborne Society has arranged to give three lectures at the Literary and Scientific Institution. The circumstance is noteworthy from the fact that the enthusiastic and venerable naturalist, the Rev. Leonard Blomefield, will inaugurate the series with an address on "Records of a Rookery."

The rev. gentleman is a marvel of mental and physical vigour, being one of the nonagenarians still surviving in our midst. Later on J. W. Morris, Esq., F.L.S., will lecture on "The Balance of Life in Nature."

The Bath Branch is one of the very oldest departments of the Selborne Society. The Tudor Branch is, we believe, the youngest of a fast growing family, but already displays as much activity as its seniors, judging from the following account of its proceedings. On the 30th of October the Secretary of the Tudor Branch of the Selborne Society (Mr. J. J. Ogle) delivered a lecture on "Some Notable Nature Lovers" in the Peel Road Presbyterian Church, Bootle. The lecturer took as typical lives those of Gilbert White, Thomas Edward (the Scotch naturalist), Charles Kingsley, and William Wordsworth, and was listened to with the greatest attention for an hour and and a half, with frequent outbursts of applause. At the close Mr. Ogle was asked to give another lecture at an early date. The second winter meeting of the Tudor Branch took place in the Students' Room Free Library, Bootle, on Friday, November 14th. The Vice-President (Mr. Hugh Reid) read a paper on "Plant Life," which was illustrated by the President (the Mayor of Bootle) by means of an optical lantern. Twenty-three members and visitors were present; two new members were enrolled. The winter programme includes papers on "Selbornian Books," "Some Aspects of Mrs. Browning's Nature Poetry," "The Work of a River," "The Life History of a Crab," "Nature as seen by Charles Dickens," "Some Lowly Forms of Vegetable Life," "Field Operations as described by Virgil in the Georgics." We shall always be glad to have programmes of such courses of lectures for publication in NATURE NOTES, and also reports of the lectures themselves, extracts from which our readers would doubtless be glad to see.

Mrs. Packham sends, through the Rev. H. D. Gordon, the copy of a magazine for January, 1888, required for Dr. Evans, which has been forwarded. Mr. Cyril J. Turner, of Hurst Road, Bexley, kindly writes as follows:—"I have all the numbers from the commencement unbound, and shall be pleased to give them to any subscriber who wishes to make up volumes."

We have several articles in hand (many of them in print) by the Rev. F. O Morris, Rev. H. D. Gordon, the Rev. Professor G. Henslow, Mr. Archibald L. Clark, Mr. Aubrey Edwards, Mr. A. H. Macpherson, Mr. T. D. A. Cockerell, &c., &c., for which we are quite unable to find room in the present number. Some of these articles we hope to print in the number for January, 1891, in which an addition of four pages will be made to the magazine. In that number we also hope to publish an account of the present most satisfactory position of the Selborne Society, and of the methods by which its magazine has secured, and hopes to continue its great and unforeseen success. In all probability the funds at our disposal will enable the magazine to be permanently enlarged from January, 1891, onwards. This is the only mode by which it will be possible for us to do justice to the articles of our kind contributors, and to give such accounts of the rapidly progressing ramifications of the Selborne Society, as our readers would naturally desire.

We cannot close this volume without returning grateful thanks to the kind friends at Great Stanmore and Richmond by whom, with accuracy and celerity, the index was compiled.

IT is particularly requested that subscriptions and letters bearing on the general business of the Society should *not* be forwarded to the Editors, but to the Secretary of the Selborne Society, 9, Adam Street, Adelphi. Editorial communications should be addressed to the Rev. PERCY MYLES, 1, Argyle Road, Ealing, W.

No. 1. January, 1890.

