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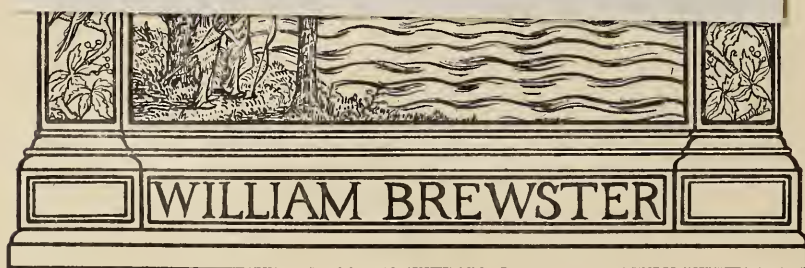
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WILLIAM BREWSTER

April 21, 1920.



Bird Notes and News.

A CIRCULAR LETTER

*Addressed to Members and Friends of the Royal Society for
the Protection of Birds and to all interested in
Bird Protection.*

VOL. I.

APRIL, 1903 — DECEMBER, 1905.

London :

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BIRD NOTES AND NEWS.

Regular Letter issued Periodically by the Society for the
Protection of Birds.

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No. 1.—APRIL, 1903. LONDON, 3, HANOVER SQUARE, W.



Introductory.

MEMBERS of the SOCIETY FOR THE PROTECTION OF BIRDS have been asking for some time past for a periodical publication through which news of the Society's doings, together with items of general interest to bird protectors, could reach them, and in which the various activities of the branches might be chronicled. Now that the Society has entered upon the fourteenth year of its existence, and has enrolled over 5000 associates and many thousand members, the development of the work seems to warrant the issue of such a leaflet, and it is hoped that it will merit a kind reception.

HISTORY OF THE SOCIETY.

The SOCIETY FOR THE PROTECTION OF BIRDS, founded in February, 1889, "in the hope of inducing a considerable number of women, of all ranks and ages, to unite in discouraging the enormous destruction of bird life exacted by milliners and others for purely decorative purposes" (to quote from the first annual report), was not the earliest protest raised against this shameful slaughter of brilliant and beautiful birds. Perhaps the first strong impulse to the movement was given by Professor Newton's memorable impeachment of the women-wearers of seabirds' wings at the British Association meeting in 1868. A few years later the Baroness Burdett-Coutts, now a life associate of our Society, in a letter to the *Times*, censured especially the wearing of humming-birds. A plumage league was subsequently formed, of which the Hon. Mrs. Boyle

was an earnest promoter, and later still the Selborne Society included the preservation of birds among the many admirable articles of its comprehensive agenda.

The founder of the SOCIETY FOR THE PROTECTION OF BIRDS was Mrs. R. W. Williamson, of Didsbury, still a vice-president and hon. branch secretary. It began very quietly as a society of women only. The requirements for membership were merely an undertaking to observe the two short rules and the payment of twopence for a membership card. These remain the conditions of simple membership. So modest and apparently insignificant, indeed, was it that, in the second year of its existence, when its headquarters were removed from Manchester to London, it was greeted with smiles of amusement rather than of sympathy, and the little first report, with its few pages and its balance-sheet showing an income of £7 13s. 8d., was described in one of the London weeklies as "a sparrow's housekeeping book." The history of the baby association seems likely to illustrate the old adage, so proudly cherished by Lancashire folk, "What Manchester thinks to-day England thinks to-morrow."

In 1891, when the Society could number its adherents by hundreds only, the Duchess of Portland became president, and her Grace has ever since manifested the warmest sympathy with the work. In the same year Mrs. Edward Phillips, a pioneer in the cause, took office as vice-president, and Miss C. V. Hall as treasurer. Among the first branch secretaries were not a few whose names it is pleasant still to find in the list, such as Mrs. Suckling, Miss Allanson-Winn, Mrs. Cornish Bowden, Mrs. J. Thornely, Miss Salisbury, Mrs. Paterson, Mrs. Beacall, and Miss Beching. In

1892 Miss Hannah Poland, who had taken over the secretaryship from Mrs. Williamson, was succeeded by Mrs. F. E. Lemon, the present hon. secretary of the Society.

Meanwhile the scope of the Society was rapidly extending, and it had become evident that something of a much broader and more inclusive character was called for than had originally been contemplated. Sympathy with its efforts quickly brought naturalists and other bird-lovers into its ranks; ornithologists as well as humanitarians recognized from the first the potentialities of such an association as a leader in promoting laws for bird protection, and in educating the general public to a fuller sense of the utility of birds as well as of their beauty and charm; and it is through the co-operation of many varying minds working for a common end that the Society has expanded from an anti-plumage league into an organization working for the protection of wild birds in every way and by all available means from wanton slaughter and cruelty, and especially for the preservation of rarer species.

Among the earliest of its members and supporters were Lord Lilford, Professor Newton, Mr. Auberon Herbert, Mr. H. S. Marks, R.A., Canon Tristram, Dr. Sclater, Dr. Bowdler Sharpe, Mr. W. H. Hudson, Mr. Harvie-Brown, the Rev. F. O. Morris, Mr. John Colam, Mr. Linley Sambourne, Mr. G. D. Leslie, R.A., Sir Herbert Maxwell, Bishop Westcott, Bishop Barry, Dr. (now Bishop) Welldon, Canon Jessopp, Sir Edward Grey, Mr. Sydney Buxton, Lord Wolseley, and Sir Ross O'Connell; while the ladies foremost in strengthening its influence included Elizabeth Duchess of Wellington, the Duchess of Somerset, Eleanor Duchess of Northumberland, Aldine Lady Forester, Lady Lyall, the Hon. C. M. Powys (now the Hon. Mrs. Drewitt), the Hon. Mrs. Boyle, Lady Grey, Mrs. Brightwen, Mrs. Owen Visger, Mrs. R. F. Sturge, Miss Power Cobbe, Lady Hooker, Dr. Sophia Jex-Blake, and Miss Rhoda Broughton.

Increased aims and efforts naturally demanded increased funds. At first the young Society had even declined donations; recognition of the fact that literature was absolutely necessary to spread abroad its propaganda brought about a speedy change of attitude. The first guinea to the funds came from Professor Newton, followed by a second from the Rev. A. L. Hussey, and a donation of £10 from Mr. Harvie-Brown enabled the treasurer to open a modest banking account. It was, however, evident that a settled income was a matter of first

importance, and at a general meeting held in 1893 the present constitution of the Society was framed, in which the title of Associate for annual subscribers was adopted, the *minimum* amount being fixed at one shilling so as to suit every class of sympathiser, while a guinea was made the qualification for Life Associateship. The term Fellow, for those subscribing a guinea a year, was not introduced until 1897. At the end of 1893 the register showed nearly 500 Associates; less than ten years have multiplied the number by ten, and it may be hoped that future increase will be at least in corresponding ratio.

In 1895 Mr. Montagu Sharpe, whose wide experience and legal knowledge have been of great advantage to the Society, became chairman of committee, succeeding Mr. Hudson, who in the previous year had relieved Mrs. Phillips of the post which she had held from the formation of the committee.

For years the business of the Society was carried on from the private residences of the leading workers, the committee meetings being held at 105, Jermyn Street, through the kindness of the R.S.P.C.A.; but the increase in correspondence and clerical work having made this arrangement no longer possible, in 1898 the committee started headquarters of their own by renting a room of the Zoological Society of London at 3, Hanover Square, W.

It may be of interest to add the names of those gentlemen who have presided at the annual meetings:—1894, Mr. E. H. Bayley, M.P.; 1895, Mr. Sydney Buxton, M.P. (now the Society's hon. treasurer); 1896, Sir Herbert Maxwell, M.P.; 1897, the Earl of Stamford; 1898, Mr. Montagu Sharpe; 1899, Sir Edward Grey, M.P.; 1900, the Marquis of Granby; 1901, Mr. Montagu Sharpe; 1902, Sir George Kekewich, K.C.B.; 1903, the Duke of Bedford, K.G.

ANNUAL MEETING, 1903.

THE annual meeting of the Society, held on February 10th, was reported in an unusually large number of newspapers, and in many cases editorial articles and notes commented on the work. The *Times*, in a leading article, advocated a knowledge of birds and their ways as the best preventive of "the wanton destruction of a form of wealth that cannot be replaced." "Not necessarily scientific knowledge, but that possessed by the true sports-

man, the genuine lover of the country; to be got not from books but through the attentive ear and the eye heeding all living things; taken in without effort, never forgotten, and forbidding waste and desecration of the best things around us."

The birdcatcher gets an "appreciation" from both the *Times* and *Standard*. "The vagabond who steals from hedgerow to hedgerow with his traps and limed twigs has in him the making of nothing valuable," says the former. "He is cruel, ignorant, idle, and a pest, too often meriting Izaak Walton's description, 'base vermin.' A society which will stiffen public opinion in its reprobation of the gangs that ravage and empty our fields will do solid work." "The chief mischief," says the *Standard*, "is done by the birdcatchers. . . . It is our feathered friends of the fields, meadows, and gardens that we desire to see protected from the wretched prowlers who now prey on them with comparative impunity."

The *Country Gentleman* likewise refers to the birdcatchers and the bird-dealers, but even more sharply denounces the "extraordinary amount of damage" done by village boys on so-called bird-nesting expeditions. "They do not want or attempt to collect the eggs. They seem to take pleasure in merely tearing the nest from the hedge or tree and throwing it on the ground. The number of eggs that they destroy in a year must amount to millions, and there is practically no available machinery to prevent such destruction."

The Indian edict and "murderous millinery" fully share in the notice widely given to bird-catching and bird-watching, and to Bird and Tree Day. "If it is possible," remarks the *Speaker*, "to prohibit the export of Indian bird-skins it ought to be possible to forbid the importation into this country of trophies from less enlightened countries, e.g., South America. Meantime, in the name of mercy, it is the duty of individuals who know the facts to speak sternly to women who encourage this savage trade." The *Notts Guardian* boldly declares that "No man ought to marry a woman who uses the mangled bodies of birds for her own adornment, because such a woman must be either thoughtless or cruel." The *Draper*, while with the Society in its protests, "doubts whether milliners can do anything to help on the reform, however much they may sympathise with it. They are compelled to follow the fashion." For "the fashion" read "the trade."

The *Outlook*, *Saturday Review*, *Spectator*, *Shooting Times*, *Daily Graphic*, *St. James's*

Gazette, *Daily News*, and *Daily Chronicle* are among other London papers which take occasion to speak in support of the Society's objects, and *Land and Water* makes the practical commentary: "When we consider the large field of work which is open it seems almost unworthy of our nation that the total income of the SOCIETY FOR THE PROTECTION OF BIRDS for the year should amount to just under £600."

AUDUBON SOCIETIES.

THE reports for 1902 of the thirty-three Audubon Societies established in the United States of America show marked progress in the work of bird protection, especially with regard to the services rendered by the Wardens, who are now employed in seven States, *i.e.*, in Florida, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Jersey, New York, and Virginia. In the report from Virginia it is stated "it is our duty to report that all the sea bird colonies on the Virginia coast are making a steady gain. It is now impossible for plume hunters to visit this coast and kill terns and gulls by the thousands, as they did only a few years since; if such an attempt were to be made the plumers would have to reckon with a very determined party of eight Wardens." Captain Savage, the Warden of Wachapreague Beach, writes: "Those who made a business of killing birds in former years have been forced to desist, knowing that they are watched and will be brought to account if caught."

It is interesting to notice that in January, 1903, the National Committee of the Audubon Societies issued the first number of their Educational Series of Leaflets; this paper treats of the night hawk. Among their other recent leaflets are "Feathers on Hats; six alleged fallacies by Milliners," by Mr. Frank Chapman, and a 16-page pamphlet which gives a list of books on birds for students and the general reader.

County Council Orders.—Since the issue of the Society's report for 1902, in which a complete list of the Orders in force is given, the following Wild Bird Protection Orders have been renewed—

County of Devon, dated Feb. 18th, 1903.

County Borough of Barrow-in-Furness, dated Feb. 18th, 1903; and

County Borough of Hastings, dated Feb. 24th, 1903.

A new Order has been issued for the County of Surrey, dated March 18th, 1903. It adds a large number of birds to the Schedule, gives all the year protection to 71 species, and protects certain eggs.

THE PLUME TRADE.

THE following figures give the number of packages of "osprey" or heron plumes, and of bird of paradise skins, offered for sale by auction at the London Commercial Sale Rooms during 1902. They are taken from the official catalogues.

	Osprey (packages).	Birds of Paradise.
February	326	... 4,052
April	313	... 2,072
June	252	... 2,977
August	155	... 2,646
October	334	... 2,895
December	228	... 4,910
Total	1,608	... 19,552

A package of osprey feathers varies in amount from two or three to over one hundred ounces; but a careful computation shows the average to be about thirty ounces to the package. This gives a total of 48,240 ounces, and on the received estimate that four birds are required to yield one ounce of plumes, we have a total of 192,960 birds killed in the breeding season to furnish one year's feather sales.

Of the birds of paradise 13,992 were catalogued as females.

Killing Down the Buff-Backed Heron.—In the last issue of the *Journal* of the Khedivial Agricultural Society, attention is called, apparently none too soon, to the great diminution in the number of useful birds in the neighbourhood of Cairo. The writer (Dr. Innes) tells of the "almost total extermination" of the buff-backed heron (*Ardea bubulcus*), which he calls the cattle-egret. From its habit of attending cattle and relieving them of insect pests. In this connection it may be mentioned that the only authenticated British-killed specimen was "shot (in 1805) while following some cows and picking up insects." Birds of this species follow the plough and pick up mole-crickets and larvæ. Capt. Shelley says that they cause "great havoc among the locusts and other insects." They were so common in the past and did so much good that many travellers confounded them with the sacred ibis. Dr. Innes attributes the reduction in the numbers of this useful species to "so-called sportsmen, who kill for the sake of killing." He also points out that, unless a stop be put to reckless shooting so as to allow the birds to increase, it will be necessary to take steps, involving considerable expense, for the destruction of injurious insects. Dr. Innes pleads for some measure of protection for this species, whose services to man are too valuable to allow it to be exterminated without an effort being made to stop reckless slaughter. —HY. S.—From the *Field*, Feb. 14th, 1903.

In the Courts.—At Enfield Police Court, Wm. H. G. Putnam, a professional birdcatcher, of Enfield, was fined 10s. and costs for snaring wild birds with a net on March 1st. He had taken three goldfinches, a chaffinch, and three linnets, and was using a redpoll, suspended on a string, as a d-coy. After being cared for by the police, the injured decoy bird recovered, and the magistrates ordered the birds to be released and the nets destroyed.

The Man with a Gun.—Last month two of the four St. James's Park pelicans were reported missing, having taken a longer flight than usual from their home. Both have been shot—one at Frensham, the other at Lancing.

LECTURES, 1903.

THE following lectures, illustrated by the Society's slides, have been given since January 1st:—

January 2nd, Newport, Fife, Miss Berry; January 3rd, Newport, Mr. W. Berry; January 12th, Fareham, Rev. J. E. Kelsall; January 17th and January 22nd, Northampton, Rev. G. E. Startup; January 21st, Winchester, Miss Williams; January 22nd, Westerham, Miss Hall; January 26th, Clydach, Mr. W. J. P. Player; January 28th, Colchester, Rev. G. A. Hicks; February 2nd and 7th, Pen-y-grove, Carnarvon, and Llanbedi, Mr. Wilson Roberts; February 5th, Maidstone, Mr. Allchin; February 11th, Fareham, Rev. J. E. Kelsall; February 11th and 12th, Littleport, Mrs. Ludington; February 12th, New Malden, Mrs. Nelson; February 16th, Holt, Mr. J. G. Woods; February 26th, Uttoxeter, Mr. Masefield; February 28th, Heywood, Mr. Dodgson; March 2nd, Bradford, Mr. Butterfield; March 2nd, Canterbury, Miss Holmes; March 7th, Malvern Wells, Mr. Stable; March 9th to 14th (four lectures), Mrs. Walter Greg; March 12th, Southport, Mr. North Dufty; March 17th, Romford, Mr. C. B. Russell; March 20th, Witham, Rev. A. F. Curtis; March 20th and 21st, Wyggeston High School, Leicester, Miss Gardner; March 21st to 28th, Northampton, Mr. Bates; March 24th, Portsea, Mr. Seale; March 30th, Sholing, Rev. J. E. Kelsall; March 31st, Morley Memorial Hall, Mr. F. Finn.

The Committee have to thank Mr. Masefield for the gift of five slides (nesting-boxes), Mr. Ludington for five (nests), and Mr. Butterfield for one (chaffinch's nest).

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No. 4. At My Window.

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No. 2.—JULY, 1903.

LONDON, 3, HANOVER SQUARE, W.



THE BIOGRAPHY OF A LIE.



WHEN the history comes to be written—and it will be a long one—of the crazes and follies of fashion, there will be no more remarkable story in the whole collection than that of the “osprey” plume.

Fifty years hence, when the egret has been practically exterminated, or its plumes are no longer considered fit wear for civilized women, our descendants will read with amazement that, at a period when woman was loudly claiming to be intellectual, rational, and cultured, she became possessed of a passion for ornamenting her head-gear with a certain tuft of plumes; that to procure this she had distant lands ransacked and beautiful harmless birds ruthlessly slaughtered in their breeding time, and nestlings by the hundreds of thousands starved to death; that she was deaf to the appeals of the humane against the widespread and wanton cruelty involved, deaf to the invective of the naturalist as he looked forward to the extirpation of a noble species, deaf to the contempt and disgust of the thoughtful, expressed plainly enough by the Press of the day; careless as to how the creatures were done to death, or what the world lost of life and loveliness.

They will further read that when the voice of protest became too loud to be ignored, and threatened to interfere with business interests, the trade—at the very time that the plumes of tens of thousands of herons and egrets were being sold annually in London auction-rooms, and cries of indignation and expostulation at the massacres of the plume-hunters were going up from Florida, Mexico, Venezuela,

India, China—at this very time the trade denied again and again the familiar scientific fact as to the origin of the plumes, and declared them to be artificial, “manufactured” out of all manner of material other than egret feathers.

In 1896, when these plumes were being sold as artificial, in order to satisfy the scruples of bird-lovers, Sir William Flower, then Director of the Natural History Museum, wrote to the *Times* to protest against the use of this “glaring falsehood” to bolster up a fashion by which one of the most beautiful of birds was being swept off the face of the earth. In the spring of the present year the same falsehood was circulated in fashion journals and told in milliners’ shops, with extraordinary eagerness. The Society for the Protection of Birds, anxious to obtain samples of the “imitation ospreys,” of which so much was heard, but of which it had never been able to procure a single example, again investigated the matter. Its representatives purchased specimens, which were sold and invoiced as artificial, at leading drapery and millinery establishments in the West End and elsewhere. Apparently there was no difficulty in procuring the article; every shop visited professed to supply it, though at two (and two only) the assistants, when questioned, admitted that “imitation” was simply a trade name, and that no such things as artificial “ospreys” were to be had. The specimens were sent to the Natural History Museum for examination, and the Society has the authority of Professor Ray Lankester and Dr. Bowdler Sharpe for stating that one and all are genuine—the nuptial feathers of the egret. Other “ospreys” from different parts of the country have been submitted to the same authorities; these, too, were all sold as artificial; these, too, all proved to be real. The Society has also asked

publicly for the address of any factory where artificial "osprey" plumes are made, but this has never been given.

The pseudo-artificial ospreys are to be bought at any price, from a few pence to over a pound, the cheap "brush" sorts being merely coarser kinds or lower portions of the spray. The low price has supported a supposition that the article must be imitation; but since the material is obtained by shooting down wild birds in nesting-grounds where 300 may be killed in an afternoon by two or three men, and extravagant sums are asked for the finer qualities, it may well be that there is more profit on goods so gotten than if the wages of skilled workers and the cost of elaborate machinery had to meet the production of "manufactured" feathers.

Many inventions may yet be to the fore to bolster up the trade in egret plumes; but it cannot go on indefinitely. "These beautiful birds," an eminent ornithologist writes to the Society, "have been wiped out in nearly every one of their old haunts, and 'ospreys' will go out of fashion, as there will soon be no birds left to kill."

Some day it will surely appear incredible that such a network of cruelty, folly, and duplicity should have been woven round a scrap of useless ornament.

BIRD PROTECTION IN IRELAND.

IN the House of Lords on May 7th the Earl of Mayo asked, with regard to Close Season for Wild Birds in Ireland, why notices had not been posted up for the last three years on all the Royal Irish Constabulary barracks in Ireland. The posting of these notices would aid the preservation of wild birds, because people in the remoter parts of the country would then know what the law was.

Lord Balfour, in reply, said that in May, 1899, the police throughout Ireland were instructed to enforce the Acts, and were at the same time instructed to warn persons against committing offences against the law. Notices with regard to the Act were then posted up, but it had not since been considered necessary to renew them. Prosecutions had been undertaken by the police. In 1899 there were six prosecutions and two convictions; in 1900 six prosecutions and one conviction; in 1901 three prosecutions and three convictions; in 1902 four prosecutions and four convictions. He was informed that the police were thoroughly alive to their duties under the Act. If the noble lord had any information which would show that the Acts were not strictly enforced, and would submit it to the Irish Office, an enquiry would be made, because it was the desire of the Irish Office to see these valuable Acts enforced as thoroughly as possible.

NOTES.

H.M. Coastguard.

VALUABLE help in the "watching" and protection of birds on the coast of the United Kingdom may be confidently anticipated from H.M. Coastguard, the Lords of the Admiralty having approved a request from the Society that this important body should co-operate in carrying out the provisions of the Wild Birds' Protection Acts. The Admiral Superintendent of Naval Reserves has sent an official notice on the subject to the District Captains and Divisional Officers; and at the Admiralty's request the Society has supplied papers of instructions, including Summaries of the Acts, showing the County Council Orders in force in the various counties, and also the Acts and Orders, edited by Mr. F. E. Lemon. The Society has been in communication with the 81 Divisional Officers, and upon their application have furnished to every one of the 728 Coast Guard Stations situated round Great Britain and Ireland sets of papers containing detailed information concerning the Orders in force in the various districts.

Egg Lifting in Scotland.

THIS spring information reached the Society that attempts were again to be made in the North of Scotland to take the eggs of certain rare birds, notwithstanding the Orders of prohibition. These plans have, it is hoped, in some cases been frustrated by the appointment of Watchers and the co-operation of landowners and their factors; among others, the Duke of Sutherland has interested himself in the matter.

Sparrow Clubs.

THE Board of Agriculture has issued a leaflet on the House Sparrow, in which it recommends the formation of Sparrow Clubs throughout the country. Piecemeal efforts are regarded as ineffectual; "it is of little value to kill the sparrows in one locality if they are allowed to multiply in surrounding parishes." The circular states that, "In all cases great care must be exercised to prevent other birds suffering along with the sparrows"; and again, "Anything like indiscriminate destruction of small birds in general should be strenuously avoided, the object being merely to reduce the numbers of the house-sparrow. Every encouragement should be given to the protection of all other small birds, unless there are obvious reasons for including other species in the black list." Unfortunately the Board omits to state how the average peasant and village boy are to be taught to know or care what small birds they destroy, especially when encouraged by the hope of club prizes. No systematic instruction in practical ornithology has yet been introduced into country schools through which the characteristics and habits of birds and the great utility of many species may be learnt; and anyone acquainted with country life knows how little knowledge there is among the people on this

subject and how very strong are the prejudices and suspicions regarding every bird that comes into field or garden. The "obvious reasons" discovered by Sparrow Club members would, we fear, threaten a majority of our commoner species. The Board of Education should surely go hand in hand with the Board of Agriculture if linnets, hedge-sparrows, tits, buntings, hen chaffinches, fly-catchers, and other species are not to be decimated either intentionally or ignorantly; otherwise the last state of the farmer may be worse than the first.

Goring League.

WHEN the County Councils have the reins of education firmly in hand it may be hoped that they will do something definite towards the development of Nature Study in schools and the establishment of Bird and Tree Day in this country, since the need of educating village children to see and understand the beauty and value of birdlife is being more and more widely recognized. Meanwhile much may be effected by local efforts, such as the Goring League for the Protection of Birds, which is affiliated with the Society for the Protection of Birds. The League's desire is not only to enlist the sympathy of children on behalf of birds, but also to teach them the laws on bird protection. Lessons on the subject are given in Goring National School and Alnut's Foundation School, with the consent of the authorities, and prizes will be awarded for the best papers written by the children. The hon. treasurer is Captain Towse, V.C., and the hon. secretary Miss Leigh.

Army and Navy Stores.

THE Society's attention was called early in the year to the advertisement in the Army and Navy Stores catalogue of small-bird traps, pole traps, and bird-lime. A letter was accordingly sent to the manager protesting against the sale of these things by the Association, and several members of the Committee took the matter up energetically. It is satisfactory to know that as a result both traps and lime have been withdrawn from the Stores list. Possibly other members of the Society holding shares in large business concerns might take similar steps with regard to the sale at these places of "murderous millinery" and bogus artificial ospreys.

County Council Orders.

BURTON-UPON-TRENT has obtained an Order dated April 8th, 1903. [B.C.E.F.S.] The Middlesex Order has been renewed, with some additions; dated June 4th, 1903. [B.C.E.F.S.]

THE SOCIETY FOR THE PROTECTION OF BIRDS has an exhibit of leaflets, etc., at the Greater Cork International Exhibition, now open; and Mr. J. L. Copeman is arranging also to show a selection of lantern slides to illustrate Nature Study Lectures.

BIRD PROTECTION IN THE WEST INDIES.

"THE Agricultural News," the review of the Imperial Department of Agriculture for the West Indies, published at Barbados, devotes a leading article in its issue of March 14th to the protection of birds.

"It is questionable," says the writer, "whether any single crop could be grown at all if birds were to be exterminated, and no other check [on insect life] substituted. Daily we can see the influence of birds in field and garden, and it should be the duty of all connected with agriculture to encourage bird life in every way. . . . 'Wild Birds Protection Ordinances' have been adopted in most colonies with the view of checking the destructive tendency of the average peasant and small boy. There should be such an ordinance in every colony, and though there are ordinances existing in many parts of the West Indies, they are either not enforced, or are not sufficiently comprehensive. Cultivation in some colonies has absorbed a large proportion of the land, rendering life harder for the majority of birds. In others it is yearly spreading, and thus robbing the birds of their wild haunts and natural homes. There is, therefore, the more urgent reason for giving every assistance to birds, for not only is their natural habitat becoming every day smaller, but the area of cultivation in which their services are required to guard the crops from insect attacks has steadily increased.

"We are convinced that every colony should have, and should rigidly enforce, a 'Wild Birds Protection Ordinance.' This should be drafted on comprehensive lines, not allowing sporting interests to outweigh the needs of agriculture; and every bird which, either directly or indirectly, assists in insect destruction, should be included, not only in a close season, but in absolute protection, making its destruction a punishable offence. This should be a part of the permanent policy of all agricultural communities, and we hope that in the West Indies, the force of public opinion will be steadily enlisted and directed to this end."

PLOVERS' EGGS.

IN the article on agriculture in the *Times* of March 30th, 1903, the following occurs:—"The annual raid upon the eggs of the plover is again in progress; and year by year this most useful bird, second to none as a farmers' friend, is becoming less and less abundant in its familiar haunts, with the result that the insect and other pests upon which the plover feeds increase to the detriment of the crops and garden. The prices which the eggs realise, particularly at the outset, are too great a temptation to farm hands; and, smart though the birds are in decoying the pilferer from their eggs lying upon the bare ground, the number taken every spring is nevertheless very large. The taking of plovers' eggs is not illegal in England; and hence it is that the worst enemy of the wireworm, as the plover is well known to be, is diminishing in numbers."

[County Councils have it in their power to protect the eggs of the plover, and this is done in several counties, *i.e.*, in Hampshire, Lancashire and Northumberland after May 1st, as well as throughout Scotland after April 15th. The Settle and District Farmers' Association is endeavouring to obtain protection for the eggs after May 1st. In reply to its appeal, the Clerk of the West Riding County Council wrote that his Council had on several occasions brought the question to the notice of the Home Secretary, but had been informed "that he has not sufficient evidence that such birds are materially interfered with to the extent of being exterminated."

NEWS FROM BRANCHES.

A MOST successful meeting was held at the Belfast Museum, on April 1st, to inaugurate a Belfast Branch of the Society, started through the efforts of Miss Ethel Magee, of Malone Park. Mr. W. H. Paterson, M.R.I.A., presided, and moved, "That this meeting, being convinced of the inhumanity practised upon millions of birds in order to obtain their feathers for millinery purposes, and being also anxious to check the destruction of our own wild birds by wanton shooting and bird-nesting, is of opinion that a branch of the Society for the Protection of Birds should be formed in Belfast." They could not, he said, extend their hand to Florida to prevent the destruction of the beautiful little egrets, nor to the Straits Settlements, or to Australia, to save the birds from destruction; but they could discourage the demand, and, when the demand ceased, the destruction of the birds would cease also. It was a matter for every lady to think out for herself, and in Belfast he believed the ladies had thought it out pretty well.

The resolution was carried unanimously; and an influential Committee has since been appointed as follows:—President, The Countess of Shaftesbury; Vice-Presidents, Lady Dunleath, Lady Henderson, Lady Patterson, Mrs. Allan (Stormount), the Lord Bishop of Down and Connor and Dromore, the Ven. Archdeacon Bristow, and Mr. W. H. Paterson, M.R.I.A.; Committee, Mrs. John Bristow, Mrs. Dunkerley, Mrs. Fennell, Mrs. Robert Paterson, Mrs. Porter, Mrs. Purves, Mrs. Alex. Wilson, Miss Bruce, Miss Bristow, Miss Connor (Bangor), Miss Despard, Miss Kidd, Miss Eva Pim, Miss Praeger; Rev. W. H. Dundas, B.D.; Mr. Robert Patterson, Mr. Crossley Patterson; Hon. Treasurer, Mr. Egmont Praeger; Hon. Secretary, Miss Ethel E. Magee.

SOME twenty of the leading millinery firms in Southport co-operated in the show of plumeless millinery arranged by the Hon. Sec. of the Southport branch, Mrs. Edwin Walker; and for two days in April their shop windows were filled with a brilliant display of spring millinery trimmed, as the card shown in each establishment proclaimed, "without destruction of bird life." The show attracted much attention and admiration. The annual meeting of the branch was held on June 17th.

THE Hon. Secretaryship of the Lostwithiel Branch has been kindly undertaken by Mrs. Hony.

LECTURES, 1903.

LECTURES, illustrated by the Society's slides, have been given as follows since the issue of No. 1 of NOTES AND NEWS:—

March 27th, Ewhurst, Rev. A. Clark Kennedy; March 30th, Westerham, Mrs. Nelson; April 1st, Malvern Wells, Mr. A. H. Stable; April 2nd and 3rd, Havant, Mr. Beeston; April 2nd, Winchester, Miss Williams; April 14th, Royal Victoria Hall,

S.W., Sir John Cockburn; April 15th, Glasson, Rev. C. Golland; April 21st, Wickham, Miss Farquhar; May 15th, Hampstead Scientific Society, Mr. B. Martin; May 18th, Cable Street, E., Rev. C. Hinscliff; May 29th, Grayshott, Miss Hart-Davis; June 15th, Haileybury, Mr. Kennedy.

IN THE COURTS.

THE Barnard Castle Bench on April 29th imposed a fine of 1s. each and costs on two egg collectors, Charles Milburn, of Middlesbrough, and Claude Braithwaite, of Seaton Carew, for taking tawny owl's eggs in Flatts Wood, on the Durham side of the River Tees. The accused explained that they came to the place especially for the eggs, having been told by a certain solicitor where to find the nest. They thought they were on the Yorkshire side. (Yorkshire would do well to take the hint and protect owls' eggs. The North Riding Order is a most inadequate one.)

The Leeds stipendiary magistrate gave judgment on April 20th in a case in which Mrs. Mary E. Richardson was charged under the Wild Animals in Captivity Act with causing unnecessary suffering to a parrot by leaving it without food for a number of days. The defendant, going from home for a holiday, placed in the cage a quantity of seed, which, if given in daily portions, would have been enough to last the whole period, but given in this way was exhausted in a few days, and the bird would probably have died but for the intervention of an inspector of the R.S.P.C.A. As there was no intentional cruelty, and defendant was greatly distressed by the result of her thoughtlessness, she was only directed to pay the costs of the prosecution.

A worse case was heard at Belper on May 14th. Walter Selby, a miner, left in his house four wild birds caged, while away for a fortnight, and a policeman getting in at a window found three starved to death and the fourth only just alive. Fined 5s. and 19s. costs.

PICTURE POSTCARDS.

NOW ready, in packets of one dozen (four assorted designs), 1s. a packet. Single card 1½d., post free.
No. 1. The Magic Circle. No. 3. The Birds' Pillar Box.
No. 2. Woodland Notes. No. 4. At My Window.

"Quaint and original."—*Court Journal*.

"Very dainty."—*Birmingham Post*.

"Will be welcomed by lovers of birds."—*Notts Guardian*.

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Next Issue.—Arrangements are being made for the issue of a Double Number of BIRD NOTES AND NEWS, to be ready on October 1st.

SUBSCRIPTION.

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To Associates of the Society subscribing 5s. and upwards per annum it will be forwarded gratis and post free.

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BIRD NOTES AND NEWS.

Regular Letter issued Periodically by the Society for the Protection of Birds.

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No. 3.—OCTOBER, 1903.

LONDON, 3, HANOVER SQUARE, W.



BIRD PROTECTION IN WINTER.



STATUTORY Close Time for wild birds ends on the 1st day of August. A considerable number of counties have prolonged the period to the 1st day of September, the earlier date being far too early for the proper protection of late-breeding species. In Ireland and

Wales, in a few exceptional cases, the season extends a little longer still; but by October 1st the Close Time has everywhere come to an end, with the solitary exception of Gloucestershire, where the Woodpecker, Short-eared Owl, Hoopoe, and Redpoll are guarded until November 1st.

There remain two methods by which bird protection may in Great Britain be continued through the winter months. Under the Act of 1896 (which does not apply to Ireland), County Council Orders may prohibit the killing or taking of particular kinds of wild birds during the whole or any part of the year to which close time does not extend, and also the killing or taking of all wild birds in particular places within that period. The latter clause admits of the formation of bird sanctuaries, where all the year protection can be established for all birds within a defined and limited area, and also of the provision, more commonly adopted, prohibiting all shooting and netting of birds on Sundays in specified districts (which can be made to comprise an entire County Council area). The former clause is generally utilised for the protection during the whole of the open time—thus practically affording protection all the year—of those birds which it is especially desirable to preserve on account of their utility, rarity, or beauty.

The "further" or all-the-year protection clause forms a part of the Orders of thirty-one counties and nine county boroughs in England and Wales and of all the Orders in force in Scotland. Of the 376 birds on the British Ornithologists' Union list of British species no fewer than 150 are given this winter protection in the Order for some part or other of Great Britain. To ascertain which of them are most widely selected we may take those species which are on the lists of ten or more counties of England and Wales. These number 26 and are as follow:—

Goldfinch, protected throughout the year in 31 counties; Kingfisher, 29; Owls, 24; Woodpeckers, 22; Buzzard, 18; Goldcrest, Nightjar, 16; Wren, Honey Buzzard, Bittern, 15; Swallow, 14; House-Martin, Kestrel, Osprey, 13; Bearded Tit, Sand-Martin, Pied Wagtail, Grey Wagtail, Yellow Wagtail, Hobby, Merlin, Great Crested Grebe, 12; Wheatear, Nightingale, 11; Linnet, Hoopoe, 10.

It will be seen that of these 26 birds, ten are migrants, in whose case "all the year" means merely the addition of a month or two's protection between the end of the close time and their departure from our shores. Five are vanishing species, which cultivation or the collector have driven to the confines of extinction.

Nine out of the 26 are species scheduled by the Act for protection from owners and occupiers as well as from the general public throughout the kingdom, and these may be accordingly considered the most fully protected birds in England—the Goldfinch, Nightjar, Woodpecker, Kingfisher, Hoopoe, Owl, Bittern, and Grebe. None of these may be killed or taken by any person at any time of the year, in the number of counties respectively given above.

Other birds protected throughout the twelve-month in a lesser number of English counties, but in more than six in each case, include the Robin, Nuthatch, Whinchat, Stonechat, Redstart, Chiffchaff and other warblers, Flycatchers, Siskin, Crossbill, Reed and Cirl Buntings, Woodlark, Swift, Wryneck, Chough, Kite, Cuckoo, Oriole, Spoonbill, Stone-Curlew, and Kittiwake. Of this list again a considerable proportion are migrants who do not remain with us to enjoy the protection accorded them in winter.

This winter protection is, in the case of resident birds, one of the most valuable features of the Acts. By its means alone can any bird be preserved from the clutches of the bird-catcher and the collector during all the months from August or September to February. It is, therefore, of great importance that our decreasing and rare birds, even though they may be but occasional visitors to a county, and also those species persecuted for the cage-bird trade, should be thus preserved from destruction; and such a clause, containing a carefully-compiled list of species, ought to form part of every County Council Order.

Sunday protection, which is of invaluable service in districts infested by the bird-catcher and the week-end "sportsman," is in force in seventeen counties and nine county boroughs. There seems no adequate reason why it should not be adopted throughout the country.

THE POLE-TRAP.

A BILL for the suppression of the pole-trap was introduced into the House of Commons by Mr. Sydney Buxton on July 28th, 1903, and read a first time. Its object is to render illegal the use of the pole-trap, a steel spring-trap with teeth, generally fastened by a chain to the top of a pole in a clearing of a wood; and it provides that

"From and after the passing of this Act every person who, on any pole, tree, wall, fence, or other position elevated from the ground, shall affix, place, or set any spring, trap, gin, or other similar instrument calculated to inflict bodily injury to any wild bird coming in contact therewith, and every person who shall knowingly permit or suffer or cause any such trap to be so affixed, placed, or set, shall be guilty of an offence, and shall be liable on summary conviction to a penalty not exceeding forty shillings, and for a second or subsequent offence to a penalty not exceeding five pounds."

The Bill is backed by Sir John Stirling Maxwell, Sir Robert Reid, K.C., Sir Edward Grey, and Colonel Lockwood.

For many years the Society for the Protection of Birds, and indeed all bird lovers and humanitarians,

have unreservedly condemned the use of this instrument of torture and destruction, and have steadily worked for its abolition. For years it has been the subject of denunciatory letters and articles in the daily and weekly newspapers, and an Appeal to Landowners, issued by the Society in 1898, showed how widely was its use condemned by game preservers themselves, while a more recent enquiry elicited the fact that it is not employed on the Sandringham estate. Forming a tempting and conspicuous perch, the pole-trap lures all the larger birds to pause in their flight, and then, catching them by the legs in the teeth of the gin, compels them to flutter out their life, hanging head downward, in agony for hours or even days. Owls, hawks, cuckoos, nightjars, jays, woodpeckers, and inoffensive song birds are alike the victims of this detestable device; and its use has formed, in the words of Sir Herbert Maxwell, "one of the scandals of game preserving." Moreover, the law protecting scheduled birds is thus, to a great extent, set at naught.

As many of these traps are set up without the authority of the landowner, and sometimes in direct opposition to his orders, this Society has for some years written to every owner of property on whose estate such traps were known to be in use. All correspondents who can give the name and address of owners of land on which a pole-trap is erected, are urgently desired to communicate with the Hon. Secretary of the Society, in order that an appeal for its discontinuance may be made to those in authority. "It is to be hoped" (to quote the *Field* of August 8th) "that before the advent of another shooting season game preservers all over the country will be justified in forbidding its employment as illegal."

BIRD PROTECTION IN EGYPT.

A PARAGRAPH having appeared in several of the daily papers in May last stating that the Egyptian Government let out tracts of land near the seashore to professional birdcatchers, who were thus enabled to catch thousands of small birds by means of birdlime, the Society for the Protection of Birds communicated with His Excellency Viscount Cromer. In reply, Lord Cromer writes that the statement is absolutely untrue, and adds:—

"The question of protecting insectivorous birds has been frequently under consideration in Egypt. The difficulties in dealing with the subject are unfortunately considerable. They arise, broadly speaking, from the rights conferred on Europeans by the Capitulations. No very effective legislation in this, or in cognate matters, is possible without the unanimous consent of all the Powers of Europe, and experience has shown that unanimity, when any legislative measure is proposed, can rarely be obtained.

Within certain very narrow limits, however, the Egyptian Government can legislate for all the inhabitants of Egypt, with the assent of the General Assembly of the Mixed Courts. I have the honour to enclose a draft Khedivial Decree, which is now under the consideration of the General Assembly, and which will, I trust, shortly become law. I do not say that this measure goes as far as could be wished, but it will, I hope, do some good. After consultation with the various authorities concerned, it was thought that, for the present at all events, any more ambitious legislation would not, in all probability, be operative in practice.

"The results which will be obtained, should the new law be passed, will be watched, and, if necessary, the matter can be reconsidered at some subsequent period."

The draft Decree is to the effect that, in order to protect birds useful to agriculture, and also to protect quails from the ill-treatment resulting from their capture by nets and traps on the sea border (1) the use of bird-lime is prohibited on all Egyptian territory; (2) the transport by rail or otherwise, the sale, offering for sale, etc., of the birds known under the general name of "bec-figures" is forbidden; (3) the taking of quails by nets or traps on Government land at a distance of less than 1000 metres from the border of the sea is forbidden. To the three clauses of the Bill is appended a list of protected birds, these including the various warblers, nightingale, robin, bluethroat, redstart, wheatears, whinchat, stonechat, shrikes, flycatcher, nightjar, hoopoe, wryneck, cuckoo, and roller.

Lord Cromer has further been good enough to express his personal sympathy with the cause of bird protection, and has evinced his interest by becoming a Vice-President of the Society for the Protection of Birds.

NOTES.

News from Abroad.

VARIOUS encouraging signs appear of the progress of the Bird Protection movement in different parts of the world. Reports from India and Egypt will be found in another column. In the Malay States under British protection an ordinance, entitled "The Animals' and Birds' Protection Enactment, 1902," has recently come into force for the purpose of preserving the big game and the rarer birds of the Malay Peninsula. The issue of licences to shoot wild birds and big game is at the absolute discretion of the British Resident, and the creation of reserves or sanctuaries for wild life is contemplated, though none exist at present. In Japan, a country in which wild birds are but little molested, a Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals has been formed, one department of which will deal with Bird Protection on the lines of our own Society; it was started by a number of influential Japanese gentlemen, has its headquarters in Tokyo, and has already enrolled over a thousand members.

Protection of Sea-birds.

THE Cape of Good Hope Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals announce in their recently issued

Report (1903) that through their representations the City Council of Cape Town have framed regulations, which have been approved by the Governor, dealing with the landing and killing of sea-birds. The new regulations empower a fine of £5 or a month's imprisonment for the landing or attempting to land of sea-birds, alive or dead, at any other place than the fish jetty; and for landing or carrying on land any sea-bird in a maimed or injured condition, it being required that any bird maimed or injured in its capture should be immediately killed in as humane a manner as possible.

Prosecutions.

THE annual report of the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, presented at the annual meeting on July 30th, records that during the past year 127 persons were convicted for offences under the Wild Birds Protection Acts. These were for infringements of the law as to Close Time. In addition there were ten convictions for cruelty to wild birds under the Wild Animals in Captivity Act, comprising two for neglecting to kill injured seagulls, one for suffocating a swift by placing it in a pocket, two for immersing blackbirds in water, and five for cruelly bracing decoy linnets, larks, chaffinches, and sparrows. "It is sometimes alleged," the report states, "that the Wild Birds Protection Act is a dead letter, because of a prevalent feeling that it is nobody's business to administer that statute"; and unquestionably a much larger number of convictions might be obtained if lovers of birds would endeavour to grasp the provisions of the law and of the local Order in their own county, and would realise that anyone may give information to the police, call upon offenders to give their names and addresses, or take out a summons and prosecute. The Society for the Protection of Birds not being itself a prosecuting Society, has from time to time to draw the attention of the R.S.P.C.A. to many cases which might possibly be taken up with good effect directly by our correspondents and placed in the hands of the local police; while there are certain classes of offences, such as taking of eggs, which are outside the scope of the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, willing and powerful as it may be to help our cause in cases of cruelty.

In Committee.

AT the last meeting of the Committee of the Society for the Protection of Birds it was decided that no essay competition should be instituted this year; and that owing to difficulties in securing an adequate attendance of those living at a distance no Conference of Branch Secretaries should be held this autumn. The Bird and Tree Challenge Shield Competition, which this year is being held in Hampshire and the Isle of Wight, Westmoreland, Berkshire, and East Yorkshire, is in 1904 to be extended to Bedfordshire. As in all years after the first the Society cannot be responsible for the prizes to individual members of winning teams, it was suggested

that an appeal should be made to residents in the counties to which Challenge Shields have been presented, asking them to encourage the work of Nature Study in elementary schools by providing funds for the festival celebration and for book prizes. Reference was made to the heavy loss sustained by the Nature Study movement in the death of Mr. T. G. Rooper, H.M. Inspector of Schools, and a donation was voted to the Memorial Fund. Another subject before the Committee was the protection of birds in the Farne Islands. Public attention having been drawn to the statements made in Mr. Oliver Pike's book, *Hillside, Rock, and Dale*, alleging barbarous slaughter of the sea-birds on these Isles immediately on the termination of the close season, enquiries were made, and in the result an emphatic contradiction was received from the Farne Island Bird Protection Association.

Nature Study.

THE loss of Mr. Rooper's wise guidance in a department of education which has so suddenly sprung to the front, is especially to be deplored now that the hackneyed phrase "Nature Study" is made to cover a multitude of aims and objects, of methods and ends. The resolution passed by our Bristol Branch indicates one of the chief dangers ahead — the danger that over-much "study" of an eminently wrong kind may leave "nature" in a worse state than she was found, and in no way conduce to the practical advantage of the student. A sentence from Mr. Medd's useful address given at the Conference of the Private Schools Association at Harrogate last June, indicates this point: "Since it has been feared that irreparable harm may be done by the destruction of rare plants or birds for the school museum, it cannot be too strongly insisted upon that collecting for the sake of collecting is worthless, and one of the results to be looked for from Nature Study is a greater reverence for all living things." To observe the growth and development of a flower instead of pressing it in a book; to watch quietly the ways of bird or insect in place of collecting eggs and pinning butterflies on corks, is the better way of studying Nature.

Nature and Art.

IT does not seem that the National Schools of Art have yet hit upon any method for encouraging Nature Study in connection with art. At the annual exhibition of National Competition work, held at South Kensington in August, there were numerous delineations of the human form from the life, and admirable paintings of flowers, from roses to cauliflowers; but representations of animal "life" were limited to a few birds copied from stuffed specimens and conventional treatments copied from books, and to a few butterflies for which a collector's tray had furnished the models. No doubt it would be both difficult and undesirable to introduce living creatures into the ordinary class-room; but all drawing is not done in class, and the

method of work indicated amply accounts for the contrast observed between so much English bird-art and the skill with which the Japanese artist portrays the life and motion of birds.

Bird Shelters.

NOW that the season has come round for indoor classes and clubs of all kinds, lovers of birds might take a leaf out of the book of the Southport branch, which engaged the time of a Working Lads' Club pleasantly and profitably in the making of bird shelters and nesting boxes. These shelters are very popular in Germany, where the Kaiser ordered forty last spring for the Sans Souci Park, and samples of German work were brought over by the Mayoress of Southport as examples. Others were made for sale by the members of the club, the wood being given by a member of the Society, and a highly ornamental specimen exhibited at the branch annual meeting showed how decorative an object such a garden-home may be. Plain and simple structures are, however, equally popular with the birds, provided they afford suitable accommodation. Our leaflet (School Series No. 4) on nesting boxes will supply hints for beginners in the business. Another possible occupation for winter evenings is the colouring of artificial eggs for school museums. These would do away with any necessity for collecting, with all its undesirable influence (a pursuit strongly deprecated by the late Mr. Rooper), and would also supply more lasting specimens than frail and fading egg shells.

Winter Millinery.

WOMEN members of the Society are asked to be on their guard against buying autumn and winter headgear trimmed with "artificial" ospreys so-called (see "The Biography of a Lie" in BIRD NOTES AND NEWS, No. 2); the bodies or wings of sea-gulls, terns, and small birds, which are appearing in quantities, particularly in the windows of suburban and inferior-class shops; and "made-up" birds, which besides being in egregiously bad taste, commonly introduce forbidden plumage. Protests have been raised in the press against one "novelty" in particular, which is exhibited in various windows, a hat trimmed with a wreath of stuffed bullfinches. A correspondent of the *Times* suggests the "judicious withdrawal of custom from shops where these abominable 'novelties' are displayed"; and the number of letters we have received on the subject indicates that the public mind is fairly sickened by these displays of the bodies and dismembered fragments of bodies of slaughtered creatures. The Society's rule binds members to wear only the feathers of the ostrich, or of birds such as game and poultry, which are killed for food. It may be added, since enquiries on the subject have been made, that emu feathers come within the proscribed list; this interesting bird is much persecuted by hunters, and is in imminent danger of extermination in the one land in which it now exists.

BIRD PROTECTION IN INDIA.

THE report of the Indian branch of the Society for the Protection of Birds for 1902-3 gives an encouraging account of the work accomplished through the efforts of the Hon. Sec., Mr. W. Jesse, assisted by Mr. E. Comber and Mr. Spence. After referring to the Bill passed by the Supreme Government prohibiting the export of birds' feathers and skins, save in certain cases, the report alludes to the excellent results achieved by several energetic societies for the protection of game and birds, notably, by the Nilgiri Game and Fish Preservation Association, which has "done wonders, not only in improving the condition that existed in the hills of Southern India, but in stirring up public opinion generally on the subject," and also by the Mysore Game and Fish Preservation Association.

One of the difficulties encountered by the Society will be appreciated by those familiar with the tactics of various self-proclaimed friends of the native who, having an axe of their own to grind, find it convenient to flaunt the placard "rights of the people" on their whetstone.

"It is to be feared" (says the report) "that not only in Mysore, but in Hyderabad, where most excellent and stringent (on paper) protection laws have been passed, they are administered almost entirely with regard to the European sportsman. The native shikari and meat hunter are, as often as not, entirely unmolested, more particularly if a little 'bakshish' can be squeezed out of them by the forest guard or police. While it is perfectly right that any European, should he transgress the game laws, be promptly brought to account, it is useless to legislate unless some restriction is placed upon the professional hunter . . . Numerous municipalities have passed local bye-laws to protect the fauna, more especially during the breeding season, but it is to be feared that they are in most cases a dead letter . . . The native offender is rarely caught. He is far too careful. If he is detected the result in nine cases out of ten is a hopelessly inadequate fine. The difficulty in imposing a suitable punishment is admitted. When only an occasional delinquent is caught, it means that numbers are escaping detection."

In pressing for still more restriction on ignorant and wanton slaughter, "we are not," the report continues, "animated by any desire to prevent the native from enjoying his rights. Rather, on the other hand, will a careful protection of many insectivorous birds prove a blessing to agriculturists. Fortunately, the average Indian—other than the professional hunter and certain wandering tribes—molests birds but little. To this has been due the comparative immunity enjoyed by our fauna. . . . The Government has appointed a special entomologist to watch over the interests of the agriculturist and planter, and doubtless he will be able shortly to give much valuable information as to the action of birds in keeping down destructive insect plagues."

In connection with the native aspect of bird protection, it is interesting to learn from our Junagad Secretary, Mr. Labhshanker Laxmidas, of the efforts made to stop the sale of feathered caps in the bazaars. The leaders of the Hindu community of Junagad have passed a resolution that any Hindu shopkeeper found selling such caps shall be fined six rupees. At the same time, in order not to put the dealers to any unjust loss on caps

already in stock, the framers of this decree purchased the whole supply, and to-day, adds our correspondent, "you cannot get a feathered cap for any price from a Hindu dealer in the whole of the bazaars of this city." As a further step some Hindu gentlemen have petitioned the Government to make the sale of feathers illegal in every part of British India.

So stringent an edict as this is hardly likely to have Government authority. Such a prohibition of the sale of manufactured goods is contrary to British ideas, and Englishmen would not willingly impose on their fellow-subjects regulations they themselves would not stand; but Lord Curzon's edict will, no doubt, do much to suppress the professional hunter, and further regulations to provide a close season for all native wild birds of India—thus preserving the species, and preventing cruelty to nestlings—must be the aim of bird protectors.

MUIRBURN.

COMMENT was made in this Society's Report for 1902 upon the burning of gorse on the Welsh hills in close time, and the consequent destruction of many birds and nests; but later correspondence encouraged the hope that such fires were more often accidental than intentional in their origin. In connection with the same subject the Society's attention was called to a letter which appeared in the *Dundee Advertiser* in March last, stating that

"On the Links of Barry the Wild Birds Protection Act is annually set at defiance by the War Office, who are owners of the ground. The burning of the old grass, which ought to be done before the nesting season begins, is deferred until after the nesting season has begun. By this means hundreds of eggs and of young birds are annually destroyed during the season when such destruction is expressly prohibited by the Wild Birds Protection Act."

An enquiry as to the truth of this statement was addressed to the War Office authorities, and the following reply was received from the Commanding Officer of the Royal Engineers, Perth:

"The only foundation for the statement that the War Office annually burn the grass is that on the Volunteer Rifle Ranges at Monifrith, which are part of the War Department property at Barry Links, the Volunteers have in former years burnt the grass where it obstructed a view of the targets. This, however, is now prohibited.

"So far from its being the case that the War Department fires the grass, the caretaker at Barry keeps a constant look-out for fires, and when they break out steps are at once taken to extinguish them.

"In spite of all precautions, however, fires at Barry are of not infrequent occurrence, and have caused much damage to the War Department plantations. Some of these outbreaks are, I fear, attributable to malice or carelessness on the part of the public, but the most fruitful cause is, I think, sparks from engines passing on the adjoining railway. If your Society can by any means prevail on the railway companies to use efficient spark arresters you will confer as great an obligation on the owners of plantations as on the birds nesting in them."

The Dundee and Arbroath Joint Railway was accordingly communicated with, and in turn disclaim the imputation, stating that fires caused by engine sparks are very rare, and adding :

“ We are very anxious to avoid any destruction to property or to wild birds by the burning of the grass, and the engines working the trains are fitted with the most approved apparatus for the arrest of sparks from the engine fires. It is not an uncommon thing for our people at Barry to see fires burning at a great distance from the railway line, and these fires are no doubt caused by people wandering about on the Links, which, as perhaps you are aware, are practically open to the public.”

EGG-COLLECTING BY SCHOOLBOYS.

THE following letter was sent to the Headmasters of public schools last spring, by the Hon. and Rev. Canon Lyttelton, Chairman of the Headmasters' Conference and Headmaster of Haileybury.

“ Dear Headmaster,—Not long ago I received an urgent appeal from the Birds' Protection Society in regard to the practice of schoolboys buying birds' nests and eggs from country boys in the neighbourhood. If this practice once becomes at all common in a school the result is a widespread destruction of young bird life. The country boys bring in a nest full of nestlings or eggs, and a schoolboy supposes that as the harm is done he may as well buy a nest, not thinking that every such purchase leads to many more nests being destroyed.

“ It has been found where this evil has been checked, that a single prohibition is of no use. Every spring, at least, the boys need a strong reminder that any purchase of this kind constitutes a serious offence, otherwise the new generation of younger boys start the practice in total ignorance of what it means.

“ I am authorised by the Committee to ask you to co-operate with the Society in its beneficent work by dealing with this matter in your own school.”

In connection with this subject a good lead is given by the Rev. A. L. Hussey, formerly of Folkestone. Mr. Hussey, who has retired from active scholastic work to a pleasant country house in a beautiful neighbourhood, makes it a rule that all boys staying with him “ must abstain from birds-nesting, egg-collecting, and catapults.”

Preservation of Woodcock.—At a meeting of the Field Sports Protection Association, at Limmer's Hotel, in June, the Earl of Abercorn described the difficulties encountered in preserving woodcock on his Irish estate. He never allowed the birds to be shot after the close of the shooting season, but they did not return in the numbers looked for. Mr. Harting explained that in some parts of Europe, notably Germany and Denmark, the birds were shot on their spring migrations; and the meeting unanimously agreed that efforts should be made to obtain an international agreement among sportsmen not to kill woodcock in spring. The woodcock is scheduled in the Act of 1880, and the killing of it in the United Kingdom during the Close Time by any person is, therefore, prohibited under a possible penalty of £1 per bird.

THE LAW AND THE COLLECTOR.

A CORRESPONDENT having written to the *Times* deploring the absence of any provision in the Wild Birds' Protection Acts to enable collectors to kill or take wild birds during the breeding season “ for scientific purposes,” Colonel L. Howard Irby writes in the *Saturday Review* (July 18th):—

“ It seems to me that it would be a great misfortune if the Wild Birds' Protection Act was relaxed in the slightest degree. Unlike the vast districts of the United States and Canada, we with our small territorial extent cannot afford to allow our rare, and fast becoming rarer, birds to be killed even to gratify the ‘ scientific purposes ’ of private collectors, who will give foolish and fabulous prices for British specimens; consequently the law is constantly evaded and broken. For instance, at the last meeting of the British Ornithologists' Club, two pratincoles, shot near Romney for the benefit of a private collector, were exhibited with pride, as the first of the genus obtained in the County of Kent. One of these birds was of a species new to the so-called British list.

“ At the same meeting, a nest and eggs of the blue-headed wagtail, taken near Winchelsea, were exhibited, a thoughtful way of encouraging this common Continental bird to increase in this country. These birds and eggs are in the schedule as forbidden to be destroyed. What is there in such useless conduct to aid science, or of what scientific value are these British specimens?

“ Furthermore, some persons annually go to the north of Scotland to harry every egg they can find both of protected and unprotected birds, and these eggs are consigned to dealers or sold to private collectors.

“ Not only do birds suffer, but our rarer butterflies are fast being exterminated. As those which are rare are usually local, in many districts they have disappeared, never to return. Such also is the fate of our local and rare plants, ruthlessly torn up and eradicated by ‘ botanists.’

“ It is to be regretted that these persons do not expend their energies in some innocuous form of collecting, such as postage stamps or walking sticks.

“ I hope you may lend your valuable aid to stop such futile destruction by those who ought to be called ornithophobists instead of ornithologists; the motto of the latter should be ‘ Observation without destruction.’ ”

In support of Colonel Irby's remonstrance, Mr. Frank C. H. Borrett wrote to the same paper, August 22nd :

“ I know enough of the egg-collector never to wish to see one iota of the Wild Birds' Protection Acts relaxed in his favour, but rather to see their provisions stringently enforced against him—unfortunately a most difficult thing to do. Only too often he is an unmitigated evil, and stops at nothing when the collecting mania is on him.

“ For whom does the paid egg-snatcher work, and the game-keeper with his infinite opportunities of destruction of birds and their eggs? It is to be hoped that people are yearly becoming more suspicious and jealous of collectors, and are beginning to stand up for their rights in wild birds. I think recent legislation shows this. A month ago I came across a man in a western county who is employed by a well-meaning society* to protect the eggs of a certain rare bird. This wretch, who calls himself a variety collector, has, it appears, for two years and more been robbing the county of many of its rarest birds' eggs, whilst very indifferently protecting those especially confided to his care.

“ The variety collector of eggs is a man who will take

* Not the Society for Protection of Birds.

ten, twenty, fifty, any number of eggs of the same kind of bird, provided they differ one from another in size, colour, or marking. Can anything be more reprehensible? Is it for such that the provisions of the Acts should be relaxed?"

"Incidentally our efforts to protect the kite have brought to light other details of the war of extinction now being waged by the dealer and his patrons. We hear of thirty-seven eggs of the common buzzard taken from Wales as the proceeds of a single raid; of a hundred eggs of the chough taken last year from a single Irish island; of £2 10s. offered by a Yorkshire naturalist for a single clutch of stone curlew . . . I trust that English collectors may be led to see how discreditable a thing it is to be instrumental in the extinction of a British species."—R. J. Ussher in the *Zoologist*, June, 1903.

[It is to be regretted that the efforts of the British Ornithologists' Club to protect the kites' nests in Wales this year have been unsuccessful. One subscriber to the fund even received from a dealer an offer of British kites' eggs taken this spring.]

BIRDS RELEASED IN LONDON.

THE following has been communicated to us by Mr. Frank Finn, F.Z.S., M.B.O.U.

"Those interested in our London bird-life may like to hear of the release of some interesting birds there during the present year. These were a pair of the large yellow-breasted Black-headed Bunting (*Emberiza melanocephala*) and twelve Rosy Pastors (*Pastor roseus*), both examples of rare species which are shot down whenever they naturally occur by collectors; and, among more ordinary English birds, a pair of Greenfinches, a pair of Blackcaps and two young birds, three Great Tits, a Nightingale, and a Crossbill. Of course I have no news of any of these birds, except that the Rosy Pastors have stayed about St. James' Park for some time, but if any of them return to London and bring friends I shall deem the experiment well worth making. At the same time I do not recommend anyone to turn out such birds as Blackcaps and Nightingales; I did it more out of compassion for their captivity than anything else, and expect that they went away and never returned. But the other stronger and more omnivorous species will be very likely to be induced to colonize London by repeated liberations, while in the case of rarities one has the consolation of knowing that one is filling up the gaps made among our rare visitors by the unscientific rapacity of collectors."

The Cormorant and Shag.

"THE Fisheries Committee of the Cornwall County Council have passed a resolution to petition the Home Secretary to exclude cormorants and shags from the protection of the Acts. One hopes they will not meet with success, since, after all, the amount of real injury done by these birds is comparatively small, and if guns were allowed on our coasts in close time we should very soon lose the few rare birds left to us. The Cornish Chough, for instance, is almost extinct, and the premium at which both eggs and living bird stand threatens its complete extermination at no distant date. . . . Besides, the principle on which the resolution is conceived is entirely wrong. What our deep-sea fisheries require is not the extermination of the birds, but a systematised stocking with ova."—*Country Life*, September 12th, 1903.

ROOKS versus GRUBS.

"MUCH loss is being incurred in Scotland this season, especially amongst the barley and oat crops, from the attacks of 'grub.' Under this name are included the leather-jacket and the wireworm, with possibly the larva of the cockchafer, the last-named being identical with the very troublesome *ver blanc* of French farmers. The leather-jacket, as is well known, is the fleshy legless larva of the daddy-longlegs fly, and the wireworm is the slender six-legged larva of the click beetle. Both live in the larval condition in the soil for several years, feeding voraciously on the roots of plants throughout the whole time, and thus doing much mischief to the young crops. The increase of 'grub' now complained of is attributed in some quarters to the extensive destruction of rooks in recent years. Like certain other creatures, the rook is sometimes the friend and at other times the foe of the husbandman; and it is not easy to strike a balance either in favour of or against this exceedingly wily bird. The depredations of the 'grub' across the border find a parallel this season in the ravages of slugs and snails in England in both field and garden, seedlings of all kinds having been swept off time after time by these night marauders."—*Times Agricultural Article*, June 8, 1903.

"For some years now the farmers have been waging war against rooks and crows, and they spend time and ammunition in order to protect themselves from the ravages of the crow family. And success seems to have crowned their efforts, and the early-sown corn is no longer said to be put in for the crows (*Anglice*, rooks), nor are our potato fields devastated as they used to be. But the crow had his uses, and although he abused his privileges he is being missed at the present moment. A Cairnie (Aberdeenshire) farmer is reported as having exclaimed, as he viewed the myriads of grub on his corn fields, "Aw wus Aw had a thousan' craws!" Ay, that is it! The corn crop will be almost a dead failure on some fields because of the ravages of grub, and the crow would have been very useful now in making some meals off the grub."—*Aberdeen Weekly Free Press*, May 30, 1903.

"If the birds were destroyed it is very doubtful whether after ten years a farmer or gardener could possibly bring any crop to maturity."—*Ontario Agricultural College Bulletin* 124. (Published by Ontario Department of Agriculture.)

It has been suggested that at Harvest Thanksgiving Services preachers might appropriately say a word in favour of bird protection.

County Council Orders.

Monmouthshire has obtained an Order dated June 10th, 1903. [E.F.]

Further Orders for the following Counties have been granted:—

Devonshire, dated July 8th, 1903. [A.B.C.D.E.F.]

Lincoln (Holland), dated July 9th, 1903. [C.]

Lincoln (Lindsey), dated August 27th, 1903. [B.C.E.F.]

Buckinghamshire, dated August 28th, 1903. [B.F.S.]

Liverpool, dated Sept. 14th, 1903. [F.]

Southampton (Hampshire), dated Sept. 15th, 1903. [B.D.E.F.S.]

NEWS FROM BRANCHES.

At a meeting held in June, 1903, of the Committee of the Bristol Branch, of which the Bishop of Bristol is President, the following resolution was unanimously adopted:—

“That this Committee desires to draw the attention of those responsible for the education of the young, both in secondary and elementary schools, to the grave objection of permitting collections of objects of natural history, such as birds' eggs and butterflies, to be made by the pupils in connection with nature study. Such collections necessitate the destruction of animal life and species, and, in the case of birds, frequently involve a breach of the law, whereas nature study was intended to cultivate the power of observation, and to awaken in the children an intelligent interest in the ordinary objects of natural life.”

The Southport Branch had a most successful Annual Meeting (briefly alluded to in our last issue) on June 17th, when the Mayoress of Southport, Mrs. T. L. Scarisbrick, presided over a large gathering. The report, read by the Hon. Secretary, Mrs. Edwin Walker, showed an increase in membership from 87 to 192; it welcomed the institution of a clay-bird club, and stated that protests had been made against the “starling shoots” of the Southport Gun Club and the destruction of rooks' nests and eggs. The report having been adopted and officers re-elected, the meeting unanimously passed a resolution calling the attention of the Town Council to the unsuitability of the position of the aviary in Hesketh Park, as it faced north-east, and was cold and sunless. We regret to learn that this protest has been of no avail.

Mr. John Elliott, J.P., of Sunnyside, Hoylake, is forming a new Branch of the Society for Wirral, and kindly undertakes the Hon. Secretaryship. Miss Violet Coutts, the Well House, Banstead, succeeds Miss Neville as Hon. Secretary for Banstead. Miss Denton, 25, Bilton Road, takes the Hon. Secretaryship for Rugby, vacated by the removal of Mrs. H. S. Tunnard, whose enthusiasm did so much to advance the work in that district. Mrs. Grant Wilson resigns the Hon. Secretaryship for Monmouth on leaving the town.

IN THE COURTS.

HENRY PANNETT was summoned at Lewes on July 14th for taking wild birds (non-scheduled) in close time, also for cruelly tying their legs with string. Defendant had been commissioned to catch birds by another man who had permission from the owner of land, but as authority cannot be transferred in this manner he was ordered to pay 2s. 6d. costs in the first case; in the second case he was fined 7s. 6d.

A curious defence was raised at Stirling Sheriff Court on June 27th, when a miner, W. McLuckie, was charged with having three larks in his possession. It was admitted that the birds were taken from the nest, but the solicitor argued that the purpose of the Act was to see that birds were not taken for the purpose of being destroyed, and that the mere fact of putting them in a cage was no contravention of the statute; all depended on the meaning of the word “taken.” The Sheriff-Substitute said the offence was just the kind the Act aimed at; it was intended to protect the life and liberty of wild birds, and expressed itself very clearly. He imposed a fine of 10s.

A shocking case of cruelty has excited much attention at Meopham, in Kent, where a boy named Philip Lynds was charged with having, on May 5th, ill-treated a black-bird by catching it in a net and cutting off its beak, tongue, and claws. The case was brought under the Wild Animals in Captivity Act, and a point of law was

raised as to whether it came within the statute. The Bench decided that the bird was in “close captivity” within the meaning of the Act; but after two adjournments the case was, on June 28th, dismissed, the chairman saying that the evidence was very contradictory, and warning the boy that there was a strong suspicion against him, and he would do well to be kind to animals in future. (In consequence of the indignation aroused by the case a Band of Mercy has been started at Meopham.)

At Holt Petty Sessions, on August 24th, William Newton, described as a gentleman, of Cley-next-the-sea, was fined £1 and costs, £1 13s. 6d., for taking eight terns' eggs from nests on Blakeney Point on June 10th, contrary to the Norfolk Bird Protection Order. The prosecution was instituted by the Cley and Blakeney Wild Bird Protection Association, which has done good work in protecting the terns in the district; the birds have in consequence increased considerably, and some 200 pairs nest at Blakeney every year.

At Bristol, on August 21st, two bird-catchers were convicted of cruelty to linnets by overcrowding them. One of the men was carrying a cage 3ft. 11in. by 7in., in which were sixty-two linnets and a chaffinch; and they had also in their possession smaller cages containing single decoy birds. Fined 2s. 6d. each.

LECTURE SEASON, 1903-4.

THE Society for the Protection of Birds possesses upward of 700 lantern slides, which are at the disposal of Associate Members for the illustration of lectures in promotion of the objects of the Society. As early an application as possible should be made for the loan of slides, as during the winter months they are in constant demand. Lists and full particulars will be sent on application to the Secretary. The following lectures are available for lending, with or without slides:

1. Birds and their Protection. By W. Kennedy, B.A.
2. Birds at Home and Abroad.
3. Concerning our Common Birds.
4. Birds of Legend and Song.
5. Bird Facts and Fancies. (Lecture to Children.)
6. Birds on the Land. (In preparation.)

Songs illustrated with slides, and books of suggested programmes are also lent to Associates arranging entertainments, etc., to help the work.

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No. 2. Woodland Notes.	No. 4. At My Window.

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Next Issue.—The next Number of BIRD NOTES AND NEWS will be ready on December 1st.

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The
St. Kilda
Wren.

BIRD NOTES AND NEWS.

Circular Letter issued Periodically by the
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LONDON, 3, HANOVER SQUARE, W.

[DECEMBER, 1903.]

HUNTING THE WREN.

HUNTING the wren—a pastime now supposed to be obliterated from the list of popular amusements, not only survives but flourishes; only the venue and the conditions of the game have changed. In former days it was practised on one winter's day in the year, in Ireland and the Isle of Man, originating in some untraced superstition, and perpetuated as a sport by the young barbarians of the land. To-day it lasts throughout the nesting season; the motive is greed; the object not so much the killing of individual birds, though that is not unknown, as the taking of nests and eggs; and the inevitable result the ultimate extirpation of an entire race of this harmless little songster.

The small island of St. Kilda and its neighbouring islets—masses of rock standing out in the wild Atlantic, fifty miles from anywhere—have long been known as the home of myriads of seabirds; fulmars and puffins, gannets and guillemots peopling densely ledges and burrows wherever eggs can be laid and young birds reared. And to this multitude of wild life the inhabitants of St. Kilda, struggling for existence on some four square miles of inhospitable soil, formerly owed almost their only means of support. The flesh and eggs of the birds were to them for meat; the fat supplied their light; the feathers and oil constituted their one trade with the outer world. In consequence of

these conditions a solitary exception was made of the island when the Wild Birds Protection Act of 1880 secured a close time for wild birds in all other portions of the United Kingdom.

The lack of small land-birds on this isolated and treeless fragment of British territory is as striking as is the abundance of its sea-fowl. One of the latest visitors records the existence of rock-pipit, twite, tree-sparrow, starling, and wheatear as breeding species; but the one true singing-bird that has made an actual home of this rock is the St. Kilda wren, and this little bird has clung so closely to its island fastness that it has adapted itself in a measure to its peculiar environment, and has come to differ in some slight degree from its relations on the mainland. It is the one special and particular bird of St. Kilda.

The presence of the wren at St. Kilda has long been known; but it was only in 1884 that Mr. Charles Dixon, who found it then abundant, noted its variations from the ordinary type. Its peculiarities were much discussed by ornithologists. It was discovered to be a little lighter in colour than the common wren, more conspicuously barred, with stouter legs and thicker bill, with eggs a trifle bigger, and nest made, perforce, of slightly different material—characteristics definite enough, it was generally decided, to mark a local race, but not to constitute a species—scarcely enough, in fact, to give any distinguishing feature in the eyes of ordinary man. Such small peculiarities, however, were enough to excite a feverish

longing on the part of dealers and collectors to swoop down upon the tiny songster, and sweep "something new" off the face of the earth into their catalogues and cabinets. They have swooped and swept accordingly, and the extinction of this wren seems likely to attest their prowess. The song of St. Kilda's bird is also stated to be a slight variant on the ordinary brilliant lyric of the wren; to be louder and clearer, as though striving to make itself heard above the harsh cries of gannets and guillemots and the roar of the ocean. But the song cannot be collected: it can only be silenced.

Meantime, while the hunting of the wren has gone merrily forward, conditions of life have been modified at St. Kilda. With improved communication, and with the better housing provided by the present owner, Macleod of Macleod, has come a development of sheep-breeding and wool industries, and the St. Kildan of to-day does not rely to the extent his fathers did on fulmar and guillemot. Trading enterprise has, however, taught him a new way of making money out of the birds of his island, and, as is usually the case when trading enterprise is the instructor, the profit does not go wholly to the native. "Of late years," says Dr. Wiglesworth, who visited St. Kilda in 1902, "the trading collector has got a foothold in the place, and the number of eggs now exported annually to supply the insatiable demand of the trade seems destined to do more damage to the bird population of St. Kilda than the natives would ever have effected if left to themselves." The raid is, of course, mainly on the rarest birds—the fork-tailed petrel, and, especially, the St. Kilda wren, which "is hunted down remorselessly for the sake of its eggs." At two sales at Stevens's Auction Rooms this autumn (1903) there were offered for sale nine or ten clutches of these eggs, with the nests, taken this year and sent to market by one person. They did not fetch any great price, but the gain is presumably sufficient to encourage collectors of this type to continue their depredations until the last wren has been hunted down, and they have the satisfaction of knowing that they have "wiped out" one sprightly little song-bird from its only habitat.

At the same sales various clutches of protected eggs sent in by the same individual (who had about a hundred lots at each sale) were objected to as having been illegally taken, and were at once withdrawn by Mr. Stevens. In other cases rare eggs had been taken in counties in which protection orders have not been obtained or are

inadequate. But the case of the St. Kilda wren stands alone; the goodwill of the proprietor of the island is insufficient to meet it; and we trust that some way may be found of protecting the birds before protection is too late. The exception in the Act of 1880 was intended to befriend a hardy and straitened people. It was never meant to cover the spoliations of curiosity mongers and of the trading collector by giving facilities for the extinction of unique and interesting forms of wild life.

BIRDS IN HATS.

THE following letter from the Duchess of Portland, President of the Society for the Protection of Birds, appeared in the *Times* of October 27th, 1903:—

"Any one who bestows even a passing glance at the milliners' windows cannot fail to notice with amazement the profusion of stuffed birds, birds' wings, and various bird trimmings which are conspicuous in so many of them, whether in Regent Street, Kensington, the suburbs, or in far provincial towns.

"Hats composed of feathers—some wreathed in bullfinches, some with twisted and distorted bodies of terns, others decked with dyed plumes—offend the eye at every turn. From sea-gulls and bullfinches, in fact, to the brilliant gem of the tropics, nothing appears to be sacred to the trade.

"Is it useless to protest yet once more against the reckless slaughter of bird-life which this barbarous fashion entails?

"The personal vanity which sacrifices not the life only but the very race of birds created for the beautifying of the world is unworthy of the civilization of the twentieth century. In the interest of good taste, and for the sake of bird-life, I hope I need not plead in vain."

[Copies of the above letter, which has evoked much sympathetic comment in the Press, can be had at the office of the Society, 3, Hanover Square, W.]

In supporting the Duchess of Portland's appeal, Lord Medway writes to the *Times*:—

"Partly from ignorance, partly from indifference, but still more because ladies appear to be the slaves of their dressmakers and milliners, they continue to turn their hats into cemeteries. Why does no young Member of Parliament grasp the nettle, and bring in a Bill making it illegal to exhibit in a shop a hat decorated with feathers, except those of the ostrich and birds killed for food? It would be a case of protection to which no one could object."

Mr. T. Southwell, writing to the *Eastern Daily Press* (October 28th, 1903), *apropos* of an exhibition

held in Norwich by the artificial flower makers connected with the Flower Girls' Mission, says :—

“On my way home I passed a shop window and was shocked and disgusted at the sight presented ; there were the mutilated remains of birds crushed and distorted . . . on one were the ill-assorted fragments of no less than eight bullfinches, and on another a like number of small birds distorted out of all recognition. Contrasting these two exhibitions, I asked myself, can such things really be? Is it possible that from the mere point of artistic beauty the women of the present day will prefer these abortions to the beautiful flowers I had been looking at? In the one case, too, there was the knowledge that in adopting the handiwork of the girls they were helping to render lighter the afflictions of their less fortunate sisters, and in the other they were giving their countenance and encouragement to the perpetration of cruelties unspeakable. How long will this heartless fashion endure?”

In a letter addressed to the Hon. Sec. of the Society for the Protection of Birds, the Hon. Mrs. Boyle writes, on October 12th :—

“The distress and indignation I feel about the barbarous use of birds in hats makes me write strongly. Birds have ‘come in’ worse than ever, though *not*, I see, in the best Bond Street shops. . . . The utter callousness to all that is refined and merciful and in good taste of the whole world of women is as hopeless as it is disheartening.”

Despite, however, the fact that the best-class milliners have little display of bird-fragments, many ladies declare they find it difficult to get hats and bonnets without ospreys and other bird trimmings. On the other hand, Miss Dickenson, of 12, Duke Street, Manchester Square, a milliner who uses only the feathers allowed by the Society, states that she has lost many customers through refusing to supply ospreys and wings.

GO, LOVELY BIRD.

Go, lovely bird,
Speed from my lady warily,
For she hath heard
That finches dainty decking be,
And her sweet charms mean death to thee !

Cares she that's young,
And seeks to have her graces spied,
That thou hast sung
In woodlands where the violets hide?
She loves thee better stuffed and dyed !

For at the sight
Of ruffled breast and stiffened limb
Her eyes grow bright.
A wreath of death will bravely trim
The circlet of my lady's brim !

Punch, Oct. 28th (Reprinted by permission).

At the sixth ordinary general meeting of the Scottish Natural History Society, held at Edinburgh on November 5th, it was unanimously agreed to protest in the strongest possible terms against the indiscriminate slaughter of birds for millinery purposes.

The Bradford Scientific Association, at their meeting on the 16th October, unanimously carried the following resolution :—“That the members of this society look with concern upon the wholesale slaughter of birds for millinery purposes, and resolve to use their individual efforts to stop this slaughter, which is thinning the ranks of some of our most beautiful and interesting species.” Local evidence was quoted showing the enormous number of birds killed annually to supply this trade. The Secretary was instructed to send a copy of the resolution to the Society for the Protection of Birds and the Selborne Society, and the hope was expressed that steps might be devised to make the Wild Birds Protection Acts rather less of a dead letter than they are at present, which could only be done by arousing public opinion on the matter.

The Rev. E. J. Houghton, of St. Stephen's Bristol, delivered at a harvest festival service a scathing indictment of modern fashions, and appealed to women to do all in their power to stamp out the practice of trimming hats with birds.

THE “ARTIFICIAL” CANARD AGAIN.

THE colloquy appended took place a few days ago between a Branch Secretary of the Society for the Protection of Birds and the forewoman of one of the leading drapery establishments in London. The lady selected this shop for her purchases because there were fewer ospreys than usual in the windows, and on entering at once gave the reason for her preference.

Forewoman.—“Oh, I suppose, madam, you are one of the ladies who have conscientious objections to wearing them? We have heard a good deal about that from some society—the Society for the Protection of Birds I think it is called. But it is entirely a mistake. The ospreys are not real ; they are all manufactured.”

Branch Sec.—“Are they, indeed? That is very interesting. I am greatly interested in manufactures, and like to encourage the wearing of manufactured articles. What are they made of?”

F.—“Simply quills, madam.” (*Taking up a*

quill, and beginning to peel it down with a pen-knife). "In this way, you see."

B.S.—"Yes, that is all very well; but you may go on with that for ever, and you will never make anything like an osprey out of it."

F.—"Oh, I assure you, madam, that is the method. We make them ourselves on the premises."

B.S.—"Really! That is still more interesting. I suppose you would not object to allowing me to see them being made?"

F.—"Oh—er—certainly not. Miss Jones!" (*Miss Jones is despatched to the manager to ask if a lady may be allowed to see the "manufacture," and presently returns.*)

Miss Jones.—"The manager's compliments, and he thinks the forewoman has made a little mistake. The ospreys are not made *on the premises*."

B.S.—"My compliments to the manager, and will he kindly tell me where they *are* made; because I will go to any part of the world to see it done!" (*Interval.*)

Miss J. (*on returning*).—"The manager's compliments, and he really does not know."

B.S. (*to Forewoman*).—"No, he does not know, and you do not know, and I do not know; because there is no such place, and you are as well aware of that as I am. So why in the world do you go on telling that story?"

Once again Professor Ray Lankester has been appealed to—this time by a *Daily News* representative—respecting the genuineness or otherwise of "imitation" plumage.

"It is," was the answer, "absolutely impossible to make artificial feathers that will in any way resemble the genuine plumage. Only recently I have had quite twenty ladies come to me with their millinery, which they were informed was entirely artificial, and in every case dead birds had been employed. The lies told by the trade sicken me as much as their practice. An osprey has never been imitated, and, whatever the shop-keeper may say, it is always obtained from the parent bird slain at the breeding season. These questions have been so often placed before me that I am quite tired of assuring the public of the facts of the matter."

In the spring, it will be remembered, the Society for the Protection of Birds made a thorough investigation into the "imitation osprey" question. The Selborne Society has now been obtaining

the opinion of experts as to the accuracy of the statement that the birds used for millinery are "artificial." "The investigation has proved the exact contrary to be the case." Gulls, kittiwakes, terns, bullfinches, starlings, doves, blue jays, and birds of paradise are certified as real, and the list might without difficulty be extended.

LINES

Dedicated to the Ladies who wear Ospreys.

"Where are you going to, my pretty maid?"
 "To the milliner's show-room, sir," she said.
 "And what would you seek there, my pretty maid?"
 "The beautiful ospreys, sir," she said.
 "And how are they brought there, my pretty maid?"
 "By famine and slaughter, sir," she said.
 "And if it be so, my pretty maid,
 Yet will you wear them? Alas!" he said;
 "Around every plume that is waving there,
 Stirred by the tremulous summer air,
 There has wailed the moan of a fledgling's pain
 Uttered in anguish, but uttered in vain—
 A cry of starvation raised o'er and o'er
 To the parent birds that shall hear no more.
 In the days of gladness, the days of spring,
 Nature sighed in the breeze thro' the egret's wing;
 And like snow in its exquisite softness white,
 A delicate plume crept forth to the light,
 Like a sanctioning seal from the God above
 On Nature's teaching and bridal love.
 But woman, whose tenderest care should seek
 To succour the helpless and guard the weak,
 Coveted still the beauty given
 To the creature of earth by the God of heaven.
 At fashion's bidding the hunter has sped,
 The plumes are ravished, the mother lies dead;
 And if such be their story, my pretty maid,
 Yet will you wear them?" again he said.

Diss, 1903.

ADA F. SLACK.

Bird Tables.—In the last number of BIRD NOTES AND NEWS the making of nesting-boxes and shelters was suggested as an employment for winter evenings. In the wintry weather bird tables should be set up in the garden by young carpenters. These are simple matters. A wooden table-top should stand firmly on a stem of wood or gas-piping high enough to be safely out of reach of cats; a hole may be cut to hold a dish of water, and from cross-twigs reared above the level may be suspended bones and cocoanuts, for tits and other acrobats, unattainable by the sparrow. Scraps of meat and fat, etc., should vary the crumbs which are no benefit to insectivorous birds, and sunflower heads and grain of any kind will be generally acceptable.

The Cormorant.—The Cornwall County Council, at their November meeting, refused by a large majority to apply for an Order excluding the cormorant from the operation of the Wild Birds' Protection Acts. It was urged that if promiscuous shooting were allowed at all times of the year in places where cormorants are found, great injury would be done to all kinds of sea birds.

NOTES.

County Challenge Shield Competition.

BIRD and Tree County Challenge Shields, with their accompanying prizes and awards, given by the Society for the Protection of Birds, were this year competed for in four counties—Berkshire and East Yorkshire (second year), Hampshire and Westmoreland,—the competing teams being drawn from elementary schools. The two last-named counties, which entered the lists for the first time, did better than the older competitors as regards both number and quality of the essays sent in; but this might have been anticipated. Hampshire is not only the largest county of the four, but it has long been favoured by naturalists, from Gilbert White onwards, and has some earnest Bird Protection workers within its borders; while Westmoreland, though with a small and scattered population, could hardly fail to respond in some measure to the Wordsworth and Ruskin traditions. It would be unreasonable to expect equal enthusiasm in a district where little has been hitherto said or done to suggest that Nature is worth noticing. If all competitors have not yet grasped the Society's ideal, or realised that an ounce of childish observation and comprehension is worth many pounds of dry facts and figures crammed, heaven knows how, into little heads, they have made a notable step forward. And though the Society's Shield can go to but one school in a county, there must surely be sympathetic and kindly residents in and near every village and parish represented, to ensure a Festival Day for every competing school, with tree-planting to mark the event, suitable prizes to the young essayists, and a cheery word of commendation and "better luck next time." To every school arranging such a festival the Society is offering a consolation book-prize, to be given, at the option of the local committee, to the writer of the best essay or to the school library.

"Eyes and No Eyes."

THE Bishop of Winchester, in summing up a discussion on the "Dullness of the Country," at his Diocesan Conference the other day, suggestively remarked that but few villages probably possessed teachers competent to instil into their scholars a sense of the beauty and dignity of the country, or to instruct them in the difference between a jay and a tom-tit. It should be some satisfaction to Dr. Ryle to know that at least a proportion of the teachers in his diocese evidently take a keen interest in jays and tom-tits, and are doing their best to press home the moral of the old story of "Eyes and No Eyes," which contains the truth about the dullness of the country in a nutshell. Where boys and girls are being taught to see with their own eyes the birds and trees selected, an unmistakable freshness and vitality brightens their essays, and sets them high above the wonderfully erudite—and sometimes wonderfully dull—compositions that make

one wonder whether the little writers have ever beheld the creature or the tree they so elaborately describe. The boys of Sandown Higher Grade School—not children, it is true, but lads between 12 and 16—have reached the point of not merely being taught to observe but of knowing how to do it on their own account. Their papers, which carry off the Shield, are really admirable; the writer of that on the kestrel has surely in him the making of a naturalist, while the study of the ash-tree is also exceptionally good. An excellent second is furnished by the Bitterne Park Boys' School, Southampton; their essays display much knowledge and genuine interest in work that is obviously inspired by an enthusiastic and thoroughly capable teacher, and is pleasantly flavoured by many local references. If there were a third prize it would have gone to the girls of St. Peter's School, Bournemouth, whose essays are delightfully sincere in feeling and expression, and tell of the pleasure their preparation has given to the writers.

Hampshire Schools.

OTHER schools in Hampshire deserve honourable mention. In the *first class*, Hook, showing much observation, especially as regard birds, as well as information; Privett, where books have been intelligently studied and taken out of doors; Bitterne Park Girls, essays prettily and sympathetically written, the trees notably good. *Second class*, Wroxall, I.W., accompanied by good drawings, and brightly told, if somewhat too bookish; Yateley and Headley, both well written, better in trees than in birds, but deficient in sympathy; Western, Southampton, very meritorious, if not always quite accurate; Fareham, apparently all derived from books, but good at that; Ventnor, where, again, the young folk are well taught, and will, no doubt, learn to look through their own eyes in time. *Third class*, Wickham, where some originality betokens personal observation; Awbridge, with coloured crayon drawings; Boldre; and Barton Stacey.

Westmoreland.

ALL the essays from Westmoreland are good. Those from Warcop, whither the Shield goes, are astonishing for the amount of information contained and the ambitious character of the composition; they show real hard work, intelligence, and considerable observation; and it is pleasant to hear that the school has already distinguished itself in Nature study in the eyes of H.M. Inspector, has formed a Bird and Tree library, and enjoyed Bird and Tree rambles. The *proxime accessit* is Heversham, the style of whose essays is admirable, the observations being accurate and simply recorded. The paper on the starling is really noteworthy for a child of ten; and very good, too, are those on apple and yew. The Beetham essays contain a great deal that is excellent, and Kendal deserves a special word of praise for the knowledge shown of Bird Protection law.

Berkshire and East Yorkshire.

BERKSHIRE gave no trouble to the judges, the essays from Buckland School, Faringdon, being far and away the best; they are, indeed, exceedingly good, much above the average of work to be expected from boys and girls of eleven or twelve. "How very fortunate it seems," remarks the lad who writes so well on the nightingale, "that such an excellent songster is not of gorgeous appearance, or we might possibly read in the daily papers that it had become the fashion for ladies to have their hats trimmed with them." Nor are the papers at all priggish. The drawings are also good. Hinton Waldrist, Newbury (Girls'—British), Touchen End, and Braywick will all do better when the children's powers of noticing and listening are more cultivated. It is curious that in all counties the song of birds is more inaccurately described than their appearance; even such familiar birds as starling, robin, chaffinch, and greenfinch seem to be only half heard. East Yorkshire, the judges regret to report, does not come up to the standard. The competition is feebler than last year's, and local friends of Nature study ought to look the matter up. The 1902 winners of the Shield (Salthouse Lane School, Hull) continue to hold it, Skidby stands second, and Ganton third.

Popular Birds and Trees.

As each young essayist chose the bird and tree which he or she was to study through the summer and write upon in the autumn, it is interesting to note that no fewer than thirty-eight species of birds and thirty-four trees are represented by the essays sent in to the Society. Among birds, the robin is first favourite; the next most popular birds being, in the order named: blackbird, sparrowhawk, thrush, skylark, starling, green woodpecker, swallow, and nightingale; while others include the sea-gull, cuckoo, nightjar, barn and brown owls, heron, woodcock, plover, stonechat, jackdaw, jay, magpie, goldfinch, and flycatcher. Among trees, the national oak is the most frequently chosen, with ash, elm, hazel, lime, and horse chestnut coming next; but beech, walnut, sycamore, yew, acacia, elder, holly, mulberry and other fruit trees, birch, alder, white and Normandy poplars, and even monkey-puzzle, are also on the list. It is probable that next year (when Bedfordshire is to be added to the list of competing counties) the conditions of the competition will be somewhat altered and simplified, and the Committee will gladly receive suggestions from teachers and others interested who are acquainted with the present regulations.

Nature Study Exhibition.

ONE of the handsome Bird and Tree Silver County Challenge Shields was a conspicuous feature on the Society's stall at the Home Counties Nature Study Exhibition, held in Burlington Gardens, October 30th

to November 2nd. Among the Society's exhibits were also nesting boxes and bird shelters, lantern slides, and specimens of various publications. As was the case at the larger show at the Botanic Gardens last year, evidence of bird-study occupied generally but a small place on the tables and in the many nature note-books sent in, as compared with botany and entomology; the school which takes the Hampshire Shield—Sandown—showed in the school section some interesting illustrations of its observations of bird and insect life; paintings of eggs happily took the place of nests and "clutches"; and birds formed the subject of three lectures, given by Mr. Kearton, Mr. Oliver Pike, and Mr. Lodge respectively.

The Police and the Acts.

A CORRESPONDENT of the Naturalist Editor of the *Yorkshire Weekly Post* (October 24th) recounts how a young policeman boasted to him of the success with which he acted as intermediary between a "man with a gun" and a local bird-stuffer in want of kingfishers. "This intelligent officer," says the writer, "did not appear to have the slightest idea that he had been guilty not only of a dastardly act, but of an illegal one, and he was not a little astonished and alarmed when I informed him that if he got his young friend to shoot a kingfisher or any other protected bird I would instantly take proceedings against both of them." This is no doubt an extreme case, but it is certain that one reason why the law in some places remains so nearly a dead letter is that the police do not understand it. For this reason the Society for the Protection of Birds is anxious to provide police-stations with literature calculated to rouse interest in and give information on the subject. Anyone wishing to assist in this direction can have their local station supplied with a bound volume of our Educational Series of Leaflets, together with Acts and Orders, with notes and explanations, and the Order in force in the district, by forwarding half-a-crown to the head office.

Ways and Means.

A FREE provision of literature to the police would have effects at least as important as the issue of publications to the coastguard, which the Society was enabled to undertake in the spring, by consent of the Admiralty, with results already discernible. The outlay attending this effort, however, was made possible by the donations given to the Watchers' Fund. It was hoped that the subscriptions, both special and general, would this year have sufficiently increased to justify the issue of instructions to the police; the employment of watchers or wardens on the lines adopted by the Audubon Societies of the United States; and the continuation of the educational leaflets. The Bird and Tree Day scheme started in 1900, in order not only to encourage a study and interest which must immensely broaden and brighten life's outlook, but

also to assist in safely guiding the Nature Study movement, has proved costly, and must continue increasingly so if fresh counties are to be taken up. But such a scheme so well begun should not be suffered to drop or to remain stationary. With these and many other projects on hand needing funds for their accomplishment, the Society appeals urgently for new and additional subscriptions from all interested in the bird-life of their country.

In Committee.

At the October meeting of the Committee of the Society for the Protection of Birds a letter on the subject of the Pole Trap Bill from the Home Office, and the reply thereto, were read. The reply of Lord Selborne to the protest in reference to the destruction of birds on the Isle of Achill was presented. A new leaflet entitled "The Little Yellow Bird" was accepted and approved, and an issue of 5000 for immediate circulation was ordered. A design for a new Christmas card with calendar for 1904 was accepted, and additional picture postcards sanctioned. Arrangements were made for adjudging the winners of the County Challenge Shields in connection with the Bird and Tree Day Competition. The steps being taken with reference to Bird Protection Orders by the County Councils of Hereford, Montgomery, Yorks, E. Riding, Waterford, and other counties were reported and considered. The protest against the sale by auction of eggs taken illegally, and the action thereon by Mr. Stevens, were reported.

TEA, COFFEE, AND BIRDS.

FROM the August number of *The Tropical Agriculturist*, the Ceylon planters' magazine, it appears that the tea growers of that country are waking up—"not a day too soon," says the editor—to the importance of encouraging and protecting birds on the estates. Various suggestions are made as to how best to attract and preserve small insectivorous birds in particular, with a view of keeping down caterpillar and other pests. The growing of fruit trees and shrubs and of various grains is recommended. "The best sanctuary of all for birds, in my opinion," writes an experienced planter, "is a grove of, say, an acre of trees (the greater proportion of them fruit trees, of course), and shrubs, creepers, and climbers, hedges, and ditches, and so forth round one's bungalow, as it is really surprising how tame even the most shy birds become in a blooming wilderness of this sort." Coolies and their children, it is observed, should be made to understand that they must not wantonly destroy nests.

On another page of the same magazine are some notes by Mr. Green, the Government Entomologist, on the lobster caterpillar, a pest which has increased with startling rapidity on certain estates. The most active enemy of the caterpillar is, it is stated, the common Ceylon crow, which "flocked to the infested fields and gorged themselves with the insects."

So highly is the Ceylon crow valued in his native land that he is being introduced into the Malay Peninsula, with a view to help the planters there to deal with their teeming insect enemies. Some years ago the cinchona plantations of Ceylon were devastated by a specially

destructive caterpillar. "It was easily found, and at first gangs of coolies were employed to exterminate it; but the crow was the effectual cure, and in its keen pursuit of this new tit-bit appeared in regions it had never previously visited. When the crow came about, the 'poochi' gang's occupation was gone; for it was unwearied in its quest, and hunted around with an argus-eyed persistency." A near relation of the cinchona caterpillar having turned its attention to the coffee plantations of Malay, a number of crows have been imported from Ceylon, and hailed as friends in need by the Selangor planters.

It is suggested that Ceylon might benefit by the introduction of insectivorous birds from India and Australia.

IN THE COURTS.

THE Wild Animals in Captivity Act continues to be usefully employed in the case of birdcatchers' and dealers' cruelty to decoy and caged birds. Among the cases recently heard was one at Marlborough Street Police Court, on October 21, when Susan Gaze, of Shaftesbury Avenue, was summoned for causing unnecessary cruelty to 60 redpolls. The birds were in a cage measuring about 12 in. by 9 in. by 6 in.; four were dead, and the rest in a dazed condition. Defendant loudly objected that they were linnets, not redpolls; but Mr. Plowden assured her that a stroke of his pen would turn them into linnets in the summons, and fined her 40s. and costs.

At Wood Green, on October 11, Charles Wilson, of Shrubbery Road, was fined 10s. and costs for cruelty to a linnets and a chaffinch. The birds were strung to a stick close to a net, and were in an exhausted state when found by the police. In a similar case in Nottinghamshire, where two men were fined 12s. 6d. each for cruelty to three linnets, which were tied with cords to pegs so tightly that two of them died when removed, the *Notts Express* heads its report, "Lenient fines for a cruel offence."