Nature Notes,

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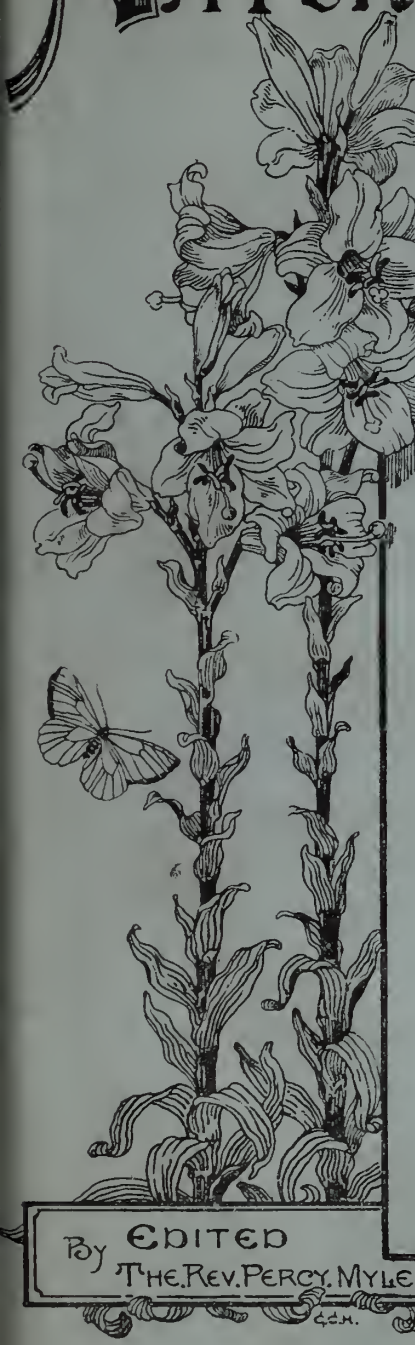

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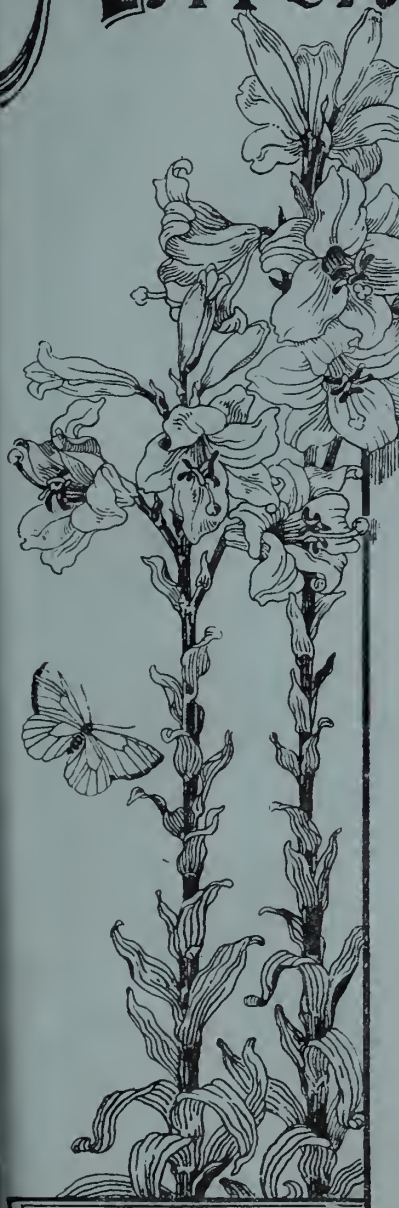