The taking of birds protected during the open season by County Council Orders also gives much work to inspectors and police; and would give more if all offences were detected. At Woolwich, on October 5, Mr. Baggallay fined two Plaistow men £2 each and costs for the unlawful possession of 18 chaffinches, 12 linnets, three goldfinches, and two larks. The release of all the birds was ordered. At the same Court four young men from Peckham were fined £1 each and costs for being in possession of a birdcatching net at Eltham; the police also having freed all their decoy birds, said to be worth 25s.

At Bridgewater, on September 24, Charles Baker, of Bristol, was fined £5 and costs, in default two months, for having thirty goldfinches in his possession. The neighbourhood was stated to be a hunting-ground of Bristol birdcatchers. Birds and nets were ordered to be forfeited. In the Fetcham district of Surrey, likewise, birdcatching is reported to be rife; but the local bench do not take the same vigorous measures to suppress it, six Londoners detected in extensive operations on September 13 being let off with the easy fines of 2s. 6d. and 1s. each with costs, although three of them had been in Court previously for a similar offence.

At Romsey, on September 24, John Rogers, of Southampton, was fined £3, representing 5s. a bird, for the possession of 12 newly taken goldfinches, his nets and other implements being forfeited. Defendant, who was said to have been for twenty years in the employ of the Ordnance Office, said he thought the close time was over and he wanted the birds for breeding purposes; but he gave a wrong name and address to the police.

NEWS FROM BRANCHES.

A DUBLIN Branch of the Society for the Protection of Birds is being formed, on the initiative of Mrs. Jonathan Hogg, of Rathgar.

New Branches have been started at King's Lynn, Hon. Sec., Miss Edith Stonex, the Clergy House; Lincoln, Hon. Sec., Miss E. M. Ruston, Monk's Corner; Bournville (Birmingham), Hon. Sec., Miss Adeline Viccars; Maltby (Rotherham), Hon. Sec., Miss Vernon, The Vicarage.

Madame Pascoli has passed on the Hon. Secretaryship of the Bognor Branch to Miss Hilda Thorowgood.

The Goring League for the Protection of Birds, which is affiliated with the Society, and of which some account appeared in No. 2 of BIRD NOTES AND NEWS, has recently held its annual examination and prize-giving. Mr. Hyde Harrison, M.A., set the papers and adjudged the prizes, and the children, both of the National School and of Alnut's Foundation School, acquitted themselves most creditably. The prize-giving took place at Long Meadow, at the invitation of Captain Towse, V.C., and Mrs. Towse. Miss Leigh, Hon. Sec., Goring-on-Thames, will be pleased to supply information on the working of the League.

The Wirral Branch of the Society is to be inaugurated by a public meeting at Hoylake on the 14th inst., when Mr. Lewis Jones will give a lecture on "Our Feathered Residents and Visitors," with lantern illustrations.

LECTURE SEASON, 1903-4.

THE following lectures, illustrated by the Society's lantern slides, have been given since October 1st:—

October 8th, Glasgow, Mr. McNaught Campbell; October 17th, Crieff, Mr. W. E. Frost; October 21st, Redhill, Miss Conway; October 23rd, Bishop's Castle, and October 6th, Shrewsbury, Mr. H. E. Forrest; October 27th, Broseley, Lady Forester; October 29th, Plymouth (Devon and Cornwall Natural History Society), Mr. H. Montagu Evans; October 30th, Brixton, Miss M. A. Mace; November 7th, Matlock, Mrs. Dixon Davies; November 13th, St. Olave's Grammar School, Southwark, Mr. W. G. Rushbrooke; November 14th, Broadstairs, Mr. Percival Carleton; November 17th, Liskeard Institution, Mr. H. M. Evans; November 18th, Brockenhurst (New Forest Natural History Society), Rev. J. E. Kelsall; November 19th, Shrewsbury, Miss Ridgway; November 19th, Awbridge (Bird and Tree Day), Rev. J. E. Kelsall; November 20th (Bradford Scientific Association), Mr. E. Harper; November 21st, Winchester (Parents' Educational Union), Rev. J. E. Kelsall; November 21st, Sunningdale, Mr. Bridge; November 27th, Meopham, Mrs. Nelson; November 28th, Bradford, Mr. E. Harper.

Eleven slides depicting coast scenery and sea-birds of the Scilly Isles, have been presented to the Society by Mrs. Dixon Davies.

Lectures available for lending, with or without slides:—

1. Birds and their Protection. By W. Kennedy, B.A.
2. Birds at Home and Abroad.
3. Concerning our Common Birds.
4. Birds of Legend and Song.
5. Bird Facts and Fancies. (Lecture to Children.)
6. Birds on the Land. (In preparation.)

Songs illustrated with slides, and books of suggested programmes are also lent to Associates arranging entertainments, etc., to help the work.

"THE LITTLE YELLOW BIRD."

A second impression will shortly be ready of the Society's leaflet No. 48, "The Little Yellow Bird."

"Certainly might do good if circulated. It is amusing, and people will read it."—*Duchess of Portland.*

"Very good indeed; I will send out any number."—*Hon. Mrs. Boyle.*

"The best and most taking thing for the purpose I have seen, and the picture is first rate."—*Mr. Edward Clifford.*

"Capital."—*Admiral Maclear.*

"Admirably suited for the persons to whom it is intended to appeal, and its logic is undeniable."—*Mr. Howard Saunders.*

"Very good indeed, and should be useful where other appeals fail."—*J. A. Owen.*

"I should like all the world to read it."—*A. Tudor.*

"Puts the case very forcibly, and all interested in bird-life should write for copies to the Secretary, 3, Hanover Square, London, and distribute them widely."—*Miss O'Conor Eccles.*

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CHRISTMAS CARDS.

"THE FISHERMAN'S FRIENDS." Original design in Colour, by MISS CRABTREE. With Calendar for 1904. One Card, 2d. ; One Dozen Cards, 1s. 6d. Packet of 12 Assorted Cards (Six Designs), 1s. 1d., post free.

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BIRD NOTES AND NEWS.

Circular Letter issued Periodically by the Society
for the Protection of Birds.

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No. 5.]

LONDON, 3, HANOVER SQUARE, W.

[APRIL, 1904.

A STORY OF EXTERMINATION.

“**T**HE last place in Great Britain where the Great Auk was seen was St. Kilda; and I have very little doubt that, if there had been a Bird Protection Society in those days, we should have the Great Auk with us now.” These words were spoken at the Annual Meeting of the Society for the Protection of Birds, by MacLeod of MacLeod, when dealing with the threatened extinction of the St. Kilda wren.

The story of the auk belongs to a different chapter in the history of vanished and vanishing birds from that in which the little wren figures. For the wren is an entirely local variety, confined to one small island; and it is patent to everyone that, since its persecution has become a matter of profit, it must either be protected, and that quickly, or it must disappear. No such apprehension was entertained for the Great Auk; it

inhabited a wide range of country, and it existed in enormous numbers. Unfortunately, it was so unused to man in its seaboard homes that it had no fear of him; neither had it wing-power to escape him. Consequently, as soon as their main haunts were discovered, the birds were easily butchered by the boat-load for food, and, when not needed for food, were done to death for “sport,” or slaughtered wholesale for their feathers and the bodies used for fuel. Before naturalists realized what was happening, the Great Auk had been blotted out of existence for ever. It is said that, fifty or sixty years ago, one of the last of its race—the last seen in Britain—visited the Isle of St. Kilda, formerly one of the breeding places of its kind. The inhabitants, not knowing what to make of the strange creature, promptly captured and tethered it. During the night its wild cries made clear to their minds that it was a witch, and, by unanimous verdict, the last Auk was stoned to death.

Another of the world's birds, once plentiful, is the Passenger Pigeon of North America. Less than a hundred years ago it nested in colonies measured by miles in length, and, in one case, forty miles in extent; and it flew in flocks reckoned by millions. The bird was harmless, living chiefly on acorns and beech-nuts; but was slaughtered with utter wantonness, being attacked with guns and clubs and suffocated with sulphur in its nesting-places, so that wagon-loads of bodies were easily procured, to be sold at a cent a piece, and droves of hogs fed on those which the hunters did not trouble to pick up. "To-day," says the author of the Audubon leaflet on the subject, "the passenger pigeon is so rare that the sight of one individual is an event to be chronicled."

The Egrets of Florida, slaughtered without even the excuse of serving for human food, form a further chapter in the melancholy record of bird life which goes to show that no species, however abundant, can withstand the greed and ruthlessness of man. The Egrets of other lands, and the Birds of Paradise, will probably be the next to disappear. A scarcer plume-bird, the Emu, existing only in comparatively small numbers and in one region, is apparently nearing extermination, its plumes and eggs both being in request.

Turning from these prominent examples to the persecution of birds in Great Britain—slain, not for food nor for sport, nor to fill the bags of the plume hunters, but simply because they are rare—we have been confronted of late with a longer chronicle than usual of rare species seen and collected, including an Avocet in Suffolk and Bitterns in Somerset and Northants. Sir Edward Grey referred, at the Society's Meeting, to the case of the Waxwings, rare and beautiful visitants, several of whom have been observed in different parts of Great Britain this winter. In Craigellachie (the name be honoured!) two pairs were seen and suffered to depart unharmed; others have been trapped and shot in England and Scotland, and now grace the glass hearses of collectors. "What matter!" says the collector; "the waxwing would not stay to nest—let us bag him while we may." Yet the story is

the same with regard to Hoopoe and Oriole, birds which have bred in England, and might do so again, if unmolested.

Mr. Lionel Cust, in a letter to the *Times*, suggests that, in order to put a check on this detestable craze, ornithologists should draw up a list of our rarest birds, and obtain an Act of Parliament making all such birds, alive or dead, Crown property. Even this would not meet the case of birds locally rare—such as the Green Woodpecker recently shot in Northumberland, because it is almost never seen there. One thing, however, is clear. Before the arrival of the Society's millenium, hoped for by Sir Edward Grey, when many would go forth to see a rare bird, but none to shoot it, the last rarity among British breeding birds will be entombed in the collectors' cases, unless these ardent gentlemen are persuaded by substantial legal penalties to divert their energies to stamps and picture postcards.

POLE TRAP BILL.

AFTER several years' agitation on the subject of the abolition of the pole trap, the Society drafted a Bill, which last year secured a second reading. This year, in the early hours of the day upon which the annual meeting was held, the third reading of this Bill was passed in the House of Commons, and Mr. Buxton was able to announce the result. In the House of Lords the Bill was passed through Committee, with amendments, on March 10th, and in this slightly altered form it may be expected to receive the Royal assent. The text is now as follows:—

1. From and after the passing of this Act every person who, on any pole, tree, or cairn of earth or stones, shall affix, place, or set any spring, trap, gin, or other similar instrument calculated to inflict bodily injury to any wild bird coming in contact therewith, and every person who shall knowingly permit or suffer or cause any such trap to be so affixed, placed, or set, shall be guilty of an offence, and shall be liable on summary conviction to a penalty not exceeding forty shillings, and for a second or subsequent offence to a penalty not exceeding five pounds.

2. Every offence under this Act may be prosecuted under the provisions of section 5 of the Wild Birds' Protection Act, 1880.

3. This Act may be cited as the Wild Birds' Protection Act, 1904, and shall be construed with the Wild Birds' Protection Act, 1880 to 1902; and those Acts and this Act may be cited collectively as Wild Birds' Protection Acts, 1880 to 1904.

ANNUAL MEETING OF THE SOCIETY.

THE annual meeting of the Society for the Protection of Birds was held at the Westminster Palace Hotel on February 24th, 1904. The Right Hon. Sir Edward Grey, Bart., M.P., presided, and there was a large attendance. The speakers included, in addition to the Chairman, Mr. Sydney Buxton, M.P., Rev. Canon Rawsley, MacLeod of MacLeod, Mr. E. G. B. Meade-Waldo, and Mr. Montagu Sharpe, C.A. (Middlesex), D.L. The report for the year 1903, which showed a slight deficit in the funds on account of the amount of work undertaken, was adopted; and the Committee were re-elected, with the addition to their number of the Hon. Mrs. Arthur Henniker, Miss Lilian Pollock, Mr. R. Bosworth Smith, Rev. A. L. Hussey, Rev. J. E. Kelsall, Rev. Canon Rawsley, and Mr. H. A. Paynter. The proposal of the Committee to petition for the incorporation of the Society under a Royal Charter was unanimously approved. A full report of the proceedings has been published by the Society, and may be had from the office, 3, Hanover Square.

NOTES.

Nine Points of the Law.

POSSESSION, it is said, is nine points of the law. This is especially the case with the law respecting the possession of wild birds. Two years ago an Act was passed empowering the confiscation by the authorities of birds and eggs illegally taken upon the conviction of an offender. This was a most necessary step. But, unfortunately, a conviction must come first; simple possession is not sufficient, the fact that the receiver is as bad as the thief (and often worse) not being as yet recognized. Brighton and Bristol, County Boroughs with good Bird Protection Orders of their own, have had this truth brought home to them of late. At Bristol bird protectors lament that though they may schedule certain birds and protect them all the year through, the bird-catcher can march through their streets with cages full of these very birds, and evade the intentions of the Order by declaring them to have been caught outside the borough boundaries, where the law, as it stands, permits such catching in the open season. A recent case at Brighton was brought under the Act of 1896, but the point involved was similar. Under the Act of 1880 it is an offence to be in possession of a newly killed or caught wild bird after March 15th,

but the Act of 1896, in empowering County Councils to protect certain species throughout the year, only speaks of the "killing or taking"; consequently the two bird-catchers who were summoned for being "in possession" of twenty-six larks and ninety-six linnets (both protected birds) in January were discharged, the magistrates, however, offering to state a case.

A Box of Linnets.

ANOTHER bird-catching story from a different part of England is a further illustration of the preposterous condition of things under which some half-dozen laws for the preservation of our wild birds are placed upon the Statute Book, and then those whose duty it is to enforce them look blinking on while the bird-catcher sweeps the countryside of its songsters, and the collector penetrates into the farthest recesses to seize upon all that is rarest and most beautiful. A correspondent writes:—

"A short time ago, while waiting at a small station, my attention was called to a continuous noise which came from a large wooden box standing in the booking office. I enquired of a gruff-looking man, covered with mud up to his knees, whether birds were inside. 'I suppose so,' he said, and went into the office to book the box to be sent off by train. On further enquiry (not of this man) I learned that the box contained ten dozen linnets and other singing birds. From this one little station alone about five hundred birds are sent off every week to Leeds, Sheffield, and other large towns. Not one in ten of these birds will live in captivity, so the wastage is enormous. We do all we can to protect the birds here during the winter, but what is the use when they are caught wholesale in this manner?"

County Protection.

THE county from which the above letter comes is one of those which make no effort to preserve their birds outside the close season, so that for six months in the year no species has any sort of protection. It would not be amiss for the County Councils Association to bring forward a list of some few species which every county should be recommended to protect throughout the year. If the bird-catcher's chief prey were thus guarded, and only comparatively valueless birds left him for legal booty, it would become scarcely worth his while to risk conviction and the confiscation of his nets and decoys. Another solution of the possession difficulty would be an adaptation to English conditions of what is known as the "Lacey Law" in the United States. If such a provision were enforced it would be illegal to sell or have in possession in any county birds or eggs protected in that county, no matter whence they were brought; or to convey

or transport such birds or eggs from the county protecting them. This would have the further advantage of saving us from the unpleasant sight of women walking among gull-loving and gull-protecting Londoners with the remains of gulls and kittiwakes in their hats.

Birds in the Philippines.

THE report for 1903 of the American Ornithologists' Union on the protection of North American birds, and on the work of the Audubon societies, is inspiring reading. Encouraging progress appears to have been made alike in the legislative, the educational, and the warden work. The last-named corresponds to the work which our own Society hopes to do by means of its Watchers' Fund, but has had the co-operation of the States governments. It is interesting to hear how quickly bird-lovers were to the front to guard bird-life in the Philippines, and to prevent its destruction for commercial purposes. The memorial to the Secretary of War runs :—

“At present there is an enormous demand for the plumage of birds used by the millinery trade. . . . Birds are now protected in most of the colonies of Australia, in India, and Burma. Steps have been taken to protect certain species in British New Guinea, and within the past year the export of birds and plumage from India has been absolutely prohibited. Apparently in most countries of the Orient under British rule efforts are being made to curtail the wholesale destruction of birds for millinery purposes, and the enforcement of the existing laws will inevitably drive the plume hunter to new fields, including the Philippine Islands.”

From the answer returned it is believed that the birds of the Philippines may now be regarded as safe. The Midway Isles have also, and with reason, engaged the attention of the protection committee, for here enormous numbers of sea-birds are killed by Japanese hunters for exportation to the London, Paris, and New York millinery market, among them a particularly beautiful snow-white tern, *Gygis alba* (with the trade name of “Albina”), which is in danger of extermination.

The Plume Trade.

THERE is little doubt that British governments are both willing and anxious to save the birds in lands under their jurisdiction ; but England itself, standing in the position of receiver of ill-gotten goods, is more difficult to deal with. The Audubon societies report that feathered millinery is going out, not only because of the growth of Audubon sentiment, but because of the greater difficulty in obtaining plumes, and the laws protecting the

plume birds. At their back they have a strong feeling for the protection of the nation's own birds. In England, where comparatively few plume birds are native, the question involves commercial imports and a lucrative trade. But until it is dealt with, and the dumping of foreign bird-skins is interdicted in favour of the ostrich feathers of our own colonies, what hope is there of any end to such sales as those held in London every two months? In New York the Audubon Societies have made an agreement with the milliners by which the trade undertake not to traffic in gulls, terns, grebes, herons, egrets, humming-birds, and song-birds. But what would be the outcome of any such attempted agreement in this country? Egret plumes would remain “artificial,” gulls would pass as pigeons, song-birds as sparrows, and all and sundry as “imitation,” just as they are described at present, when occasion demands, in what are euphemistically called “trade terms.”

Trees and Climate.

Mr. E. D. TILL, the author of the Society's prize essay on Bird and Tree Day, and a keen believer in afforestation, has an article on the subject in *Pearson's Magazine* for February ; and the practical side of the subject was forcibly demonstrated by Professor Schlich, C.I.E., F.R.S., F.L.S., in the course of a lecture in Carpenters' Hall, London, on February 25th, under the auspices of the Carpenters' Company. Forests are, Dr. Schlich pointed out, of direct value through their products, and of indirect value through their influence upon climate, the regulation of moisture, the stability of the soil, the healthiness and the æsthetic beauty of a country ; and they have a beneficial influence upon the moral and physical welfare, as well as on the character, of a people.

“An incidental further benefit of such woods consists in the fact that they form breeding and resting places for useful birds, which in their turn render an immense service to man as the great insect-destroyers in agricultural districts.”

Readers of Mr. George Gissing's *By the Ionian Sea* will remember a striking instance there cited of the effect of trees on climate. The fever-stricken and waterless village of Cotrona, with its dried-up streams and polluted wells, stands on the site of a great city which was called the healthiest in the world. The change is believed to have been brought about by the destruction of forests which clothed the hills ; consequent on this destruction there is practically no rain in Cotrona to-day, and there is scarcely a healthy man.

THE PLUME SALES.

THE first of this year's bird skin and feather sales took place at the Commercial Sale Rooms in the City on February 16th. These auctions are held every two months and constitute the central market of the plume trade in London.

For "osprey" plumes there was, according to the trade report, "a good demand." It is difficult to estimate the quantity, as these feathers are put up in packages of varying weights. The 291 packages consisted of the plumes of various species of egrets and herons, chiefly egrets; the majority were from India, others from South America and China. The lowest price was 24s. 6d. per ounce, 26s. to 36s. being a fair average, and a few special selected lots fetching as much as £5, £7, and £9 12s. 6d. per ounce; while some grey heron's plumes went as low as 1s. 9d.

The 2687 Birds of Paradise were principally the yellow-plumed and red-plumed, which sold at 12s. 6d. to 18s. 6d., according to quality; some females and poor specimens going at 10s. and 11s. 6d. each, and a few small and poor rifle-birds at 2s. 6d. each. Needless to say, all these birds were from New Guinea, the only part of the world in which Birds of Paradise are found.

Of Impeyan Pheasants there were 1828, all from the Himalayas; their price was 1s. 9d. to 3s. 4d. each. From the Himalayas came also the so-called "Japanese" Argus Pheasants, which went at 21s. to 26s. each; and the miscellaneous bird skins included Indian Hawks and Eagles (many *Spizætus*), which sold at from 2s. 7d. down to 5d. each; Ravens, 1s. 4d.; 400 small Indian Owls, $\frac{1}{4}$ d.; 50 larger Indian Owls, among which were many of the genus *Ketupa*, 3d. each; about 2600 Indian Paraquets, chiefly *Palæornis torquatus*, 1s. to 1s. 0 $\frac{1}{2}$ d. each; and about 3000 Indian Rollers—described, as usual, as "jays"—which went at an average of about 1s. each. Flat Jungle-cock skins, without the necks (these having doubtless been taken off for fly-tying purposes) were 1s. 7d. to 2s. 2d. each.

Mandarin Ducks, 120 from China, sold at 10 $\frac{1}{2}$ d. each; Pittas, 250 from New Guinea, 7 $\frac{1}{2}$ d.; Magpies, about 300, a penny apiece.

Of the 11,443 Humming-birds none were of very brilliant species, and the best fetched no more than 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ d. or 3d. each, while dull sorts, males, went for 1 $\frac{1}{4}$ d. to 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ d., and females for $\frac{1}{4}$ d. to $\frac{7}{8}$ of a penny each. Among other small tropical birds were also 1300 Tanagers, which sold for 4 $\frac{1}{2}$ d. each; about 800 Cardinals ("Virginian Nightingales"), 2d. each; and about 400 Orioles, 3 $\frac{1}{2}$ d. each.

BIRDS IN THE PARKS.

THE Report of the London County Council, issued on February 16th, 1904, gives some particulars as to the bird-life in the London parks:—

"Great attention has been paid to animal and bird life in the Council's parks. The waterfowl have done extremely well, and this is partly due to the satisfactory arrangements made for their shelter on islands inaccessible to the public, and partly to their regular distribution among the various parks. . . . The following kinds of waterfowl are now to be seen in the parks:—Black and white swans; geese, viz., Bean, Bernicle, Brent, Canadian, Chinese, Egyptian, the grey-legged, and common variety. Amongst the ducks will be found Carolinas, Cazarkas, Cayugas, Chilians, Gadwalls, Muscovies, Pintails, and Mandarins, as well as rosy-billed, spotted-billed, and common ducks. Sheldrakes, tufted divers, teal, coots, wigeon, pochards and moorhen are also plentiful in the parks. Swans have been placed on some of the ponds in the open spaces. . . . In connection with the subject of bird life in the parks, it may be mentioned that the experiment of hanging in the trees mesh bags filled with suet in order to induce small meat-eating birds, such as wrens, titmice, and robins, to frequent the parks has been attended with considerable success. . . . The animals and birds thus provided have been a source of pleasure to visitors to the parks, and their provision has the advantage of involving but a very small charge upon the rates."

BIRD AND TREE FESTIVALS.

THE proposal is made that the new holiday for Ireland—St. Patrick's Day—should be celebrated as Arbor Day. If this excellent suggestion be adopted it is to be hoped that the birds will not be left out. England still awaits the fixing of one date for the national celebration of Bird and Tree Day, and this, once arranged, would no doubt do much to nationalize the festival. Meantime the schools concerned in the Society's County Challenge Shield Competitions select the times and seasons most convenient to each individual school; but the practical sympathy of the local squires and other residents is needed, and may surely be looked for, if every school entering for the Competitions is to have its annual Festival.

Sandown (Isle of Wight).—An enthusiastic gathering of clergy, gentry, local magnates, and the parents and friends of the scholars, as well as the

boys of the school, assembled at the Town Hall on November 27th, to celebrate the reception of the Hampshire Challenge Shield by Sandown Higher Grade School (Principal: Mr. Tregear, B.A.). Mr. T. A. Wright, Chairman of the former School Board, presided. The Shield was presented by Mr. F. E. Lemon, and the team prizes by Mrs. Lemon. Nine trees were subsequently planted by the boys in the roadway in front of the school.

Bitterne Park (Southampton), which carried off the second prize for Hampshire, had a very successful day on February 17th. Alderman Dunsford, Chairman of the Education Committee, presided over the meeting. The Mayor of Southampton made a sympathetic and encouraging speech and presented the prizes, which included three special ones given by Mrs. Suckling. Mr. R. M. Fowler, H.M. Inspector of Schools, urged the study of nature without the collecting and destroying of birds and their eggs; and hearty congratulations were passed to Mr. Cleary, the head-master. Two ailanthus trees were planted in the school yard.

Buckland (Faringdon).—A very bright and happy party of young people, with scarcely less enthusiastic elders, joined in the meeting, tea, and games on January 2nd to celebrate the winning of the Berkshire Shield. Sir William Anson, Bart., M.P., who was away from home, gave two special prizes, and the awards were distributed by Miss Anson. All denominations united to honour the occasion, the Vicar, Rev. W. Bulmer, presiding over the meeting, and the Shield being unveiled by the Rev. Father Arthur. A handsome scarlet chestnut tree, given by the Vicar, was planted. (Head-master, Mr. A. Fletcher.)

Warcop.—Westmorland's Festival on December 3rd was in no way behind those in the south, and had an unique feature in the shape of a procession through the village of the crowned and white-robed Queen of the Festival, in a pony carriage, with pages and attendants, banner-bearer, herald, and the school children in drill order. Canon Rawnsley was to have given away the prizes, but was prevented by illness; his address, however, was read by the Rev. W. R. Burney, and is reprinted in full in the Society's Annual Report for 1903. The Rev. Seymour Shaw gave the prizes, and tea and concert followed, a little testimonial being presented to Mr. Jackson, head-master. The trees planted were two copper beeches, two scarlet thorns, two weigelia, two plums, and an apple.

Awbridge (Romsey).—Festival Day, November

19th, 1903. Prizes given by the Society and by Mrs. Suckling were presented in the course of a pleasant entertainment, and an appropriate talk about local birds, with lantern illustrations, was given by the Rev. J. E. Kelsall.

Beetham (Milnthorpe).—Festival Day, February 10th. Tree-planting and entertainment, including a lantern lecture by Mr. J. W. Pattynson, head-master. Additional prizes were given by Mr. and Mrs. Frith-Hudson. The school has, through Mr. Pattynson, been affiliated with the Society, so as to maintain interest in the work, and have the use of the lantern slides.

Skidby (Yorkshire).—Festival Day, December 3rd, associated with the annual prize-giving and entertainment. Prizes presented by the Vicar, Rev. Sydney Porter.

Touchen End (Berks).—Though not successful for a second time in winning the Shield, had a good gathering on February 9th, when the prizes given by the Society were distributed; and a lecture on "Man's Helpers" was given by the Rev. H. J. F. Tringham, curate-in-charge.

Ventnor.—Festival Day, February 13th, when a tea and largely-attended meeting were held in the Albert Street schools. The Vicar, Rev. G. P. Bassett Kerry, presided, and the prizes were presented by Mrs. Morgan Richards, of Steephill Castle. A tulip tree, given by Mr. T. Gibbs, is the memorial of Ventnor's first Arbor Day.

Celebrations have also been held at Heversham, Privett, and elsewhere.

THE NORTH AFRICAN OSTRICH.

MR. GRAHAM RENSHAW, M.B., who last summer (1903) visited an Algerian ostrich farm, sends us the following:—

"Although there still exists among naturalists considerable doubt as regards the number of species of ostrich inhabiting Africa, according to the most recent view four distinct forms may be recognized, namely, the Northern ostrich (*Struthio camelus*), the Southern ostrich (*S. Australis*), the Somali ostrich (*S. molybdophanes*), and the Eastern ostrich (*S. massaicus*). The two latter species are but little known, although they have both been exhibited in the London Zoological Gardens.

"The Southern ostrich is of special interest to the members of the Society for the Protection of Birds, as it furnishes the beautiful plumes so largely used in millinery. Formerly much persecuted for its feathers, the numbers of the wild birds have materially increased since the semi-domestication of these birds was commenced at the Cape. As is now well-known, large ostrich farms have been established in South Africa, the birds being systematically reared for the sake of their feathers, which are obtained by clipping them at regular intervals, without sacrificing the life of the ostrich.

"It is probably not so well known that the Northern species has also been semi-domesticated. Several years ago the French started ostrich farms, and others are being established by Englishmen in Uganda. There is, or was, a very fine and flourishing farm at the little village of Zeralda, near Algiers; there is also a smaller one close to Algiers itself, and this I visited in June, 1903, last.

"The Algiers farm is easily reached from the town by steam tram, and is at the northern end of that magnificent tropical garden, the Jardin d'Essai. Although famous enough to be mentioned in the guide books, the birds are very much fewer in number than one would have supposed; neither did inspection seem to be invited, for their enclosure was almost hidden by a thick outer hedge and might easily be overlooked by a stranger. Each bird has the free range of a large yard, which is surrounded by a breast-high fence. Shelter is provided by an open shed, which is little more than a thatched roof supported on stout poles. Probably this is all that is required under the turquoise sky of Algiers, where palms and bamboos flourish out of doors all the year round, and where, after all, the ostriches are in their native Africa. The birds were in good condition and apparently well cared for. The male was a fine bird in his jet-black and snow-white plumage, which contrasted smartly with the dull brown feathers of the females.

"Wild killed ostriches of the Northern species are worth about £15 or £20 if in good plumage, so that if a sufficient number of healthy birds could be obtained, the success of English breeders at the Cape might be repeated by French aviculturists in Algeria. It appears, however, that the Northern ostrich is gradually receding further and further into the desert, not being found until lat. 17° is reached. During my recent trip to the Sahara I saw no ostrich eggs, skins, or even feathers in the Arab market at Biskra, though plenty of gazelle horns were displayed on the stalls, and even the spoils of the rare addax antelope were offered for sale. It would therefore appear that the future of ostrich-farming in North Africa is far from promising, unless the stock can be reinforced by southern examples imported from the Cape."

SCHOOLS AND EGG-COLLECTIONS.

It has been the custom at Felsted School to give a prize for the best collection of eggs collected locally every year. This has been done away with, and it is proposed to substitute a prize for the best photograph of birds' nests in their natural position.

The managers of a large elementary school near London have decided, at the instance of an active member of the Society for the Protection of Birds, to discontinue the practice of accepting for the school museum eggs collected by the scholars.

The recommendation that eggs modelled in wax or other material should take the place of the natural shells in school museums, and that children should be taught to make such models, finds support in the following paragraph in Professor Miall's article on "Nature Study in Schools" in the March (1904) number of *School*:—"A time will come when the uses of modelling will be better appreciated than they are now. This slow but particularly distinct method of representing natural structures has many

advantages of its own, and I have more than once solved, by means of models, little problems which would yield to no other means." A leading difficulty in the matter has been the want of a suitable substance for children to work; but one of the Society's Hon. Local Secretaries writes:—

"I hope I am now on the right track for model birds' eggs to be painted by children in elementary schools. . . . I think if we can get this to succeed it will stop a good deal of egg pilfering."

The rules of membership of the flourishing natural history society connected with Tiffin's Endowed School, Kingston-on-Thames, render obligatory the keeping of note-books and the making of collections. Birds' eggs, however, are not recognized as collections for the purpose.

"Many a collector," says the *Reigate Grammar School Magazine*—

"would object to be called cruel and selfish, probably he would still more strongly object to be called ignorant—yet he is all three. Ignorant in supposing that no harm is done by the taking of eggs; cruel in wantonly destroying life; and selfish because in giving himself a little feeble satisfaction, he is doing away with a source of pleasure to hundreds of others. It is difficult to understand what real enjoyment an egg ogre gets from his collection. The proud possessor of a few candle boxes, containing forty or fifty kinds of eggs, badly arranged, unidentified and wrongly labelled, or, still more, the owner of a cabinet in all its glory, would, doubtless, call himself a naturalist, yet he has as much claim to the title as the old woman who goes daily to look under the cow manger for the latest production of her Cochin China. If he were half as harmless naturalists would be thankful."

IN THE COURTS.

SEVERAL bird-catching cases have been brought before the Brighton magistrates of late by the R.S.P.C.A., the wholesale netting of song-birds in the neighbourhood having been a matter of much complaint. On January 5th George Goddard was fined 1s. per bird and costs for being in possession of 36 newly-taken linnets. He had a box cage crowded with wild linnets tied up in a handkerchief, and a bag of dead birds. The same penalty was imposed on H. Dine, sen., and H. Dine, jun., for the possession of 48 linnets; the men were carrying bird-nets and poles.

A similar summons was heard on January 27th against Wilfred Swaysland and John Boxall, for the possession of 26 larks and 96 linnets. The solicitor for the defence raised the point that the possession of wild birds was prohibited only after March 15th, the Act under which the prosecution was taking applying only to killing and taking, and making no mention of possession. The case was adjourned to February 13th, when Mr. Polhill, for the R.S.P.C.A., urged that the words "killing or taking" were used in the Act in a comprehensive sense, and included the offence mentioned in the summons. The magistrates decided that they

must construe the Act literally, but offered to state a case.

On February 15th Henry Pannett was summoned for using a net to take wild birds, including three goldfinches. Defendant said he was catching greenfinches; he would not try to catch goldfinches as everyone was afraid to buy them nowadays. There were two previous convictions against him, and a fine of 7s. 6d. and costs, 25s. in all, was imposed, the Bench intimating that in future cases they would forfeit all nets.

At Llandudno, on January 18th, a labourer was fined 5s. and costs for attempting to catch goldfinches by limed twigs and a decoy bird.

At the West London Police Court, on December 9th, a youth was fined for using starlings as decoy birds. The decoys had strings tied to their legs, and were kept moving, and they were in an exhausted state.

NEWS FROM BRANCHES.

A REPORT of the Eighth Annual Meeting of the South Australian branch of the Society is unavoidably held over for our next issue.

The President, Vice-President, and Committee of the Belfast Branch gave a reception in Ye Olde Castle Restaurant, Belfast, on February 29th, when a largely-attended meeting was held in the King's Hall, presided over by the Lady Mayoress (Lady Jaffe). The speakers included the Lady Mayoress, who urged the teaching of natural history in schools; Professor Gregg Wilson, who animadverted especially upon the detestable cruelty involved in the procuring of egret plumes; Mr. W. H. Paterson, who called attention to the destruction of larks for the table; Rev. W. H. Dundas, and others.

The Annual Meeting of the Southport Branch was held on March 22nd, too late for a detailed notice in this number of BIRD NOTES AND NEWS.

The Wirral Branch was inaugurated on December 14th, 1903, by a lecture on "Our Feathered Neighbours and Visitors," by Mr. Lewis Jones, of Hilbre Island; Dr. Forbes, F.Z.S., presiding. At the close of the lecture the silver medal of the Royal Humane Society was presented to Mr. Jones for saving life on more occasions than one.

The Highgate Branch gave a very successful entertainment on March 5th. In addition to songs and recitations there were tableaux representing "The Shuddering Angel," and groups from the Society's postcards, and also a dialogue adapted from "The Little Yellow Bird." Hon. Sec., Miss F. A. Smith.

LECTURES.

THE following lectures illustrated with the Society's slides, were given between December 1st, 1903, and March 10th, 1904:—

December.—Everton, Mr. Lewis Jones; Clitheroe, Mr. J. Widdup; Retford and Derby, Miss A. C. Shipton; Broadstairs, Miss V. Burke; Hoylake, Mr. L. Jones; Burley, Mr. Witherby; Failsworth, Mr. E. Robinson; Tuebrook, Mr. L. Jones; Winchester, Miss E. Williams; Haileybury,

Mr. Kennedy; Barmouth, Mr. Wilson Roberts; Dunsden, Miss Hart-Davis. *January.*—Edgbaston, Mr. E. L. Tyndall; Bristol, Mr. H. C. P. Playne; Winchester, Miss E. Williams (two lectures); Devonport, Mr. H. Montagu Evans; Birmingham, Mr. E. L. Tyndall; Ashby-de-la-Zouch, Miss A. E. Gardner; Norland Institute, W., Miss Mace; Romsey, Rev. J. E. Kelsall; Stockport, Mrs. Dixon Davies (two lectures); Yarmouth, Mr. T. J. Wigg; Battersea, Mr. W. Johnson; Whitehaven and Seascale, Rev. P. W. Parminter; Stockwell Training College, Mr. Frank Finn. *February.*—Barmouth, Mr. Wilson Roberts (two lectures); Rugby School, R. Bosworth Smith; Blackburn, Mr. R. J. Howard; Highgate, Mr. Maddox; Haileybury College, Mr. Bosworth Smith; Brixton, Mr. N. W. Osborne; Northampton, Rev. A. Harvie; Liverpool, Mr. Lewis Jones; Portsmouth, Mr. H. Beeston; Milnthorpe, Mr. J. W. Pattynson; Winchester, Miss Williams; Bebington, Mr. L. Jones; Sudbury, Miss Perkin; Haileybury, Mr. Kennedy; Leeds, Mr. Eagle Clarke; Clitheroe, Mr. Widdup; Wallingford, Miss Quin; Stoke-on-Trent, Mr. Masefield; Southport, Mr. W. P. Pycraft; Marlborough College, Mr. Bosworth Smith; Northampton, Rev. A. Harvie; Harold's Wood and Coggeshall, Mr. T. Rose; Burslem, Mr. Masefield; Winchester College, Mr. Bosworth Smith; Stockwell, Mr. F. Finn. *March.*—Chelsea, Miss B. Taylor; Eton College, Mr. Bosworth Smith; Cheshire (series of lectures), Mrs. W. Greg.

County Council Orders.

SINCE the issue of the Society's report, which gives the dates and nature of all Orders in force on February 1st, 1904, the following Orders have been granted:—

Chester, March 14th, 1904. [A.B.C.E.F.]

Shropshire, March 9th, 1904. [B.E.]

Hastings (C.B.), March 9th, 1904. [A.B.C.E.F.]

THE SNOWY HERON.

Copies of an illustrated Leaflet, by Mr. William Dutcher, published by the National Committee of Audubon Societies, and entitled "The Snowy Heron," may be obtained of the Hon. Secretary, Society for the Protection of Birds, 3, Hanover Square, W. This Leaflet has been widely circulated in the United States of America, and deserves the thoughtful consideration of English women.

Next Issue.—The next Number of BIRD NOTES AND NEWS will be ready on July 1st, 1904.

Reading Cases for BIRD NOTES AND NEWS can be obtained from the office at a cost of 1s., including postage. They will be found very useful to keep the numbers together, and also for use in Public Libraries.

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for the
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No. 6.

JULY, 1904.

THE CAGING OF WILD BIRDS.

WITH the possible exception of bird-trimmed millinery, and the consequent slaughter of plume birds in breeding-time, nothing is the cause of so much cruelty to wild birds as the cage-bird business, with all that it entails.

A great deal is urged on behalf of the caging of birds. It encourages "a love of birds," we are told; they are pets with ladies and children; they must be happy because they go on living and singing and are saved from their natural enemies; their presence gladdens and refines the slum; and so on.

But, apart from fancy and false sentiment, what are the facts of the matter in regard especially to the British wild bird? The character of the bird-catching trade, and the extent to which it is still carried on in fields and hedgerows, and in practically every piece of common or open land where there are still any birds worth catching, are realized by few persons, even though they may live near some favoured resort and see rough-looking gentry, with the familiar apparatus, pass their doors every Sunday morning, or meet, and instinc-

tively avoid, them about country lanes and commons. In the open season the catcher has little let or hindrance, save in counties where the list of birds protected throughout the year is carefully framed, so that he cannot, while netting the unprotected linnets take protected redpolls "by mistake," or goldfinches "by accident"; and where the police and the R.S.P.C.A. officers are vigilant in enforcing the Orders. Even in Close Time he has no difficult task in evading the law, or in getting behind it by securing the easy co-operation of some small farmer who will "let" him the land for the purpose.

The catcher goes to work with his decoy birds and his nets or lime, most of the "work" being done by the miserable little decoys, surely the most hapless of bird victims! Since the Act of 1900 was passed the decoy has been brought under some sort of protection, and needs it badly enough: the linnets with bleeding legs, and the yellowhammer with broken back, mentioned under the heading "In the Courts" on another page, may be taken as samples of the tenderness with which they are used.

The wild birds are caught by the dozen or the hundred: the hens probably have their

necks wrung, the cocks are thrust into cages or boxes, and are either taken to the dealers in a neighbouring town or despatched by rail to some large centre, spending possibly hours in transit. A dozen in a Hudson's soap box, with some seed, but no water, is recommended by a careful dealer anxious for the safety of birds on long journeys. In the big town those which survive are consigned to the familiar cell-cages ("It's kinder to give 'em small cages; they'd beat themselves to death in bigger ones") on the dealer's dark shelves, or round about his window, in as foul an atmosphere as Paradise Court, Petticoat Lane, would seem to a Swiss mountaineer. Of the reduced number which reach the dealer alive, perhaps one in six survives to find a purchaser. Or it may be they are sold off at some Saturday night auction and distributed in paper bags, as vividly pictured in the pamphlet entitled "A Linnet for Sixpence," just published by the Society for the Protection of Birds.

Once sold, what fate awaits them? What fate is likely to await the delicate, fluttering wild thing sold for a few pence in the back street? There is, of course, the very small percentage which the defenders of caging have ever in view, those which are bought by well-intentioned private persons and safely broken in to the strange new life. Are even these fortunate few placed as a matter of course in aviaries where captivity may be made as endurable as possible? Well, no, that is out of the question, only the rich have aviaries; but, it is argued, they must be happy because they sing! That is to say, they continue, unless utterly broken-hearted, to exercise the one bird-faculty left to them—to cry aloud for the warm sunshine, the green shade, and the never-seen, ever-delaying mate, even though they can never be understood by a single listener and never answered in their own mystical language. And by and by they cease beating their wings against the bars, peck at the seed or other food in the seed-box that replaces the hundred varieties of dew-sweetened meat in the meadow, and hop up and down, up and down, on the monotonous perches, and are "merry."

The wild birds most extensively caged are the skylark, the linnet, and the chaffinch. The harshened trill of the lark is a common city sound, not "at heaven's gate," but from some public-house or mews; of all birds there is none whose caging is more repugnant to the man with any comprehension of wild bird life. The linnet is less often seen or heard. It is not pleasant to surmise what becomes of the tens of thousands that suffer transportation from their furzy homes to the galleys and hulks of cagedom. The chaffinches are in many cases the property of men with "a hobby" for birds; that is to say, a hobby for "bird races," handicap singing competitions, over which bets are made and money won. These are the birds which are taken "out for a walk" or to enjoy the fresh air (closely tied up in black cloth or brown paper), where they may hear their wild mates, and thus improve their fading songs or serve as decoys for snaring others. It has long been the practice to blind these "pets" of the East-ender, so that, unable to see and be terrified by their human surroundings in the public-house, they may suppose their competitors are wild kin calling to them from the green boughs. The custom is rendered illegal by the Wild Animals in Captivity Act, but its illegality has probably not succeeded in abolishing it. Larks are kept for the same purpose. In Huddersfield, says the *Standard* of May 26th, 1904, there is an association which "promotes the singing of larks":—

"Captive birds are trained by being taken in boxes into the fields, where they are left to pick up the notes of free birds as best they can. Competitions for prizes have this week been held at various public-houses, the birds singing for ten minutes or so without a break In this way some £6 or £7 has been distributed, and the contests have proved an infinite source of amusement. The association has been in existence about thirty years, and this year the hobby of lark singing has been encouraged by some thirteen 'Sings.'"

The encouragement of the "hobby," however, is no doubt in many cases only a means to an end, viz., to promote gambling, and perhaps the police might have something to say to this, especially when the "competition" takes place on licensed premises.

The three species named, however, are far from exhausting the number sought for caging. The goldfinch has been, we know, almost exterminated in many counties owing to its popularity as a cage bird, though now somewhat recovering its place thanks to the Protection Acts and Orders. Any country walk will discover sullen jackdaws, starlings, magpies, moping within wicker frameworks; ragged blackbirds and thrushes and restless bullfinches slung at the doors of cottagers who hear hundreds of free song birds all day long, yet who must have their captives. But the chief incentives to the business are the cage bird clubs, which, like the singing handicaps, bring the powerful stimulus of competition and gain to bear upon the matter. These clubs are said to be on the increase up and down the country, twenty new ones having been formed within the past few months; and they promote the caging of almost every British bird, however unsuitable for the purpose. In the middle of Close Time the fanciers' journals abound with advertisements of "cock nightingales" (a bird difficult to keep in health, and one that, like all migrants, becomes very restless and unhappy at the approach of migration time); chiffchaffs and willow-wrens, those delicate little wanderers from overseas; flycatchers, wheatears; "English cock goldfinches," "larks, champion songsters"; "cock brown linnets, nice red breasts, caught February catching season"; redpolls, twites, buntings, greenfinches, robins, blackbirds and thrushes, and so on, and so on, and even ravens and kestrels. To prove that there is any breach of the letter of the law in manifest breaches of its spirit, it must be shown that the birds are "recently taken." There are many ways in which the dealer who finds it convenient to replenish his stock in Close Time can render such proof difficult if he chance to be dropped on; and in the "catching season" he is master of the situation.

The most amazing part of the business is that we English people as a nation countenance this wholesale onslaught upon the wild-bird life—the brightest and cheeriest wild life—of the country, with all its attendant illegalities

and brutalities, carried on by those who have not the ghost of a claim to their living loot; thereby making ourselves partners of the slave-raiders, and responsible for all that bird catcher, bird dealer, and bird fancier are suffered to do.

In addition to British birds, immense numbers are imported from other lands to serve as show birds, decorations, or pets in England. A few weeks ago (May 3rd), the newspapers reported the arrival in London of a steamer from Australia with a cargo of 14,000 birds from various parts of the colony, which were being sold to fanciers and dealers. That a bird is "foreign," is with some people enough to excuse or commend its caging. But a bird is a bird the world over; even a cage-bred one never entirely loses the passion for liberty, the powerful instinct of flight, which are the glory of free bird life.

NOTES.

Watching.

A REMARKABLE story might be told in these columns of the work for the protection of some of our rarest birds which is being carried on at the present time in several places in Great Britain; but the reasons which occasion the need for it compel silence as to places and methods, if the collector is not to be afforded one more incentive to harry threatened nests and bribe needy natives. To such a pitch has come this childish and despicable craze for laying hands on rare birds and eggs that the most elaborate precautions have to be taken for safe-guarding them. To obtain protection on paper from County Councils is a comparatively little thing: to this must be added genuine interest and watchfulness on the part of all in or under authority in the neighbourhood; and, on occasion, the vigilance of special watchers, incorruptible in morals and muscular in body—"prepared to use force," as one correspondent writes who has personal experience of such business. The next thing needed will be a detachment of soldiery to guard a nest in order to prevent some "oologist," as unscientific as he is unscrupulous, from boasting that he has exterminated a species and owns the last egg; has, that is to say, triumphantly inflicted an irreparable loss on the country and added a curio (with money in it) to his own "collection."

Gulls and Herrings.

A SPEAKER at a recent meeting of the Belfast Natural History Society is reported to have made the calculation that there are two million gulls in the United Kingdom, and that each of these destroys 12,000 herring fry in a year; that if all these herring fry came to maturity, they would be worth twenty-four millions sterling, and that thus each gull costs the nation £12 a year. There is great virtue in "if," and we all know that a fine imagination can make strange use of statistics. But this asks a little too much of the average person's common sense. On the one hand, we are to suppose that none of these small fry would be snapped up by cod, dog-fish, or other enemies, and that all would come to maturity; on the other hand, that every man, woman, and child of the population is prepared to eat some 600 additional herrings a year each, if only this rare delicacy can be saved from the gulls, and that if only the sea were stuffed with herrings they could all be caught, brought to market, and sold at present prices. As well might one argue that if all the world were planted with cabbages, what fine times the market gardeners would have. It would seem that some persons are so constituted that even as they view a glut of rotting fish or of decaying fruit that will not pay to take to market, they divide their anathemas between the superabundant nature which has let down market prices and the audacious birds which eat what man might devour, if only he had the requisite time and capacity.

The Mayor of a certain east-coast town has been quoting the learned scientist's computations with additions of his own, in which he states that gulls and terns are "absolute poachers," living on small fish, and would evidently like Parliament to step in with Game Laws for gulls. Seeing that the birds are also "absolute scavengers," it is possible that the east-coast residents would buy their surfeit of herrings somewhat dearly.

An "Open Door."