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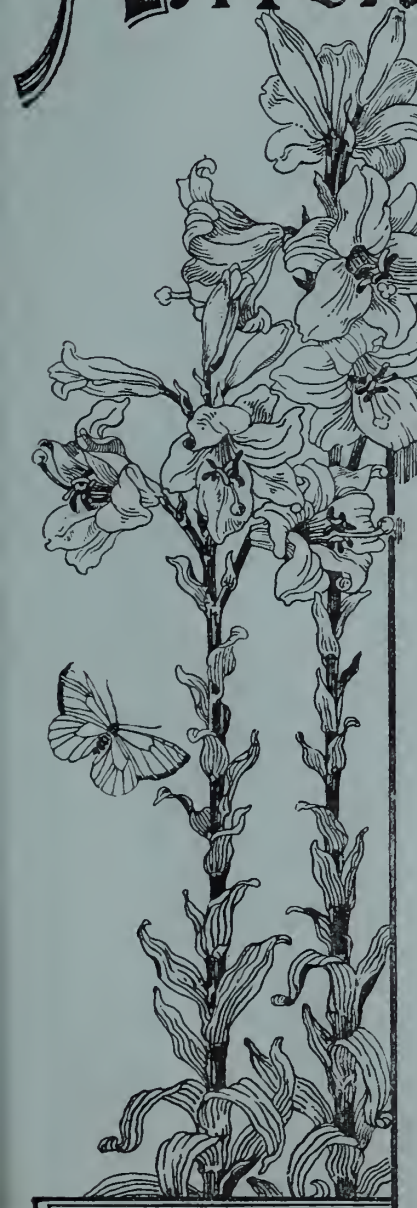

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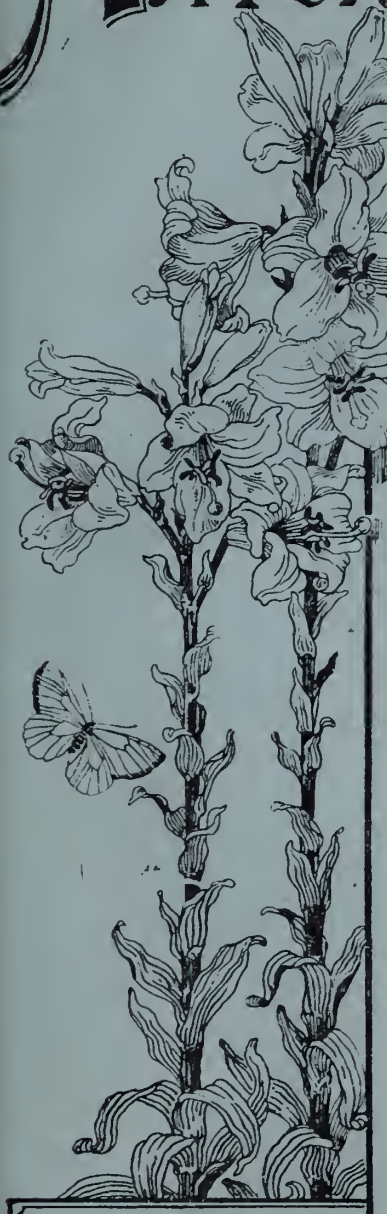

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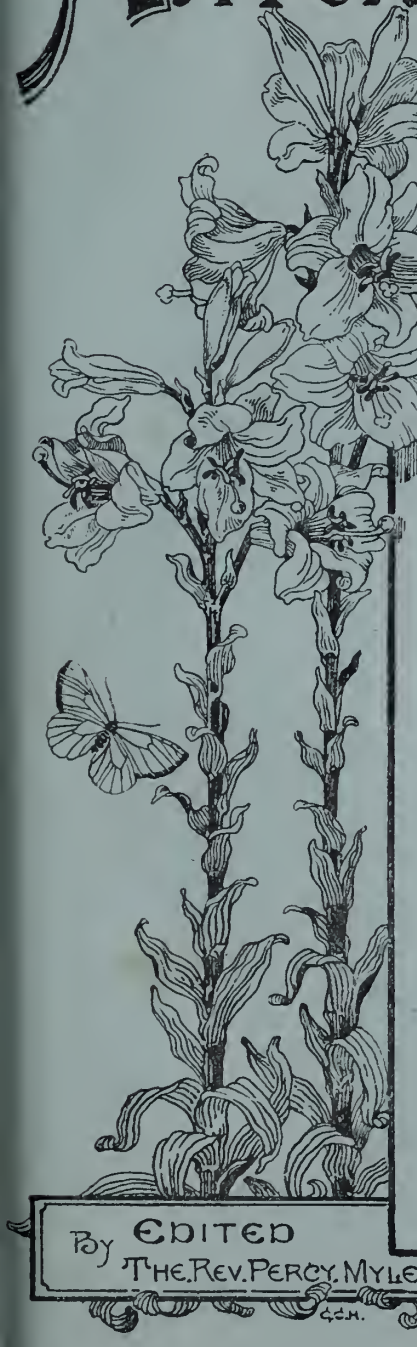