By the Act of 1880, all owners and occupiers of land are allowed to kill or take non-scheduled birds upon their own land even during Close Time. The intention of this clause was, of course, to permit farmers and gardeners to destroy birds injurious, or supposed to be injurious to the crops. So far, it should have its uses in securing for the law the support of husbandmen, as it leaves them full facilities for destroying, or empowering other persons to destroy, the birds to which they object, while helping to keep off their land highly un-

desirable trespassers who find bird-catching and bird-nesting a convenient excuse for their presence on private property. But there will have to be a tightening of this breach in the regulations, and some proof required of *bona fides* in the "owner or occupier." At present it affords an opening, not only for professional bird-catching on a large scale, but also for the wanton shooting, wounding, and trapping, of nesting birds in any small garden-plot or backyard where some idle boy or man with a gun or catapult finds fun in practising upon parent birds and young. The Society for the Protection of Birds has many complaints of this sort of thing every summer; and only a few weeks ago a young schoolmistress died in Northampton Infirmary from a bullet-wound accidentally inflicted by a young man engaged in shooting at nesting starlings.

Selborne Society.

MANY people will regret that the Selborne Society, which in former days was a declared opponent of bird-trimmed millinery, and was regarded as working in the matter on similar lines with the Society for the Protection of Birds, has somewhat changed its attitude. The second "object" of the Society was until recently stated to be: "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." The wording of this is now altered as followed: To discourage, etc., "birds and their plumage, except when the birds are killed for food, reared for their plumage, or are *known to be injurious*." The words in italics (ours) are, unfortunately, a begging of the whole question, as they leave each person to decide according to the extent of his prejudice or the limit of his knowledge what bird is or is not "injurious." Herons, gulls, terns, grebes, kingfishers, owls, cardinals, tanagers, bullfinches, and other small birds, and even birds-of-paradise, may be proscribed, by those who wish so to proscribe them, as feeders more or less upon grain, fruit, or fish fry, or otherwise "injurious."

Obituary.

THE Society for the Protection of Birds has lost old and valued members through the death of two eminent persons who were distinguished for work in very different spheres, but who were at one in their support of the objects of this Society. Miss Frances Power Cobbe was among the earliest of its Life Associates, joining in 1893, and though her untiring energies were devoted first and foremost to the anti-vivisection cause she never ceased to

take an interest in the birds, the latest letter received from her being written only a very few weeks before her death. Sir Henry M. Stanley, M.P., the intrepid explorer, became a Life Associate in 1894, before either the G.C.B. or the M.P. was attached to his name, but when his fame was as world-wide as though the whole alphabet had followed it. Miss Cobbe died on April 5th, and Sir H. M. Stanley on May 9th, 1904.

Lantern Slides.

A HANDSOME gift of lantern slides of British birds has been offered to our Society by Mrs. Sennett, through Mr. Dutcher, the Chairman of the National Committee of Audubon Societies of the United States of America. The slides were purchased in England by the late Mr. Sennett some years ago, and form a valuable collection. The offer has been accepted by the Council with cordial thanks.

The City Pigeons.

In consequence of the many rumours respecting a proposed onslaught on the pigeons of the City of London, and their supposed unprotected condition, the Society communicated with both the Lord Mayor and the Commissioner of Police respecting them. The replies received are of a character eminently satisfactory to those who rejoice in the presence of the birds in our busy thoroughfares. "There is no foundation for the statement referred to," is the answer from the Police headquarters; "nor is it the intention of the City Authorities to destroy any of the City pigeons. Any person found taking or killing the birds in question will be prosecuted by the Police under 24 & 25 Vic., c. 96."

Bird and Tree Day.

The total number of elementary schools entered this season for the County Challenge Shields and prizes which the Society is offering for competition in six counties, is 137. It is to be hoped that the ardour of teachers and children will not cool, and that essays from every one of these schools will be sent in by September 30th.

A PLEA FOR A NATIONAL PARK.

MR. CHARLES STEWART strongly advocates in the *Nineteenth Century and After* for May, 1904, the establishment of a National Park for Scotland, a park, that is, which shall not be simply a Hyde Park, or even a Richmond Park (above all not a

Richmond Park without its protected woods and its reserves), but what the New Forest might conceivably have been under wholly changed conditions and untroubled by verderers or squatters, rights or privileges: a smaller Yellowstone or rival Yosemite. Its objects should be the preservation in its wild state of a large tract of country possessing in a high degree natural beauty and grandeur, and the strict preservation of specimens of the indigenous fauna of our country: "the red deer, the fallow deer, the roe deer, the hare, the badger, the otter, the wildcat, the fox, and the minor quadrupeds; the capercailzie, the blackcock, the muirfowl, the partridge, the golden eagle, the raven, and all the glorious tribe of sea-eagle and sea-hawk, and all the lesser native birds; the salmon, the sea-trout, the ferox, the grayling, the yellow trout, *et hoc genus omne*." It should be of not less than 20,000 acres, and might be 40,000; the islands of Jura or Rum being suggested as not impossible for the purpose. A capital of £30,000 to £50,000 would buy a suitable place. It might be made to pay to some extent by the breeding and sale of stags, the hatching of salmon and trout, the sale of seedlings and saplings; and it would yield handsome dividends in the delight afforded to a nation.

"The direct advantage of preserving intact a large and wild tract of country of great natural beauty; the benefit of preserving and improving the wild animals and birds of our country, and of rescuing their genera and their species from extinction . . . ; the enormous and highly prized boon which would be conferred upon zoologists, ornithologists, ichthyologists, botanists, arboriculturists, and all the honoured band of scientific folk, who are struggling individually and through their learned societies to maintain and extend the credit of our country in their valuable branches of knowledge; all these are plain and direct benefits which would surely and promptly accrue from the acquisition and maintenance of a National Park."

The Government that has the courage and the spirit to undertake and carry through such a scheme would, Mr. Stewart thinks, deserve and receive an ample meed of gratitude.

The same number of the review contains an article on "Bird Life at Bingham's Melcombe," the last of the entertaining series on bird-life which Mr. Bosworth Smith has been writing and all bird-lovers have been reading.

THE PLUME TRADE.

AT the feather sale at the Commercial Sale Rooms, London, on April 19th, 1904, there were 161 packages of osprey feathers, of varying quantities, these being

all the plumes of the various egrets and small eastern herons, with a few of the common heron (*A. cineria*). Of birds-of-paradise from New Guinea there were 3255, chiefly *P. apoda*; of Impeyan pheasants from the Himalayas, 648; of Indian rollers ("jays"), no fewer than 3913, with also a large number of East India pigeons (wings), and pittas, Indian owls, parrots, and jungle cocks. One firm catalogued 469 Chinese mandarin ducks. The remainder of the birds were mostly from America, comprising 52,628 humming-birds, and numerous cardinals, tanagers, trogons, toucans, parrots, etc. There were also a large quantity of wing quills from pelicans, swans, geese, turkeys, and eagles.

At the June sale (June 14th) the packages of "osprey" feathers numbered 165. There were 1335 birds-of-paradise, 10 cases of peacock feathers (about 100 lbs. to the case), 13 packages of quills, and 87 cases of various birdskins. The last-named included, as usual, many humming birds, tanagers, Impeyan and argus pheasants; owls (one firm offered 3674); bronze ibis (skins and wings); mandarin ducks, etc. A less familiar feature of the sale were the quantities of Japanese teal, one firm cataloguing 7200 pairs of these wings.

It is a common complaint that the clergy rarely preach or speak on the subject of inhumanity to animals. Occasionally, however, there is a welcome exception to the rule, and among those not afraid to speak straight is the Rev. R. H. Wilson, Cheltenham College Missioner at Nunhead; his "Letter about Birds" in the May number of his parish magazine has been, we understand, copied, by permission, into several other local periodicals.

The chimney-swallow, whose decrease has troubled English observers of late years, is being sold by hundreds in New York shops for millinery. Specimens of the birds have been sent from America to this Society, and prove to be young birds, no doubt killed in France or Italy on their first migration.

Mr. J. W. R. Clarke writes to the *Sydney Morning Herald* (March 9, 1904): At the last meeting of the Animals' Protection Society special attention was drawn to the destruction of beautiful Australian birds for the English markets. Birds-of-paradise (probably lyre birds are meant), bronze-wing pigeons, jays, kingfishers, parrots, and owls were rapidly disappearing through this agency, although all protected by Act No. 26, 1901.

Mr. Frank Chapman, editor of *Bird-Lore* (U.S.A.) has just completed a tour of observation through parts of Florida, once thronged with plume-bearing herons and paroquets, and reports (*Bird-Lore*, June, 1904):—

"The plume bird, or snowy heron, is practically extinct. Not one was observed or reported. The white egret exists in small numbers; not more than a dozen birds were seen, and only a single rookery was heard of. News of its formation was accompanied by the statement that it had been 'shot out.' This, in the writer's opinion, is the certain fate of every rookery of aigrette-bearing herons, unless an armed warden be detailed to guard it day and night. No law will ever prevent robbery, if the temptation to thieve be sufficiently great; and with herons' plumes worth twice their weight in gold, there are hundreds of ex-plumers waiting to loot any rookery which becomes large enough to make the returns worth the risk of prosecution."

"IMITATION OSPREYS" AGAIN.

ROUSED by a widely-circulated statement from Professor Ray Lankester respecting the sham artificial osprey, an anonymous correspondent revived in the columns of a London newspaper* the old story that such imitations are to be had, and that "the difference in price is a guarantee against extensive substitution." The secretary of this Society thereupon wrote in reply, giving once again the facts of the case, and asking once again for the address of any factory where "artificial ospreys" are made. A "special" correspondent responded on behalf of the trade, with much show of circumstance and knowledge, but with the customary vagueness, that "over a thousand hands" are employed in the business, and that "the largest manufacturer of ospreys in London had at once displayed a selection of real imitations" to him, some being made from grasses, some from cotton, and some from a "secret substance" (delightful words and most convenient!). As usual, no name or address gave evidence of good faith to this statement; but the address of the "largest manufacturer," etc., was courteously supplied to the Society, who thereupon wrote to the firm, asking for a specimen or specimens of the artificial ospreys made and sold by them, with the prices. On June 6th a memorandum from the firm was received: "Your letter to hand and same shall have attention." From that day to this no other reply has been received at 3, Hanover Square. The conclusion is obvious: when scientific examination is to be anticipated, the "largest manufacturer," etc., is unable to fake up or obtain even one specimen of the

* *St. James's Gazette*, May 12, 1904.

"artificial ospreys" which "over a thousand hands" are engaged in making!

Is it not time that women ceased to make themselves a laughing-stock by swallowing these stories; ceased to countenance this miserable fashion (a veritable father of lies) under the shallow pretence that they do so in appearance only?

Those interested in the matter may be referred to the article on "Osprey Plumes," by Mr. W. P. Pycraft, in *Knowledge and Scientific News* for June, 1904. After showing up the stories of egret farms, etc., the writer adds: "The statements that imitation or artificial ospreys are made of split quills, whalebone, or other material, are all absolutely false."

IN THE COURTS.

AN exceptionally large number of interesting cases under the various Wild Birds Protection Acts have come before the magistrates of late, the larger number having to do with birdcatchers and their ways.

On May 2nd two men, named Hayes and Turner, were before the Brighton Bench on an adjourned summons for being in possession of 216 linnets, recently taken. The men, while driving on the Marine Parade on March 26th, were stopped by Inspector Waters, of the R.S.P.C.A., who found in the cart three large boxes containing the birds. The defence was that the men had permission from the owner of a farm in East Sussex to take the birds; but Mr. Polhill contended that, though linnets were not scheduled in East Sussex, they were protected against all persons in Brighton, and that the Bench had to deal only with the Act as it related to Brighton. Hayes, said to have only driven Turner into town, was discharged. Turner was fined 2d. in respect of each bird, with advocate's fee, £4 11s. 6d. in all. The magistrates consented to state a case, but the intended appeal has since been abandoned. (The linnets after being counted and examined at the police station, were bought by Waters for 2d. each and liberated.)

At Lewes, on May 16th, two men named Dine, who were convicted of a similar offence in January, were fined 6d. each bird and 4s. 6d. costs for taking 21 linnets; and at the same court three other men were convicted of a similar offence, all these being Inspector Waters' cases.

At Kingston-on-Thames two Clerkenwell birdcatchers were fined 17s. each, or 14 days, for having five chaffinches in their possession and using birdlime at Thames Ditton. The Chairman remarked that far too much birdcatching was done by idle loafers, and ordered their apparatus to be destroyed.

The Chairman of the Stratford Bench (Mr. Tabrum) appears to take another view of the matter. Mr. Francis McKenzie, of the Warren, Loughton, being in Epping Forest on Easter Sunday, saw

three men working with call-birds, and shortly afterwards met a couple of others sauntering along the hedge and carrying two chaffinches in cages. He took possession of the cages, and was subsequently summoned for unlawfully detaining the "goods," he at the same time summoning the men for searching for nests contrary to the Forest bye-laws. They said they kept birds for singing competitions, and took them out for training. The cross-summons was dismissed, and Mr. McKenzie was ordered to give up the birds and pay the costs, £3 7s. 6d., Mr. Tabrum observing that there was no possible harm in the men taking out their birds and hearing them sing; it was a nice relief from Bethnal Green. (Mr. F. G. Aflalo, commenting in the *Morning Leader* on the case, suggests that bird-lovers and natural history societies in each county should establish a small reserve fund to defray the costs of anyone sued for his interference with birdcatchers and their like.)

Before the same Bench, on May 20th, two men charged with birdcatching were, the one fined, the other sentenced to six weeks' hard labour for resisting and assaulting a forest-keeper.

A Nottingham birdcatcher was fined 40s. for cruelty to decoy linnets at East Bridgford on May 7th. The birds were held captive with twine round their legs, and defendant used a "jigger" to make them hop about. One was dead, and the others had their legs cut and bleeding.

Henry Curline was let off with a warning and payment of 10s. costs by the Bristol magistrates, on April 8th, for cruelty to decoys. He had eight birds tied on a string, which was twitched to make them jump and fly when free birds came near. One bird, a yellowhammer, was dead, having its back broken. Defendant said he had been catching birds for fifty years, and had never been in trouble before.

For stoning coots, which were afterwards found dead, two men were ordered to pay 7s. costs each, at Castle Eden, on May 28th, the magistrates regretting they could not impose a fine.

At the Aberdeen Sheriff's Court, on May 24th, James McConnach was fined 15s. for taking eight eggs of the black-backed gull from the estate of Glen Tana.

An important case, the first raised in the county for many years, under the Poisoned Grain Act, was heard by the Harewood End Bench (Herefordshire), on May 9, when John Williams, of Demence Farm, Garway, was fined £5 and costs—£10 3s. 6d., for placing poisoned seed on land in his occupation. In consequence of numerous complaints defendant's actions were watched by Inspector Lewis, of the Hereford S.P.C.A., and the police, and some grain picked up on his field was sent to the analyst and was found to be impregnated with strychnine.

The Irish Game Preservation Association has secured five convictions against game dealers of Dublin and Blackrock, for exposing wild duck and plover for sale in the Close season. The fines varied from 10s. to £2.

NEWS FROM WORKERS.

MRS. J. PLAYFORD, who has for ten years been the energetic Hon. Sec. and the moving spirit of the South Australian Branch, has unfortunately been compelled to resign owing to ill-health. At the Annual Meeting, at Adelaide, tribute was paid to Mrs. Playford's noble work; and addresses were given by Sir George Le Hunte, Governor of the Colony, Sir Lancelot Stirling, President of the Legislative Council, and Mr. W. J. Sowden. Mr. Sowden referred to the increase of native singing-birds near the towns since the passing of the protective Acts four or five years ago. The Branch has 1274 members, and reported a balance of £30, so that the Hon. Sec. leaves it in a flourishing condition, but her resignation will be a serious loss to the work.

The membership of the Southport and Birkdale Bird Protection Society was stated as 211 in the report read at the Annual Meeting, held at the Municipal Buildings, under the presidency of the Mayoress (Mrs. J. W. Brown), on March 22nd. Mr. J. Masefield, our Hon. Local Sec. for North Staffordshire, was the principal speaker. In the following week the annual show of plumeless millinery was held by the leading milliners of the town.

A meeting in furtherance of Bird Protection work was held at Clifton on May 3rd, under the auspices of the Ladies' Club. A letter was read from Professor Ray Lankester respecting the practice of selling real "osprey" plumes as imitations; he stated that he had drawn the attention of the Prince of Wales to the matter, and asked His Royal Highness whether he would be willing to bring it before the Princess. Mrs. Robeson presided, and the speakers included Lady Fry, Mrs. Glazebrook, Canon Bromby, and Mr. H. C. Playne.

NOTICE.—Regulations for the guidance of Hon. Local Secretaries and for the information of Branches working with Committees, have been drawn up and approved by the Committee of the Society, and may be had from the Office, 3, Hanover Square.

LECTURES.

THE following lectures, illustrated by the Society's slides, have been given since March 9th.

March.—Cheltenham, Mr. Mellersh; New Forest (two lectures), Rev. J. E. Kelsall; Kingston-on-Thames, Mr. W. F. Shearcroft; Romford, Miss Clifton; Bradford, Mr. W. Harper; Birmingham, Miss Viccars; Stockwell Training College, Mr. F. Finn; Bethnal Green, Miss Clifton; Hockliffe,

Major Haines; Sidmouth, Miss Quin; Grayshott, Miss Hart-Davis; Edinburgh, Miss Sexton. *April.*—Sherborne School, Mr. Bosworth Smith; Rotherhithe, Miss Pearse. *May.*—Harrow School, Mr. Bosworth Smith; Gloucester, Mr. Mellersh. *June.*—Glenalmond College, Mr. Bosworth Smith.

Dramatic Entertainment.—Three dramatic performances, arranged by Mrs. St. Hill for the benefit of societies for the protection of animals, were given at the Albert Hall Theatre on April 19th and 20th. New plays by Miss Freund-Lloyd and Mr. De Courcy Laffan were produced at the matinee, and "A Night Off" was played in the evenings. There were large audiences, and the tickets sold on behalf of the Society for the Protection of Birds realised £12.

County Council Orders.

THE following Orders have been granted since April 1, 1904:—

Hereford, June 3rd. [B.D.E.F.]

Shropshire, April 23rd. [B.E.F.]

Somerset, April 30th. [A. (2) B.C.F.]

Yorks, W. Riding, April 18th. [B.C.D.E.F.]

Warrington, May 30th. [B.E.F.]

Pole-Trap Act.

THE Wild Birds Protection Act, 1904 (the Pole-Trap Act), came into operation on April 30th. Leaflets giving the text of the acting clauses, may be had from the Society for the Protection of Birds.

"A LINNET FOR SIXPENCE."

LEAFLET No. 50, issued by the Society for the Protection of Birds, with coloured illustration. Copies may be had at 1d. each, 9d. per doz., 5s. per 100.

Next Issue.—The next Number of BIRD NOTES AND NEWS will be ready on October 1st, 1904.

Reading Cases for BIRD NOTES AND NEWS can be obtained from the office at a cost of 1s., including postage. They will be found very useful to keep the numbers together, and also for use in Public Libraries.

BIRD NOTES AND NEWS will be sent post free to any address for 1s. per annum, payable in advance.

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

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BIRD NOTES AND NEWS.

Circular Letter issued Periodically by the
Society for the Protection of Birds.

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CUTTER
"GANNET"
LUNDY ISLAND.

No. 7.]

LONDON, 3, HANOVER SQUARE, W.

[OCTOBER, 1904.

THREE ISLANDS.

THREE remarkably interesting little islands, each associated with a special and characteristic bird, have recently engaged the attention of the Society for the Protection of Birds—St. Kilda, the one habitat of the St. Kilda Wren; Foula, the most important of the two or three breeding stations of the Great Skua; and Lundy, the only English home of the Gannet or Solan Goose.

Something has been said about St. Kilda in earlier numbers of this paper. The outermost of the Hebrides, fifty miles from the mainland, it was in former times almost cut off from communication with the outer world, and entirely so through the long winter; its few inhabitants (some twenty families) lived a hard, rough life, dependent for existence mainly on the eggs and flesh of sea-birds. The coming of the unwonted stranger meant an outbreak of measles or influenza among the susceptible islanders; and a visit to its shores was an ex-

perience to afford material for a book. Now-a-days, conditions have somewhat improved; life is a shade less dour, farming as an industry is added to fishing and fowling, and steamboats touch the coast. As a set-off to the benefits of communication, the trading collector has come with his eye on the rare birds, chief among which are the St. Kilda Wren and the Fork-tailed Petrel; and it is to check the undesirable attentions of this visitor that the new Bird Protection Act has, thanks to the Macleod of Macleod and to Sir Herbert Maxwell, been placed on the Statute Book.

Almost equally out of the world are the rocky islets to the far north of Scotland, forming part of the Shetland group, where that curious pirate among birds, the Great Skua, lays its brown eggs. Foula, eighteen miles from its nearest neighbour, is indeed less isolated as regards actual distance from other land than St. Kilda, but it is scarcely more accessible, as not only is its own coast precipitous and difficult of approach, but it is surrounded by dangerous rocks. Barely 2000 acres in extent, it is the

home of about 250 people, for whom existence is austere enough, and it is also the home of innumerable sea-birds, including the Great and Richardson's Skuas. The island has, however, changed hands twice since Mr. R. C. C. Scott received the London Zoological Society's silver medal for his protection of this rare species; and two or three years ago the Society for the Protection of Birds thought it advisable to send a special representative over to report on the present condition of the birds.

In 1891 the Zoological Society also awarded a silver medal to Mrs. Edmonston for protection of the Great Skua in the Island of Unst; and the collector has this summer had a wholesome lesson by the conviction of an English clergyman for taking Skua eggs in Unst, the penalty being emphasized, under the Act of 1902, by the forfeiture of the specimens.

Lundy is about the same size in acres as Foula, but lies only nine miles off the Devonshire coast, and has the advantage of regular communication with Instow, whence Captain Dark's little boat, the *Gannet*, brings the mails once a week; but the journey has been known to occupy ten hours. In turn a nest of pirates, the retreat of an assassin, a stronghold of Royalists, the headquarters of French privateers, and a convict settlement, Lundy Island can boast a history that would furnish plots for many a romance; and the granite from its rocks that forms part of the Thames Embankment might tell strange tales. Although included in County Devon, the happy islanders of the present day pay neither rates nor taxes; it is apparently outside the Customs and extra-diocesan. The name of Lundy is derived from the old Icelandic name of the puffin, and in old days the sea-birds were taken in immense numbers for their feathers. More lately they have found worse enemies in the crews of pilot boats and in the dealers and sight-seers who come egg-collecting. The whole island being a great resort of birds, was made a protected area by the Devonshire County Council, at the desire of the owner, the Rev. H. G. Heaven; but the law has never been enforced, and in the absence of police and

magistrate it seemed improbable that it would be observed without some little gentle pressure from outside. The small colony of Gannets was, in the opinion of an eminent ornithologist, in imminent danger of extermination, not having been allowed to bring off any young birds for several years; and, accordingly, with the assent of the owner, the Society for the Protection of Birds has this year had a watcher on the island throughout the breeding season. The difficulties have been considerable; but the Coastguard and Trinity House authorities expressed their willingness to co-operate with the Society as far as lay in their power, and it is hoped that the people of Lundy will in every way support the efforts made to preserve one of the great natural attractions of their island, so that the safety of the Gannets and other interesting birds may be ensured.

THE ST. KILDA ACT.

THANKS to the efforts of the Society for the Protection of Birds, seconded by Lord Balfour of Burleigh and Sir Herbert Maxwell, there is reason to hope that next spring the operations of the egg collector in St. Kilda will be practically stopped. The wren, peculiar to this island, has been almost exterminated, and the fork-tailed petrel has been growing rarer year by year. The Macleod, to whom the island belongs, had vainly exerted his personal influence to prevent the taking of nests and eggs for export. He felt that the islanders were not so much to blame as the dealers who incited these poor people to this course in order to secure a profit for themselves. One dealer sent last year about a dozen nests of this wren, with full clutches, to a London auction room. There was a vigorous protest in the press, but nothing could be done. In reviewing the situation at the annual meeting of the Society in February last, The Macleod, at the instance of his factor, suggested that all should be protected except the fulmar, gannet, guillemot, puffin, and razorbill. The suggestion was at once acted upon. A short amending Bill on these lines was drafted by the Society; it was introduced by Sir Herbert Maxwell, and piloted by Lord Balfour of Burleigh through the House of Lords. Taken in conjunction with Lord Jersey's Act, this measure should stop the further depletion of the breeding stock of the fork-tailed petrel. Few trading collectors would care to buy the protected eggs, which cannot then be sold openly without the risk of a prosecution that is almost sure to end in a fine of a pound an egg and the forfeiture of the clutch.—*Field* (Aug. 13th, 1904).

BIRD PROTECTION IN CENTRAL AFRICA.

IN the House of Commons, on August 8th, Sir H. Seton-Karr drew attention to the extensive slaughter of wild animals and birds carried on by the natives in Lagos, and asked what steps were being taken to prevent it. The Colonial Secretary, in reply, said that regulations for the preservation of certain animals and birds had been drawn up, in accordance with the powers given by the International Convention signed in London in 1900, and enquiry would be made as to their promulgation. Considerable difficulties attended the imposition of restriction in the protectorate of Lagos as distinguished from the colony, but he would communicate with the Governor on the subject. The birds protected by the Convention are the owl, secretary-bird, rhinoceros-bird, and vulture, with partial protection for the egret, marabou, bustard, ostrich, and game-birds.

"NATURE STUDY" IN SCHOOLS.

SIR GEORGE KEKEWICH, K.C.B., presided at a Nature Study Conference held at the Botanic Gardens, London, on June 7th, 1904, and in his address spoke as follows on the subject of Nature Study in schools:

"Rightly used, Nature Study may powerfully affect and lead in the right direction the development of character. Reverence, awe, love, and refinement, appreciation of beauty, kindness to all living things, and a thousand other lessons which will build up character, may be taught in the study of Nature.

"But there is a danger to be guarded against, a danger which is the more real because it is one which springs from excessive zeal. I believe that Nature should be studied under natural conditions, and I think that if such conditions cannot be obtained, or if suffering is inflicted upon the creatures studied, Nature Study had better be absent from the curriculum. To my mind we should not, and we ought not to, keep living creatures under artificial conditions for purposes of Nature Study, nor certainly ought we to suggest to the children that it is right to kill birds or collect birds' eggs or insects for the purpose of School Museums. I do not think that it can improve the character of a child if he is led to infer that it is right to kill in order to enrich a School Museum, and that there is no harm in his doing so; such a creed practically inculcates cruelty. Birds, mice, dormice, hedgehogs, rats, blindworms, snakes, in cages or confinement—aquaria or vivaria—are all, to my mind, equally

objectionable, and there is plenty of material for the museums of even our urban schools without the inclusion of such exhibits.

"I would never be a party to any propaganda the effect of which was to suggest to the child cruelty to living things. The very opposite should be taught, and I trust that such exhibits will never be admitted into a Nature Study Exhibition. I fear that at previous exhibitions they have been, probably through inadvertence."

As one result of Sir George's speech the "School Nature Study Union" has crossed off from the list of its "objects" the provision of "living specimens for demonstration and observation" in school museums.

CANON RAWNSLEY ON RURAL LIFE.

AN address by Canon Rawnsley on "The work and aims of the Society for the Protection of Birds" was read at the very successful inaugural meeting of the Lincoln Branch of the Society on June 24th, 1904. After speaking of the destruction of birds for millinery, and of the work of the County Councils in putting the Bird Protection Acts in force, the Rev. Canon specially alluded to the institution of Bird and Tree Day, expressing a hope that as one result of the meeting someone would present a challenge shield for Lincolnshire.

"The Society's greatest claim to our gratitude is that it has realised that the best chance of saving bird-life is by the education of our elementary scholars to observe and care for the bird life that is round about them, and if side by side with the encouragement of the habit of observation given to the eyes of our school children we can enlist the sympathies of our school teachers, as has been done in Cumberland, one is very hopeful that the next generation will not only have other Jonathan Edwards and Richard Dicks, but also that we shall have done one of the greatest public services that we can well do, namely, that of adding to the real interest of rural life. It cannot, I think, be doubted that it is our duty to prevent the passing away to our cities of the pith and sinew of our people; and the rapid deterioration of the physique of the people as soon as they become city prisoners is a matter of serious alarm; but the greater excitements of town life and the dulness of rural life can in some measure be counteracted by the work that this Society has undertaken. It is possible to get children so to care about the bird life and the

flower life of their country surroundings that they will not readily forsake them for all the temptations that the city offers.

"I know a young man in my own county who had made up his mind to go to town or to emigrate that he might make a fortune. He was fond of reading and became interested in one of Ruskin's writings, with this result, that he gave up all thought of leaving the quiet countryside for the city or for America, and told me that what with the bird and the flower life and beauty of his native vale, to which until then he had been blind, he had determined to be content to stay at home a poorer man, for he had found great riches.

"Not the least beneficent work the Society has done is in the direction of aiding and abetting legislation. . . . But it is not on Acts of Parliament that the Society depends for the sure protection of the great British possession and heritage we have received of bird life and bird beauty and bird song. It is to an enlightened public opinion, to a deeper interest in the ways and habits of those friends and companions of our workaday life, that it looks for the success of its national mission."

NOTES.

Mr. G. F. Watts, R.A.

IN 1837, the year of Queen Victoria's accession, Mr. G. F. Watts, then a young man of twenty, exhibited his first picture in the Royal Academy, the pathetic bird study, "The Wounded Heron." In 1899, two years after the Diamond Jubilee, the veteran artist of eighty-two sent to the New Gallery his well-known picture of The Shuddering Angel weeping over an altar covered with birds and birds' plumage, which he dedicated to "All who love the beautiful and mourn over the senseless and cruel destruction of bird life and beauty." Throughout his long life the sympathies of the greatest and noblest artist of our times were ever with the cause of humanity, and his protest lifted, whether by the pen or with the still greater power of art, against the cruel, the senseless, and the ignoble. A member of the Society for the Protection of Birds, he willingly granted the Society permission to reproduce his "Angel" to enforce the text of its appeal against "The Trade in Birds' Feathers"; and on the removal of the picture from his studio in London to the gallery at Compton, he consented to the distribution of the pamphlet to visitors, "in the hope," wrote Mrs. Watts, "that it may forward your good work which Mr. Watts and

I have so much at heart." He was ill when this letter was written, and little more than a fortnight later (July 1st) was called to face the Angel of Death, whom his fine imagination had always depicted as at once so majestic and so pitiful.

Elizabeth, Duchess of Wellington.

THE Society has also lost a powerful friend by the death of Elizabeth, Duchess of Wellington, who joined it in its earliest days, and was one of the first of its Vice-Presidents. The Duchess's feeling for animal suffering was wide and practical, and was evidenced not only by her personal interest in the work of this Society, but also by her long connection with the Tunbridge Wells Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, of which she consented to become Vice-President when Mrs. Edward Phillips became its Hon. Secretary. Her remarkable beauty of face and form (Queen Victoria is said to have considered her the most beautiful woman of the Court), the stately carriage of her head, on which she never wore an aigrette; her long public life as Lady of the Bedchamber from 1843 to 1858, and as Mistress of the Robes from 1861 to 1869, and from 1874 to 1880; and the extreme pride and affection of the Great Duke for his daughter-in-law—the child of his old friend the Marquess of Tweeddale; these and many other things made her a personage; and like the great artist whose death is recorded above, she had attained to more than four score years. (Born in 1820; died August, 1904.)

School Leagues in France and Switzerland.

WORK in connection with schools is regarded as the most hopeful sign of progress in France, School Leagues for the protection of birds existing all over the country, to the number of 5000. A similar movement (writes a Geneva correspondent) has been set on foot in Switzerland by the formation in the Canton of Geneva of a league for the protection of animals and plants, the members of which promise to take no eggs or nests, and to do their utmost to prevent the capture or destruction of birds and the use of bird-lime, traps, and nets. The handbook issued by the Society for the use of its members, compiled by M. Cointre, a French schoolmaster, bases its appeal almost entirely on utilitarian grounds, giving lists of the animals, birds, and insects most useful, and also of those considered injurious to agriculture.

Work in Japan.

TWENTY prize essays written by Japanese boys and girls on the subjects "Man and Animals," and "Children and Dragonflies," are published in "Awaremi" ("Mercy"), the organ of the Tokio Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals. The Society did the Society for the Protection of Birds the honour of consulting it some little time since, receiving all its papers; and it is interesting to note that this competition was arranged on similar lines to those adopted in our Bird and Tree scheme. Essays were invited from the children of the Primary Schools throughout the country, and nearly 400 compositions were sent in. Unfortunately they are printed in the beautiful and wonderful Japanese characters, so that the unlearned Englishman cannot judge their merits; but in a country where—travellers tell us—children never cry, and animals are never ill-used, there should be a happy understanding between the two. The Society, whose medal bears the head of a horse wearing a quaint sun-hat, is endeavouring to promote some sort of merciful care of horses on the battle-field.

Nature Study.

RECENT speeches of Sir George Kekewich and Canon Rawnsley indicate peculiarly well the false and the true methods of Nature Study. The child who by becoming interested in natural life learns to exercise observation, quickness of eye, and intelligence, is, as Canon Rawnsley points out, learning what will be of the utmost value in any walk of life, as well as adding a thousand-fold to its enjoyments. On the other hand, you may bid him note every detail of the doings and diet of a squirrel in a cage, or a grass-snake in a vivarium, and you have taught him nothing, for you have not cultivated his intellect by a true study of facts, nor awakened his imagination by a true study of nature. You may have taken a step towards the formation of his character; but, as Sir George Kekewich observes, that step is in the wrong direction. If we cannot have Nature Study properly so-called, let us at any rate avoid mischievous shams, and be content with the old natural history of books and diagrams, which has its rightful place among the bones of the educational skeleton.

The Magistrates and Bird Catchers.

CONSIDERABLE encouragement to the cause of Bird Protection is to be found in the reports of

police court cases from various localities; because they show clearly that magistrates are forming decided opinions on the subject of bird catching and bird dealing, and are expressing those opinions with refreshing plainness. When the police throughout the country districts (especially in the neighbourhood of large towns) are instructed to enforce the Protection Acts and Orders, and when magistrates in general share the views of the Mayor of Brighton, the Mayor of Saffron Walden, Mr. Loder, and Mr. J. W. Ford, there will be hope of a very considerable suppression of this detestable trade.

PLUMES AND PLUME-BIRDS.

IN buying autumn and winter millinery ladies are asked to help the Bird Protection movement, and to discourage the slaughter of beautiful and useful birds, by selecting hats and bonnets trimmed with no feathers other than those of the ostrich or of birds commonly used for food, such as game and poultry. "Made-up" birds and ornaments should be avoided, unless the plumage used is plainly recognizable.

The following feathers are especially to be shunned by everyone interested in the preservation and protection of wild birds:

"OSPREYS." — These, whether the long and slender kind or the short "brush" or "stub," are all made from the breeding plumage of herons and egrets, worn by the birds at no other season. There are no such things as "artificial ospreys" (see S.P.B. Leaflets, Nos. 27, 49, and 51), though a few imitations are made from peacock and rhea feathers (see Rhea). And there are no egret farms.

PARADISE PLUMES. — Birds-of-paradise are obtained almost exclusively from New Guinea, and are being terribly reduced in number. The natives call them "God's birds" or "sun-birds" on account of their gorgeous beauty. They are killed chiefly at the breeding-time, for not only are their plumes in perfection then (as is the case with all birds), but they afford easy targets for the hunter. The male birds assemble in companies on certain trees to display their glories before the hens; and the hunter shoots them one after another as soon as they begin their graceful evolutions, the birds being so eagerly absorbed in their courtship that almost all may be brought down before the danger is heeded. The special plumes grow from the

shoulder, and sometimes attain a length of two feet.

GOURA MOUNTS.—The Goura, or Crowned Pigeon, is another native of New Guinea and adjoining islands—a beautiful lavender-grey bird, with a peculiar crest, for the sake of which it is killed. With its limited habitat its extermination, once decreed by the trade, may soon be effected.

RHEA.—This bird furnishes the feathers, called "vulture" or "vautour" by the trade, largely used as "quills," and also to some extent for making aigrettes. It is the ostrich of South America, smaller than the African bird and without the decorative "ostrich plume," and is not farmed. It is persecuted pitilessly by the plume-hunters, has already disappeared from some regions, is nowhere abundant, and its extirpation is only a matter of time if the present slaughter continues.

EMU.—The representative of the ostrich tribe in S. E. Australia. As the eggs as well as the feathers are keenly sought, this bird has been to a great extent stamped out by the march of civilization, and is being rapidly exterminated in the homes which remain to it.

GREBE.—The satiny-white plumage of the Grebe is accepted as a fur by some ladies. The elegant water-birds which furnish it are slaughtered by thousands in Russia and North America, being shot most successfully on the great lakes in breeding time. At that season some species, like the British Great Crested Grebe, have curious ornaments of horns or tippets, one kind having its head surrounded with an aureole "which glitters with a glory that passes description." "Harmless, beautiful, defenceless," writes Mr. Vernon Bailey, of the U.S. Biological Survey, "they fill the place among birds which the fur seals do among mammals, and their doom seems as sure and sad."

With these birds must be mentioned the SWALLOW (killed on migration and the wings much used), TERN and KITTIWAKE, and OWL, all largely employed.

Many other birds whose names are comparatively unknown, and therefore mean little to buyers of millinery, figure largely in catalogues of the plume trade and are used in the manufacture of feather ornaments. These include :

ARGUS PHEASANT.—An inhabitant of the Eastern Archipelago, and remarkable for its long tail quills, marked with eye-like spots; in the cock bird these are three feet or more in length.

CARDINAL.—The handsome songster familiar as the Virginian nightingale. One of the most

characteristic birds of Bermudas. The name is given also to some crimson finches.

COCK-OF-THE-ROCK.—A wonderful orange-coloured bird, very rare, peculiar to Guiana and the lower countries of the Amazons.

HUMMING-BIRDS.—The smallest and most radiant and sparkling of all birds. They occur in the New World only, and number some 450 species. The glory and lustre of their glittering little bodies cannot be imagined by those who see only the dull dead skins.

IMPEYAN PHEASANT.—A bird of the Himalayan forests. "In some districts seems to have been extremely numerous not so many years ago, but this is not so now, for the cocks have been killed by thousands to meet the plume market" (Prof. Newton). Plumage chiefly of shining gold, green, and blue. (The exportation of feathers from India is now prohibited.)

LYRE-BIRD.—A native of Australia. Killed for its long tail plumes, which do not attain perfection until the bird is in its third or fourth year, and then only in the breeding season. Almost the sole survivor of a very ancient family of birds.

ORIOLE.—The beautiful Golden Oriole, which some ornithologists hope to see naturalised in England.

PITTA.—A family of gaily-hued birds, obtained mainly from the Malay Archipelago, and remarkable for brilliantly contrasted patches of colour.

RIFLE-BIRD.—The Australian bird-of-paradise (a name given also to the lyre-bird). Clad in velvety black and glittering green. Named from the green uniform of Riflemen.

ROLLER.—Known in the trade as Jay. Lovely blue birds, of Indian and Ethiopian regions. Almost wholly blue, from delicate azure to deep ultramarine. "Thousands upon thousands," writes Professor Newton, "are annually destroyed to supply the demand for gaudy feathers to bedizen ladies' dresses."

TANAGER.—Brilliant little creatures of the finch tribe, belonging chiefly to tropical America. The Scarlet Tanager (a summer immigrant in the Northern States), whose gay feathers are coveted by the trade, is scarlet only in the summer or breeding season.

TROGON.—Corrupted by the trade to "Trojan." Perhaps the most splendid of all birds, not excepting the birds-of-paradise; inhabits tropical America, Asia, and Africa. Plumage generally of gorgeous colouring, carmine, green and gold predominating. The king of the family is the Quezal, a native of Central America, whose flowing

train feathers are three feet long and of a resplendent golden-green. The feathers, however, once taken from the birds, soon fade on exposure to light.

Almost all these birds, whose names with others are to be found in the catalogues of the feather-sales, are among the rarest and most exquisite gems not only of bird-life but of the whole animate creation, and each year our earth grows the poorer and sadder for loss of her living jewels. They are being sought out from the whole world; wantonly and uselessly slaughtered; "knocked down" in city auction-rooms, for a few shillings or a few pence apiece; manufactured by the plumassier into something from which all the grace and loveliness and brilliance of the living birds has gone: and this for no better purpose than to provide a season's trimming for women's hats.

THE PLUME SALES.

THE fourth of the year's (1904) feather sales was held at the Commercial Sale Rooms, London, on July 29th. There were 160 packages of "osprey" plumes, for which the demand was good, and prices higher for long plumes; these were all feathers of egrets and herons of various kinds from Asia and South America, mostly of such species as are found in India. There were also 35 cases of "osprey" skins of the same character. The birds-of-paradise numbered 800, all from New Guinea, and sold at higher prices. Argus pheasants, 109, were from the Himalayas and China. Jays (Indian rollers), 3330, sold at 3½d. to 3¾d. each. Of owls there were 3674, all examined being of the short-eared species, and probably from India. Humming-birds, 6820, ranged from ¼d. to 2½d.

The cases of miscellaneous bird skins, 108 in number, included 645 tanagers, 485 cardinals, 135 orioles, 2275 bronze ibis wings; also parrots, cocks-of-the-rock, trogons, peacock feathers (mostly from India), and quantities of eagle, crane, swan, and pelican quills.

IN THE COURTS.

THE most important case under the Bird Protection Acts heard in the courts recently was that of the Rev. Albert Ernest Sorby, of Darfield Rectory, Yorkshire, who was charged at Lerwick on July 12th, 1904, with taking two eggs of the great skua

at Burra Firth, Unst, and one egg of the sea-eagle on the island of Yell. He was fined £3, and the eggs were ordered to be forfeited, and handed over to the Edinburgh Museum.

Two Ipswich labourers, the one with eighteen, and the other with four previous convictions against him, were charged before the Woodbridge Bench on August 18th with taking wild birds in Close Time. The men were watched by the police on a Sunday morning, and in the whin where they hid were found nine young linnets and two goldfinches tied up in a handkerchief, and a quantity of limed twigs. The Chairman (Mr. J. Loder) said the Bench were determined to stop this cruel practice, and the men were fined £2 with 10s. 6d. costs each. (The captured birds were taken to Mrs. Luther Holden, who cared for them till they were able to fly.)

Three bird-catchers were fined 15s. and costs each at Enfield on August 15th for netting wild birds and cruelty to decoys. The decoys had had strings fastened round them, which were pulled by the men so as to make them flutter their wings and thus attract free birds; and a chaffinch produced in court had been blinded by having its eyes pierced with a needle. One defendant said he thought the five years for which the Act was in force had expired. The chairman (Mr. J. W. Ford) assured him that the five years were never likely to expire, and the law on the matter was likely to be more severe. If they were ever brought there again for putting out the eyes of a bird he would fine them £5. The decoys, nets, and cages were confiscated.

Henry James, a bird dealer of Old Kent Road, was fined £4 4s. at Lambeth on August 12th for exposing for sale 35 skylarks, two blackbirds, and three linnets, recently taken. At South London Police Court, Thomas J. Goodwin, also of Old Kent Road, was fined £3 and costs for the illegal possession of three young thrushes. Defendant declared that such birds were openly sold in the streets in the East End. The magistrate said this cruel traffic must be stopped. (Both these cases were proved by Inspector Green, of the R.S.P.C.A.)

A Saffron Walden labourer and his son were convicted at the Borough Bench on June 17th for using lime to take birds. The Mayor said it was a cruel thing to take linnets in this way, as ninety-nine birds out of every hundred died in the early days of captivity.

A Barkingside dealer, summoned before the Ongar Bench on June 25th for the possession of wild birds, said he had had them a twelvemonth, and only brought them down there for air and sunshine. The Chairman (Captain Wellesley Pigott) said he could tell that to someone else; he had better not come there again. Ordered to pay 5s. costs.

In hearing a case at Barnard Castle on June 29th, in which two miners were charged with having an owl in their possession, Colonel Vane said the Act was not half sufficiently enforced.

The Brighton magistrates imposed a fine of 40s. and costs, with the alternative of a month's hard labour, in the case of William King, bird-catcher,

who was summoned on August 31st for cruelty to decoy sparrows. Defendant used the decoys in netting birds, and caught up four together, crushing them in his hand with brutal cruelty. Many birds had been used as decoys, and had their legs cut with string. King said he had the farmer's permission, and sold the sparrows for 4½d. a dozen. The Mayor said it was hardly possible to imagine more brutal treatment, and it was a question whether defendant should be allowed the option of a fine. Time for payment was refused.

BIRD PROTECTION IN WINTER.

ORDERS for the protection of certain birds throughout the year are in force in thirty-eight County Council areas in England and Wales, and in every county, with two exceptions, in Scotland. It is hoped that Hon. Local Secretaries and members of the Society in these districts will kindly make known as widely as possible the fact that bird protection does not end with Close Time. Sunday protection, in force in nineteen County Council areas, also relates to the whole of the year.

LECTURE SEASON, 1904-5.

THE Society's collection of lantern slides has been considerably augmented by the purchase of new slides, as well as by the gift of the Sennett collection; and it is found necessary to revise the regulations governing the loan of slides for lectures. Last season they were in great request, and accordingly much time and trouble was involved in the issue of the selections chosen by the different lecturers. In some cases the slides were used for the illustration of lectures not directly connected with the Society or its work; and not only was no contribution sent to the Society, but the actual cost of supplying the slides was not defrayed. It has therefore been considered advisable to fix the fees to be paid for the use of the Society's slides; and particulars and forms of application can be obtained from the Secretary.

COUNTY COUNCIL ORDERS.

THE following Orders have been issued since July 1st, 1904:—

Wiltshire, July 7th. [B.C.E.F.S.] This amended Order extends Close Time to September 1st, gives Sunday protection in certain districts, and protects plovers' eggs after April 15th. A number of birds are protected all the year, including the Stone Curlew, Goldfinch, Owls, Kingfishers, and Woodpeckers.

Huntingdon, July 15th. [B.C.E.F.S.] Adds the Heron to the fully protected birds.

Derbyshire, July 20th. [B.C.E.F.S.] Extends the lists of scheduled birds and of eggs protected. Protects Owls, Kingfishers, Woodpeckers, and Bittern all the year. Gives Sunday protection to certain species.

County of Dublin, August 1st. [E.] New Order.

London, August 15th. [B.C.E.F.S.] Renewed Order.

West Sussex, September 1st. [A.B.C.E.F.S.] Renewed Order.

THE DECREASE OF SWALLOWS.

THE continued serious decrease in the number of swallows, which is noted not only in Great Britain, but also on the Continent, was discussed at the meeting of the Committee of the Society on July 15th. The decrease is attributed chiefly to the extensive destruction of the birds for millinery purposes, and for the table, and it is practically certain that they are netted on migration both in spring and autumn. It is not, however, easy to ascertain at what place or places, and at whose instigation, these wholesale captures are made; and the Committee decided to prosecute further active enquiries on the subject in France and Italy.

CHRISTMAS CARD.

NOW READY.

"THE SONG OF THE SEASON."

By the kindness of Mr. J. MacWhirter, R.A., the Society's Christmas Card for 1904 is illustrated with reproductions in black and white of his two charming pictures, "A Winter Song" and "The Blackbird's Song."

Price, one card, 2d.; one dozen cards, 1s. 6d.

"OSPREY" PLUMES, REAL AND "ARTIFICIAL."

By W. P. PYCRAFT, A.L.S., F.Z.S.

LEAFLET No. 51, issued by the Society for the Protection of Birds. Illustrations from photographs. Copies may be had at 4d. per doz., 2s. 6d. per 100.

PUBLICATIONS RECEIVED.

"Birds in their Seasons," by J. A. Owen (Routledge & Sons, 2s. 6d. nett). A brief popular account of British birds, with 12 coloured illustrations by A. F. Lydon.

"The Animals' Friend" (G. Bell & Sons, 2d. monthly).

"The Animals' Guardian" (13, Regent Street, 1d. monthly).

"The Humanitarian" (Humanitarian League, 1d. monthly).

"Directory of State Officials and Organizations concerned with the Protection of Birds and Game" (U.S. Department of Agriculture, Division of Biological Survey; Circular No. 44).

Next Issue.—The next Number of BIRD NOTES AND NEWS will be ready on December 1st, 1904.

Reading Cases for BIRD NOTES AND NEWS can be obtained from the office at a cost of 1s., including postage. They will be found very useful to keep the numbers together, and also for use in Public Libraries.

BIRD NOTES AND NEWS will be sent post free to any address for 1s. per annum, payable in advance.

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BIRD NOTES AND NEWS.



OSPREY.

Circular Letter issued Periodically by the
Society for the Protection of Birds.

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No. 8.]

LONDON, 3, HANOVER SQUARE, W.

[DECEMBER, 1904.]

Charter of Incorporation.



AT the meeting of the Privy Council on October 24th, 1904, His Majesty the King was pleased to grant a Charter of Incorporation to the Society for the Protection of Birds, under the name of The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds.