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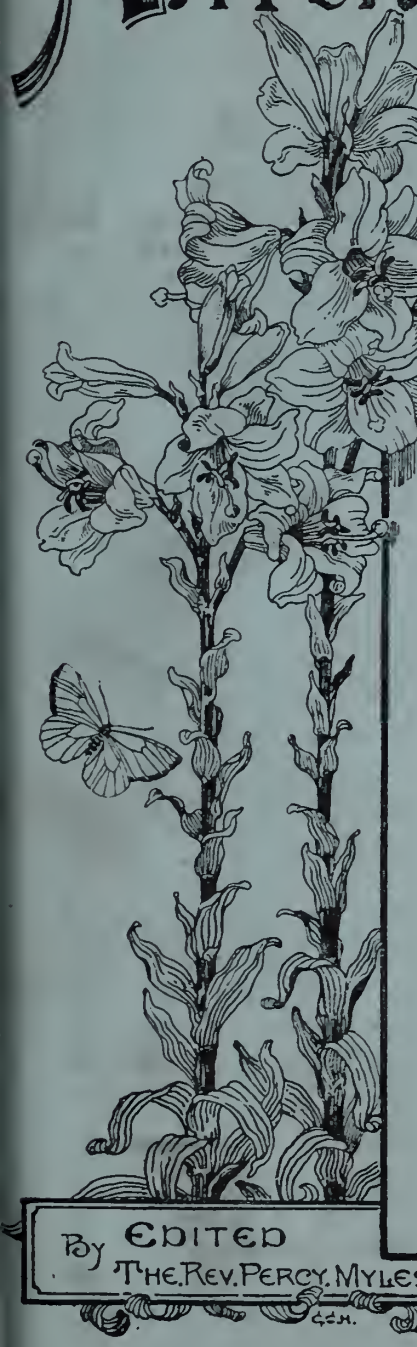

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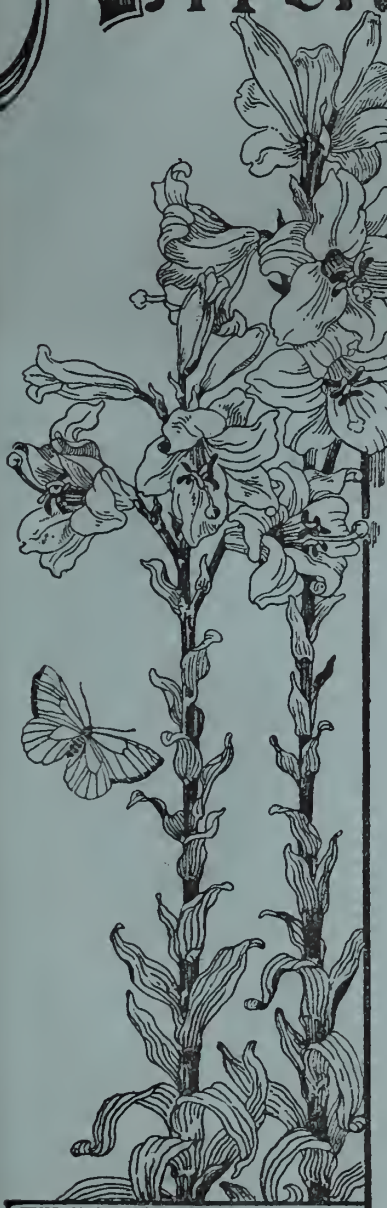

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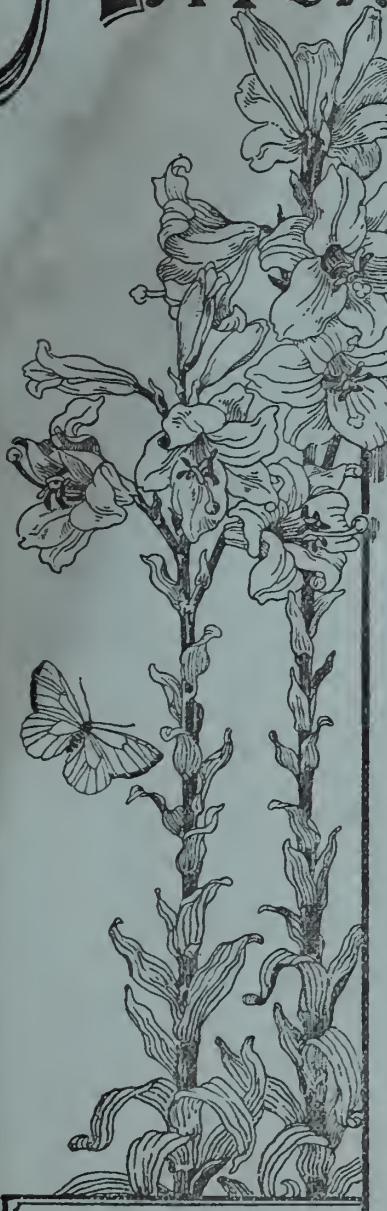

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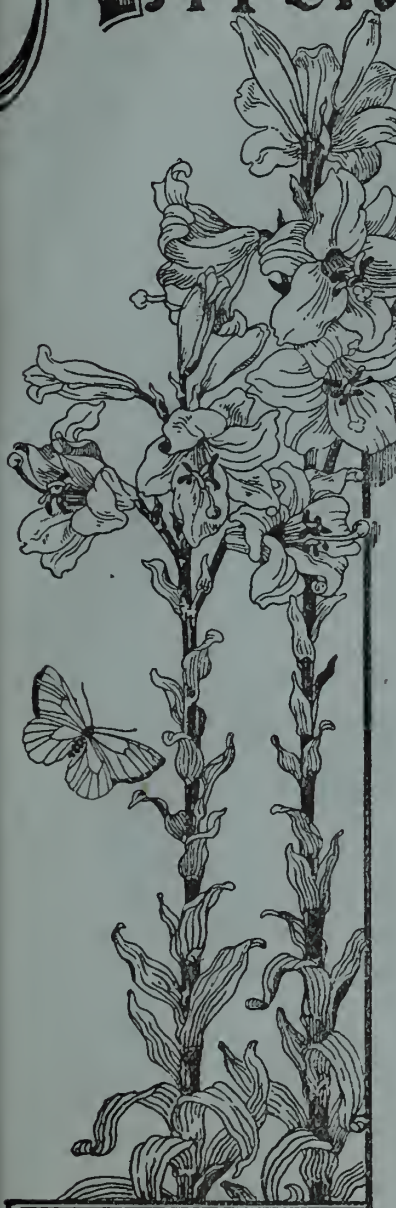

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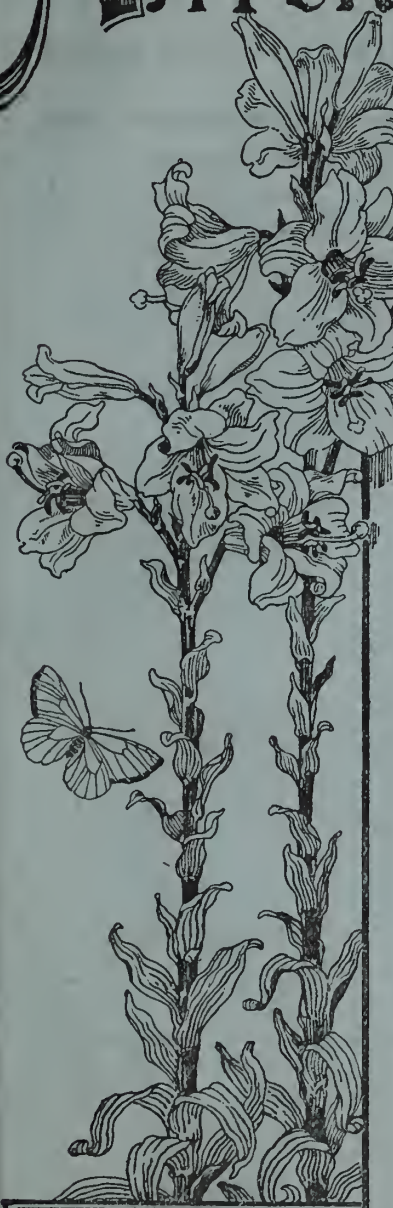