THE OSPREY* IN SURREY.

THE case of the Osprey recently shot at Cranleigh in Surrey, which has attracted much attention in lay as well as ornithological quarters, is in every respect a representative and instructive one. The facts are briefly these :

The Osprey or fish-hawk, one of the few grand species left to our country, is now so near extinction that its only British breeding-places, in the Highlands, have to be watched with the utmost vigilance in order to protect the few birds that return to Scotland year after year, and save them from the cupidity of the collector. The owners of two estates on which

the birds build have been awarded the medal of the Zoological Society of London in recognition of their care of these precious visitors. The ospreys pass over England on their migrations, but it is not known whether the bird which appeared at Cranleigh belonged to the Scottish ospreys or to the stragglers from the Continent which annually visit our shore.

The Osprey was seen at Vachery Lake, near Cranleigh, for about a fortnight in September. Its magnificent appearance brought many interested sightseers to enjoy the unwonted pleasure of watching the great bird sailing in the air or dropping swiftly and powerfully down upon its prey—a strange and fascinating spectacle over a quiet Surrey water. Then it vanished. Its next appearance was as a stuffed “specimen” in a bird-stuffer’s shop at Guildford. The Society for the Protection of Birds at once placed itself in communication with the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals and with the Surrey Constabulary; the investigation and prosecution were undertaken by the former; and at the Guildford Bench, on October 22nd, the keeper on the Vachery estate was fined for having killed the bird, and his employer, the estate-

* This bird must not be confounded with the Egrets and Herons that furnish the so-called “osprey” plumes of the milliner.

manager, for having aided and abetted him. The bird was ordered to be given up and handed over to Charterhouse School Museum. A second osprey, said to have been seen at Cranleigh, is reported to have resorted to safer quarters at Peper Harow, where Lord Midleton gave strict orders for its protection.

But for the action of the County Councils Association in recommending for general protection certain non-scheduled birds, it is probable that the Osprey might never have been placed on the fully protected list in southern counties; Surrey indeed took this precautionary step only last year (1903). And again, but for Lord Jersey's Act of 1902, framed by the Society for the Protection of Birds, the dead bird could not have been confiscated but would have remained—a prize worth ten times the amount of the fine levied—in the hands of the law-breaker who killed it.

The history of the Osprey in Surrey is melancholy reading. Its appearance was first recorded by Gilbert White at Frensham, the neighbourhood in which it has been more often seen than anywhere else in the county. The subsequent record, as given in Mr. Bucknill's *Birds of Surrey*, is as follows:—

- 1841. Frensham Pond. Killed.
- 1843. Hammer Pond, Farnham. Killed.
(Date unknown.) Abbots Pond, Frensham.
Killed.
- 1852. Milford House, Godalming. Killed.
(Another seen.)
- 1853. Weybridge. Killed.
- 1868. Gatton. (Believed to have been an
Osprey, but not "preserved.")
- 1881. East Molesey. Captured—disabled after
having been severely injured by
shooting at Malden.
- 1881. Warren Pond, Puttenham. Killed.
- 1884. Frensham Pond. Seen.
- 1885. Little Frensham Pond. Killed.
- 1889. Richmond Park. Subsequently killed
at Barnes.
- 1897. Frensham. Apparently escaped.
- 1898. Kew and Penn Ponds, Richmond. Seen.
- 1899. Cobham. "Accidentally shot."

It is to be hoped that the specimen of which Charterhouse has now gained possession will have its history clearly set forth on a label, so as to prove a useful object lesson to visitors to the Museum.

BIRD PROTECTION IN INDIA.

THE interesting and very satisfactory report issued (August, 1904) by Mr. W. Jesse, Hon. Sec. of the Indian Branch of the Society for the Protection of Birds, deals with the plume trade and the game laws.

"It is no small satisfaction" (the report states) "to be able to feel that the Society's Branch in India has borne its share with such important bodies as the Game Preservation Associations of the Nilgiris, Mysore, Rangoon, etc., in bringing to the notice both of the public and the authorities the need that exists for further action in the matter of preserving our Indian fauna. Subscriptions showed a considerable increase over the previous twelve months, due in a great measure to the generous donations of H.H. the Maharajah of Mysore, H.H. the Maharajah of Kuch Behar, and the Nilgiri Game Preservation Association. . . ."

"The result of the Act recently passed by Lord Curzon's Government appears on the whole to be satisfactory; nevertheless, there is no doubt whatever that efforts are being made—and unfortunately with some measure of success—to evade its restrictions. . . . Communications with the Customs authorities pointed to the probability of the post being used for the purpose. It is to be hoped that the Postal officials may be able to aid the Customs in this matter. . . . A circular letter sent round some months ago elicited the fact that many feathers and skins are supposed to find their way out of India through French or Portuguese ports, but no definite information was forthcoming. . . ."

"A correspondent in Assam writes regarding the destruction of peacocks in certain districts, due to a demand for the feathers. It would appear from his account that in the Darrang district, where it was formerly abundant, the bird has been practically exterminated."

The report goes on to speak of the Government Bill for the Better Preservation of Game and Fish, and the need for checking the destruction by shikarries; and the help of Mr. Spence, Mr. Comber, and Mr. Laxmidas is heartily acknowledged. Any financial assistance from those interested in the birds of our Indian Empire will be welcomed by Mr. William Jesse, Meerut College, Meerut.

THE Ligue des Oiseaux of Switzerland, founded by Mlle. Lagier, has, by permission, adopted the postcard design No. 5, published by the SOCIETY FOR THE PROTECTION OF BIRDS, substituting for Browning's words an appropriate verse in French.

NOTES.

The Fauna of Australia.

THE attention of the Society for the Protection of Birds is being called to the need for further bird protection measures in various parts of the globe, where sister societies appear to be much needed. A New South Wales correspondent, Mr. J. W. R. Clarke, writes at length on the disappearance of the native fauna and flora of that colony. "In the year 1899, at my instigation," he writes, "Mr. Richard Driver brought in a Bill and passed it through the Legislature for the protection of the laughing-jackass and a few other birds, but since then very little has been done towards preserving other species of birds and animals that are now very fast disappearing."

If more active steps are not taken it is feared that the brush turkey, bustard, emu, curlew and pigeon, as well as the kangaroo and wallaby, will soon be extinct, while other species are becoming rare.

Cape Colony.

IN Cape Colony a Bird Protection Society is urgently required. The law is ready to hand were any vigorous workers ready to make use of it, but being of a permissive character it unhappily lies to a great extent in abeyance. And meanwhile the birds are being rapidly destroyed, with consequences that will be serious to future tillers of the soil, who will have to struggle against the many insect enemies of field and garden without the invaluable help of the insect-eating birds and their hungry little families. The main clause of the Protection of Birds Act of 1899 is as follows:—

"It shall be lawful for any Municipal or Divisional Council to petition the Governor to prohibit the destruction of birds within its municipality or division, as the case may be: Such petition shall set forth the kinds of birds in respect of which, the period for which, and the limits within which, such prohibition is desired."

Thus all that is needed is a working society with a branch in each of the hundred Divisions into which the colony is divided; and we greatly hope some bird-lovers in the colony (or some friends of agriculture, if the birds have no force strong enough on their side to work for love of them alone) will take up the matter without delay, and will not only see that the law is adopted, but that it is also enforced. Guns, catapults, traps, and limed sticks are reported to be making a clearance of beautiful and useful species even around Claremont and Wynberg, and the sugar-birds, saysies, canaries,

and Cape robins are said to be in imminent danger.

The Seagull.

THE "Gull versus Herring" controversy has been dragging a somewhat weary length in the *Western Morning News*, the *Scotsman*, and the *Morning Post*. It has been kept up on the one side mainly by Mr. J. Brown, who seems as anxious as a Russian admiral to turn his batteries on anything that appears on the face of the waters. The name "gull" is taken as including, not only the common, herring, and black-headed gulls, but also the black-backed (which is not a scheduled bird); and it having been shown by the most surprising figures,—and on evidence that can hardly be considered scientific,—that gull and man cannot both continue to enjoy a herring diet, the bird is further charged with advancing inland, threatening and devouring poultry, game, eggs, trout, grain, and puppies. The other side of the argument has been maintained by various writers, including Sir Hereward Wake, Mr. F. G. Aflalo, and Mr. A. H. Palmer, in temperate and cogent letters; and curiously enough one of the papers containing correspondence on the subject contained also a paragraph recording that "*This has been an unprofitable season for the Haddingtonshire fishermen, as many as a thousand crates of herrings having been thrown away on one day for want of buyers.*"

Nesting-Boxes.

THE making of nesting-boxes for birds has been taken up as a village industry at Ballycastle, co. Antrim; and anyone wishing to procure boxes for placing in gardens, or as patterns for the manufacture of others at boys' clubs and the like during the winter months, may obtain a variety of shapes and sizes from the manager of the Toy Factory, Ballycastle, or from the Peasant Arts Society in London, or from Mr. B. Alcock, of Cheadle. At the same time it would be well to obtain Mr. Joseph King's leaflet or pamphlet on the subject (to be had from this Society), or Mr. Masefield's more comprehensive guide. The boxes should be placed in the garden in very early spring, or even in winter, so that the birds may have ample time to view the premises, as they are shy of new structures.

Pigeon Houses on the Nile.

LADY WILLIAM CECIL, in her charming "Bird Notes from the Nile, recently published, gives a drawing of one of the quaint little houses made of

Nile mud by Nubian women, for domestic pigeons to nest in. Similar material has probably not been experimented with in Britain, though the mud cottages of the New Forest are pronounced warm and comfortable as human dwellings. The same writer also alludes to the "pigeon-towers" for the wild birds, which are a conspicuous feature of Nile villages. The pigeons are tempted to them by convenient brushwood perches outside, and encouraged to build by a provision of pots and potsherds inside. It is not wholly a matter of sentiment. They are valued for the sake of the manure; and one is occasionally killed for a special feast.

PLUME SALES.

THE supplies at the Commercial Sale Rooms on October 11th, 1904, included 239 packages of "osprey" feathers, East Indian, South American, and Chinese, all being plumes of herons and egrets. Of birds-of-paradise there were 1344 light-plumed and 1725 various, the former meeting less demand than of late. Miscellaneous bird-skins and quills were comprised in 130 cases, and included Victoria crown pigeons (heads and necks, 3s.), jungle cocks, tanagers, cardinals, trogons, red ibis, orioles, and humming-birds. Longtail trogons realised 9s., humming-birds went as low in some cases as $\frac{1}{8}$ d. There were also six cases of peacock feathers and six cases of so-called vulture (rhea) feathers.

At a skin-sale at the College-hill Sale Rooms on October 25, 100 lyre-bird tails were offered.

SMALL BIRDS IN ITALY.

THE Society's enquiries into the decrease of the swallow have brought together much information on the persecution of small birds in Italy. That little birds are common articles of food in that poetic land is a familiar fact; they are sold in the markets of every town, not so much as provender for the poorer classes, to whom the tiny bodies of warblers or goldcrests offer little sustenance, but for the tables of the wealthier and, more especially, for the hotels and boarding houses. This custom of eating song birds, long practised in Italy and France, is also fairly general in Spain, and, to judge from the increasing demand for larks for smart dinner parties and charity balls, it is now apparently adopted in England. The English are indeed said to be notably greedy of such dishes at Continental tables. For this purpose the small

birds are slaughtered by tens of thousands in Italy, most largely in the southern and central provinces. At the migration season nets are erected on the plains and the seashore, forty feet high and four or five miles in extent. The birds are decoyed by a fluttering comrade, or, weary from their long journey, drop down easy victims. They are sold at a halfpenny or a penny a piece, and the trade is a thriving one: it touches more classes than the professional birdcatcher, the Archbishop of Sorrento, for example, deriving a large share of his income from the rent of land let for this purpose.

The second enemy of the little bird is the owner of the cheap gun license, who regards swallows as peculiarly well fitted to exercise his skill, and who endeavours to beat the record by the number he can bring down in an hour. They are also killed, to some extent, for millinery. Italy has no statute law for bird protection. Each province fixes its own Close time, but in some cases this is practically useless, as it does not cover either the spring or autumn migration; and in other instances it is nullified to a great extent by the limitation of the law to cultivated ground, and the entire exemption of uncultivated land and the seashore.

Efforts have been made for some years to remedy this state of things, and a Bill, which will largely restrict the trade, has been before eight or nine Parliaments. The present Minister of Agriculture is now introducing a Bill which proposes to give absolute protection to swallows and swifts. The Italian Societies for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, under the intrepid leadership of Mr. L. H. Hawksley, are doing much in the matter, as in animal protection generally; and a proportion of the clergy, especially the English priests, are in favour of the objects of the Societies.

THE THIEF AND THE POSSESSOR.

DR. ALFRED RUSSEL WALLACE writes to us:—

"I wish to make a suggestion for an amendment of the Wild Birds Protection Acts next time they come up for discussion. It is a maxim of law, and a very proper one, that the receiver is as bad as the thief, because if there were no receivers and no purchasers of stolen goods, there would be little or no robbery of such goods. This rule seems to apply to the *dealer* in birds illegally captured or procured, but does it apply to the *purchaser* from the dealer? And if not, why not? If there were no buyers among the educated and well-to-do, there would be few if any bird-catchers or dealers to break the law. If boys and labourers

are supposed to know the details of the laws, the educated purchaser should also be supposed to know them, and should also be punished for their infraction.

"I suggest therefore that, if necessary, the Acts be so amended as to include among offenders all purchasers of birds and eggs, the possession of which by dealers is an infraction of the law; and also that, in their cases, the fines shall be doubled, on the ground of their being really the instigators of all such offences. It would be very easy for the police or inspectors to summons all purchasers taking away such illegal property from any dealer's shop. A few hours a day at the proper season would produce a crop of cases that would do more for the protection of birds than is now done by the persecution of poor labourers, to whom bird-catching is at once a recreation and an addition to their miserably scanty means of livelihood. Till this alteration is made the statement that there is not in England one law for the rich and another for the poor is a falsehood and a mockery."

[As a matter of fact the law as regards birds stands to a considerable extent as Dr. Wallace would have it. The possession of a "recently taken" wild bird after March 15th is an offence whether the possessor be catcher, dealer, or purchaser. And though the higher classes might do much to stop bird-catching by utterly refusing to countenance the caging of wild birds, it is probable that nine-tenths of the buyers of newly-taken birds are poor persons. The caging of larks and chaffinches is indeed defended on that very ground.]

"I entirely agree with Dr. Alfred Russel Wallace," writes Mrs. E. PHILLIPS, "in thinking the receiver as bad as the thief, and that the purchase and resale of illegally captured or procured birds should be prohibited, under penalties. But I cannot see why the actual thief is to be acquitted, whether he be a rich man or a poor man who finds 'recreation' and pecuniary profit in his unlawful employment."

"The real remedy," writes Sir GEORGE KEKEWICH, "is to eliminate the words 'recently taken,' adding a proviso to exempt purchasers of birds taken before the passing of the amending Act."

Mr. W. H. HUDSON writes :—

"My friend Dr. Wallace treats of two distinct matters, namely, bird-catching and bird-collecting, as if they were one, and a very simple one at that. With regard to bird-catching for the dealers in cage-birds, the law is good enough as it stands, if only private persons, the rural police, and magistrates, would see to its being carried out. The police authorities are often indifferent, and the

rural policeman winks at illegal bird-catching; but this state of things would be remedied if only one or two or more residents in every parish would make it a duty to call the attention of the police to the matter, and insist on the law being enforced. Finally, we find that magistrates are far too lenient in many cases; that even where a conviction is obtained they often as not decline to confiscate the nets and other bird-catching paraphernalia, as the law gives them power to do. Still, we know that there has been a distinct improvement from the fact that species like the kingfisher and goldfinch, which had become exceedingly rare in England, have increased considerably during the last five or six years. A more important and difficult matter to deal with is the destruction of interesting and valuable woodland birds by the gamekeeper, and of rare species all over the country for the collector, who wishes to possess 'British-killed' specimens. The gamekeeper, we know, laughs at the law; there are scores of estates in every county where the keepers kill every owl, kestrel, hobby, and several other species, protected on paper all the year round, and make no secret of it. That is to say, they do not deny it, although they do not now nail or hang the birds up on their gibbets as they formerly did. Now they put the owls and protected hawks out of sight, or send them to the bird-stuffers, with whom they are in league.

"What can be done to restrain these persons destructiveness when the landowner or shooting tenant gives him a free hand—with a gun in it, which he is at liberty to carry every day and all the year round, and which must be fired off at something? But the gamekeeper, safe in his woods, is an even less injurious person than the private collector, the 'curse of rural England,' with whom he is usually in communication through the bird-stuffing dealer. He, too, is practically safe from the law. He is usually a man of means, often a landowner and game-presenter and a magistrate. But I have treated this subject exhaustively in a chapter in 'Birds and Man,' and need not go into it here. The law as it stands gives protection to many common species which hardly need it, and to other species, such as the goldfinch, nightjar, kingfisher, woodpeckers, terns, kittiwake, peewit, and a good many others which certainly needed it. These are the species which the private collector does not want; the species which he wants cannot be effectually protected in the present state of the law. The only possible way to protect them would be an Act to prohibit the collecting of British birds by private persons."

BIRD AND TREE COUNTY COMPETITIONS.

THE general results of the School Competitions for the Society's Bird and Tree County Challenge Shields are distinctly satisfactory. The essays sent in reach a remarkably high standard of merit, considering the age of the competitors and the comparative novelty of the scheme; and give evidence of the care bestowed on the preliminary study both by teachers and children. Even the general complaint of the judges that the compositions are too bookish is probably to be explained by anxiety to work up the subject; and as the competitors grow a little more sure of themselves they will learn to trust less to books and more to what they individually can read and understand in Nature. One of the judges writes: "I think that undoubtedly the aim of the Competition, viz., that the essay should be a summary of the child's own observation, has in the main been well followed." So far as this is true, so far is the Competition a success. It has its value also in casting sidelights on bird protection and bird persecution in various neighbourhoods. The Challenge Shields are awarded as follows:—

- Bedfordshire : Sandy (Girls') School.
- Berkshire : Buckland School.
- Cumberland : Burgh-on-Sands School.
- Hampshire : Bitterne Park (Girls'); second prize, Sandown (National) Boys'.
Proxime accessit, Western (Council), Southampton.
- Westmorland : Warcop School.

The judges were : Mr. Montagu Sharpe (Chairman of Council), Rev. Canon Rawnsley, M.A., Rev. A. L. Hussey, M.A., Rev. J. E. Kelsall, M.A., and Mr. W. H. Hudson, F.Z.S.

The Society's Council decided to send awards of books to every competing school, in the hope that local residents will enter heartily into arrangements for festivals, with tree-planting and entertainment, such as will make a red letter day for the young folk. Several festivals have already taken place, but too late for any account of them to appear here.

Taking the essays altogether, a very fair variety of birds and trees were selected by the children, comprising 39 species of birds and 38 kinds of trees. The Skylark is the bird of the year (last year it was the Blackbird), with the Thrush second; and among trees the oak is most popular

(as was the case last year), followed by the horse-chestnut.

CUMBERLAND.

CUMBERLAND makes a most successful first appearance on the scene this year, the general level being high, though Cumberland as a county is a little behind the times in the matter of bird protection. Many of the schools believe that no protection is afforded to any birds but game, the County Council Order (which is a meagre one) being evidently little known. The first name to be inscribed on the Cumberland Shield is that of the Burgh-on-Sands School. Their essays are clear, accurate, and to the point; the young writers showing an almost anxious interest in their studies. Close at their heels comes the Cargo School, where the children have set to work in the right way by recording their own observations, but pass Draconian sentence on all fruit-eating birds; a pretty and exceptional feature is the attempt to translate some of the bird-calls into sol-fa notation, not an easy thing, but preferable at any rate to the perpetual re-iteration of the "Cherry-tree, cherry-tree" and "Little bit of bread" travesties. Greystoke is distinctly promising. Lorton has excellent essays on Tit and Robin, but it is a pity all the children chose the same tree—the chestnut, also selected by Penrith, who, however, confuse the horse- and Spanish chestnuts. Stanwix, also good in some points, treats House and Hedge Sparrows under one head as "cousins." Kirkoswald has one specially well-written essay on the Jackdaw; Calderbridge shows much careful work; and St. John's, Keswick, and Borrodaile, though now and then blundering in facts, are very genuine, and the outcome of little minds well worth encouragement.

BEDFORDSHIRE.

THE Bedfordshire Shield is taken by the Sandy (Girls') School with a batch of essays at once accurate and, in every sense of the word, nicely written, doing much credit to themselves and their teacher. Colmworth stands second; the amount of book-study shown here is wonderful, but unfortunately much of it seems to be book-study only. What else, indeed, could it be when a Bedfordshire child selects for "observation" no less a bird than the Eagle! For simple unpretending notes, personal and spontaneous, the much slighter essays from Leagrave and Tempsford deserve a high place; the teams have done their bird-watching

out of doors, and the first-named supply illustrations that are certainly original. Eaton Socon would stand higher if their cleverness—for clever they are—were less exclusively the erudition of industrious readers; next year it is hoped that they will back it up with field study. Clophill and Ashton, both boys and girls, even though they make mistakes, indicate genuine interest and intelligence, and ought to persevere; and a good word must likewise be given to Woburn, Biggleswade (where a little more sympathy might be cultivated), Studham (where, however, there is bad confusion between the House- and Hedge-Sparrows), Barton Manor, and Kensworth.

Here is a suggestive extract from one of the Ashton essays:—

“The neighbourhood of Dunstable is noted for its skylarks. They are caught in large nets, often carried by two men. Professional ‘larkers’ start their occupation about seven o’clock at night, and do not cease before one or two in the morning. During that time they can catch from 300 to 400 larks. These are sent to London, some alive in cages, and some dead ready to be sold in the poultry shops. It is reported that about 50,000 larks from Dunstable are sent to London annually.”

HAMPSHIRE.

HAMPSHIRE gave great difficulty to the judges, the three schools placed first being of singularly even merit. The Bitterne Park girls, however, besides showing keen personal observation in their bird essays, sent exceedingly good Tree papers, with admirable drawings, and are awarded the Shield. The bird papers from Western School, Southampton, are remarkably full, correct, and painstaking, with indications of careful note-taking; so, too, among the Tree papers, is that on the sycamore. The Sandown (National) boys, if less detailed, give highly intelligent, clear, and accurate descriptions in their own words of both birds and trees, well illustrated. After careful consideration the second prize goes to the latter. Bitterne, Southampton (National Boys’), send capital essays on birds, but transgress the rules in giving only one on trees. St. Peter’s, Bournemouth (Girls’), are highly meritorious both in matter and manner, the Nightjar being particularly good. Portchester is a new entrant of considerable merit, and will no doubt do better still next time; they have made good use of books, and should now study birds (*free birds*) for themselves. The Ventnor (Girls’) papers are very prettily written and sincere, the birds better than the trees; and Cowes distinctly deserves com-

mendation. North Stoneham’s trees are good, but the papers on birds indicate want of sympathy. Hayling, with considerable evidence of genuine observation (Nightjar notably good), but sending in too many essays; New Milton (very nice little essays); Newchurch, Hinton Ampner, Barton Stacey, and Whitsbury are all promising. If any doubt is felt as to the fairness of comparing the work of quick town-bred boys and girls with village children, it is set at rest by Privett, which comes near to taking a very high place indeed. Most of the papers it sends are delightful reading for their enthusiasm and originality, one little fellow, aged ten, simply bubbling over with all that he has to tell about the sparrow and the birch. Unfortunately another competitor has taken passages word for word from a book, and thus let down the team. Headley also gives good testimony to country intelligence, particularly in the essays on Plover and Starling.

WESTMORLAND.

THE competition in Berkshire and Westmorland is much smaller than in the counties already mentioned, but the merits of the schools which held the Shields for 1904, and again take them, reach a high standard, and their manifest enthusiasm should spread to other schools in the counties. All the Westmorland essays indeed are so good that one can but suppose there is material to hand for the making of young naturalists elsewhere in the county. Warcop’s compositions are astonishingly elaborate and finished performances, doing full justice to the careful study of nature that has been for some years a feature of the school. Beetham’s essays are all good also; if two others had been on the same level with those on the Skylark and Kingfisher, the Shield would have gone to this school. Heversham’s more youthful team ought to be winners one of these days, their work is so genuine and spontaneous.

BERKSHIRE.

IN Berkshire, Buckland School stands head and shoulders above its competitors, these essays comparing favourably with any in the whole competition; they are admirable in every respect, models of what such essays should be. Clewer comes second (the Wagtail and Scarlet Oak papers the best); and Burghfield also deserves commendation, though the too frequent allusions to the caging of birds suggest that caged birds rather than free may have been studied.

COUNCIL MEETING.

At the meeting of the Council of the Society for the Protection of Birds held on October 14th, 1904, the subjects under consideration included: The Destruction of Swallows on the Continent, Mr. L. H. Hawksley very kindly attending to give information with respect to Italy; Flapper Shooting and the advisability of extending the Close Time for Wild Duck to September 1st; various County Council Orders; Foula and the Great Skuas; Smuggling of Bird Skins from India; The Whale Fisheries (Scotland) Bill; The Cranleigh Osprey Case; suggested Cage Bird Poster; Richmond Park Reserves, etc. The report presented dealt with, among other matters, Bird and Tree Day Essays; Regulations for the Loan of Slides; Appeal to the Rajah for Bird Protection in Sarawak; Circular Letter *re* Bird Catching to County Constabulary; and the recent Egg Sale at Stevens's, at which certain lots of illegally taken eggs, objected to by the Society, were withdrawn from sale.

IN THE COURTS.

At Guildford County Bench on October 24th, Charles Buck, keeper on the Vachery estate, Cranleigh, was summoned for having shot an osprey at Cranleigh on September 16th, and Mr. Inglewood Parkin, his employer, was summoned for having aided and abetted him. Mr. Polhill, Solicitor to the R.S.P.C.A., prosecuted. Mr. Parkin had admitted that he authorised the shooting of the bird, which was feeding on the trout in the lake, but ignorance of the law was pleaded. Defendants were fined 10s. each, and the Bench ordered the osprey (which had been mounted) to be confiscated and offered to the Charterhouse School Museum.

At the Eye (Suffolk) Petty Sessions on September 12th, a boy, named Ernest Charles Clamp, was charged with having two barn owls in his possession, and admitted having taken them from the nest. Fined 10s., and the birds forfeited.

At Malling Petty Sessions (Kent) on October 10th, two London birdcatchers were summoned for taking wild birds at Malling on Sunday, September 11th. They had caught thirteen goldfinches, chaffinches, and linnets. One of the men denied on oath that he assisted in the capture, while the other avowed that he intended to take sparrows only; and the Chairman said the Bench would consider whether they should not be charged with committing perjury. Fined £1 and 10s. costs, the birds being forfeited. Further charged with cruelty to a decoy linnets, they were sentenced, one to a fortnight, the other to a week's imprisonment.—Two men, named Scarrett, father and son, of Chiswick, were fined £1 and 9s. 6d. costs, with seven days' imprisonment in the case of the older defendant, for ill-treating a decoy linnets.—Two

Crayford men were fined 5s. and 11s. 6d. costs for taking goldfinches at Wrotham, with a further 6s. for giving false addresses.

At Cullompton, on October 30th, the station-master of Hemyock was fined £1 for having three young goldfinches and a trap cage in his possession. He said he used the birds for mating purposes only; but the birds were recently caught. The Bench refused to order confiscation of cage and birds.—At the same court a Tiverton stableman was fined 10s. for exposing a trap cage with decoy goldfinch.

Another case of cruelty to decoy linnets was heard at Exeter on October 24th, when Thomas Ward was fined £1 for this offence. Engaged in bird-catching on Sunday, the 9th, he had three linnets placed as decoys, the string cutting into the flesh. One died when released, and two dead birds were found between the nets. He had caught a great number of linnets. Mr. Studd, J.P., said that defendant might think himself lucky he was not sent to prison; should other offenders come before the court they would be dealt with much more severely.

At Greenwich on November 4th a birdcatcher was fined 40s. and 4s. costs or one month for causing unnecessary suffering to two jackdaws and two rooks. The birds were found on the defendant's premises in a dirty, neglected state, with braces on, made of thin string, cutting the flesh. The defendant said the braces were not worn because the birds were used as decoys, but that they improved the bird's plumage.

"HOW TO HELP IN BIRD PROTECTION."

Practical Hints to Workers.

LEAFLET No. 52, issued by the Society for the Protection of Birds. Copies may be had at 3d. per doz., 1s. 9d. per 100.

CHRISTMAS CARD.

NOW READY.

"THE SONG OF THE SEASON."

By the kindness of Mr. J. MacWhirter, R.A., the Society's Christmas Card for 1904 is illustrated with reproductions in black and white of his two charming pictures, "A Winter Song" and "The Blackbird's Song."

Price, one card, 2d.; one dozen cards, 1s. 6d.

Next Issue.—The next Number of BIRD NOTES AND NEWS will be ready on April 1st, 1905.

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No. 9.]

LONDON, 3, HANOVER SQUARE, W.

[APRIL, 1905.]

THE LAW AND ITS CRITICS.

IS it altogether too much to ask of those who in public print and at public meetings criticise, commend, or condemn Bird Protection law, that they should learn what the law of Bird Protection is? It might be expected that a writer or speaker on a specific question would spend half-an-hour in making himself acquainted with his subject. Yet it is the exception rather than the rule to come upon a speech or a newspaper article on this topic which does not contain egregious errors in facts. To say that the Acts are complicated, intricate, unintelligible, is a commonplace of criticism. Nevertheless, it is within the power of any man of ordinary intelligence to grasp their general outline in the course of half-an-hour's attentive study, especially if aided by the "Summary" or the "Acts and Orders" published by the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds.

Some of the more frequent errors reiterated from day to day might be avoided if it were but once understood that the statutory law deals with Close Time only, and that even in Close Time it protects, from landlords and tenants of

land and their employés, no more than some eighty or ninety species (mostly sea-birds and rare species, with perhaps half a dozen fairly common land-birds of recognized utility). Everything else in Bird Protection law is left to the option of County Councils. The protection as against landowners and occupiers of any further species than the eighty or ninety enumerated in the Act; the protection of any species beyond the Close Time; the extension of Close Time; the protection of any eggs; the prohibition of Sunday bird-catching during the winter months; are all matters for Home Rule in the Counties.

In face of this modest statute, the farmer bewails the ruin of agriculture because "the law" forbids him to destroy the "pests" which devour his corn or fruit, or because "the law" prohibits the small boy from serving his country by bird-nesting. Chambers of Agriculture rise up in wrath and demand the repeal of restrictions that have never been made, and the exemption from protection of birds that are not protected. "In fruit-growing counties," says one of the organs of the country gentleman (February 18th, 1905), "starlings do an enormous amount of damage to ripening fruit,

as do rooks, blackbirds, and thrushes. The 'protection' of these birds involves a loss of 20 per cent. of the fruit-farmer's profits." Without pausing to consider the pros and cons of the argument, it need only be said that no fruit-farmer in any fruit-growing county in England is prohibited from killing any of these birds. If they were so prohibited it would be by the act of the local County Council, which is answerable to its constituents for what it does.

Again, we have a leading London daily (February 8th, 1905) asking, in an article of excellent intention, "What do County Councils expect to gain by prohibiting the taking of all birds' eggs?" and recording its conviction that "Edicts against egg-taking in general we hold to be an instance of excessive zeal, while they tend to check the growth of that love of natural history among peasant children which it is so desirable to encourage." Whether the adorning of "every cottage wall with strings of eggs" proves the love of natural history, as the writer appears to think—any more than a necklace of teeth proclaims the student of zoology—is an open question. The excessive zeal may be granted; but no County Council ever has issued or is likely to issue an edict against "egg-taking in general." Either every species of egg it is proposed to protect has to be named in the Order applied for, or the area in which it is proposed to protect all eggs must be exactly and minutely defined; the latter form of protection being generally reserved for portions of the coast, in order to guard sea-birds and such persecuted species as the Chough, the Raven, and the Peregrine.

A third writer, commenting most sympathetically on Bird Protection in a country paper (February, 1905), observes that "a few, too few, species are protected during the whole of the year," the "four enumerated" for such protection being, it appears, the Goldfinch, Kingfisher, Owl, and Great Crested Grebe. Here the writer is obviously speaking generally from the particular instance of his County Council Order. The time may come, and the sooner it comes the better, when certain species will be protected in the whole country throughout the year,

either by statute or by concerted County Council action; but at present no bird is in that happy position.

Yet another instance is afforded by an exceptionally well-informed weekly, which allows its angling correspondent to deplore the scheduling of Cormorant and Black-backed Gull; neither species is scheduled by the Act or by any Order.

Perhaps the most curious example of these comments upon an imaginary law is afforded by a County Councillor who recently (February, 1905) brought before his Council a motion that the county Order "should be modified by exempting servants, while engaged in protecting orchards, from prosecution," and stated that he had written to the Home Secretary on the matter as "something must be done to protect the cherry-orchards." As no "servant employed in protecting orchards" can be prosecuted for killing a non-scheduled bird, and as no cherry-eating bird is scheduled by Act of Parliament, it follows that the County Council themselves must have scheduled the offending species, and that the County Councillor now appeals to the Secretary of State and to his fellow-councillors to save the county from the effects of their own measure, a position of affairs bordering on a Gilbertian absurdity. All the Council have to do, instead of setting to work to exempt servants employed, etc., is to cease from including the cherry-eaters in their list of scheduled birds. In all probability, however, they are not so included.

On March 5th the *Field* printed a letter from a writer who considered it "incomprehensible" that a County Council Order should prohibit Sunday bird-catching merely between August and February; apparently he was not aware that the Act of 1896 gives this power to a Council only for non-Close Time, and that the Act of 1880 covers all the other Sundays in the year.

Bird-protection law may not be perfect; bird protectionists fully admit that point; but this is no reason why ignorance or carelessness should constantly place to its discredit any enormity or vagary which they may imagine to exist as substitutes for its actual provisions.

ROYAL SOCIETY FOR THE PROTECTION OF BIRDS.

THE Annual Meeting of the Society, held at the Westminster Palace Hotel on February 21st, 1905, was distinguished by the presence of its President, the Duchess of Portland, who presided, and congratulated the Society upon its Incorporation by Royal Charter. The speakers were Mr. Montagu Sharpe, Sir Herbert Maxwell, Bart., M.P., Mr. Sydney Buxton, M.P., Canon Rawnsley, Mr. Alfred Austin, Dr. P. L. Sclater, Dr. E. A. Wilson, Mr. T. Hastings Lees, and Mrs. Williamson, the founder of the Society. It was announced that the Duchess of Portland, the Duke of Bedford, the Earl of Stamford, Lady Theodora Guest, Mrs. Williamson, Sir Edward Grey, M.P., and Mr. Yerburgh, M.P., had become Life Fellows of the Society since the granting of the Charter; and an appeal was made for further Life Subscriptions in order to give the Society the secure basis of larger invested funds. The Report was adopted, and the President, Council, and Officers were re-elected.

[The Annual Report of the Society, with Proceedings at the Annual Meeting, may be obtained from the Society's office, 3, Hanover Square, price one shilling.]

COUNCIL MEETING.

THE Council of the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds met at 3, Hanover Square on March 10th. Present: Mr. Ernest Bell, Hon. Sir John Cockburn, Mr. H. E. Dresser, Hon. Mrs. Drewitt, Mr. Hastings Lees, Mr. and Mrs. F. E. Lemon, Mr. Meade-Waldo, Miss Pollock, and Mr. Howard Saunders.

The following appointments of Hon. Local Secretaries were confirmed:—Bowden, Mr. T. A. Coward; Carlisle, Miss Blanche Hartley; Chiswick, Mr. Edgar Syers; Guildford, Mrs. Johnson; Kineton, Mrs. Timms; Knutsford, Mr. C. Oldham; Petersfield, Mrs. Mackarness; Selborne, Mr. James Norman; Wentnor, Mrs. Wardman.

It was reported that the Society's lantern slides had been lent for the illustration of thirty-seven lectures since Jan. 1st.

Watching arrangements for Hascosay, Lundy Island, Seaford, and Dungeness were considered. Mr. Hoseason wrote from Hascosay that watchers were on the island throughout the breeding season, but, in spite of this, the sailing of a yacht round the island, and the offer of a reward for information, egg-lifting had not been wholly prevented, the poachers sometimes escaping to boats before

they could be identified. It was decided to provide a strong glass for the watchers' use.

Reports were received respecting the forthcoming Ornithological Congress; preparation of the Society's seal (given by the Rev. A. L. Hussey); destruction of Bitterns and other rare birds; instructions to H.M. Coastguard; feather sales on Feb. 14th; Bird and Tree Day competitions and festivals; the Society's publications and proposed new leaflet; next season's Christmas card, etc.

It was agreed that a small committee should be formed to consider certain recommendations to be made to County Councils as to alteration of Orders.

With regard to a proposal for the manufacture and sale of artificial eggs, it was decided that the scheme scarcely came within the scope of the Society's work; but the models, submitted by a manufacturer in the Potteries and made by a special process, were considered excellent, and a hope was expressed that they would be placed on the market through educational supply stores. Thanks were heartily accorded to Mr. J. R. B. Masefield, and also to Mr. Keates, for the trouble they have taken in the matter.

Meetings of the Council were also held on Jan. 13th and Jan. 27th, when the annual report and accounts were considered, the new bye-laws confirmed, and other business transacted.

NOTES.

Bitterns in England.

An unusual amount of attention has been drawn to the killing of a little company of Bitterns who made their appearance in January in this country, where once their strange booming note was a common sound of marsh and fenland districts. Of the four or five counties where they have been seen and shot, Cheshire is the only one which protects the Bittern out of Close Time, and here a prosecution was unfortunately impossible; the bird alighted, wounded and in a last stage of weakness and misery, in a farmyard; as to what exactly happened then accounts vary, but the body of the dead bird was claimed by the Chief Constable of the county, so that we may trust it will not be added to the proud possessions of the public-house parlour or the gentleman collector's museum. Another Bittern is, strange to say, reported alive. It is, or was when last heard of, vigilantly protected by the gamekeeper of the estate whereon it sought shelter: a gamekeeper who has been from boyhood a lover of birds, and who, to use his

own words, finds far greater pleasure in watching the movements and habits of the rarer species than in shooting them. But such gamekeepers are as unique as the praiseworthy taxidermist of Manchester who, having lately received a Hoopoe to stuff, exhibited it in his window with the notice: "A rare bird, which ought never to have been shot, but some people will kill anything." Is it to be expected that the gamekeeper should refuse his gratuity or the bird-stuffer his work? It is not they who are the principals in the slaughter of rare birds, which, legal or illegal, goes on perpetually.

Rare Birds.

Among recent records in the newspapers of the killing of rare birds are the following:—

A pair of Bearded Tits (reed pheasants), at Burley Fishponds, near Oakham. This species is said by *Country Life* to "have undoubtedly increased since the Wild Birds Protection Acts have been enforced, even in their present imperfect manner," but it is one of the scarcest of British birds, and almost confined to Norfolk. It is not protected in Rutland.

Great Northern Diver, shot on the Kennet, near Hungerford, and exhibited in a taxidermist's shop in Newbury.

A Merlin, shot by a gamekeeper near Wirksworth. Exceedingly rare so far south as Derbyshire.

A Hawfinch, shot on Portobello beach, where the species had not been seen for four years.

Golden Eagle, shot in Groveley Woods; the first seen in Wiltshire, and said to have proved a danger to the lambs. Added to the collection of the owner of the property, who, according to a morning paper, "about fifteen years ago secured two fine ospreys while fishing in the river which runs past Wilton House."

Horned Owl in Hampshire.

"It may be mentioned," says the *Shooting Times* (Dec. 31st), "that the Kingfisher, Dipper, and Heron are being destroyed wholesale by the water-bailiffs in the Ribble valley." These birds are not protected in Lancashire during the winter.

Educational Work.

Writing to the Society in reference to the great need for education on the subject of bird-life, in order that Bird Protection may be adequately dealt with, Sir Hereward Wake says:—

"To arrive at efficacious legislation we must educate the growing generation. The solid and impervious crust of sheer ignorance of some 99 per cent. of all classes alike on matters of fact which ought to be common knowledge is what militates against the survival of our most interesting and useful forms of bird life. If we can catch the voters and M.P.'s to be, young enough, no cage birds will be kept that are not bred in cages, and no women or girls will wear bird feathers, A.D. 2005; and such of our *feræ nature* as have survived will

be accorded some chance of further continuance. In the meantime we must do all we can to prevent the change in our cruel and senseless habits and customs coming too late, and the whole country being given up to noxious weeds and destructive insects. So I wish the Society every success, and trust that it will be doing all it can by circulars and lectures and so forth to enlighten the schoolboys and girls, not only in the public elementary schools but in all schools, as opportunities occur or are made."

Birds and Boys.

The Poet Laureate, in his speech at the Society's Annual Meeting, spoke of the necessity for giving boys a genuine interest in the habits and ways and almost human passions of birds if they are to be weaned from nest-breaking. How successfully this may be done is illustrated by many little stories from our Bird and Tree centres, and by the example of the School of Tean, in Staffordshire, where our local Hon. Secretary, Mr. Masefield, has recently been lecturing. The master mentioned that he had been able so far to interest his scholars in bird-life that there was, last summer, a flycatcher's nest on a hinge of one of the school doors and four or five nests of thrushes and blackbirds in the school grounds, while a pair of rooks had started a rookery in the trees in the playground. From Hook, in Hampshire, we hear of a tit building regularly in the school pump, and rearing its young.

"Ospreys."

A lying rumour of unknown origin appears recently to have been set afloat to the effect that the Duchess of Portland had been seen in the Park wearing an "osprey." No one with any knowledge of the Duchess, and of the warm interest taken by her in the Society for the Protection of Birds, of which she has been President for the past fourteen years, would for an instant imagine that Her Grace would either wilfully infringe one of the rules of the Society, or that she would allow herself to be imposed upon by the trumped-up story of "artificial" plumes, which, if excuses are to be believed, still leads many credulous women to support the trade. The Society is authorised to give emphatic contradiction to the story. "I am indignant about the osprey," the Duchess writes, "I have never possessed one in my life, nor had the slightest desire to do so. Personally, I have always thought them very uninteresting and ugly in a hat."

Ostrich-farming.

Another story, to which a number of papers have given currency, doubtless with the best intentions, relates to alleged cruelty in ostrich-farming. So

far as can be ascertained no authority is forthcoming for the assertion. That ostrich-farming does not necessarily entail cruelty has been again and again stated by those in a position to know the facts. Such cruelty as exists on badly-managed farms belongs to the same category as that practised only too often on sheep and cattle farms by the careless and callous; it is not essentially involved in the business as is the case, for example, in the procuring of egret plumes. The Society will always welcome *first-hand* information on the subject from those personally acquainted with the conduct of ostrich-farms.

ORNITHOLOGICAL CONGRESS.

THE Fourth International Ornithological Congress will be held in London, June 12th to 17th, 1905, when a large number of ornithologists from all parts of the world are expected. A section will be devoted to Economic Ornithology and Bird Protection. The meetings will be held at the Imperial Institute, South Kensington, and the programme also includes a reception by the Lord Mayor of London, conversazione at the Natural History Museum, excursions to Tring, Woburn Park, Cambridge, and Flamborough Head. Dr. Bowdler-Sharpe is the President-elect. The subscription for membership is £1, and should be sent to the Hon. Treasurer, Mr. C. E. Fagan, Natural History Museum, Cromwell Road, S.W. The Hon. Secs. are Dr. Hartert, Tring, and Mr. J. L. Bonhote, Ditton Hall, Fen Ditton, Cambridge.

THE PLUME SALES.

INDIAN birdskins continue to be offered at the feather sales. At the Commercial Rooms on February 14th, 1905, 45 Argus pheasants from the Himalayas, 900 jungle-cocks, and a large quantity of peacock feathers were offered. The larger portion of the 265 packages of "osprey" plumes were probably from Asia; others from America. The prices reached were fully 10 per cent. more than at former sales. There were 5296 birds-of-paradise selling at from 8s. to 24s. per skin. Other skins included 2626 tanagers, 1043 orioles, 76 trogons, 194 toucan breasts, and 2519 humming-birds (which sold at from four to eight a penny), also 50 condor skins from South America and 46 emu skins from Australia. On the whole, the number of birdskins of various kinds appears to be decreasing, with the exception of the birds-of-paradise; the number of these is so great that unless a stop is speedily put to the traffic in them several species of this magnificent group must become exterminated.

CAGE-BIRD TRAFFIC.

IN December last forty-four dozen Larks and Greenfinches, newly caught, were sent by a Newcastle dealer to Liverpool for shipment to the United States. On arrival at New York over 80 per cent. of the birds were dead, and those surviving in a weak and half-starved condition. Mr. William Dutcher, Chairman of the Associated Audubon Societies, writes to our Society (December 21st, 1904):—

"The birds were sent in charge of a foreign express company, and the consignee refused to receive the small remnant of the original shipment. The result was that for three or four days the birds have been lying in the express office in this city gradually becoming weaker, although the company tried to feed them, but the putrefying bodies of the dead ones in the cages had a sickening effect on the ones still alive. I saw the few remaining ones—about twenty birds that had still some life in them—this morning and got the express company to consent to send them to a prominent bird dealer in this city that they might be cared for. I relate this story trusting that your Society will see whether some action cannot be taken to stop the shipment of such birds from Great Britain."

A second shipment of the same size met a like fate. Of the whole thousand birds less than 10 per cent. reached New York alive. The shippers' version of the story is that the birds had every attention, but that 135 of the first lot died before being shipped, and that large numbers died daily during the voyage on account of the inclemency of the weather and the fact that the birds were fresh caught.

Neither the Bird Protection Acts nor the Acts for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals seem able to touch these cases. They are simply an outcome of the trade in caged birds permitted in England.

Among the sample police court cases quoted on another page of this paper will be found an account of a London bird-dealer's shop, another outcome of the same trade. Little wonder that our American cousins stand amazed by British complaisance.

The sale of caged birds of American species is absolutely prohibited throughout the United States.

The Model Law, drafted by the Audubon Society and recommended by the United States Department of Agriculture, prevents the holding of live birds in captivity or the traffic in them, except where the privilege is given to a citizen of the State to have a pet bird provided it is not kept for sale or shipped out of the State. In Louisiana, the State from which came almost all the birds for export, the bird-dealers fought strenuously against the adoption of the law, but it was passed in 1904,

and the Society then gave notice to all the dealers that no more live American birds could be sold.

The section is as follows :—

“No person, within the State, shall kill, catch, or have in his or their possession, living or dead, any resident or migratory bird other than a game bird, or purchase, offer, or expose for sale, any such wild non-game bird after it has been killed or caught, except as permitted by this Act.” (The Act also covers the skin and plumage.)

“If,” writes Mr. Dutcher, “you could go with me and see the large number of birds brought into this country from Europe you would realize the necessity that European countries should take some action similar to our own.”

In an article on “Business in Birds,” dealing with the British bird-catcher and bird-dealer, the *Pall Mall Gazette* (March 9th) says: “As indicating the prodigious turn-over in birds, British and foreign, one of the largest dealers in the kingdom recently claimed that a quarter of a million specimens pass through his hands every year. When it is said that he occasionally sends away six thousand birds at a time, one can understand the extensive character of his operations and also the enormous demands that are made upon the avian population.”

BIRD AND TREE DAY FESTIVALS.

IT is not possible to give more than a brief outline of the festivals held in many schools and parishes to celebrate Bird and Tree (Arbor) Day, and to distribute the prizes given by the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds. The most important gatherings were of course held in connection with the schools winning the Society's County Challenge Shields.

Bedfordshire.—The Bedfordshire County Shield was presented to Sandy School, and the prizes distributed at the Conservative Hall, Sandy, on December 16th, by the Squire and Mrs. Pym. The Hall, which was gaily decorated, was crowded by the children, their parents, and friends. Interesting speeches were made by the Rev. J. Richardson (Rector) and Mr. Francis Pym on the importance of the work taken up by the Society and the benefits to be derived from nature study. A report of the work done by the girls was read by the Rev. W. Browne, local secretary, and the mistress (Miss Warren) was much complimented on the success of her pupils. A capital entertainment, given by the children, followed. The Shield was afterwards exhibited in a shop window in the High Street, and is now in a prominent place in the schoolroom. The tree-planting took place on February 19th, when an oak tree was planted in the school playground by Mrs. Pym, assisted by the winning team, and christened “Bird-tree Oak”; it is about 6 ft. high, and well protected by an iron guard provided by the Squire.

Berkshire.—“The dear old Shield came on Friday morning. We are all so very pleased to have it back in its old place,” writes the mistress of Buckland School (Mrs. Fletcher), which, for the second year, carries off the Berkshire Shield. The festival came off most successfully on November 18th, and was particularly gratifying for the cordial help given by Church folk, Roman Catholics, and Nonconformists. Mountain-ash trees were planted on either side of the new gate to the school, and the essay on the mountain-ash read at the ceremony. In the afternoon 116 children had tea. Mr. Lockwood, C.C. (a member of the Education Committee), was present at the evening meeting, which was crowded and enthusiastic, and the prize essays were read and were illustrated by large drawings.

Cumberland.—The feature of the festival at Burgh-by-Sands was the presentation of the Shield by Canon Rawnsley, its donor. It was designed by Mrs. Rawnsley, drawn by Miss Tremayne, and executed at the Keswick School of Industrial Art by Tom Sparks. The meeting took place in the Public Hall, the Rev. J. Baker presiding, and an address was given by Canon Rawnsley, who also distributed the Society's prizes. Mr. Courtenay Hodgson, Secretary to the County Education Committee, in proposing a vote of thanks to the Rev. Canon, said it was difficult to get teachers for such out-of-the-way places as there were in Cumberland, because they had not been trained to take interest in country things. In the afternoon nine trees were planted, including a red chestnut, to be known as “Edward VII.”

Hampshire.—A large and distinguished company honoured the gathering (organised by Mrs. Suckling) at the Philharmonic Hall, Southampton, on February 18th, when the Hampshire Shield was presented to the Bitterne Park Girls' School by Lady Emma Crichton. Colonel Crichton presided. Mr. W. W. Portal, vice-chairman of the County Council, in a most interesting speech, hoped all present would unite with the Society in the encouragement of nature study. Mr. D. T. Cowan, Director of Education for Hampshire, said that Bird and Tree Day formed part of a great movement which he believed would have a striking effect on the lives of children in our elementary schools, and he trusted interest in it would grow wider and wider until a majority of the schools were trying for the Shield. Mrs. Sumner, Mr. Fowler, H.M. Inspector, Dr. Aldridge, chairman of the Southampton Education Committee, and Col. Grimston also spoke; and after the presentation of prizes the girls of the school performed Mrs. Suckling's operetta, “Wings.”

SANDOWN NATIONAL SCHOOL, winners of the second award, also celebrated their success by a public gathering, the Rev. W. T. Storrs, vicar, presiding. There was a procession from the school to the Parish Room, where the prize essays were read, part-songs sung, and the prizes distributed. Mr. T. Wright, in congratulating the school and headmaster (Mr. Prickett), promised a guinea towards the expenses if next year the Challenge Shield were brought to Sandown. Nine trees were subsequently planted in the school-ground.

Westmorland.—Warcop celebrated Bird and Arbor Day on November 18th, with a gay procession in addition to the meeting. The May Queen, in a carriage, preceded by a banner-bearer, and attended by maids and footmen (all of them children from the school), and followed by the remainder of the scholars, formed in the station square to receive Canon Rawnsley and accompany him to the Temperance Hall, which was prettily decorated. Captain Chamley presided, and the Mayor and Mayoress of Appleby were among the large audience. In the course of his address, Canon Rawnsley commented on the essays sent in from Westmorland, and thanked the master of Warcop School (Mr. Jackson) for his earnest work. The Challenge Shield and prizes were then presented.

BARTON STACEY.—The presentation of prizes took place at the School, on December 9th, by the Vicar, Rev. U. Z. Rule, who read the two best essays and the Society's letter to the assembled children and teachers.

BEETHAM.—At Beetham, on February 9th, an interesting lantern lecture on Birds was given in the Schoolroom by Mr. C. Frith-Hudson, preceded by the presentation of prizes in connection with Bird and Tree Day. Mr. Pattynson, the schoolmaster, gave a handsome volume to the first prize-winner. A plum-tree was planted in the old school playground.

BORROWDAILE.—The Vicar gave away the prizes, accompanied with critical and encouraging remarks on the essays, on December 29th, the presentation being prefaced by a tea and a programme of music, and a lantern lecture by the Vicar.

BURGHFIELD.—The tree-planting was a great success, two fine limes being presented by the Rev. D. O. Harrington, and planted between the girls' and boys' playgrounds, previously destitute of trees.

CARGO.—A half-holiday and a meeting and entertainment in the school marked Bird and Tree Day here. Mr. Watt presided, and the report on the Competition was read by Miss Donald, who gave a special prize to the best essayist, and presented the Society's awards.

CLOPHILL.—The schoolmaster's birthday (December 2nd) was selected for the ceremony, when a memorial tree was planted, the essays read, prizes distributed, and a presentation made to the master. The Rector, Rev. Rollo Meyer, has greatly encouraged the Bird and Tree Competitions.

HAYLING.—The prizes were presented in the School by Colonel Sandeman, and a half-holiday granted. This year (1905) Colonel Collins has offered a prize for the best essay on a Bird, and Colonel Sandeman for that on a Tree.

HEADLEY.—The presentation of the Bird and Tree prizes was associated with the annual treat to the Sunday School scholars. A plum tree and two apple trees, given by Mr. J. Bell, were planted in three of the plots of garden ground which are well kept up by the day-school boys; and, after tea, the prizes were given, and the Society's report and the best essay read by the Rector, Rev. W. H. Laverty. An entertainment followed.

KENSWORTH.—An ash tree, presented by Miss M. G. B. Watts, was planted on the School premises, in the presence of the local committee, teachers, and scholars; and Wordsworth's lines on "The Mountain Ash" were recited. The children were then entertained to tea by the committee, the prizes presented, and an entertainment given.

KIRKOSWALD.—A peculiarly pleasing feature of Kirkoswald's fête was the sending of a donation of five shillings to the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, collected by one of the schoolboys, Harry Griffin, whose essay on the Jackdaw received special commendation. The Vicar, Canon Thornley, presided at the gathering; addresses were also given by Mr. A. W. Todd and Mr. Alderman Potter, C.C., and a tea followed.

NEWTOWN, I.W.—February 8th was celebrated as Bird and Tree Day. Tree-planting in the morning, when nine trees were planted in the churchyard, was followed by a holiday in the afternoon and a meeting and entertainment in the evening. A lantern lecture on birds was given by Mr. H. J. Clarke, the schoolmaster, appropriate songs and recitations were contributed, and the prizes presented by the Society and those given locally were handed to the successful essayists.

PORCHESTER.—Bird and Tree Day was celebrated at the Council School for the first time on December 22nd. The chairman of managers, Mr. C. Sturgess, and Messrs. J. and C. H. Gates were present; the head teacher (Mr. Bennett) gave a report of the work done, and the children sang a selection of Christmas carols. Mr. Sturgess promised a tree for planting in 1905.

STANWIX.—Miss Donald presented the prizes on November 25th, and also gave a special prize for the best essay. Mr. Watt presided. Addresses commending the scheme were given by the Rev. A. S. Newton and others, and after songs and recitations by the children, a maple-tree, given by Mr. Watt, was planted in the outer school ground.

STUDHAM.—The upper classes at Studham School made weekly excursions between March and September for observing Bird and Tree life, and on February 13th the Society's prizes were distributed by Major Stephen. The boys planted a deodara tree, and were suitably addressed by the Rev. J. E. Brown.

VENTNOR.—The girls attending the National School, about 90 in number, were entertained at a tea in the School on February 11th by Mrs. Morgan Richards, who afterwards presented the Society's prizes, and those given by Mr. T. A. Worrell, Miss Hibberd, and other friends. The Vicar (Rev. G. P. Bassett-Kerry), Mr. T. Gibbs and Mr. J. Richards were among the speakers, and much regret was expressed at the approaching departure of Miss Pridham, the schoolmistress, who has taken great interest in the Competitions. The children went through a programme of music and drills, and a tulip-tree, given by Mr. Gibbs, was planted.

The name of the manufacturer of nesting-boxes mentioned in the April number of BIRD NOTES AND NEWS should have been given as Mr. William Alcock, Bank Street, Cheadle, Staffs.

IN THE COURTS.

KENT.—At Malling on February 13th, 1905, three men named Dowland, Thorne, and Lane, were summoned for taking wild birds at Aylesford, and Dowland and Lane were further charged with causing unnecessary suffering to a linnet. Dowland, who came from Chatham, had nets laid for bird-catching, with a decoy linnet attached by a string. Lane and Thorne declared they were only looking on, but Lane admitted holding the string. The Chairman (Mr. R. Norton) said the business was neither manly nor sportsmanlike, and the Bench were determined to uphold the spirit of the Acts and do their best to protect these poor little birds. Dowland was fined £1 and costs for the first offence and his tackle confiscated, and 3s. 6d. and costs in the second case; and Lane was fined 5s. and costs by way of a lesson. Dowland said it was his first venture in bird-catching and should be his last, a resolution the Bench cordially commended.

MIDDLESEX.—At Uxbridge on January 23rd, a bird-catcher was fined 5s. in each case for pinioning birds and for using nets at Hayes, the nets to be destroyed. He had three decoy birds pegged down to a net. Defendant said he had only lately come to Middlesex, and where he came from they were allowed to catch birds.

METROPOLITAN POLICE DISTRICT.—A case bearing on starling shoots was heard at Woolwich on January 27th, Charles Spriggs, of Deptford, being fined 40s. and costs on each summons for having 88 recently-taken starlings in his possession and for causing unnecessary suffering to 40 of the birds. He had 48 dead birds in a bag and said they had been shot at a match; and also 40 birds in a cage 18 in. by 10 in. by 7 in., three of which were dead from suffocation and others exhausted. The magistrate held that seven days' possession did not take the birds out of the category of "recently caught." Defendant's solicitor declared such a ruling would put a stop to shooting at all places from Hurlingham downwards. Mr. Kettle said it would perhaps be a good thing if it did.

At **LAMBETH** on January 6th, Charles Griston, a Walworth bird dealer, was ordered to pay fines and costs amounting to £4 14s. for cruelty to birds. Inspector Green, of the R.S.P.C.A., visited the shop on Christmas Day and found most of the birds in small cages and in a most filthy condition. Nine freshly-caught skylarks were in a cage about 30 in. long and 10 in. high, four of them dying; and two greenfinches, one dead and the other dying, in a filthy cage 15 in. by 6 in. There were also linnets and blackbirds and thrushes in small dirty cages. He bought a thrush and cage for 1s. 9d., but the bird was a mere skeleton, and died before he reached his home at Tooting.

ESSEX.—In a case of cruelty to three decoy starlings, two of which had dislocated legs, while all were unable to stand in consequence of the injuries inflicted by a string fastening them to the net, the Mayor of Southend on January 23rd let off defendant with a nominal fine of 5s. and costs, saying that proceedings were taken under the Wild

Animals in Captivity Act, "which had just come into force." (News seems to take some time to reach Southend; the Act came into force in 1900.)

STAFFORDSHIRE.—W. Sadler, farmer, of Hobble End, Great Wyrley, was fined 20s. and costs for sowing his field with poisoned wheat on Sunday, November 6th. He said it was done to kill the birds, and he had picked up over 200 dead birds. The magistrate remarked that the proceeding was not only contrary to the law, but a far-reaching danger.

COUNTY COUNCIL ORDERS.

THE following County Council Orders have been issued since January 1st, 1905:

Lincoln (County Borough), January 23rd. B C E F. Identical with the Order for the Lindsey Division of Lincolnshire.

East Sussex, February 15th. A B C E F S. No change from previous Order except in the protecting of the Brown and Green Linnet throughout the year within an area between Hastings on the east and the county boundary on the west, bounded on the north by Ninfield, Laughton, and Hurstpierpoint.

Leicestershire, February 28th. B E F. No change from previous Order.

[A full list of the Orders in force appears in an Appendix to the Society's Annual Report.]

NEW BOOKS ON BIRDS.

Bird Life and Bird Lore. By R. BOSWORTH SMITH. Illustrated. (John Murray.) 10s. 6d. net.

Chapters on the homes and haunts, courtships, nests, notes, local and family attachments, and migrations of birds, written, "first, to communicate as far as possible, to others some portion of the enduring happiness which the love of birds has given to me; and, secondly, to do all that lies in my power towards the preservation of all birds, especially of those interesting and beautiful species which are habitually persecuted."

British Bird Life. By W. PERCIVAL WESTELL. (Fisher Unwin.) 5s.

An account, in the popular style, of British-breeding species, arranged alphabetically. Preface by the Right Hon. Sir HERBERT MAXWELL, Bart., M.P., and illustrations.

Next Issue.—The next Number of BIRD NOTES AND NEWS will be ready on July 1st, 1905.

Reading Cases for BIRD NOTES AND NEWS can be obtained from the office at a cost of 1s., including postage. They will be found very useful to keep the numbers together, and also for use in Public Libraries.

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

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BIRD NOTES AND NEWS.

Circular Letter issued Periodically by the Royal Society for the
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No. 10.]

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[JULY, 1905.



BIRDS OF PARADISE.

(From the picture by MISS N. HADDEN, by permission of the Proprietors
of "The Sphere.")

INTERNATIONAL BIRD PROTECTION.

ALTHOUGH the International Ornithological Congress, held this year for the first time in London, is principally concerned with the scientific aspects of bird-study, it is earnestly to be hoped that its meetings in general, as well as those of the Protection and Economic Section in particular, will do something to advance Bird Protection.

The necessity for international agreement and co-operation in the matter becomes every day more apparent. Each country may and should have its own bird-preservation laws, just as each English county may and should have its own Bird Protection Order; but without some mutual agreement, some common understanding, and some co-ordinated law, the individual action of state or county must at times utterly fail of its purpose. It is of little practical use to protect Goldfinches in Suffolk, while the dealer has only to cross the border to net them in Norfolk. It is little use to protect Swallows by law and sentiment in England and Germany

while they are netted by tens of thousands on migration through France and Italy. It is of little avail for naturalists to denounce the ruthless slaughter of the exquisite Birds-of-paradise for women's headgear if the land where the birds breed does not extend some legislative ægis over them. Even the United States, which in many ways is taking the lead in Bird Protection matters, is discovering that it is comparatively useless to protect the Herons and Egrets of American territory, while foreign egret plumes may be imported and used by the trade. In such a case all egrets are apt to become "foreigners," since they have no language or accent to attest their citizenship; just as every game-bird in the English poulterer's shop becomes a foreigner immediately Close Time begins.

The question of the Swallow is a typical and pressing one. The decrease in the number of birds appears to be more marked this year than ever; and it seems probable that not one swallow but a host of gnats may serve to show the approach of an English summer of the future. In this matter the aid of France and other Continental countries is imperative.

Another question for international consideration is that of plume-birds in general. These comprise the gems of the entire feathered race; many of them are very rare as well as singularly beautiful creatures, and in danger of extermination. The plume-trade, with its large vested interests and with ramifications in every land, is intent on seizing and bringing to market all of these species on which it can lay hands; no swamp is so malarial, no forest so dense that a bird may long hide from the hunters to whom its feathers mean gold. England, it is true—as the nation of shopkeepers in the worst sense of that famous phrase—is the chief mart for all the spoils; in London warehouses may be seen cases and rooms full of these gleaming skins and ravished plumes from the tropics before they pass to the feather factory and the milliner's show-room; but while England's ports remain free, and her commerce what it is, no restriction on imports can be looked to as the remedy for the evil. Nor

would this be effectual, it would merely remove the central mart to Paris or Vienna; while taxation would but increase the evil by making the trade a source not only of private gain but of revenue to the country, thus dragging in the nation at large as sleeping partners in the detestable business. One alternative course is to use every endeavour and every pressure possible to persuade the countries where the plume-birds dwell to guard them and to penalize the export of their skins. In this several British Colonies, as well as the Government of India, have shown the way. "Some of the leading drapery establishments in England, France, Germany and Russia, employ so-called sportsmen to trap, snare, and shoot all our most valuable birds," writes a veteran bird protector of New South Wales to the Sydney press. "Why should this be?"

Another case for international agreement is afforded by birds such as the Penguins. When Dr. Wilson called attention at the annual meeting of the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds to the advisability of securing some protection for the Penguins of Antarctic regions, some of his hearers may have thought that here at least, amid desolate ice-fields where man is a greater rarity than birds, nothing would need to be done. But the sordid notion of boiling down Penguins wholesale merely for their oil has already been avowed a paying thing; consequently, unless the Governments concerned come to the rescue, the Penguin must go. A flightless bird, assembling in large "rookeries" at the breeding-time, with a very slow rate of reproduction and helpless young, what chance does it stand against commercial cupidity? Mr. T. Southwell recalls in a letter to the *Field* (7th April, 1905) how when the Transit of Venus Expedition visited Kerguelen Island, in 1874, the whole of the penguin community near Observatory Bay was made into "hare soup" for the officers of the vessel; and how in Macquarie Island the birds have been killed by thousands to be boiled down for oil. It took only a few generations to extirpate the Great Auk, and we move faster now.

Again, there is the important question of

international protection for insectivorous birds from the economic standpoint. If a list of such birds could be made out with the aim and intention of having them scheduled in the protective laws of the nations concerned, agriculturists might have cause gratefully to remember the Congress of 1905.

Topics like these are well worthy the attention of international ornithologists. Beyond such problems there is also great need for the formation of a standing International Committee, consisting of working representatives of Bird Protection Societies and practical ornithologists, who would constitute a permanent body for interchange of information, and for co-operative action, in all matters touching the preservation of birds.

COUNCIL MEETINGS.

THE Council of the Society met at 3, Hanover Square, on April 14th. Present: Mr. Montagu Sharpe (Chairman), Mr. Bell, Hon. Mrs. Drewitt, Rev. A. L. Hussey, Miss Hall, Mr. Hastings Lees, Mrs. F. E. Lemon, Mr. Meade-Waldo, Miss Pollock, Mrs. Owen Visger, and the Hon. Secretary.

It was reported that 25 lectures had been given since March 11th; that the usual annual letter had been sent to the 81 Divisional Officers of H.M. Coastguard with reference to the enforcement of the Wild Birds Protection Acts; that various steps had been taken with regard to the watching of the Dungeness area and of Lundy; that the new County Bird Protection Orders for Scotland had been received from the Scottish Office, and had led to correspondence with the Office relative to the Inverness Order.

The following appointments of Local Hon. Secretaries were confirmed:—Chelmsford, Mr. Alec Sacre; South Bucks, Mrs. Dixon Davies. The Southport Branch was reported to have constituted itself a separate Society.

Six Fellows and 28 Members were elected.

A large number of communications having been received with reference to sparrow clubs, it was agreed to be desirable that in these clubs someone with ornithological knowledge should be appointed to inspect the takings, and the subject was referred to a committee.

A suggestion from Mr. Jesse, Hon. Secretary of the Indian Branch, for the establishment of one or

more scholarships at Meerut College was considered. The cost of a scholarship would be £15, the qualifying examination would consist of an essay on some subject in connection with birds, and the competition would be open to all Indian boys of the United Provinces. The matter was referred to a committee to report upon.

At the meeting of the Council on June 3rd there were present: Mr. Montagu Sharpe (Chairman), Mr. Bell, Sir John Cockburn, Mr. H. E. Dresser, Miss Hall, Mr. W. H. Hudson, Rev. A. L. Hussey, Mrs. F. E. Lemon, Miss Pollock, Mrs. Owen Visger, and the Hon. Secretary.

The following appointments of Local Hon. Secretaries were confirmed: Rutland, Miss Maud Tryon; Taunton, Miss A. M. Sibly; Kettering, Miss H. Wicksteed. One Fellow, two Life Members, and 17 Members were elected. It was reported that six lectures had been given since April 14th. Reports were received relating to Bird Protection in the Bahamas; Watchers; Sparrow Clubs; the Ornithological Congress, etc. On the recommendation of the Committee it was agreed that £15 be given by the Society to found an Indian Scholarship, and that efforts be made to establish others by the aid of persons interested in India. The issue of three new leaflets was agreed to.

It was decided to arrange, if possible, for a Conference of Local Hon. Secretaries in the autumn of this year.

OBITUARY.

THE Royal Society for the Protection of Birds has suffered a heavy loss in the death, on the same day (May 14th, 1905), of Sir Daniel Ross O'Connell, Bart., of Killarney, one of its Vice-Presidents, and Lieut.-Colonel L. Howard Irby, a Member of the Council.

The name of Sir Ross O'Connell had been associated with the Society for some twelve years, as Hon. Local Secretary, as Member of Committee, and as Vice-President successively; he was among the best friends of its early days, and his warm and ready sympathy with the work was always most helpful and encouraging even after he had been compelled to retire from active co-operation in its conduct. Sir Ross O'Connell, who was only forty-four years of age, had been in indifferent health for a long time, and died at San Remo.

Colonel Irby, who had a gallant record for services in the Crimean campaign and the Indian Mutiny, will be long remembered, says the *Times*,

as one of the most thorough and practical of our field naturalists. Throughout his life he took an intense interest in all branches of natural history, ornithology being his favourite subject. In company with the late Lord Lilford, who was his lifelong friend and fellow-worker, he made Spain his special study, and the two may be jointly viewed as the pioneers of our ornithological knowledge of that region. In 1875 he published a most admirable work on the "Ornithology of the Straits of Gibraltar," which is likely to remain permanently the standard work dealing with the subject, and in 1887 his "Key List of British Birds," which has proved of great utility to lovers of birds. He was a Member of the Council of the Zoological Society, and took an active interest in the formation of the life-groups of birds at the Natural History Museum. Colonel Irby's wide scientific knowledge, coupled with keen sympathy in the preservation of rare birds from the avidity of collectors, rendered his support and advice very valuable to the Society for the Protection of Birds. His death is the first loss through death which has befallen the Council in the Society's sixteen years' history.

THE AUDUBON SOCIETIES.

THE National Association of Audubon Societies for the Protection of Wild Birds and Animals, which has done such excellent work for the preservation of the native birds of the United States of America, was incorporated on January 5th, 1905, just two months after the incorporation of our British Royal Society for the Protection of Birds. The annual report of the Association for 1904, therefore, appropriately includes an interesting history of the Bird Protection movement in the States. It began, as such movements usually begin, with letters and protests in the public Press, especially as to "the unholy work" of destroying birds for millinery.

In 1884 a committee of the American Ornithologists' Union was formed for the protection of North American birds and their eggs; and other steps taken at the same meeting led to the establishment of the Biological Survey, which now constitutes an important department of Government, and is of the greatest assistance to the Audubon Societies. New Jersey has the honour of having secured, in 1885, the first comprehensive bird law of America. In the following year the A.O.U. Bird-Protection Committee drafted their Model Law, which is now in force in twenty-eight

States. The first Audubon Society was formed in the same year, having for its objects to prevent (1) the killing of any wild birds not used for food; (2) the destruction of nests and eggs of wild birds; (3) the use of feathers as ornaments or trimmings. Men like Henry Ward Beecher, J. G. Whittier, Oliver Wendell Holmes, and Charles Dudley Warner gave the society a warm welcome, and for a time it grew and flourished exceedingly. But opposition, from the fashion and the farmers especially was strong, the general ignorance of the public made it hard to keep up interest and to obtain funds, and twelve years' work left the workers discouraged and hopeless. Feather-wearing was as rampant as ever, bird legislation as defective as before the movement began, and the Audubon Society practically ceased to exist.

Such a history might have led to the abandonment of a cause, but our American cousins, like ourselves, do not know what it is to be beaten, and no sooner was hope apparently extinguished than the torch was again blazing. In 1886 the present system of distinct Audubon Societies for the various States was started, which now extends to thirty-five States, one territory, and the District of Columbia; and the National Committee of the Societies was formed in 1900. The first number of "Bird-Lore," the admirable organ of the Societies, was published in 1899, and the issue of educational leaflets started in 1903. The names of Messrs. Brewster, William Dutcher, G. B. Sennett, E. P. Bicknell, Witmer Stone, F. M. Chapman, and others, must always be held in grateful remembrance by all American bird-lovers; and a distinct work is associated with the name of Mr. Abbott Thayer, who organized the watchers' fund, out of which thirty-five wardens are employed to protect the sea-birds, whose lives the plume trade threatened.

That the work has now secured wide sympathy and support is instanced by the fact that a New York philanthropist has promised £600 a year to the funds for 1905 and 1906, with an additional promise of £20,000 under his will.

Two notable items in the Report for 1904 are the records of the destruction wrought by Japanese plume-hunters in the Pacific Islands, and the notes on Bird-Protection work in Mexico, where the Department of Agricultural Parasitology is making active efforts to preserve birds useful to agriculture.

It is pleasant to be able to add that the most cordial friendship exists between the British and the American Societies. All our readers will con-

gratulate our Audubon brethren heartily upon their enterprise and vigour, and will hope that cause for mutual congratulation may increase as the years go on.

OSTRICH PLUCKING.

THE Audubon Societies' Educational Leaflet No. 13 deals with the Ostrich, with especial reference to ostrich farms and the wearing of ostrich feathers, to which these Societies, like our own, offer no objection. In the course of some details of the industry in America, it is added:—

"Probably there are no wild Ostriches now killed for plumage. The feathers of the domesticated bird are very much finer and better than those of the wild Ostrich.

"Plucking is done by putting the Ostrich in a V-shaped corral just large enough to admit its body, with room for the workman. A hood, shaped like a long stocking, is placed over the head of the Ostrich, when it becomes perfectly docile. The workman then raises the wings and clips the feathers that are fully ripe. Great care is exercised at this time, as a premature cutting of the feathers deteriorates the succeeding feather growth.

"There is no possibility of inflicting pain in plucking an Ostrich; not a drop of blood is drawn, nor a nerve touched. The large feathers are cut off, and in two months' time, when the quill is dried up, it is pulled out. By taking the feathers in this way it causes the bird absolutely no pain at all."

THE EXTERMINATION OF THE EGRET.

IN *Country Life in America* for April, 1905, Mr. Herbert K. Job, an American naturalist, gives an account, illustrated by photographs, of an egret rookery he discovered in a southern State, happily unknown to the hunter and rigorously protected.

"A long sail up a series of narrow tortuous creeks, between walls of impassable mud and through immense salt marshes, found us anchored at the desired locality. Even before the anchor took the mud, late in the afternoon, I had seen the sun glance on the dazzling whiteness of several dozens of egrets as they flew to and from the marsh, immaculate amid the southern mud which sticks like glue. After one false start, we found a man who knew the location of the rookery, in a great cypress swamp. First we tramped a mile over a woodland trail, when we came to an arm of muddy water under high, over-arching trees, and a small flat-bottomed skiff. Working two paddles we glided along, and soon emerged in a great area of cypress trees growing out of the water. Alligators and turtles splashed before us, and buzzards and ospreys wheeled overhead. From the cypress branches, with their delicate needle-foliage of pale

green, hung the streaming grey moss. Pairs of wood-duck started up now and then from the water with resounding wing-beats. . . . First we met, as we continued to navigate this cypress sea, scattered nests with eggs of the yellow-crowned night-heron. Then we began to meet individuals of the familiar black-crowned night heron of the north, also breeding, and soon emerged into a more open area where the trees grew more sparsely and not so tall. At every rod of progress dozens and scores of egrets and the smaller, dark-coloured little blue heron, with numbers of the bluish but white-breasted Louisiana heron, kept springing into the air. Then, as the abundance began to lessen, we returned to the heart of the rookery to spend the day. . . .

"It was a wonderful sight, well worth travelling far to see. Upon any sudden noise, hundreds of these different herons would spring from trees everywhere about. Then they would return and alight upon the tree tops, the delicate snow-white plumes from the backs of the egrets straying out bewitchingly in the breeze. Nearly all day long we paddled about the lacustrine forest, and I revelled in the sights and sounds of this wonderful place, which is probably the largest and perhaps the only egret rookery in North America. The only reason that it exists to-day is because it is guarded by armed wardens who will arrest or, if necessary, shoot any person found upon the property with a gun. And where is it? May my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth if I betray the egrets' secret.

"The whole business of the slaughter of the white herons for their plumes for millinery purposes is one that every lover of Nature and every person of humane feeling who understands the case will regard as no less than infamous. This is one of the moral questions—to be classed with the opium traffic and the slave trade—to which there is but one side. The origin of the trade is ignorance on one side and greed for money on the other, and there is not one true word which can be said in its defence.

"It should be understood at the outset that these plumes—which are variously called by milliners 'aigrettes,' 'stubs,' or 'ospreys,' and dyed to whatever colour is fashionable—are borne by herons, and that only during the nuptial season, and can be secured only by shooting the birds when they have assembled in colonies to breed, when their usual shyness has departed, owing to the strength of the parental instinct. Returning to their nests, they are shot down and their young are left to starve.

"Let it be nailed as a trade lie that these plumes are secured in any other way. In all my explorations of these rookeries I have found but one solitary 'aigrette' feather, badly worn at that. It is inconceivable, impossible, that anyone could find them in paying quantities, scattered about in these morasses and jungles. Neither are they manufactured. Manufactured aigrettes and hens' teeth belong to the same class.

"This traffic has almost exterminated the two plume-bearing species of white herons found in the United States—the snowy heron, a small species

with curling plumes, and the much larger American egret, with straight ones. There are several other closely similar species in South America and in other parts of the world. At the present rate of destruction, a decade or two more will make each of these American and foreign herons as extinct as the buffalo and the great auk."

"The aigrette question is one of the most important now before all the Audubon Societies. The use of these plumes seems to be increasing rather than otherwise, notwithstanding the milliners' agreement that their sale should cease January 1st, 1904. The Millinery Merchants' Association is disbanded, largely owing to the question of the sale of aigrettes, and therefore the Audubon Societies are relieved from any obligation regarding laws entered into under the terms of the agreement. In view of this fact, the New York Society has introduced in the Legislature the following amendment to Section 33 of the present law:—

"Feathers or plumes commonly known as aigrettes, or the feathers or plumage of any species of the heron family, whether obtained within or without the State, shall not be bought, sold, offered, or exposed for sale at any time."

Bird-Lore, March-April, 1905.

THE PLUME TRADE.

THE trade report on the sales held in London on April 11th, 1905, records a good attendance of buyers and good competition. Birds-of-paradise sold well at steady prices; 2258 of light and dark plumed were offered, and 3886 "various," the prices varying from 22s. for light plumes to 5d. for kings. Of Impeyan pheasants 100 skins were sold; and of the 295 packages of "osprey" feathers, 145 were stated to be East Indian, 45 Venezuelan, 52 South American, 41 Senegal, 7 Chinese, and 5 Turkish. The miscellaneous birdskins comprised crested pigeons, cocks-of-the-rock, trogons, tanagers, cardinals, kingfishers, humming-birds (43,224), canaries, etc. There were also seven lyre-bird tails from Australia, and tern-tails and other feathers from Japan; also quantities of crane, heron, bustard and eagle quills.

For the sale on June 14th the catalogues included 210 packages of "osprey" plumes, besides 200 "osprey" skins; 2000 birds-of-paradise, together with 20 packages; 16 cases of "vulture" feathers (vulture is the trade name for the rhea), and 80 cases of miscellaneous birdskins of the usual kind.

THE Kirkcudbright County Council has decided to apply to have the lapwing's eggs protected during the whole breeding season.

BIRDS IN JAMAICA.

(Contributed by Mr. FRANCIS KING, a Member of the Council, R.S.P.B.).

To the title of the Island of Springs and Land of the Hibiscus, Jamaica deserves to add the distinction of the Paradise of Birds. Not that the *aves* of the colony are specially numerous—though they are more frequent than many visitors may be led to expect—but on account of the singular immunity that they enjoy.

The Wild Birds Act is here in full force, and during the nesting and breeding season is observed with a generally dutiful law-abidingness both by young and old, even in a land where certain commandments of a Divine origin are notoriously infringed.

The John Crow vulture is religiously protected both by law and custom as the natural sanitary officer of the region; so also is the "blackbird" (*Crotophaga ani*), the friendly deliverer of cattle from the persecuting tick, and the slaughter of either bird is visited with the heavy penalty of £5 per head. As a consequence these, and, more or less, all the feathered denizens of the garden and forest, betray little or no fear of man's approach, nor is their tameness, that Mr. Selkirk found so "shocking," to me anything but delightful. The nightingale or mocking-bird will alight in mango or logwood, and pipe to you with rare sweetness as you watch and listen in the shade below.

Numbers of the *trochili* flit hither and thither within arm's reach, including the beautiful long-tailed species (*T. polytmus*), which utters its cheerful little note as it plunges the long red bill into some peculiarly attractive cluster of blossom. In this way, with the help of Gosse's book and coloured plates—by no means an exhaustive catalogue, by the bye—one may identify several species, of which the sober liveried grass twit, the handsome redstart flycatcher of the orange-barred blackwing (besides other of the *muscicapidæ*), the green and yellow banana bird, and the kingbird, or "loggerhead," are the most common.

In an evil hour, some twenty years ago, the hateful mongoose was introduced into the country with the object of ridding the sugar cane estates of their pest of rats; but, while the rat is almost as plentiful as ever, the losses inflicted, not only on the domestic poultry but also the "ground game" of the island, have proved incalculable. The partridge, quail, stilt, and some species of dove are almost extinct. It is said that the mongoose is on the decline—perhaps, by those whose wish is father to the thought; but it is still sufficiently numerous to attract the notice of the casual tourist on his walks and drives, even within no great distance of the capital itself.

Jamaica, March 1st, 1905.

BIRDS IN NEW ZEALAND.

NEW ZEALAND is a land where small birds have suffered in character through some lack of discretion in the early introduction of British species.

In a climate so mild that birds breed nearly all the year round, it is little wonder if birds which are in England the commonest and hardiest of their tribe have increased with a rapidity unknown in the homeland. The house-sparrow, yellowhammer, and greenfinch have accordingly been indicted as a nuisance in the South Island, and some difference of opinion obtains as to the rate of wage drawn by the thrush, blackbird, and skylark. Yet even the sparrow has his defenders in Sir Walter Buller, well-known as a writer on New Zealand ornithology, and Mr. Travers. It is a little curious that no complaints appear to be made against the starling in that fruit-growing country.

A fruit-grower at Shannon, New Zealand, writes to the R.S.P.B. Hon. Local Secretary for Romford, Essex :—

“Being a large fruit farmer, I have studied which birds are my friends and which my enemies. Our Government has imported from England the domestic sparrow, the greatest pest of all ; also the yellowhammer, greenfinch, goldfinch, skylark, blackbird, thrush, and starling. The starling is the most useful bird in New Zealand. In this district we have a grass grub over an inch long, with a brown head, which is very destructive, attacking the roots of the grass, more especially the cocksfoot, and eating it off level with the ground. On hilly land, where you cannot cultivate, the damage done is serious. When the starlings came they seemed to realise the farmers’ trouble, and set to work to help us out of it by attacking these grubs ; so they wax fat and rid us of one of our worst pests. I have seen the ground black with them, but have never seen one settle on a fruit-tree yet ; they never come into the orchard. You will often see them settle down on a flock of sheep and eat the ticks out of the wool, and the sheep know their friends. The goldfinch also eats no fruit, but goes for the seeds of thistles and other weeds. The blackbird and thrush destroy me a good many apples, etc., but I will not have them hurt, as I consider they only take a fair wage for the work they do.”

A Society for the Protection of Birds would be very useful in New Zealand, both to watch the case on their behalf, and also to gather evidence and circulate trustworthy information.

LECTURING on “Friends and foes of the garden” before the Hunsdonbury Horticultural Society, Mr. F. Heath, of Presdales Gardens, said that through misunderstanding on this subject many feathered friends were cast aside. He spoke favourably of blackbirds, thrushes, and starlings as insect devourers, but considered the best friends of the gardener were the robins, wrens, hedge-sparrows, wagtails, pewits, swallows, and owls.

NOTES.

The Pole Trap.

Landed proprietors and tenants of estates will do well to see that the Bird Protection Act of 1904, commonly known as the Pole Trap Act, is complied with on their land. There is little doubt that many gamekeepers have a strong tendency to evade it ; and it is not easy for outsiders to know what is done on private property. But landowners may be credited with a less limited outlook than keepers enjoy, as well as the Englishman’s respect for law and the sportsman’s claim to humanity. They usually know how to deal with poachers ; and, after all, there is no reason why the keeper should be allowed to break laws any more than the poacher. A pole trap is defined as “any spring, trap, gin, or similar instrument calculated to cause bodily injury to any wild bird coming in contact therewith,” and it may not be affixed, set, or placed on “any pole, tree, or cairn (*Anglicè*, heap) of stones or earth.”

Caution to Keepers.

In all cases where knowledge or rumour of the use of the pole trap reaches the Society a letter is invariably sent to the landowner. As an example of courteous response, made even where the rumour appears to have been mistaken, may be quoted the following letter from the Ashton Court Estate Office, near Bristol, in answer to a communication sent to Lady Smyth :—

“I am not aware that the pole trap is used on this estate by any of our keepers ; if so, it is contrary to Lady Smyth’s express wish, and it may interest you to see a copy of a circular letter I have to-day written to all our keepers.”

(*Enclosure.*)

“Dear Sir,—I wish particularly to caution you that no pole trap must be used on any account on this estate. It is contrary to law, and also contrary to Lady Smyth’s and my own frequently expressed wish.

“Yours faithfully,

“H. B. Napier.”

Candles as Building Material.

Apropos of the efforts which are being made to preserve the gannets of Lundy Island and of the Bass Rock, an interesting account of another breeding place of the species comes (April, 1905) from Mrs. Mashiter, whose father formerly tenanted an island off the Welsh coast that includes in its domain a desolate and solitary rock where the one little colony of Welsh gannets breed. The rock is ten miles from land, and in older times was thus safely out of the reach of collectors : even in

these days it is not very easy of access. In the fifties this gentleman, himself an accomplished naturalist, once visited the rock, in company with friends, and, the weather being fine and calm, they spent a night there among these sea-birds. It happened that there had been a wreck in the vicinity, and a quantity of wreckage was floating about, including some large cases of candles. The gannets, busy with domestic matters and on the look-out for building material, had observed the promising stick-like appearance of this treasure trove, and accordingly had ingeniously used wax candles for the construction of their nests. Many odd substances have been worked into bird nests, but this is probably the first instance on record of the employment of candles.

The Protection Acts.

Mr. T. Helmer, a member of the North Riding County Council, has ascertained from the local police authorities that the total number of convictions under the Wild Birds Protection Act in the Riding for the five years ended December 31, 1904, was three. This not unnaturally suggests to him that the Act cannot be very strictly enforced (it may also be remarked, in passing, that the North Riding Order is itself an exceedingly poor one), and writing to the *Yorkshire Post* on the question of giving effect to the law, he well says:—

“This, I fear, never will be done until lovers of wild birds individually or collectively can be induced to bombard the County Councils through their representatives, by insisting on the law being more rigorously enforced. To me the singular thing is that an Act passed for the protection of wild birds, and which was never intended for the benefit of the few, but for the pleasure and instruction of the whole population—and for none more than the inhabitants of our big towns—should be looked upon with so much indifference, and even with suspicion. If our Education Committees could be induced to enlarge their views, the rising generation would soon find themselves in a new world of delight—seeing the vast numbers of folk from the big centres of industry who now spread themselves over country districts during the summer holidays. At the moment our educationist Gradgrinds are too much in evidence for us. By-and-by we may perhaps emancipate ourselves and our children from their influence. And a happy day it must be for the latter when the fact comes to their knowledge that there are other things in nature beyond the lion, the tiger, the bear, and the ostrich which still pictorially adorn so many of our schools.”

At present, it is said, Leeds workmen find it pay to leave work for a day and patronise an excursion train into the country in order to go birdcatching.

Birds as Tree Planters.

In the *Speaker* for May 27th Mr. W. H. Hudson tells how, in one case certainly and in many others inferentially, the elder-tree has become a tree of Downland, although its feeble branches and frail leaves ill fit it for struggling against the winds and storms of an open hill country. The wheatear, the bird of this open land, frequently makes its nest in rabbit burrows, and the wheatear, like most small birds, is partial to elder-berries. After feeding on the berries of some distant tree it sows the seeds in the loose earth of the burrows, where they take root and grow; and an elder tree or clump of trees is the result, to the benefit of succeeding birds. A similar case is afforded by the blackberry-bushes in New Zealand. One of the most serious charges against small birds in that country is that they carry the seeds of the blackberry into the rough bush country and poor land, and thus cause the extensive spread of what is there considered a troublesome plant. So that while the blackbird is shot in England for eating cultivated fruit, in the Antipodes he is killed for planting one of the most delicious of wild fruit.

From Rhodesia.

A Rhodesian resident, who has seen the reference in the Society's annual report to the decrease of swallows, writes that he has noticed the dwindling away in the number of these birds in South Africa for several seasons. He adds:

“When one thinks of the enormous destruction of farm and garden produce year after year, and the almost life and death struggle against all kinds of insect pests everywhere in the civilized world, it makes one stand aghast to find men that are supposed to be guided by reason and common-sense, engaged in deliberately exterminating some of our best friends. I have planted out fruit trees for the little birds alone, just to draw them to the place. Five-pound notes are not plentiful with me, but I would not for five pounds injure a feather in the plumage of insect-eating birds.”

Hurlingham.

A very largely-attended meeting of the members was held on May 20th, when, on the motion of Lord Ancaster, seconded by Sir H. P. Ewart, it was agreed “that Pigeon shooting at Hurlingham be discontinued from December 31st, 1905.” A majority of 158 votes was obtained over and beyond the two-thirds majority necessary by the rules. If other clubs follow suit public-house starling-shoots may also become unfashionable. It may be remembered that recently a solicitor for the defence in a starling-club case which was

before the Bench objected that the magistrates' finding "would make even Hurlingham impossible."

Birds of the District.

Most bird-lovers and flower-lovers are surprised at times by the vague notions their acquaintances possess regarding the number and names of the common wild birds and flowers of their own neighbourhood. On the other hand, even ornithologists will view with admiration the list of no fewer than 67 species of birds drawn up by "Old Finchleian," as having occurred in the London suburb of Finchley within the last three years. The list, published in "The Finchleian" for November, 1904, includes some single records, but omits five species seen to pass over without settling. The Long-tailed Tit is said to be increasing, and the Kingfisher, Nightjar, and Sand-Martin to occur regularly. When we go further afield such lists naturally lengthen, and Captain Lindsay, of Sutton Courtenay (one of the prettiest of Berkshire Thames-side villages), sends a list of 90 species observed by himself during the last few years within an area of 30 acres around his house. Of these the Nightingale, Kingfisher, Goldcrest, and Tree-Sparrow are increasing; others, including Kestrel, Magpie, Jay, Wryneck, Nightjar, Curlew, Sandpiper, Wheatear, Wood-wren, Bullfinch, and Hawfinch, are not known to nest within the area. The Cirl Bunting, Lesser Spotted Woodpecker, Dipper, Great Crested Grebe, Snipe, Land-rail, and Water-rail are other interesting records.

Agricultural Conference.

The King of Italy convened an International Agricultural Conference to meet at Rome on May 28th, and it is hoped that increased protection of birds useful to agriculture and horticulture will result. The British delegates were His Excellency the Right Hon. Sir Edwin Egerton, the Earl of Jersey, the Earl of Minto, Sir T. H. Elliott, and Mr. T. P. Gill.

Ornithological Congress.

The Fourth International Congress takes place as announced in our last number, June 12th to 17th, at the Imperial Institute, South Kensington. The programme includes a conversazione at the Natural History Museum, a reception by the Lord Mayor of London, and, in the following week, excursions to Woburn Abbey, Cambridge, and Flamborough. It is proposed to give some account of it in the next issue of BIRD NOTES AND NEWS, especially of the papers touching on Bird Protection.

"METHODS OF GAME PRESERVING."

MR. BOSWORTH SMITH writes to the *Times* (May 30th, 1905) to call attention to a new compound, advertised in a catalogue of "shooting requisites," which the ingenuity of the gamekeeper and his friends has devised to take the place of the condemned pole-trap, and which appears to be, if anything, the more abominable invention of the two.

"The object, it is to be observed, is the extermination of some of the most interesting, the most intelligent, the most beautiful of English birds, the hawk, the magpie, and the jay among them. And what are the means? 'Snarglu'—notice the appropriate hideosity of the name—is an intensely adhesive compound from which no feathered creature which once touches it can escape. A magpie or a jay is to be caught by its means upon her nest; her feathers are to be further daubed with it by hand, and she is then to be let loose to crawl about as best she may in her maimed condition, or she is to be tethered to the ground with a peg or string a yard long. When others of her kind, attracted by her struggles and moved by that sad and strange instinct—perhaps in their case a merciful one in the end—which leads even men of the baser sort sometimes to trample on those who are down, come mobbing round her, they are, in their turn, caught and paralysed by the murderous compound, and are then either disposed of at once by the gamekeeper, proud of what the circular calls the 'satisfactory eventualities,' or are let loose to drag out a death-in-life, and to deal out, ere they die themselves, death to those who live. Will any high-minded English gentleman, will any true sportsman allow his gamekeeper to swell the slaughter of the annual battue by such calculating cruelties? Englishmen pride themselves on their humanity. I am persuaded therefore that the iniquity of 'Snarglu' needs only to be exposed to be as unanimously condemned and abolished.

"Let not the Ornithological Congress, which meets in London from all parts of the world next month, and one of the main objects of which is the preservation of all birds, learn that in England the preservation of game is regarded by even a small minority among game preservers as so sacrosanct an end that it justifies such means."

BIRDS AND AGRICULTURE.

AN important debate on the economic value of birds in their relation to agriculture took place at the London Farmers' Club on April 3rd, 1905. The subject was introduced by the Rev. H. H. Slater, F.Z.S., M.B.O.U., of Thornhaugh, Northants, who read a paper on "Wild Birds and the Farm."

On the whole—carefully balancing the evidence on both sides—there could be very little doubt indeed, said Mr. Slater, that the class of birds are very much more of a friend than a foe to agriculturist and horticulturist, seeing that they do an immense amount of work which it is to man's interest should be done, and which he could only do for himself with a great deal of trouble and expense (in insecticides and machinery for their use) or which he is absolutely incapable of doing for himself (as in the destruction of the more minute insects and the seeds of weeds). Of the 250 species of birds resident in or regular migrants to this country about 80 are to be seen on agricultural land for a considerable portion of the year. Of these 30 belong to the slender-billed warblers or their allies, feeding exclusively on insect food, and therefore entirely beneficial. Among these he classed pipits, wagtails, flycatchers, swallows and swifts; and with them may also be grouped the cuckoo, water-hen, coot, corncrake and lapwing, feeding exclusively on molluscs, worms, and insects. Of the 45 species remaining, a proportion, such as heron, kingfisher, snipe, ducks, woodpeckers, and partridges, so far as they affect the land at all are certainly harmless and may be of use. And to them he was not sure whether he might not add the thrush family, which feed largely upon snails and insects without injury in any way to the interests of the farm. There remained to be considered the birds of prey, tits, skylark, buntings, finches, starlings, pigeons, and crows.

Briefly, Mr. Slater's report on these birds was as follows:—

SPARROWHAWK.—Certainly not injurious but mildly beneficial. Kills a good many sparrows.

KESTREL.—One of the very best friends the farmer has, and from every point of view ought to be carefully preserved; touches nothing else when it can get mice.

OWLS.—Any farmer shooting either owl or kestrel is a monster of ingratitude. The owl takes up the kestrel's work when the other goes off duty at night, and it is impossible to say how voles and mice could be kept down but for the kestrel, owls, and weasel. Feed on mice, with occasional shrews, small birds, and rats.

TITS.—I do not think that any of the titmice do any harm whatever on the farm; to the orchard the great and blue tits certainly do a little, but far more than repay the damage they do, as they are very useful in helping to keep down the pernicious winter and codlin moths, the apple weevil, and the aphides, by devouring them in all their stages. Marsh, coal, and long-tailed tits feed upon insects, destroy no fruit, and should be carefully preserved.

SKYLARK.—Occasionally injurious in the winter months. In severe winters undoubtedly injures

green crops; but the balance of utility to man is largely in the bird's favour.

BUNTINGS.—The Corn-Bunting feeds chiefly on insects and small seeds, in autumn largely on grain, frequenting stubble and stackyard, but not numerous enough to do much harm. The Yellow-hammer is of similar habits, and commonly frequents stackyards in winter, but is not seen to pull straws as sparrows do.

CHAFFINCH.—I have no doubt whatever that the balance of utility is very much in its favour, and, if so, we ought not to grudge its wages. But its delinquencies are so open and apparent that they may outweigh in popular estimation the good it does. Injurious for only six weeks or two months; feeds on weed-seeds all the year round, especially groundsel and chickweed.

GOLDFINCH.—The great object of that pest, the birdcatcher, who flourishes in spite of the solemn but singularly ineffective thunder of the County Councils. Staple food, weed-seeds.