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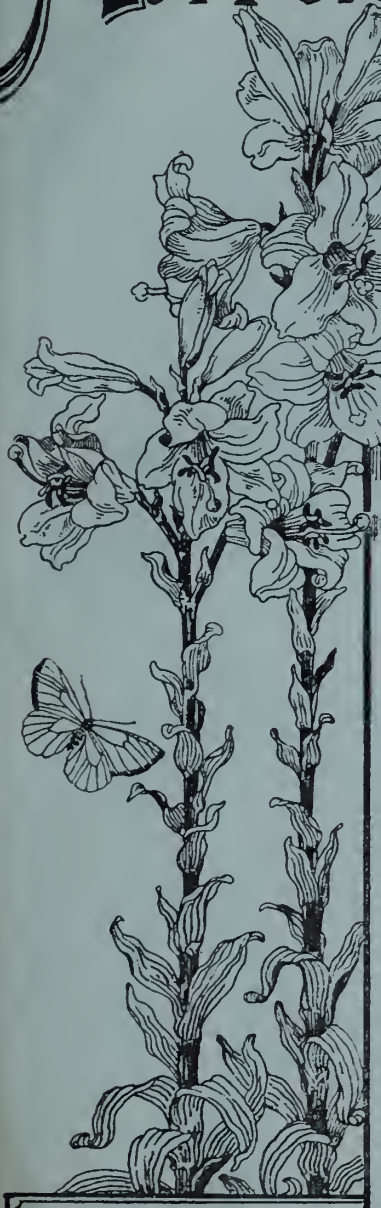

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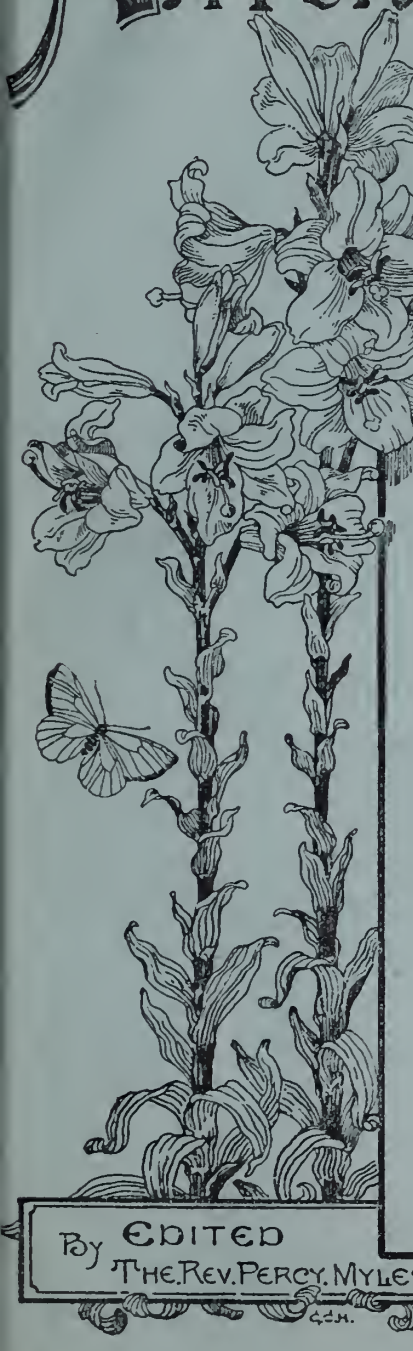

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