LINNET.—I cannot ascertain that this bird does the very least harm. Feeds on seeds, especially charlock and knot-grass. Also much persecuted by the birdcatchers.

TREE SPARROW.—Harmless.

HOUSE SPARROW.—Originally, no doubt, a feeder on wild seeds; has now attached itself to man, influenced by his untidiness and wastefulness, until it has become about the worst of all his pests. Multiplication must be stopped by a careful watching of the nests. If, however, a sparrow club be started, be sure and take care that other birds' heads are not palmed off as hen sparrows; when another bird's head has once or twice been counted in the reckoning up as "minus 5" this will stop.

GREENFINCH.—Only occasionally mischievous in attacking newly-sown garden seeds; and mischief trifling on the whole.

HAWFINCH.—Rare and shy, with an extraordinary fondness for green peas. Usual food, hard seeds, especially hips and haws.

BULLFINCH.—A perfectly harmless and altogether desirable neighbour, except in February and March, when it does serious damage to gooseberry and plum buds if not watched. A little stone-throwing or catapulting is quite enough to drive it away, and shooting entirely unnecessary.

STARLING.—Normally one of the most useful birds we have; possibly increasing beyond the normal, but I cannot point to any tangible damage which over-population is driving it to commit. Very fond of cherries.

JACKDAW.—Beneficial on the whole to agriculture, but an atrocious egg-stealer.

MAGPIE.—Decidedly to be encouraged, as a feeder on slugs, worms, etc., and a check on the increase of woodpigeon and blackbird. Jay also to be preserved as eating the woodpigeon's eggs.

ROOK.—A most useful friend if not allowed to increase abnormally. Does yeoman service by the destruction of injurious insects and larvæ.

WOODPIGEON.—A decided pest on the whole, feeding on all green crops.

BROWN-HEADED (OR BLACK-HEADED) GULL.—Entirely useful.

Finally, Mr. Slater summed up by saying that certain species, including all the slender-billed birds, kestrel, owls, lapwing, and black-headed gull, ought to be encouraged and protected by every possible means. Certain others are naturally beneficial, but liable to over-multiply, as the rook, blackbird, and perhaps starling. Certain others require a moderate amount of scaring at certain times of the year, such as the bullfinch, great and blue tits, skylark, chaffinch, greenfinch and hawkfinch, jay and magpie. One or two are, from a farmer's point of view, almost an unmitigated nuisance, such as the house-sparrow, and, a long way after him, the woodpigeon and jackdaw. These appear to be the only exceptions to the general law that birds are most valuable friends of farmer and gardener, and it is quite conceivable, indeed it seems certain, that agriculture, which a good many people find an uphill job at present, might be absolutely impossible without the help of our feathered friends.

The discussion which followed was especially interesting as showing the variety of opinion with regard to many birds, and practical unanimity concerning others. While there appeared to be general agreement that birds as a race were distinctly more beneficial than harmful, the house sparrow found no friends, the woodpigeon and starling were considered to be unduly increasing, and divergent were the views held as to the rook.

Mr. HENMAN said that a great deal of the light land of the country could not be farmed profitably unless the rooks were always at hand to keep down wire-worms. They also took the click beetles of which wireworms were the larvæ. The owl was a public benefactor. Some few years ago, while shooting in a covert, a gentleman brought two brown owls as his contribution to the bag. He told him that he ought to be fined £5 a head by the Society for the Protection of Birds, and if he had his way would fine him £10 right off. If the jay would keep down the woodpigeon in any degree it eminently required preserving.

Mr. MUNTZ (Birmingham) said he had heard grievous tales of the damage done by rooks, but had found by actual practical experience that, though they might consume a certain amount of green food, they consumed a great deal that was

not green, particularly wireworms. He had found the rook's crop full of wireworms.

Mr. ST. JOHN ACKERS (Gloucester) cordially agreed that any man who shot an owl should be fined more than £5; and considered the sparrowhawk also one of the most useful birds left in this country, as now that the peregrine was practically extinct it was the only bird that could, or did, kill wood-pigeons on the wing. He thought it far more useful than the kestrel, which though it destroyed quantities of mice, also destroyed a good many young birds. He did not think the whole blame for the decrease of martins could be put upon the sparrow, for though the martins had decreased, the swallows, with which the sparrow did not meddle, had decreased still more. With regard to the green plover, could not the Farmers' Club make a strong protest against the number of eggs taken of this bird, one of the most useful on the farm? The eggs were constantly gathered, and high prices offered to those working on the land to break the law and send them to market.

Mr. SLATER, in replying, spoke of the value of a windmill with a rattle attached, to scare birds from fruit, and concluded with a rook anecdote. The tenant of a large farm said to him one morning, pointing to a bare patch in the field, "Look at the beastly rooks, they are getting all that corn." "I beg your pardon," was the reply, "the rooks are not getting the corn, they are getting the gentlemen that are getting the corn." Said the farmer: "I do not believe they do the least bit of good." To defend the rooks Mr. Slater shot one, on its way from corn to rookery, and bade the farmer look under its tongue. He said, "It is nearly all wire-worms. I will never touch another rook as long as I live."

"The farmers of America are now thoroughly aroused to their annually increasing losses from the ravages of insects, and, having seen the failure of many costly attempts to check the insect pests by artificial devices, are now willing to aid Nature in her efforts to preserve the balance which their ignorant, misguided efforts have disturbed. They are no longer seeking the destruction of their best friends, the hawks, owls, and crows, and are as vigorously prosecuting the vagrant pot-hunter and the small boy with a Flobert rifle as they are the pilferers of orchard and melon patch or the pipe-smoking tramp in their hay-mows. . . . In view of the extent of the evil caused, he who unnecessarily kills a bird is worthy of a more severe punishment than the traitor who sells to a foreign government the plans of our coast defence."—Prof. G. L. CANNON (Annual Report for 1904 of the Board of Horticulture, Colorado.)

IN THE COURTS.

LONDON.—At the Lambeth Police Court, on April 24th, two labourers were ordered to pay 40s. each for birdcatching in Dulwich Park. They had a decoy bird and the usual accessories. The Park constable said the authorities were a good deal troubled with men of this class at this time of year.

An Old Ford man, convicted of using nets and decoy birds for taking wild birds near Wanstead Park on April 11th, said he was very sorry for what had occurred. Mr. Burnett Tabrum: "Very sorry you're caught, you mean. Five shillings and costs." Declaring that he had no money, defendant was sent to prison for seven days, and the constable was directed to take the birds into the forest and let them fly.

MIDDLESEX.—At Brentford, on March 15th, Henry Johnson and George Thompson were fined 20s. each for using snares to take wild birds. Snares and decoy bird to be forfeited. They had a chaffinch in a cage, and also a stuffed decoy and a limed twig.

HERTFORDSHIRE.—Henry Wiseman, a Luton dealer, was fined £1 at the Hitchin Petty Sessions for catching birds at Hexton on April 7th, and for cruelty to a decoy linnnet, described as "improperly braced." The birds (greenfinch and ten linnnets) were released from the court window, but the nets were returned to defendant.

SURREY.—On April 29th the Croydon Bench ordered Charles Beadle, of Addiscombe, to pay 7s. 6d. costs for using a decoy bird and lime for catching wild birds. The Chairman (Mr. T. Baddeley) said they were determined to put a stop to this practice, and had defendant caught a bird he would have been dealt with very differently.

LEEDS.—At Leeds, on March 7th, a birdcatcher known locally as the "linnet king" was fined 40s. and costs for cruelty to decoy green linnnets. The birds were tethered with string, and one had its leg broken. The Stipendiary said bird-catching was one of the most barbarous pursuits in which a man could engage.

NOTTINGHAM.—Four Nottingham bird-dealers were summoned on May 5th, for having recently-taken wild birds in their possession. The prosecution was conducted by the R.S.P.C.A., whose inspector had visited the bird-market. The birds, he said, flew and fluttered about the cages in a frightened way, like newly-caught birds, and the linnnets had the red on the breast which disappeared in captivity; one of the men admitted having been out bird-catching on the previous Thursday. The defence was that the birds were not newly taken, and it was further urged that they were in such "little bits of cages" it was impossible to say whether they fluttered or not. Eventually the Bench dismissed the summonses.

BRIGHTON.—Birdcatchers continue particularly busy near Brighton, and Inspector Waters, R.S.P.C.A., continues busy catching the offenders. On April 7th, at the Borough Bench, Thomas Gander was summoned for having 119 newly-caught linnnets in his possession. The birds,

packed in two boxes, were taken by defendant to Brighton Station, consigned to the London bird market, and were examined by Inspector Waters. They were much over-crowded; 30 or 40 died, and the Inspector liberated the remainder. The fine amounted to 3d. per bird and costs, in all £3 1s. 3d.; and Inspector Waters' action was approved. On April 16th T. Gander and Henry Dine, Jun., were fined £1 each and costs for catching linnnets at Roedale Farm. Nets and decoys confiscated. On May 8th George and Edward Dine were fined, the one 10s., the other 5s. and costs for netting linnnets on George Dine's allotment. Defendants had decoys, newly-caught birds, and field-glasses in their possession. George Dine was further fined £1 and costs for brutality to a braced goldfinch, and Edward Dine 5s. and costs for giving false name and address. Nets and decoys forfeited.

CESHIRE.—Before the Oakmere County Bench, on March 27th, James Simpson, gamekeeper to Mr. Charles Bell, Norley Hall, was summoned for shooting a heron on February 9th. After hearing the evidence, the magistrates said the police had done quite right in instituting the proceedings, but they were satisfied the defendant committed the offence in ignorance, and therefore he would be dismissed with a caution. [Mr. J. Baddeley, J.P., of Higher Broughton, writes to the *Manchester Guardian*: "Ignorance, at the best, is a bad plea; but here we have a man who habitually carries a gun, and yet neither he nor the master who pays him has ever taken the slightest trouble to ascertain the law as it affects their own business. The writer would respectfully submit, as a magistrate, that this want of knowledge was an aggravation, not a palliation, of the offence, and that the defendant deserved the infliction of the full penalty, if only for his inexcusable and wilful ignorance of what he, of all men, ought to have known. It is useless for County Councils to obtain orders, it is useless for the police to take proceedings, even in flagrant cases, if this wretched excuse is to be accepted."]

NEW LEAFLETS.

IN PREPARATION.

The Bird of Paradise, with coloured illustration, reproduced by permission from a picture by Miss HADDEN.

A Letter to Public Schoolboys. By Sir HERWARD WAKE, Bart.

Next Issue.—The next Number of BIRD NOTES AND NEWS will be ready on Oct. 1st, 1905.

Reading Cases for BIRD NOTES AND NEWS can be obtained from the office at a cost of 1s., including postage. They will be found very useful to keep the numbers together, and also for use in Public Libraries.

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Supplement to Bird Notes and News.

JULY, 1905.

PROTECTION OF WILD BIRDS THROUGHOUT the BRITISH EMPIRE.

THROUGHOUT the greater part of the British Empire, efforts are being made to preserve and protect Wild Birds by legislation, whether on account of their utility, beauty, or rarity, or as game. A brief summary of the methods pursued and of the laws and ordinances in force may be of interest as showing practically the position of Bird Protection throughout the Empire, account being taken only of those which have reference to birds other than game. In addition to the Houses of Parliament meeting in London, there are about seventy Legislative Assemblies in the British Empire. A law is passed by a Legislative Assembly; an Ordinance is enacted by a Governor, either on his own responsibility or "in Council."

In the majority of cases birds to be specially protected are named in a schedule; but in one or two instances the method proposed for future legislation in England is adopted, viz., protecting all birds and proscribing certain named species.

The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds will be very glad to receive any information and copies of enactments from friends in the Colonies, in order that this tabulation of the Society's records may be continually revised and kept up to date; and particulars as to Bird Protection in other lands will also be most welcome.

EUROPE.

UNITED KINGDOM OF GREAT BRITAIN AND IRELAND.—By the Acts of 1880 and 1881 a Close Time (breeding-season) is provided for all wild birds, but farmers and occupiers of land are allowed to kill any bird not named in the "Schedule." Provision is made for the variation of Close Time, and the offering for sale of birds recently taken is forbidden.

By the Act of 1894 power is given to prohibit the taking of eggs and to amend the "Schedule" for any district.

By the Act of 1896 birds can be protected during that portion of the year not covered by Close Time. "Sanctuaries" may be established wherein no birds may be killed (1896) and wherein no eggs may be taken (1894). Bird-catching on Sundays can be prohibited.

It is left to the Councils of Counties or County Boroughs to apply for Orders* under these Acts.

By the Acts of 1896 and 1902 the Courts were empowered, in addition to the penalties by fine (maximum £1), to forfeit traps, nets, and decoy

* There are at present 140 such Orders in force.

birds (1896), and the bird's egg illegally taken (1902).

By the Acts of 1904 the use of the pole-trap was made illegal, and legislation for the Island of St. Kilda was passed. The Act of 1896 does not apply to Ireland.

ISLE OF MAN.—The Act of 1868 prohibits the killing of all gulls and the taking of their eggs ("gulls" including gannets, shags, guillemots, kittiwakes, and skuas).

The Act of 1887 prohibits the killing or taking of all wild birds and the destruction of nests and eggs, February 1st to September 1st (with a higher penalty for scheduled birds), and the use of all nets, snares, traps, lime or lantern, for taking wild birds at any time.

JERSEY.—The Act of 1879 protects all sea-birds and forbids their sale or exposure for sale, or transport, between April 1st and August 1st; and also prohibits the killing of gulls at any time.

GUERNSEY.—

CYPRUS.—The Act of 1883 (No. 2) provides for the protection of birds "during the time when the island is infested with locusts" (February 15th to August 1st). By the Act of 1895 (No. 3) the High Commissioner may permit the killing of birds or taking of eggs in the interests of science. A recent Act (1904) (No. 13) declares it illegal to export the skins or eggs of any wild bird, except with special permission, and also creates eight areas wherein no birds may be killed.

GIBRALTAR.—

MALTA.—

ASIA.

BRITISH INDIA.—The Wild Birds Protection Act, 1887 (No. 20), extends to the whole of British India, and gives the local governments and cantonment and municipal authorities the power to define the expression "wild birds," and also to specify the breeding season, during which it will be illegal to possess or sell any of the protected birds or their plumage within the cantonment or municipality. The amount of fine to be imposed for each offence is also specified.

The Court may order the confiscation of any wild bird or plumage in respect of which the breach was committed.

An edict of the Governor-General in Council (No. 13 of 1902) prohibits the taking by sea or land out of British India of skins, feathers of all kinds, except feathers of ostriches or skins as specimens illustrative of natural history.

[The history of wild bird legislation in India and the text of the 1887 Act will be found in the leaflets of the Society, Nos. 36 and 37.]

CEYLON.—

STRAITS SETTLEMENT.—By Ordinance No. 3 of 1884, wild birds are protected. Penalties are enacted for the killing or taking of all wild birds

not named in the Schedule, or exposing them for sale. The Governor in Council may vary the Schedule. Licences to kill may be issued.

MAURITIUS.—

HONG KONG.—By Ordinance No. 6 of 1885 and No. 8 of 1904, protection of wild birds is enacted and sale forbidden during certain months—March to September, both months inclusive.

AUSTRALASIA.

NEW SOUTH WALES.—By the Act (No. 26 of 1901) the Close Season for all scheduled birds, except quails, is fixed as between August 1st and January 31st. The Colonial Secretary may vary Close Season for any district, and may add or remove any bird and or from the Schedule which includes foreign birds such as skylark, chaffinch, goldfinch, linnet, starling, and 47 native birds. The penalty is up to £5 for killing a bird and 10s. for each egg. Penalties are divided between the informer and the Zoological Society. Preserves may be declared. Persons may be authorised to "collect specimens of natural history for any scientific institution or museum."

QUEENSLAND.—By the Native Birds Protection Act of 1877, chap. 7, Close Season (October 1st to March 1st) is provided for 30 birds and species named in a Schedule. The Governor in Council may extend the Act to other birds, may alter the date of Close Season, and may appoint rangers. A moiety of the penalty goes to the informer. By the Amending Act of 1877, chap. 16, it was enacted that the regulations were not to apply to farmers as regards the protection of crops on their land, nor to the aborigines as regards food. By the Act of 1884, chap. 12, the Governor may proclaim reserves.

SOUTH AUSTRALIA.—The Act of 1900 (No. 745) declares a perpetual Close Season [all the year round] for certain species (1st Schedule); declares no Close Time at all for other species (3rd Schedule); declares various Close Seasons for all other species (2nd Schedule). It empowers the proclamation of portions of the Crown Lands, and the sea shore, and public reserves as "bird protected districts."

Killing, possessing, selling, or exporting protected birds, and destroying or selling their eggs, or selling articles made from their skin or feathers, are made offences punishable by progressive fines, which when received are payable one half to the Zoological Society and the other half to the Government. The penalties are—for first offence, not less than £1 nor more than £2; for second offence, not less than £2 nor more than £25; and in addition in every case £5 to be paid in respect of any bird in the 1st Schedule, and £2 if in the 2nd Schedule.

Swivel and punt guns and the like are declared illegal devices, and may be forfeited.

By the Act of 1900, the Governor has power to transfer a bird from one Schedule to another, and in 1903 received power to vary the Close Times.

By the Amending Act, 1903, the need was established for bird-catchers' licenses in respect of

birds in the 2nd Schedule in the Northern Territory.

TASMANIA.—By the Act of 1895 (cap. 26) and 1896 (cap. 12) Close Time was fixed for certain birds. To shoot at or wilfully kill or destroy the eggs of the birds named in the Schedule (64 species) was made illegal, but the Governor has power to authorize protected birds to be taken for scientific purposes.

By the Acts of 1901 (No. 36) and 1902 (No. 21) the wattle bird and mutton bird (short-tailed petrel) are protected.

By the Act of 1903 (No. 23) to buy, sell, or offer for sale the birds named in the Schedule of the Act of 1895 is made an offence.

By the Act of 1904 (No. 25) the nests and eggs of species of birds enumerated cannot be taken or destroyed except by the written order of a Justice of the Peace.

VICTORIA.—By the Game Act of 1890 Close Seasons are provided for various birds, and protection is given to certain birds during the whole year; these latter include swallows, warblers, wrens, magpies, flycatchers, etc. The Close Time provided for 28 species of wild birds, such as larks, plovers, teal, kingfishers, tree-creepers, herons, cranes, etc., is August 1st to December 20th. The Governor may vary the schedules. The penalty may be £2, and in addition the sum of 5s. for each bird destroyed, and for having in possession or for taking or destroying eggs 10s. A moiety of the penalty goes to the informer. By the Act of 1896 it is illegal to buy or sell the flesh, skin, or feathers of any native birds, the killing of which is forbidden.

WESTERN AUSTRALIA.—The principal Act (1892) was passed to protect birds and to encourage persons to import birds, and gave the Governor power to proclaim a Close Season for native birds, and to establish Reserves. The penalty for destroying imported birds may be £20, and 10s. for each bird, and the instrument used may be forfeited. The Colonial Secretary may grant licenses to kill, and penalties for taking or destroying eggs were fixed. Power to forfeit the bird or egg was given, and to sell such forfeitures.

By the Act of 1902 possession of dead birds protected by proclamation under the principal Act is rendered illegal, and provision made for the appointment by the Governor of Inspectors to assist in enforcing the Acts.

BRITISH NEW GUINEA.—By the Ordinance (No. 2 of 1894) for the Protection of Wild Birds the Administrator may issue proclamations fixing Close Time as regards all wild birds; the penalty may be £10 or a month's imprisonment. Special permits may be given to kill birds, but these must specify the bird to be destroyed, the locality and period during which the killing may take place. By the Bird Collectors' Ordinance of 1897, without a licence the destroying or capturing by any means of birds existing in a wild state is forbidden for any object, except for using them as food or stopping them from doing mischief.

FIJI.—By the Ordinance (No. 6, 1895) for the

protection of birds Close Time for any native game or wild birds mentioned in the Schedule is fixed for September 30th to March 1st. Hawks and parrots may be, however, destroyed by a person in his own garden or premises. Permission to collect specimens of natural history may be given. The penalty for illegally taking birds or eggs, or having them in possession, during Close Time, may be £5 or a month's imprisonment, with or without hard labour. The Schedule includes about 20 species, among which are the starling, lark, thrush, blackbird and plover, with their eggs. Preserves may be created.

NEW ZEALAND.—The principal Act of 1880 (No. 18) gives protection to indigenous birds, and fixes certain Close Seasons for scheduled birds.

The Act of 1886 gives to the Governor power to protect any bird indigenous to the Colony.

In 1892, the seabirds and their eggs on the Titi and Stewart Islands were protected.

An Act of 1902 (No. 25), however, makes it the duty of local authorities to take effective action for the destruction of birds gazetted by the Government as "injurious," provision being made for concerted action, and the laying of poisoned grain is permitted. In case of default, an inspector may be appointed to do the work.

The Act of 1903 alters the Close Season for the godwit.

AFRICA.

CAPE COLONY.—The Act of 1899 (No. 42) enables the Governor upon the petition of municipal and divisional councils to prohibit under penalty the destruction of all or of scheduled birds for the whole or part of each year.

NATAL.—The Act of 1896 (No. 33) prohibits the killing or taking of birds in the Schedule or their eggs, except by express permission of the Governor for scientific research. The list includes swallows, and may be added to by the Governor.

TRANSVAAL AND ORANGE RIVER COLONY.—

GAMBIA.—

GOLD COAST.—Ordinance No. 2 of 1901 was passed to carry out the Convention signed in London on 19th May, 1900, for the preservation of wild animals, birds and fish in Africa between the line of the river Zambesi and the 20th parallel of North latitude. By this Ordinance, the killing of vultures, secretary bird, owls and rhinoceros-birds or beef-eaters is prohibited on account of their usefulness. Provision is made to limit the number killed of ostriches, marabouts, egrets, bustards and francolins, guinea fowls and other "game birds."

LAGOS.—Ordinance No. 15 of 1900 similarly carries out the Convention.

SIERRA LEONE.—

SOUTHERN AND NORTHERN NIGERIA.—

EAST AFRICA PROTECTORATE.—By the Bird Protection Regulations of 1901, it is not lawful to shoot birds without a licence. Penalty, 50 rupees.

MAURITIUS.—

SEYCHELLES.—

NORTH-AMERICAN COLONIES.

BRITISH COLUMBIA.—An Act of 1898 (No. 24) consolidates the laws for the protection of birds and provides for Close Seasons.

MANITOBA.—By the Game Act (cap. 14, 1900) Close Seasons for certain birds, including the plover, is provided.

NEW BRUNSWICK.—An Act of 1895 (c. 10) protects all wild fowl and the nests and eggs of gulls within certain portions of the province. By the Act of 1898 (No. 8) a Close Time was fixed for wild duck, teal and other birds, and it became an offence to destroy any sea-gull, pheasant, or any small birds which frequent the fields and woods, except blackbirds, crows and sparrows.

The hunting or killing of birds on the beaches, islands, or lagoons along Northumberland Strait, Gulf of St. Lawrence, and the Bay of Chaleur is prohibited between December 31st and September 1st by the Act of 1899 (No. 39). The exportation of partridges is forbidden.

NORTH-WEST TERRITORIES.—The Act of 1901 (No. 11) was passed to protect useful birds. No person may hunt or kill any birds whatever, except certain named species. (This list of eighteen birds includes hawks of various kinds, "blackbirds," and the English sparrow.) A license to procure birds for scientific purposes may be obtained.

NOVA SCOTIA.—Under an Act of 1896 (cap. 4) the killing of "robins," swallows, sparrows, and other small birds of song which frequent the fields and gardens, and the selling, offering for sale, and having in possession of such birds when killed is prohibited.

ONTARIO.—The Act of 1897 (289) deals with the protection of insectivorous birds, and except as regard hawks, crows, blackbirds, and English sparrows, prohibits the killing or snaring of any wild native bird, also the destroying of nests, young, or eggs, unless with the permission granted to an "ornithologist" or "biologist." Power is granted to seize birds unlawfully possessed.

Under the Act of 1900 protection may be given to migratory or non-migratory birds in danger of extinction, and wardens are appointed; and by Act of 1903 towns, cities, and villages may make by-laws to prevent destruction of birds.

PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND.—"Game" Acts passed in 1879, 1898 and 1899 are in force.

QUEBEC.—By the Act of 1899 (No. 24) a Close Time is fixed for swallows, warblers, finches and other birds, and snares or traps of any kind are forbidden. Birds illegally taken may be confiscated. The Act of 1903 (c. 23) fixes a Close Time for wigeon, teal, and wild duck.

NEWFOUNDLAND.—A Close Time (January 12th to August 20th, for curlew, plover, snipe, and other wild or migratory birds (except wild geese) is fixed by the Act of 1902 (c. 17), and the eggs and nests of such birds protected. Maximum fine 200 dollars. In 1904 (c. 11) a Close Time was fixed for the ptarmigan and its eggs (October 1st to January 12th).

WEST INDIAN COLONIES.

BAHAMAS.—In 1905 a Wild Birds' Protection Act was passed, protecting all song and insectivorous birds throughout the year, fixing Close Times for certain other birds, and empowering the Governor to establish "reserves" from time to time. The eggs, as well as the birds, are protected, and selling or exporting is forbidden. Penalty may be £20 and forfeiture of bird, skin, feathers, or egg. The Governor may grant a licence for scientific purposes, but such licences may not authorize the taking of more than six birds or six eggs of any one species. [The proposal in the Bill for the protection of terns was not passed.]

BARBADOES.—

BERMUDA.—The Act of 1902 enacts a penalty for shooting any scheduled wild bird, or for taking or destroying the eggs of such bird. The penalty may be £1, and half the penalty goes to the informer. Any person who shall produce to a Justice of the Peace a crow or a crow's egg taken locally may be awarded 4s. for a bird and 1s. for an egg.

BRITISH GUIANA.—By the Ordinances, No. 6 of 1877, and No. 12 of 1885, 39 birds, including egret, heron, kingfisher, owl, sparrow, swallow, are absolutely protected. The penalty for killing or wounding any of these may be 24 dollars, and exposing or offering for sale is forbidden. Close Season is provided, April 1st to September 1st, for 19 species. Power to vary the Close Time and to alter the Schedule rests with the Governor and Court of Policy. Where too numerous, carrion crows may be destroyed by Inspectors appointed for the purpose.

BRITISH HONDURAS.—

JAMAICA.—By the Birds and Fish Protection Law of 1885 (No. 32) the killing or wounding of 21 birds and species specified in the First Schedule is forbidden at all times, and Close Season is provided for certain other birds. Any bird in respect of which a conviction takes place shall be forfeited to His Majesty. The Governor may license killing for scientific purposes. By the law of 1887 (No. 4) the Governor has power to vary the Schedule.

TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO.—The Act of 1895 (No. 25) enacts a Close Time for the protection of wild birds and their eggs. The Governor may vary the Close Time, and authorise killing for scientific purposes, and export may be prohibited.

WINDWARD ISLANDS. (1) *Grenada.*—By the Ordinance of 1891, 22 birds named in Schedule No. 1, with their eggs and nests are absolutely protected. A Close Time, March 1st to May 31st, is fixed for six birds named in Schedule No. 2. The Governor has power to alter the Close Time and to vary Schedule No. 2, and may authorize the killing of birds for scientific purposes. A moiety of the fines inflicted go to the informer, and birds illegally taken may be forfeited.

(2) *St. Vincent.*—By the Ordinance of 1901 (No. 11) similar provisions are enacted to those in force in Grenada.

(3) *St. Lucia.*—

LEEWARD ISLANDS. (1) *Antigua.*— (2) *Dominica.*— (3) *Montserrat.*—

(4) *St. Christopher and Nevis.*—By the Act of 1902 (No. 9) a Close Time for wild birds is established from February 1st to August 31st, and penalties prescribed for killing or wounding scheduled birds, or for taking or injuring eggs or nests.

SOUTH ATLANTIC.

FALKLAND ISLANDS.—



Founded February, 1889.

Incorporated under Royal Charter, November, 1904.

Office:—3, HANOVER SQUARE, LONDON, W.

Any person interested in promoting the objects of the Society and willing to abide by the Rules is eligible for election as follows:—

FELLOW.—Subscription—an annual sum of not less than one guinea (£1 1s.), or donation of twenty guineas (£21).

MEMBER.—Subscription—an annual sum of not less than five shillings (5s.), or donation of five guineas (£5 5s.)

All Fellows and Members are entitled to attend and vote at all General Meetings of the Society, and to receive a copy of every publication issued by the Society.

ASSOCIATE.—(A) By subscribing an annual sum of not less than one shilling (1s.), or compounding as a Life Associate by payment of twenty-one shillings (21s.); (B) by paying a sum of not less than twopence (2d.), to cover cost of registration.

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BIRD NOTES AND NEWS.

Circular Letter issued Periodically by the Royal Society for the
Protection of Birds.

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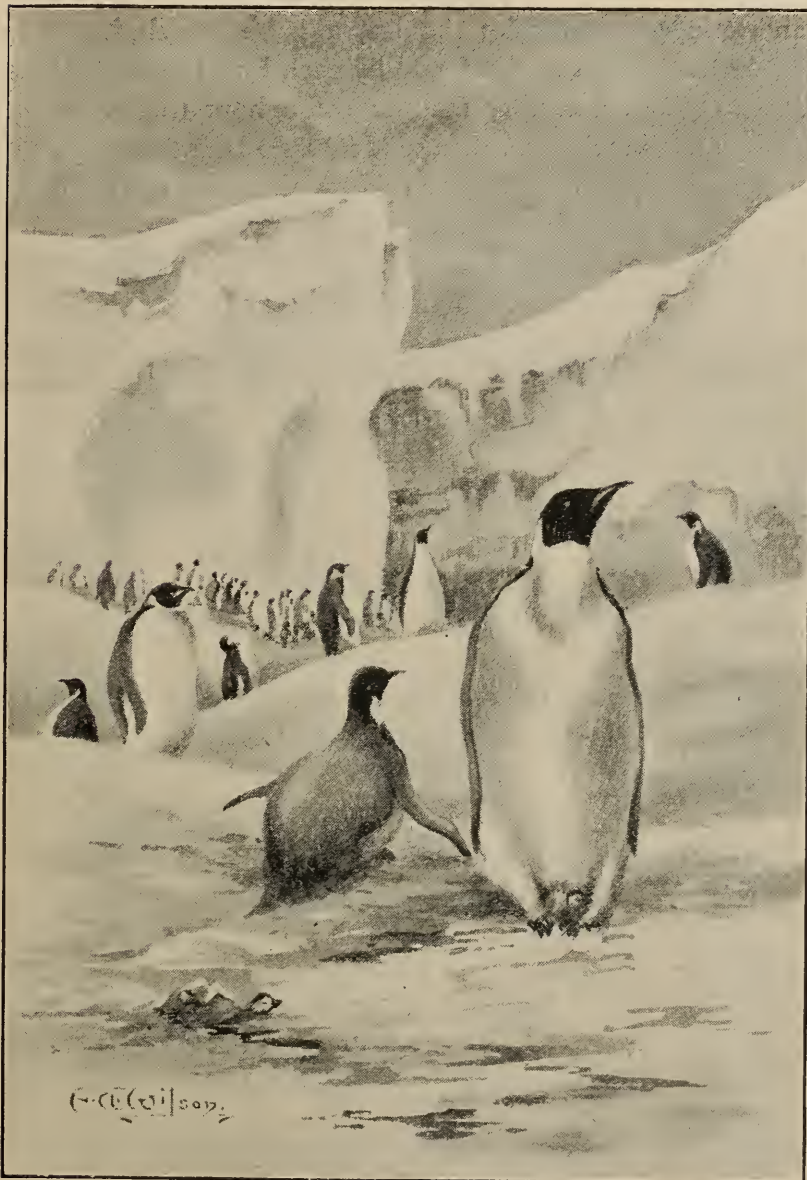
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[OCTOBER, 1905.



EMPEROR PENGUINS.

From a Drawing by E. A. WILSON, M.B., F.Z.S.

PENGUINS.

By DR. E. A. WILSON, of the *Discovery*.

DURING the recent Ornithological Congress penguins came in for a large and well-merited share of attention; and it must have been a matter of the greatest possible satisfaction to anyone who has come in contact with them in the places where they are boiled down by the thousand for their oil, to see the question so energetically considered, and to think that there is some immediate prospect of legislation which will check this inconsiderate slaughter.

Our interests, however, should not, I think, be confined to the penguins of those islands which come under the legislation of New Zealand and Australia—for there are many others that are equally open to attack; and when the penguins that are nearer home are protected, there is no doubt that the more remote birds will come in for their share of undesirable attention.

There are in all some seventeen different species, which are widely distributed over the land and water of the southern hemisphere. There are certain penguins in the Galapagos Islands, as nearly as possible on the equator, and these

are inured to the heat of a tropical climate. Others there are in the southern polar regions, enduring persistently the most intense and constant cold. But the majority live on the storm-swept coasts of the rugged southern continents and of the southern ocean islands, where they collect, each species in his own locality, and in very enormous numbers, to breed and rear their young. Up to the present time, these are the birds that have borne the brunt of the attack made upon them for their oil; and the King Penguin, which is found on no less than six different islands, is the one which, for his size and weight of fat, is in greatest demand. But, large and handsome as he is, the antarctic Emperors are even larger and more handsome. Ninety pounds is at present their record weight, and birds of from 70 to 80 pounds are by no means uncommon. Much light has been thrown quite recently upon the breeding habits of this Emperor Penguin by the work done on the *Discovery* in the Antarctic; and most of the information brought home is, happily, indicative of the continued safety of these splendid birds. They breed during the darkness of the antarctic winter, and hatch out their chickens during the coldest month of the whole antarctic year. It is true that, like other penguins, they collect in thousands to form a nesting rookery, but these gatherings are on sea-ice only, and by the time the navigable season has begun, the birds, both young and old, are widely scattered. Herein naturally lies their greatest safety, and no doubt they would increase enormously were it not that the rigorous climate alone lays claim each year to no less than 77 per cent. of all the chickens hatched, before they are sufficiently old to be independent of their parents. This average mortality amongst the new-born chicks is no mere guess, but the result of two years' observation, when the dead chickens on the sea-ice were actually counted before the rookery broke up at the commencement of the spring. It is surprising that the adult birds should be so abundant, for in a rookery which is apparently a going concern one finds but one chicken to ten or a dozen adults, and each adult most anxious to nurse that one chicken—

a condition of affairs which leads to disastrous quarrels for its possession.

In these quarrels the chicken invariably suffers, and it is easy to find a rent or two in the skin of those that have succumbed to their ill-treatment. It is by no means an uncommon sight, moreover, to see the old birds nursing a dead chicken; so strongly implanted in them is the desire to sit or brood, and so often is the desire unsatisfied on account of the high mortality amongst the chickens.

In the illustration which heads this paper will be seen an Emperor Penguin with its chicken held upon its feet to protect it from contact with the ice, a habit which it shares with the King, and by each bird the egg is held in a similar manner throughout the period of incubation. In the McQuarie Islands in November, may be seen large numbers of the King Penguin, squatting on stones in a quagmire of mud and water, each with an egg tucked in under the abdominal skin and feathers, and held upon the feet to save it from the water. In the same way the Emperor keeps its egg and chicken from contact with the ice on which it sits. Each lays but one egg, and neither makes a nest, but there is a great difference between the young of these two birds which in other respects are so surprisingly alike. They are wholly different in colour, for the young King Penguins, which are still abundant in the rookery when the old birds are sitting on fresh eggs in November, look like young bears in their long brown down, whereas the young Emperors are silvery white, with a head which is wholly black except for a patch of white on each side, including the cheek and eye.

It is certainly unwise and untrue to say that the antarctic Penguins can never need protection. That the Emperors are safe while they breed is true, but by no means while they moult, for during the summer months they collect in large numbers for this purpose in certain places, and wait till the moult is finished. The Adélie Penguins, on the other hand, are always within easy reach. Everything, of course, depends upon the necessity of penguin oil for certain commercial processes. If, when it can

no longer be lawfully obtained in the southern ocean islands, no efficient substitute can be found, it is only too probable that it will be obtained from these more southern Penguins that so far have lived in peace. That they and their kind may continue so to live and escape the destruction which has before now led to the extinction of equally abundant and unhappily defenceless creatures, is the sincere hope of everyone who is reasonably interested in the life of the birds and beasts around us.

COUNCIL MEETING.

A MEETING of the Council of the Society was held at No. 3, Hanover Square, on July 21st. Present: Mr. Montagu Sharpe (Chairman), Mr. Ernest Bell, Sir John Cockburn, Mr. H. E. Dresser, Mr. W. H. Hudson, Rev. A. L. Hussey, Mr. F. King, Mr. Hastings Lees, Mrs. Lemon, Mr. Meade-Waldo, Mrs. Owen Visger, and the Hon. Secretary. The appointment of the Rev. Allan Ellison as Hon. Secretary for Mid-Herts was confirmed. Five new Fellows were elected, viz.: Mr. J. Schwann, Wimbledon; Rev. S. A. Vardon, Tunbridge Wells; Lady Samuelson, Maidenhead; Mr. A. Culshawe, Liverpool; Mrs. Marshall, Haslemere. One Life Member and twenty-eight Members were elected.

Satisfactory reports were received as to the Watching at Dungeness; and with regard to Lundy Island, it was stated that the gannets had unfortunately not laid, but that the Watcher had prevented egg-lifting by visitors, and two pair of peregrines and one pair of buzzards had nested. It was decided that a badge should be provided for the Watchers. Discussion took place with regard to the need for more systematic watching at Foula, the Farne Islands, the Island of Noss, Isle of Wight, Walney Island, and Hickling Broad; and a communication from Mr. J. H. Buxton was read as to the destruction of owls and jays, and want of protection for birds in the New Forest.

The destruction of swallows in France was again under consideration. A subscriber, who desires to remain anonymous, had offered £50 towards the expenses of an investigation into the matter, and it was agreed that efforts should be made to pursue the enquiry.

It was reported that the International Agricultural Conference at Rome in May last was attended

by delegates from thirty-eight Governments, and that a permanent International Institute of Agriculture would probably be the result. The hope was expressed that the part which birds play in the world's agricultural economy would not be overlooked in the research work carried out by such an Institute.

AUTUMN CONFERENCE, 1905.

A Conference of Hon. Local Secretaries and others interested in the work of the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds will be held at Morley Hall, George Street, Hanover Square, W., on Friday afternoon, November 10th. Papers have been already promised on "Bird Sanctuaries in London Parks," "How we Attracted Birds to a New Garden," "Bird Catching," "Individual Effort," etc.

Cards for the meeting will be sent to any Fellows, Members, or Associates of the Society desiring to be present, and suggestions of subjects for discussion will be welcome, and will be carefully considered if forwarded without delay to the office of the Society, 3, Hanover Square, London, W.

COUNTY COUNCIL ORDERS.

Carnarvon, Sept. 2nd. B.C.E.F. Extends the Close Time to October 1st for certain species, makes additions to the Schedule, and protects the goldfinch, kingfisher, and owls all the year.

Haddington, July 7th. Extends the Close Time for all birds on the Bass Rock and other islands to Nov. 1. (We hope to refer to this very satisfactory Order at greater length in BIRD NOTES AND NEWS for December.)

Inverness (Island of St. Kilda), May 18th. E.

Westmeath, May 11th. D.

A WORD FOR THE SPARROW.

CAPTAIN HUTTON, President of the Australasian Ornithologists' Union, writes (June, 1905) from the Museum, Christchurch, New Zealand:

"A few years ago the horse bot-fly was introduced into New Zealand. It was thought to have been brought by a troop of circus horses from California. However this may be, it spread rapidly and caused the death of so many horses that the farmers in New Zealand were in great alarm. But the despised sparrow took the matter in hand. It settled on the horse-droppings, devoured the maggots, and has now, I believe, reduced the pest to quite moderate dimensions."

**THE
GULLS AND TERNS ON WALNEY,
LANCASHIRE (1905).**

By F. B. KIRKMAN.

THE following notes are the result of a visit paid to the protected gullery at South End, Walney Island, on May 30th, followed by a month's stay from June 15th to July 13th. Nearly every day of my stay I spent several hours in the gullery with note-book and camera, and, became therefore fairly intimate with the life of its inhabitants.

Walney Island is a sandy strip about eleven miles in length, stretching along the north shore of Morecambe Bay over against Barrow-in-Furness. It is by an order of this County Borough that the birds and eggs on Walney are protected. At the south end there is a large colony of Black-headed Gulls and a ternery. These can be visited only by special permission, and are, for a greater part of the season, under the charge of a watcher. My attention was almost exclusively confined to the gulls and terns, and it is with their progress that this paper is alone concerned. I noted, however, the presence of the following: sheld-duck, oyster-catcher, wheatears (abundant), ringed plover, skylark (rare in Lakeland, Walney being, perhaps, the only spot where it is abundant), tit-lark, stock-dove (one pair), all breeding. Among casual later visitors were the pied wagtail, lapwing, curlew, black-backed gull, and young herring or common gull.

When I visited the island on May 30th the gullery was alive with young birds running in all directions, and it was difficult to put one's foot down without treading on eggs. This promise of a good season was not fulfilled. Though the gulls were laying from about April 23rd till the end of June, the percentage of eggs that resulted in young gulls able to fly freely and quit the island must have been very small. There were several reasons for this:—

(1) The jackdaws from Piel Castle (Pile of Fouldrey) spent their days in the gullery feasting on the eggs. When caught *flagrante delicto* by the infuriated mother gull they simply fled till the pursuit ceased, and then recommenced pilfering. I have no doubt that the rats, judging from the mischief they did in the ternery, were not behind the jackdaws in their consumption of eggs, but it was not easy to detect traces of their presence in the bent-covered ground where the gulls had their nests.

(2) In the early part of the season I was struck by the number of chick gulls lying dead and

flattened out. As there were few visitors, and as these walked with care, I am inclined to believe that the chicks in question owed their death to the boots of moonlight marauders, but have no certain proof. The gullery was not watched at night, and was therefore at the mercy of anyone who chose to enter.

(3) From the middle of June to the time I left the ground was strewn with the dead bodies of young gulls of all ages. It was difficult to stand anywhere without seeing about a dozen. Here and there the more conspicuous white feathering of adult gulls showed that the young were not the only sufferers. The explanation is probably to be found in the following passage from Macpherson's "Fauna of Lakeland," p. 425:—

"An interesting topic, and one deserving of wider attention than it appears to have received hitherto, is that of the epidemics which occasionally attack whole colonies of birds in the breeding season. The black-headed gull is a typical sufferer. In certain years the percentage of deaths among the unfledged birds is so high at Ravenglass that wherever you go in the midst of the gullery you find the bodies of the birds in all stages of putrefaction.

(4) Several young met their death in the gravel pits. In one I found ten bodies of birds, all of which must have been well able to fly. Several I rescued. Once in the pit, they seemed quite unable to fly out.

(5) Lastly, there can be little doubt that, each day, perhaps half a dozen paid with their lives the penalty for trespassing in the terneries. For reasons not clear, the Arctic and Common terns attacked no bird but the young gulls, and, judging from repeated observation through a powerful field-glass (Goerz 9x), they only actually struck the latter when on the wing. As the young gulls have not learnt the corvine device of turning over and presenting beak and claws to an enemy swooping down from above, they are, when in the air, absolutely defenceless. More than once I have seen them drop to the ground after an attack, but in no case struck dead. Sometimes the wing was broken; but, in the case of the one bird I was able to catch after its descent, no mark of violence was apparent. Still, on the following day, I always found the bird thus attacked lying dead on the spot to which I had marked it down after the attack.

When attacked on the ground, the young gull invariably adopted the same tactics: as soon as the tern's swoop began, it lifted its head and opened a wide beak of protest, but rapidly ducked as the enemy swept over it and up. It employed the

intervals between the attacks of its aggressors in making short runs, often in the wrong direction. That its nerves were very much unstrung was apparent from its disgorging its food. It is possible that some terns did strike the young when on the ground, but I never saw them do so. The fact that one day I noted a young gull running with its head covered with blood, is the only evidence that seemed to favour the supposition. There is no doubt that some terns are more vicious than others, as I found out by personal experience, one striking my head with a violence that astonished me no less, probably, than the solidity of my skull astonished the bird, accustomed, as it was, to deal with softer material. It did not repeat the exploit. The terns I watched attacking young gulls may not have been the boldest. On the other hand, it is quite useless to take the evidence of watcher or natives on this point. It is impossible, without a strong glass, to see exactly what happens.

The terns were even more unfortunate in their breeding than the gulls. I doubt whether a single young tern left Walney this year. During the whole of my stay I found no young tern in feather, and not more than a dozen in down.

I identified three species of tern on the island, the Arctic, of which there were about fifty pair, the Common, about a dozen pair, and the Little, about half-a-dozen pair. The only satisfactory means of identification in the case of the Common and the Arctic, putting aside the few dead birds I found, was the beak, blood-red to the tip in the Arctic, orange-red with a dusky tip in the Common. Slight differences in plumage were no certain index in the strong and changing light.

I ascribe the dearth of the young terns almost exclusively to the ravages of the rats among the eggs. By nearly every nest I found in the sand the trace of their tails and feet leading up to the broken egg, which, somehow or other, they removed to a safe spot before demolishing. The Arctic terns were compelled to shift their breeding grounds from one side of the gullery to the other, but of course without avail. In the case of some empty nests there were neither marks of rats nor broken shells to explain the robbery. And I strongly suspect that the eggs were taken either by boys or men. This was undoubtedly so in the case of the Little terns, which nested on the beach. People frequently walked over their nesting site, and, if no one was looking, there was nothing to prevent them putting the eggs in their pockets. I am informed that the eggs of the Little tern fetch

2d. each in the market, and so they were probably worth taking.

The breeding failure of the terns is particularly unfortunate. The demands of the plume market are making these birds rarer every year. And the rarer a bird becomes, the greater its value, and the more certain its ultimate extinction. It should be easy by poison to exterminate the rats, and I trust the attempt will be made.

A LINCOLNSHIRE GULL COLONY.

A MEMBER of the Society had an opportunity last spring of visiting one of the inland breeding grounds of the black-headed gull, situated at Crosby, in the north of Lincolnshire. This boggy and willow-covered tract is, he writes, "at present an ideal spot for a gullery, with its ponds and peaty tufts of grass and sedge rising above and about the water, but it is feared that the years of the colony are numbered, owing to the steady encroachment of the contiguous workings for iron ore. These cuttings are gradually draining the land ponds, and eventually will also disturb the peaceful retreat of the birds.

"The actual inspection of a stretch of the drier part of the nesting area was a most interesting sight. The number of nests must have been enormous, and in some places where there was a suitable patch of grass above the water, three or four nests, containing two or three eggs each, would be collected together in the space of a square yard. The nest in no case was more than the slightest depression of the surface, lined with a few dried blades of grass. The eggs, as is usual in the species, were very varied in colour and markings, although in most cases they toned wonderfully well with their surroundings. The largest number were almost uniformly blotched with shades of brown on a green ground; others were covered with small blotches, and on others again the brown was practically confined to one end of an otherwise green shell. In several instances the eggs of a clutch were of two distinct types of coloration.

"It is pleasing to be able to say that the owner of the ground, Sir Berkeley Sheffield, always has a keeper stationed about the ponds in the breeding season to prevent the birds being molested."

THE Westmeath County Council has withdrawn all protection from the black-headed gull on the ground that it devours the flies which should bring to the surface the fish which visitors come to catch.

NOTES.

Bird Protection at the Congress.

The importance and success of congresses and conferences lies less in the amount of definite work accomplished than in the strengthening of enthusiasm, the stimulating of thought, and the energising of effort which result from personal intercourse among co-workers. From this standpoint particularly the recent International Ornithological Congress may be pronounced an undoubted success by friends of Bird Protection no less than by the more purely scientific ornithologists in whose interests it was arranged. There was comparatively little Bird Protection on the programme, but there was a great deal in the air; and to so large an extent did it enter into the considerations of sections other than that allotted to it that the *Times* in a concluding notice pronounced the Congress to have been "specially concerned" with this department of ornithology.

Penguin Oil.

The one piece of executive work undertaken by the Congress was distinctly Protective. At the instance of Mr. Walter Rothschild, supported by representative naturalists of various lands, a petition was despatched to the governments of New Zealand and Australia praying for special protection in the islands under their rule for birds now boiled down for oil by traders.

The Cage Bird Traffic.

Another effort towards legislation was urged by Mr. A. F. Wiener, who, in the course of the discussion on Aviculture, pleaded on behalf of the multitudinous little foreign birds imported into Europe, numbers of which perish on the way, while the survivors sell for a very small sum. He suggested that if the colonies would place a small export duty on live birds they would be shipped less recklessly, and the higher price resulting would ensure greater care in their treatment. The audience listened sympathetically, but they did not take any step to further the suggestion. A Colonial government approached in the matter of bird-traffic might, indeed, well turn round and ask: How about the hundreds and thousands of wild birds—the larks and linnets, and chaffinches and greenfinches, which England exports? How about the heavy percentages of these which perish on the road? How, too, about the thousands sent up every week in autumn from English villages to the big towns—

dying of fright or suffocation in overcrowded boxes on the rail or sold for a few pence in shop or street? The Audubon Society of America had some ground on which to stand in its recent protests against the exportation of English wild birds to the States: it has done its best to prohibit the caging of the native birds of America. But a Congress meeting in England, and proposing to petition the Colonies, might reasonably be requested to address its protests nearer home.

The Fauna of New South Wales.

The Chairman of the New South Wales National Park Trust appeals in the *Sydney Morning Herald*, of July 19th last, for the protection of the native fauna and flora of the State. The National Reserve consists of sixty square miles of country where native birds and animals are now carefully preserved in a free condition; but Mr. Farnell fails to see why this little territory should be the one place where they are safe. In particular, he refers to the necessity for checking the destruction of game, the collecting by naturalists (the permit system having been greatly abused), and egg-collecting for schools, &c., the last being responsible "for the decrease of the most valuable species of our insectivorous birds." The formation of an Acclimatization Society, such as other Australasian States already possess, is urged, for the distribution of indigenous animals and the introduction and acclimatization of those of other countries.

The Signalman and the Birds.

A pleasant little incident is reported by Mr. Masefield, the Society's Hon. Local Secretary for North Staffordshire. Several pairs of redshanks have bred near Stafford in the last few years, no doubt in consequence of the protection extended to the species under the County's Protection Order; and this year one pair nested in a meadow close to a signal box on the L. & N.-W. railway. The old birds brought the young ones, when hatched, close up to a much-frequented main road, and endeavoured to pilot them across to a sewage farm which lies on the other side; but failed to get them through the railings—fortunately, no doubt, considering the dangers of the highway and the stones of passing boys. The signalman, however, had often noticed these "big whistling snipe," as he called them, and observing their difficulty and danger, went to their aid and carried all the chicks to a place of safety in the lower meadow. The incident was mentioned at a meeting of the North

Staffs. Field Club, and at once a little sum of money was subscribed as a slight recognition of the signalman's action in saving the young red-shanks. His surprise on receiving such an acknowledgment of his simple kindly act was, says our correspondent, "beautiful to see."

Donations to the Society.

The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds has received, through Mrs. Wynnard Hooper, a donation of eighteen guineas as an *In Memoriam* gift from friends of the late Mrs. Hubbard, of Kew. It is the result of a collection made by a few of Mrs. Hubbard's nearest friends, at Kew and elsewhere, who considered it would be in accordance with Mrs. Hubbard's own view and feelings, that they should send a contribution to the Society in which she took a very great interest, instead of buying flowers for her funeral. Mrs. Hubbard was one of the early members of the Society, and her death in May last deprived it of a generous and sympathetic supporter. The Society has also received a bequest of five guineas under the will of the late Miss Jane Ferraby, of Parkstone, Dorset, who was likewise an old and valued member, having been enrolled in 1898.

FEATHERED WOMEN.

MR. G. BERNARD SHAW'S opinion as to the use of dead birds for a lady's headdress is shared by very many persons, but his method of expressing it is all his own, and his letter, which appeared in the "Times" of July 3rd last, excited notice and comment such as few headdresses composed of dead birds and fragments of birds have aroused. After recording his sentiments regarding the evening dress imposed upon him by the sumptuary laws of Covent Garden, Mr. Shaw proceeds:—

"At 9 o'clock (the Opera began at 8) a lady came in and sat down very conspicuously in my line of sight. She remained there until the beginning of the last act. I do not complain of her coming late and going early; on the contrary, I wish she had come later and gone earlier. For this lady, who had very black hair, had stuck over her right ear the pitiable corpse of a large white bird, which looked exactly as if some one had killed it by stamping on its breast, and then nailed it to the lady's temple, which was presumably of sufficient solidity to bear the operation. I am not, I hope, a morbidly squeamish person; but the spectacle sickened me. I presume that if I had presented myself at the doors with a dead snake round my neck, a collection of blackbeetles pinned to my shirtfront, and a grouse in my hair, I should have

been refused admission. Why, then, is a woman to be allowed to commit such a public outrage? I once, in Drury Lane, sat behind a *matinée* hat decorated with the two wings of a seagull, artificially reddened at the joints so as to produce an illusion of being freshly plucked from a live bird. But even that lady stopped short of the whole seagull. Both ladies were evidently regarded by their neighbours as ridiculous and vulgar; but that is hardly enough when the offence is one which produces a sensation of physical sickness in persons of normal humane sensibility."

The sight of an "osprey" in a woman's bonnet or upon her head at opera or theatre does not perhaps excite sickness in the normal person, but to those who know its story it is an even more suggestive sight than a whole bird—suggestive not only of slaughter and cruelty, but of the amazing ignorance or callousness of the wearer. The only thing that can be urged on behalf of osprey-wearing is that it is nowadays so thoroughly democratic; it proves that Mrs. Gamp and Mrs. Prig, with "ospreys" sticking up in their bonnets, can be just as stylish as Lady Araminta with a huge brush nodding in her hair, and that Lady Araminta knows no more and thinks no more on matters of taste and humanity than Sarah Gamp and Betsy Prig.

Those who have watched the history of plume-hunting will not be greatly surprised, though they cannot but be greatly shocked, by the latest tragedy for which it is responsible—the murder of one of the wardens employed by the Audubon Societies of the United States to protect the surviving remnant of the Florida egrets. The warden, or watcher, Guy Bradley, was a vigorous man, devoted to his work, taking keen interest in the birds; he was shot and instantly killed, on July 8th, at Oyster Key, Florida, while making an arrest at a rookery. He had acted as warden for three years, and had travelled thousands of miles in the launch *Audubon*, in order to watch over the egret colony. Only this year, writes Mr. Dutcher (Chairman of the National Audubon Committee) in *Bird Lore*, he said that he felt, while cruising among the Keys, or patrolling the swamps, that his life was in his hands, for the plume-hunters, whose nefarious traffic he so seriously interfered with, had sworn to take it.

In the autumn and early winter months, when new millinery is being selected, members and friends of the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds are urgently asked to make a special endeavour to ensure that ladies of their acquaintance know the truth about the plume trade. Above all, there should be no chance given for a resuscitation of

the now familiar fraud—to which so many women have been easy dupes—of the so-called “imitation,” or “artificial” osprey. Many feathers, also, are foisted on the ignorant buyer as those of domestic poultry, though obtained from wild birds of many kinds. In No. 7 of this paper some particulars were given of the various birds most largely employed in the plume-trade; and literature on the subject can always be had from the office of this Society.

Nothing that is fresh remains to be said on this topic; but a few of the things that have been said in the past are worth re-saying so long as the fashion survives:—

“It is a fact known to everyone who will take the trouble to inquire, that all these egrets are shot down at their breeding places while they are building their nests or rearing their young, and that if so be that the latter are hatched, they die of hunger on their parents’ death, the breeding-places being absolutely devastated by the ‘plume hunters.’”—*Professor Newton. (Times, Feb. 25, 1899.)*

“The thoughtless fashion for these feathers has caused the almost entire extinction of more than one species.”—*Lord Lilford. “Birds of the British Islands” (Great White Heron).*

“In the breeding season the egret has occipital and dorsal ‘decomposed’ feathers. These are the wire-like or thread-like feathers placed erect on women’s hats, and at once recognized as very different from all others that are worn. Women know their money cost, but if they knew their slaughter and starvation cost, no woman worthy the name would wear them.”—*Prof. R. K. Hymonis. (Popular Science News, Nov., 1897.)*

“Of these aigrettes, formed of ‘ospreys,’ it may be mentioned that they consist of the slender decomposed dorsal feathers of the white herons or egrets, that they are the bird’s nuptial ornaments, consequently are only to be obtained during the breeding season, when the death of the parent bird involves the death by starvation of the young in the nest. For the sake of the few ornamental feathers yielded by each bird killed, the white herons have been entirely exterminated in Florida, their great breeding district in North America, and the massacre has since gone on in South America, Africa, India, and Australia—the birds being slaughtered wholesale in the heronries.”—*W. H. Hudson. (Times, Oct. 17, 1893.)*

“Within the last few days I have examined numbers of plumes, the wearers of which were

priding themselves on their humanity, relying upon the assurance of the milliner that they were not real egret’s feathers, but manufactured. In every case it did not take a very close scrutiny to ascertain that they were unquestionably genuine. The only ‘manufacture’ consisted in cutting the plume in two, and fixing the upper and lower half side by side, so that a single feather does duty for two in the ‘brush.’ Thus one of the most beautiful of birds is being swept off the face of the earth, under circumstances of peculiar cruelty, to minister to a passing fashion, bolstered up by a glaring falsehood.”—*Sir W. H. Flower, Director British Natural History Museum. (Times, June, 26, 1896.)*

“An ‘osprey’ has never been imitated, and whatever the shopkeeper may say it is always the parent bird slain at the breeding season which supplies ‘ospreys’ for women’s hats and bonnets. These questions have been so often placed before me that I am quite tired of assuring the public of the facts of the matter.”—*Professor Ray Lankester, Director British Natural History Museum. (Daily News, Oct. 16, 1903.)*

“Our experience here is that all the so-called artificial ospreys sold in the fashionable shops are heron or egret feathers.”—*C. E. Fagan, Natural History Museum. (April, 1903.)*

“Let it be understood at once that there is no such thing as an artificial feather. . . . The statements that imitation or artificial ‘ospreys’ are made of split quills, whalebone, or other material, are all absolutely false.”—*W. P. Pycraft. (Knowledge, June, 1904.)*

“How long will women tolerate a fashion which involves such wholesale, wanton and hideous cruelty as this?”—*Times, Oct. 17, 1893.*

PLUME SALES.

THE fourth of the year’s plume-sales took place at the Commercial Sale Rooms on August 4th. There was again a good demand for osprey feathers, of which 238 packages were offered, 117 being East Indian and the remainder from other parts of Asia and South America. The price per ounce ranged from £8 7s. 6d. down to 10s. or less. Of birds-of-paradise there were 5564 skins, from New Guinea. The birdskins from South America, Asia, and the West Indies included humming birds, peacocks, jungle-cocks, terns—no fewer than 4400 in the catalogue of one firm—cocks-of-the-rock, trogons, tanagers, orioles, parrots, etc.

INTERNATIONAL ORNITHOLOGICAL CONGRESS.

BETWEEN three and four hundred representative ornithologists of all nations assembled in London for the meetings of the International Ornithological Congress, held at the Imperial Institute, London, June 12th to June 17th, 1905. The gathering was the fourth of its kind, the previous meetings having been held at Vienna, under the presidency of Prince Rudolf, its main promoter; at Budapest, under Dr. Fatio, and at Paris, under Professor Oustalet. On this occasion Dr. Bowdler Sharpe was President, and for the next Congress, to be held in Germany in 1910, Dr. Anton Reichenow has been elected. The selection of Germany seemed natural and inevitable, and was indeed recommended at the Paris Congress, but Dr. Reichenow urged that difficulties stood in the way of making Berlin the meeting ground, so that the final choice of the city is left open for the present. German scientists preponderated at this year's Congress, the tongue of the Fatherland being heard on every side.

France was scarcely less to the fore, sending as Government delegate Monsieur Daubree, Director-General des Eaux et des Forêts, and Professor Oustalet. Italy was officially represented by Professor Giglioli, head of the Florence Museum of Natural History; Belgium by Dr. Dunois, Ministre de l'Agriculture, and by Dr. Quinet; Holland by Baron von Schaubert and by Dr. J. Buttikofer; Hungary by Professor Otto Herman; and Sweden by Professor Axel Johan Einar Lönnberg.

In addition to these official delegates, there were distinguished representatives of many learned bodies in Europe, and in the United States, Canada, Australia, Tasmania, and South America. Among the members were also a number of ladies, including Miss Florence and Miss Maria Audubon, granddaughters of the great naturalist; but no lady's name appeared among the contributors of papers.

The organizing committee consisted of Dr. F. Du Cane Godman, Mr. Meade-Waldo, Mr. Ogilvie-Grant, Dr. Penrose, Hon. Walter Rothschild, M.P., Dr. Sclater, and Mr. H. F. Witherby, with Mr. Fagan as treasurer, and Dr. Hartert and Mr. J. L. Bonhote as secretaries.

THE PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS.

Dr. BOWDLER SHARPE, in his genial presidential address, avoided controversial subjects, premising that he had not thought it desirable to venture on the stormy waters of nomenclature or classification, and devoted himself mainly to a very interesting account

of the great national collection of birds at the British Museum (now at the Natural History Department, Cromwell Road) and its history. The first collection originated in the gift to the nation of Sir Hans Sloane's collection in 1753, followed by those obtained in Captain Cook's voyages, and by Sir Joseph Banks's gifts. With the exception of one starling of the Cook collection, all those early treasures have perished, and the real nucleus of the present splendid accumulation was Mr. Allan Hume's collection from the Indian Empire, brought over in 1885. Mr. F. D. Godman, Mr. Osbert Salvin, the late Marquess of Tweeddale, Colonel Wardlaw Ramsay, and Mr. Seebohm in his valuable bequest, were named as special benefactors.

The founding of the British Ornithologists' Union in 1859 gave an impetus to bird study; and every expedition to distant lands and seas adds something to the Museum's stores. There are now some 400,000 birds and eggs in the Natural History Museum. One piece of information of great interest, given by Dr. Sharpe, related to the picture of the Dodo in the Museum, long believed, on but slender grounds, to have been the portrait of a living bird. Dr. Sharpe has discovered the following paragraph in an authentic document compiled for the Museum in 1808: "We must not omit a curious picture, executed long ago in Holland, of the extremely rare and curious bird the dodo, belonging to the tribe *Gallinæ*, and a native of the island Bourbon. The picture was taken from a living specimen brought into Holland after the discovery of the passage to the East Indies by the Cape of Good Hope. It was once the property of Sir Hans Sloane, and afterwards of the celebrated ornithologist, George Edwards, who presented it to the British Museum."

LOST AND VANISHING BIRDS.

The case of other birds which are, or like to be, in the same plight as the extinct dodo, was discussed by the Hon. Walter Rothschild, in a lecture given to the members of the Congress at Tring, on the occasion of their visit as Mr. Rothschild's guests, to Tring Park and its wonderful Museum. Round the room were shown numerous specimens, or skeletons, or drawings, of species (1) extinct, (2) on the verge of extermination, and (3) threatened with extermination in the near future; and in these three divisions the subject was treated by the lecturer. Few perhaps even of the learned members of the audience had realised the deplorable length of the category of birds exterminated, or doomed to extinction, within the past five hundred

years; and the lecture could not fail to be, as Mr. Rothschild observed, melancholy, though extremely interesting in spite of its sadness. It could also not fail to be useful as a lesson and a warning, seeing that, of all the enemies of bird-life, history proves man to be the greatest. In many cases the destruction has been due directly to murderous man; in others he has been to blame less immediately, through the introduction of animals and birds inimical to the native birds. In some few instances the disappearance of a species is attributable to natural causes; the last eruption at St. Vincent, for example, annihilated two species of thrushes; in others to the physical peculiarities of the birds themselves. Where natural influences seem to be still at work in suppressing certain species, investigation into these causes might, the lecturer suggested, be undertaken. The idea was also propounded that where a bird tends to become extinct the Government of the country where it exists might take measures for its preservation.

Among the extinct birds, of which specimens were exhibited, were the black emu (only two skins of the dwarf black species are known), the Labrador duck, the Auckland rail, the Hawaiian honey-eater, various parrots, the heath-hen, the starling of Reunion, the flightless pigeon, St. Vincent thrush-babbler, Martinique thrush, Mauritius pigeon, etc. Of the many extinct New Zealand species not a few probably fell victims to man at the time when the colony was first peopled by whites; special mention was also made of the celebrated *Notornis*, "restored" by Professor Owen from collected bones, but afterwards found to be still in existence in the flesh, and not yet wholly extinct. Of the great auk seventy-one stuffed representatives exist, two of them being in the Tring Museum, the remainder mostly in State collections; one specimen (the third one exhibited) has just been sold to a Continental museum for £400.

Once on a time there were living some thirty species of moas, the principal members of the biggest bird family; several of these were extant three hundred years ago, but they were killed wholesale by the firing of the bush in which they lived, and were probably exterminated in New Zealand between 1650 and 1700. The flightless pigeon of the Mascarenes, at least two of which were shown alive in Europe, was recklessly killed by sailors, sometimes for food, but at others for slaughter's sake; and the passenger pigeon, formerly existing in immense numbers in the

United States, had been reduced to the brink of extermination in about fifty years, by ruthless destruction. The Labrador duck has become even more suddenly extinct. The heath-hen was once common; no less than four specimens, taken by the same collector in St. Martha's Vineyard Island so recently as 1896, were exhibited. But in all the ugly episodes in the history of bird destruction, Mr. Rothschild cited as the most dastardly case imaginable that of the penguins of Antarctic lands, whose wanton slaughter to-day showed the measure of commercial greed, millions of birds being boiled down merely for the sake of the oil thus obtained.

Among species doomed to, or on the verge of, extirpation were shown the Californian condor, southern merganser, laughing owl, capped petrel, Sandwich Islands goose, New Zealand wekas, Jamaica macaw, several parrots, including the St. Vincent amazon, Azores bullfinch, huia, stitch-bird, parson-bird, New Zealand bush-wren, North Island robin, white-headed tit, and many others. The species still existent, but with extermination already in sight, are chiefly to be found in New Zealand, the West Indies, and the Sandwich Islands; but from the array of names read out by Mr. Rothschild, and the immense collection of specimens from every region inspected by the naturalists present, it is evident that bird protectionists all over the world have their work cut out if even a remnant of these are to be saved.

ANTARCTIC BIRDS.

The penguin may be considered to have been the special and particular bird of the Congress. In addition to the prominent allusion made to him in Mr. Rothschild's lecture, he figured largely in the excellent lectures given by Dr. Wilson and Mr. Bruce, and finally formed the subject of the sole piece of executive work undertaken by the Congress.

The dangers which menace the penguins of certain islands within the antarctic zone were forcibly pointed out by Dr. Wilson, of the *Discovery*, at the last annual meeting of the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds; and the account he gave to the Congress of these birds, incited all who heard it to advocate strenuously the protection of the species.

The Antarctic Expedition, in which Dr. Wilson was engaged, started from New Zealand, covering the ground of the Ross expedition. Their route soon gave them a near acquaintance with albatrosses, snow petrels, penguins, and other antarctic birds,

and beyond the pack ice they came upon the great "rookeries" of the black-throated and emperor penguins. Later on, by sledging, they had hoped to reach the emperor penguin rookery at the beginning of the nesting season, but did not arrive there until September, when they found that the young had been hatched in August, during the period of greatest cold and of complete darkness. The eggs as well as the young are held on the feet of the old birds, and are in this way protected from contact with the ice. The young take three years to develop fully; the emperor—the finer species—being about four feet high in full maturity and weighing as much as 90 lbs. The birds are, of course, flightless, so that they are easily destroyed in the rookeries at the breeding-time; when first followed, they endeavour to escape by walking, but when in danger they lower their bodies and with the help of the wings and feet glissade at a rapid pace on the ice, till they reach the water, where they are at once and completely at home. The black-throated penguins, on the other hand, make their pebbly nests on bare ground. The young, when a little older are herded in great colonies. These "crèches" are left under the charge of two or three sentinels or shepherds, while the parents go to seek crustaceans in the water amid the ice floes. Each parent on returning is mobbed so persistently by the hungry chicks as to be unable to reach or possibly to find its own young, and is obliged to disgorge its supply to the most vigorous and resolute of the mob. The whole life in such rookeries affords one of the most perfect examples of a literal fight for existence, and the law of survival of the fittest is impressed indelibly upon the mind of the onlooker.

Mr. Bruce, who went out with the National Scottish Expedition, also showed photographs of the penguins (emperor, black-throated, bridled, gentoo, and rock-hopper), courting, fighting, and also in melancholy procession being driven to the ship to be killed for food. Neither these birds nor the skuas showed, he said, any fear of man. The *Scotia* started from the Falkland Islands, and reached as far south as latitude 74°, wintering in the South Orkneys. Mr. Bruce gave a vivid account, both by word and picture, of some of the islands, with their precipitous cliffs green with lichen, and their rocks clothed with tree-ferns and other vegetation. Of the nineteen species of birds noted on Gough Island, three were new to science—two buntings, quite distinct from those of Tristan da Cunha only 200 miles distant, and a thrush. The buntings, shown from paintings by Mr. Good-

child, were coloured, the one green, washed with silver-grey, and the other orange-buff, and have been named *Nesopiza jessicæ* and *N. goughensis*. With the exception of a water-hen these were the only land birds. A number of eggs of birds whose nesting places had never before been reached were also seen, including those of the Cape pigeon, snowy petrel, giant petrel, and blue-eyed shag.

At the closing general meeting of the Congress a practical effort towards the safeguarding of the Antarctic birds was initiated by Mr. Walter Rothschild, who moved "That a cablegram be sent to the Government of New Zealand, and to the Legislature of Tasmania, urging them to introduce legislation to prevent in islands under their rule, the destruction of penguins now going on for the sake of boiling the birds down into oil." The motion was strongly supported by Sir Walter Buller (the well-known author of "The Birds of New Zealand"), Sir John Cockburn (formerly Premier of South Australia, and a member of the Council of the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds), Dr. Giglioli, M. Fatio, Mr. F. M. Chapman, the Rev. H. Bonar, Mr. Littler (delegate of the Australian Ornithological Union), and Dr. Bowdler Sharpe. Mr. Littler referred to the hideous cruelties by men who go "mutton-birding" in islands lying between the Australian mainland and Tasmania, and stated that such a cablegram would strengthen his hands; the Tasmanian Legislature had recently put the penguin on the totally protected list.

The only opposition was raised by Mr. Leonhard Stejneger, representative of the Smithsonian Institute, Washington, U.S.A.; not, it need hardly be said, out of any sympathy with the penguin's enemies, but on the ground that the Congress had no business to dictate to Governments. The Congress were, however, unable to see anything like schooling in such a message from those interested in bird preservation to those competent to enact it. It was agreed that the petition should be addressed to the Commonwealth of Australia, in addition to New Zealand and Tasmania, and that for the word "penguin" should be substituted the words "all birds boiled down for oil." And the motion was finally passed, despite this one dissentient, amidst great applause.

BIRD PROTECTION SECTION.

The Congress was sub-divided into five sections; that especially devoted to Bird Protection was under the presidency of Mr. Dresser, with Dr. Penrose as secretary, and held two meetings,

which proved perhaps the most generally attractive of any of the sectional discussions. Mr. Digby Pigott set the ball rolling with an account of British Bird Protection laws from the time of the Sea-Birds Act. The Act of 1872 was originally intended to extend protection to all birds, but was altered in Committee so as to cover only 79 scheduled species. The Select Committee, presided over by Mr. Auberon Herbert, recommended that all birds should be protected from March 16th to August 1st, reserving the rights of landowners, and proposed to render illegal the sale of all birds in Close Time, whether taken in this country or not. Lord de la Warr's Bill was the first to propose the protection of eggs. The Act of 1880, which superseded all previous enactments, very properly recognized the rights of landowners in fixing a general close time; and Mr. Pigott expressed a desire to see this principle carried further by making all eggs the property of the landowner, who should have power to permit bird-nesting or not, as he thought well; foreshores being made the property of County Councils. The wisdom of protecting eggs had been greatly debated, and personally he doubted its advisability, seeing how close was the resemblance between the eggs of various species. The worst flaw in the Act, he considered, to be the absence of permit or licence, to take specimens for scientific purposes; but the variety and complication of Orders made under succeeding Acts led to great confusion, and had rendered it impossible for him to tabulate the state of protection in England at the present time, as he had intended to do.

Mr. Lemon (Hon. Secretary of the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds) followed with a paper on "The Rationale of Bird Protection." After indicating some of the main causes of the diminution of birds—such as increased occupancy of land, and consequent clearings and drainage, bird slaughter for food, bird massacre for fashion, game preservation, where it entailed the destruction of all creatures not game, and collecting—the speaker suggested that all advocates of bird protection might at least claim:—Protection for native and indigenous species to such an extent as the conditions of various countries required it; protection during the breeding season, especially for rare and diminishing species; protection for spring migrants, requiring co-operation among nations; prohibitory laws to control or prevent the use of traps, poisons and snares; regulations as to the traffic in live birds. The summary of Bird Protection laws, published in BIRD NOTES

AND NEWS for July, showed that the subject had had much careful consideration from legislators, and that nearly every form of protection required or desired had found support in one or more of the Colonies; but above and beyond restrictive legislation public opinion and education must be looked to for the encouragement of a friendly feeling towards feathered life, and the inculcation of some appreciation for a bird as a bird. Many nations include bird-study in the curricula of their schools; this centres in the United States, in some of the Colonies, and in parts of England, in what might usefully become a national institution in every country, viz., "Bird and Arbor Day."

Sir John Cockburn spoke on the protection laws of Australia, leaving with his hearers the impression, due, perhaps, to the lucidity of the speaker—that in simplicity, vigour and flexibility these leave Great Britain some distance behind. The Act comprehends birds in three schedules (1) those protected all the year round; (2) those having a close time; and (3) an outlaw class with no protection, rendered necessary chiefly by the mistaken sentiment of English settlers in introducing familiar English species, such as the sparrow and starling, for which the Australian climate proved only too favourable. Any person can set the law in motion, and in part of the Colony the fines vary from £5 to £25.

Mr. Littler followed with some account of things in Tasmania, where the good work done by the Acclimatization Society is, he said, nobly and ably seconded by the police. Wanton slaughter of sea-birds, such as that of the terns, for millinery, is unknown, and no native birds are allowed to be sold at auction sales; but further protection is needed for the black swan.

One of the liveliest discussions of the Congress followed the papers. M. Herbert Gans, of Geneva, spoke of the great and increasing diminution of swallows, stating that so far as his own observation went, the window-swallow had decreased 80 per cent. in ten years; where a thousand were formerly seen on the plains near Geneva, there were now not fifty. He considered it most unfortunate that Great Britain did not give the great weight of her influence by joining the International Convention, in which case Italy would also probably have joined. The swallow, the skylark, and stonechat, were, he believed, becoming extinct in Switzerland. Dr. Quinet, (Brussels) held, on the other hand, that the diminution had been exaggerated, and also that, such as it was it was due to the food conditions; if the birds could not find their proper food in

Europe in wet and cold seasons they would stay in Africa.

The Hon. Walter Rothschild wished to emphasize the fact that a more important factor in bird preservation than the mere restriction of the pursuit of specimens, lay in the provision of abundant nesting facilities, the growth of hedges, protection of small breeding areas, and so on. At the same time he thought that where certain birds were unduly threatened and in danger of becoming exterminated, strict laws should be passed. Where, however, a species had reached the actual verge of extermination, legislative restriction should not apply, for if a species must die out the last specimens had better be secured for museums in order that the form should not be utterly lost to science, and therefore the putting into force of Bird Protection Acts should be, he considered, in the hands of competent game wardens and not in those of the police.

This tenet brought up some hot dissentients. Mr. C. Collier observed that the great skua would probably have been rendered extinct if "collected" on these lines; to which Mr. Rothschild replied that he referred only to species doomed to total extinction, not to those which might be reinforced from other countries. Mr. Southwell quoted the case of the bearded tit, and wanted to know how and by whom the decision was to be made that a species was on the verge of extermination, and that the remainder were to be secured for the museums. Mr. Rothschild declared himself the last man to support the extermination of species; he alluded merely to those inevitably doomed to disappear.

Baron von Berlepsch strongly advocated the provision of shelters and nesting-boxes, and of window food in winter time, mentioning incidentally that he had two thousand nesting-boxes on his estate. Dr. Quinet urged that it was a mistake to attempt to divide useful from injurious birds, in our present condition of ignorance as to the utility of insects and the food of birds; and Mr. W. P. Pyecraft declared that the truth as to what composed the main food of birds could never be accurately known until systematic examination of the stomachs was undertaken by the Board of Agriculture.

Dr. Drewitt, the Rev. H. N. Bonar (East Lothian) and other members also spoke, and the debate was wound up by Sir John Cockburn, who humorously deplored the disappearance of old superstitions which conduced to bird protection. In old times, he remarked, it was thought unlucky

to put the whole of an estate under cultivation, without leaving a wild patch to conciliate the brownies, who would otherwise be driven away. We knew now the real meaning and intent of that belief which was that a reserve should always be maintained for wild creatures; and it was a great pity that we had moved backwards in this matter of reserves. Mr. Lemon had hit the right nail on the head when he referred to the necessity of education of the people. He had been struck by the extraordinary tameness of the birds in Holland, where avocets and other species practically exterminated in England were to be seen walking about within twenty yards of houses and farmsteads. No one molested them; the children found the nests but did not take the eggs.

ECONOMIC ORNITHOLOGY.

The principal paper in this section (bracketed in the Congress programme with Bird Protection) was the report on "Investigation of the Food of Birds since 1900," contributed by the learned and enthusiastic delegate of the Hungarian Ornithological Central Office, Dr. Otto Herman. Unfortunately it was read in the language of its author, so that the majority of the Congress could benefit little. The study of birds from both the scientific and the economic standpoint is systematically and carefully pursued in Hungary, under State encouragement, as was demonstrated by a pamphlet on the utility of the rook circulated (happily in an English translation) at the Congress. The Hungarian experiments, and the cases of food taken from the bodies of rooks at different times of the year, which were exhibited, go to prove that the bird destroys countless insect pests in the autumn and early spring, when the majority of our insectivorous birds are in their winter quarters, and only pulls up green stuff which has been attacked by injurious larvæ.

Herr Igali's paper on the virtues and vices of the house-sparrow as affecting agriculture was briefly summarised by Dr. Penrose. It had nothing to say in favour of the species, which was accused of driving away useful insectivorous birds.

BIRDS IN CAPTIVITY.

Mr. Seth-Smith, of the Avicultural Society, read a paper on the importance of aviculture as an aid to the study of ornithology. He contended that too much attention was given to dead forms, and that in such aviaries as permitted birds to live under natural conditions, it was possible to observe every condition of life except migration. In many

cases it was impossible to observe living birds in any other way, on account both of their shyness and of the distant regions in which so many species made their homes. Hundreds of exotic species existed in museums, of whose life-history nothing was known; and bird-students saw with satisfaction that much more attention than formerly was given to this subject at the Zoological Gardens. The value of private study was instanced by Mr. Meade-Waldo's contributions to the history of the sand-grouse, and by other observations. In an interesting debate, some reference was made to the health and happiness (or otherwise) of birds in captivity, this being maintained on the ground of the longevity of some captive birds, while one speaker referred to the case of chained eagles at Bucharest, which were kept as watch-dogs, and were, in his opinion, quite happy.

The most useful part of the discussion, however, from the Bird Protection point of view, was the plea made by Mr. A. F. Wiener for an export duty to check the importation of birds, especially of finches from West Africa. These are procured by dealers in immense numbers—he had seen 25,000 selling in Brussels at 25c. a pair—and a large percentage die. Such cruelty and waste is indefensible, and if Colonial governments would levy an export duty, say of a shilling a head, the overcrowding and loss of life might be largely prevented, and only those who have a real interest in birds would find it worth while to purchase.

MIGRATION.

The one point which Mr. Seth-Smith holds cannot be studied in caged birds—migration—was the subject of a deeply interesting paper written by Dr. Otto Herman, and most sympathetically and clearly read by Madame Herman. The Congress was founded, to a great extent, to develop international study of this question; and at the Paris gathering it was decided to focus the work on the movements of the swallow and the stork. Hungary, however, was the only country that took any actual steps to carry out this recommendation, and the investigations conducted afford a model for the rest. With regard to the swallow, nearly 6000 masters of elementary science noted on postcards the arrival of the bird all over the country, and these dates were entered on separate maps for each day at the Central Ornithological Office. The mean date of arrival in Hungary was shown, on the basis of more than 10,000 data, to be April 7th. For the cuckoo 30,000 data had been collected from the whole area of distribution, with the exception of Spain, the

greater part of Italy, and the Balkans. From England a marvellous series of records had been supplied by Mr. Southwell; they were made by the Marsham family in Stratton-Stawless, who kept faithful note of the arrival of the bird, with a few breaks, from 1739 to 1904. Not, however, until every country was as well explored and worked as Hungary had been, would the true nature of the phenomena of migration be revealed.

OTHER PAPERS.

It is not possible to give any account here of the many papers which, valuable to the systematic ornithologist and biologist, had no direct concern with the work of the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds. Dr. Hartert's paper on "The Principal Aims of Modern Ornithology" did indeed touch definitely on the subject, in its advocacy of reserves in particular; and Mr. Frank M. Chapman's two lantern lectures on the Flamingo and the Brown Pelican could hardly fail to rouse keen desire for the protection of these two splendid species.

One of Mr. Chapman's first slides showed that the Pelican starts life under unusually advantageous conditions; not only does he enjoy the companionship of his brothers, and the unremitting attention of father and mother, during the first eight weeks of his life, but he is brought up in a community—the pelicans always choosing their nesting places in a colony, in damp marshy ground near suitable provender for appeasing the voracious appetites of their young. When the mother bird is tired of sitting on her nest, she gives her mate a warning note, a pre-arranged signal, used at no other time, to which he answers in a similar key; and after a little preening and smoothing of feathers, they amicably change places, and she goes off to stretch her limbs, and to find food for herself—and after the eggs are hatched, also for the young brood—returning to the nest, and awaiting in her turn for her mate's signal to take up her duties at home while he takes up the duties abroad, and once more the same preening and ceremony is gone through. When the young are first hatched their diet must be pre-digested and put down their throats, but later they prefer doing this work for themselves, and extract the fish whole from their parents' throats, by almost getting their own heads down in the struggle. Then comes the process of digestion, and whether from an innate love of acting, or for less romantic reasons, for some seconds after swallowing the fish the young bird drops down feigning death, but soon rises up

again to execute a series of war dances until his equanimity is restored. His next advance is to go forth and find food for himself, and to make the best of life until his time comes to devote himself to the rearing of a pelican brood, and as a parent, be it said, the pelicans are models, the fathers in no less a degree than the mothers. Such are a few of the pelican manners and customs as told by Mr. Chapman in one of the most delightful lectures to which naturalists could have the privilege of listening.

Mr. Chapman also lectured on "What constitutes a Museum Collection of Birds," describing the American methods, but paying a hearty compliment to our own national collection. Mr. W. P. Pycraft, in "Nestling Birds in relation to Evolution," contended that all birds were originally arboreal; Dr. Dwight treated of the "Causes and Effects of Feather Abrasion"; Mr. H. Scherren contributed a paper on "The First Bird List of Eber and Peucer"; Mr. J. L. Bonhote recorded his Experiments in Hybridising Ducks; Count von Berlepsch dealt with New Neotropical Birds; the Rev. C. R. Jourdain with Erythrism in Eggs."

ENTERTAINMENTS AND EXCURSIONS.

Over and beyond the opportunities for intercourse afforded by meetings and intervals between meetings, there was no lack of social functions. On the eve of the Congress an informal reception took place at the Imperial Institute. On Wednesday a *conversazione* was held at the Natural History Museum. On Friday the British Ornithologists' Union gave a dinner to foreign members at Frascati's, and the Lord Mayor and Lady Mayoress of London received the members at the Mansion House. The visit to Tring has been already mentioned. It took place during the Congress week, and a long and delightful day was spent, the special train leaving Euston at nine in the morning, and returning about eight in the evening. The Congress were throughout the day the guests of Mr. Rothschild, and they were most lavishly entertained—whether the entertainment be taken to refer to the instructive feast at the Museum and at the lecture, to the pleasure derived from seeing the kangaroos, zebras, and other wild creatures at large in the Park, and the water-fowl at Tring Reservoirs, or to the luncheon.

On the Monday following the week of meetings, 150 members of the Congress were welcomed at Woburn Abbey, by the Duke and Duchess of Bedford. His Grace provided a special train to

Ridgmont, where his own carriages met the party, and conveyed them not only to the Abbey, but for a glorious drive through the Park, with its beautiful glades, where trees and turf brought even from American visitors an acknowledgment that there are some things in which England cannot be equalled. The famed assembly of wild animals to be seen leading a happy free life in the park and paddocks—rheas, emus, flamingos, storks, buffalos, bisons, giraffes, wild horses, zebras, tapirs, gnus, &c., not to mention thirty varieties of deer—provided unending interest; and host and hostess guided their guests in the inspection, and entertained them at luncheon.

The following day was devoted to a visit to Cambridge, where Professor Newton received the members in the Museum of Zoology, and luncheon was served in the Hall of Magdalene College. Picked cases of eggs, including eight of the great auk (with the addition of a gourd so closely resembling the eggs as to deceive more than one scientist), and an interesting selection of books and letters were arranged for the visitors' inspection; and a short lecture was given by Dr. Gadow. In the afternoon most of the party drove to Fen Ditton, to see Mr. Bonhote's fine aviaries, in which the hybrid ducks described at the Congress were bred.

The final event was an excursion to Flamborough and Bridlington, but only about fifty members, mostly foreigners, took part in this. It was arranged for the purpose of viewing the sea-birds' nesting-places, and the methods of the cliff-climbers who collect the guillemot's and razorbill's eggs.

The Congress was favoured with splendid weather during almost the whole time, so that our foreign visitors may remember England as a land not exclusively given over to fogs and rain.

Very interesting accounts of the Congress have appeared in *Chasse et Pêche*, in the form of a series of articles from the able pen of Monsieur le Docteur Quinet, of Brussels. Monsieur Louis Ternier has kindly sent us the numbers of *La Chasse Illustrée* (published in Paris) to which he has contributed articles descriptive of the Congress. Doubtless similar detailed notices have been printed in other foreign and colonial papers. Copies of such would be welcomed at the office of this Society.

THE Belgian Minister of Agriculture has issued a circular with reference to the ortolan season, directing that if any birds other than ortolans are used as decoys or are snared, they are to be liberated and the fowlers summoned.

IN THE COURTS.

SHETLAND ISLES.—At Lerwick Sheriff Court, on July 26th, the Commander of the French fishery cruiser "Estafette" was charged with having on board his vessel seven gulls and twelve kittiwakes, birds scheduled in the Wild Birds Protection Act. The birds had been caught on hooks. Defendant said the birds were taken for food, and he was not aware that they were protected. Sheriff Broun said that, if he had been able, he would have dismissed the case with an admonition; but, as the Act said some penalty must be imposed, and he understood the birds were taken in a very cruel and somewhat revolting manner, he would impose a fine of 6d. per bird—9s. 6d. in all. [The Act authorises a fine not exceeding £1 for each bird.]

FORFAR.—Sheriff Campbell Smith, of Dundee, is even more friendly to offenders than Sheriff Broun, who, doubtless, wished to be lenient towards foreigners. At the Dundee Court, on July 13th, an artilleryman was summoned by the Scottish S.P.C.A. for having three young caged thrushes in his possession. He said he found them hopping about the links and put them in a cage. The Sheriff ordered him to pay 5s., but observed that, perhaps, it would modify the zeal of the Society if they were required to pay most of the expenses (a balance of 15s. 6d.) themselves. (The gallery of the Court, says the "Dundee Advertiser," was well filled with birdcatchers, the links being their favourite hunting-grounds, and they were delighted with the Sheriff's deliverance; "they recognized that the worthy Judge was hitting straight at the men who were rightly endeavouring to secure observance of the law.")

CHESHIRE.—At Birkenhead Police Court on August 10th, W. Jones was fined 5s. for shooting a gull, a scheduled bird. The Superintendent said that owing to the extent of the practice a lady paid for a constable to be placed on special duty for seven days.

DURHAM.—Before the Sedbergh Bench on June 28th, Walter H. James, of Breda House, Sedbergh, was summoned for being in possession of three great-tits. The nest was in the grounds of Mr. Chadwick, an assistant master of Sedbergh School, who was asked by a boy named de Wilde if he might take the birds. Permission was refused, but the nest was afterwards taken by a workman, at the boy's request, and the birds found in defendant's house. Fined 1s. for each bird, and costs, in all £1 3s.

YORKSHIRE.—The Keighley Bench, on July 10th, fined a hairdresser, named Maxwell, £2 2s. and costs for having in his shop 22 redstarts, 2 skylarks, 4 thrushes, 10 flycatchers, and 4 wheatears. The birds were stated to be taken for exhibition in the show season. The West Riding County Council asked for an exemplary penalty.—At Bingley, on July 19th, the tenant of an allotment garden was ordered to pay costs for having set seven spring traps, in one of which the police found a bird held by the beak, six dead birds lying near.

NORTHANTS.—At Thrapston on June 1st a farm foreman was fined £1 and 9s. 6d. costs for shooting a moorhen, and £1 with 6s. costs for carrying a gun without a license, the Bench regretting that so many scheduled birds were shot.

SURREY.—At Kingston-on-Thames on July 27th Herbert Brandon, of Thorne Road, Worthing, was fined £5 1s., including costs, for shooting two brown owls at Avenue Elmers, Surbiton. The information was laid by the Chairman of the Justices, Mr. W. Y. Cockburn, the birds having been shot while perched on a tree in his garden, and he had offered £5 for information leading to the conviction of the offender (Mr. Cockburn did not adjudicate in the case). Mr. J. Thornely, the acting Chairman, said the Bench considered it a disgraceful and brutal offence to shoot these beautiful and useful birds, which ought to be welcomed and protected, and defendant ought to be ashamed of himself.

FIFE.—An Auchterderran farmer was fined at Dunfermline Sheriff Court on July 27th for laying wheat steeped in strychnine in a turnip field. The poison was intended for rooks, and killed a number of domestic pigeons.

NEW LEAFLETS.

Fiat Justitia. A Letter to Public Schoolboys. By SIR HEREWALD WAKE, Bart. 3d. per doz., 1s. 9d. per 100.

Our Ally the Bird. With Illustrations. Reprinted, by permission, from *Pearson's Magazine*. 1d. each, 9d. per doz., 5s. per 100.

CHRISTMAS CARD.

The Society's **Christmas Card** will be published in October. The illustration will consist of one of Mr. ARCHIBALD THORBURN'S charming bird pictures, specially painted for the Society, and *reproduced in colour*.

A series of bird postcards, "How Birds Propose," drawn in black-and-white by well-known artists, has been published by Mr. F. Finn, F.Z.S.

Next Issue.—The next Number of BIRD NOTES AND NEWS will be ready on Dec. 1st, 1905, and will contain an Index to the first 12 numbers.

Reading Cases for BIRD NOTES AND NEWS can be obtained from the office at a cost of 1s., including postage. They will be found very useful to keep the numbers together, and also for use in Public Libraries.

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

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BIRD NOTES AND NEWS.

Circular Letter issued Periodically by the Royal Society for the
Protection of Birds.

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[DECEMBER, 1905.]



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GANNETS ON THE BASS ROCK.

From a Photograph by MR. CHARLES KIRK, Glasgow. By kind permission.

SOME HOMES OF THE GANNET.

THE Bass Rock, the famous British breeding-ground of the Gannet, or Solan Goose, and the home also of many other interesting sea and coast birds, is known to all naturalists as affording, in the nesting season, one of the most wonderful visions of wild bird life that Britain has to show. The Peregrine formerly nested on its sides, but deserted to neighbouring islets at the time of the building of the lighthouse. The collectors pursued the bird thither, taking the eggs regularly in defiance of the law, and the police received instructions from the Chief Constable of Haddington to give special attention to the matter. Other birds remaining on the Rock were the sport of a certain class of tourists, who came out in boats from the mainland to shoot at the birds in their nesting-places, at a time when every ledge and peak was crowded with sitting birds and young. This wanton cruelty aroused much indignation, but in August, in years preceding 1905, close time was over and the birds unpro-

tected. Mr. W. A. Nicholson, naturalist editor of *The Shooting Times*, and intimately acquainted with the district, accordingly wrote to the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, which he knew to be already interesting itself in the subject, to urge the great need for further protective measures. The lessee of the Rock, who had put out warning notices in vain, strongly backed Mr. Nicholson's protest and appeal; and the Society communicated with the Haddington County Council, where it is fortunate in having the support of the Earl of Haddington, well known as a friend and student of bird-life. The Order issued July 7th, 1905, protecting the wild birds of all the islets in the Firth of Forth until the 1st of November in each year will, it is hoped, be cordially approved by ornithologists. The vast Gannet colony may now be considered safe from destruction, and the Peregrine may perhaps return to his former eyries.

The Bass Rock, like Lundy (the one English home of the Gannet) is a place with a history, less familiar to southerners than to the Scots. A precipitous mass of greenstone, about a mile in circumference, and tunnelled by a huge cavern, it was the refuge of James I. of Scotland from his English enemies; in the seventeenth century it was the hiding-place of the Church of Scotland Registers; a little later it came into English hands, and was a prison of the Covenanters; later still, seized by the Jacobites, it formed the last stronghold of the Stuart cause.

In Wales, as in England, there is one solitary settlement of Gannets; but their historic nesting-ground on Grassholm Island has lately been threatened by the cry that the birds are destructive to the fish. There are stated to be not more than 300 pairs of birds, who are there only in the nesting-time, and the numbers do not increase, as a pair rear only one young bird a year, and the herring-gulls account for a good many of these. It would seem, therefore, that the consumption of fish can hardly be of such serious moment to the fisheries as to warrant an attack on the interesting bird colony: and it is satisfactory to learn that Grassholm has been

leased by a member of the Cardiff Naturalists' Society with the object of protecting the birds.

At Lundy, off the Devonshire coast, the work of the Watcher has not resulted as yet in the Gannets resuming nesting, but it is believed that good has been done in the protection of other species.

A graphic picture of yet another and a wilder home of the Gannet is contained in the new American bird book, "Wild Wings." Far out in the very midst of the Gulf of St. Lawrence—in situation somewhat to the Magdalen Isles what St. Kilda is to the Shetlands—the Bird Rock calls for a stout heart and a strong boat if its fastness is to be conquered. But the wild wings and the nesting-homes of ten thousand gannets, kittiwakes, murrees, auks, and puffins reward the naturalist visitor for sundry 'scapes. "It is splendid," says the writer of the book, "that the fine colony is doing so well. The keeper has orders from the British Government to prevent all depredations upon the birds. Yet he ought to have more done for him—a telephone or telegraph to the Magdalens, and more calls of the Government supply boat." (The island is liable to be gripped in ice for six months of the year, and made inaccessible, and human visitors are at all times an event.) "Left as he is, he must depend largely upon casual vessels, and he can hardly afford to prevent the visitors from egging and shooting, lest they, in retaliation, forego their favours." Under the care of Keeper Peter Bourque, however, the birds of Bird Rock are said to be on the whole increasing.

THE Gannet, one of the largest of British sea-fowl, being thirty-four inches in length, is not a member of the Goose tribe, but a connecting link between the Cormorant and Pelican. Its scientific name, *Sula bassana*, is derived from the Bass Rock, but it has several other nesting colonies on the west of Scotland and on the Irish coast. The nest is made of seaweed and grass, and the one egg is pale blue, coated with chalky white. The birds when sitting are very tame, even allowing themselves to be stroked, with only a protesting croak. In colour the adult birds are pure white, with buff head and neck and black wing-primaries.

COUNCIL MEETINGS.

MEETINGS of the Council of the Society were held at No. 3, Hanover Square, W., on October 10th and December 1st. At the earlier meeting there were present: Mr. Montagu Sharpe, Chairman, Sir John Cockburn, Mr. H. E. Dresser, Hon. Mrs. Drewitt, Dr. Drewitt, Miss Hall, Rev. A. L. Hussey, Mr. Hastings Lees, Mrs. Lemon, Mr. Meade-Waldo, Mr. Howard Saunders, the Hon. Secretary, and the Secretary. Particulars as to the Schools competing for the Bird and Tree Challenge Shields were given, and arrangements made for the judging of the essays. The reports of the Publication and Finance and General Purposes Committees were received, and various matters, including the traffic in cage-birds and the plume trade in India, considered. Mr. Aubyn Trevor-Battye and the Hon. Alfred Dobson, K.C., C.M.G., were elected members of the Council. Four new Fellows were elected, viz., the Hon. N. C. Rothschild (Life), Hon. A. Dobson, Captain Goland Clarke, D.S.O., and Mr. L. J. Bonhote. Mr. J. A. Brooke was elected a Life Member, and seventeen ordinary Members were elected.

At the December meeting there were present: Mr. Montagu Sharpe, Chairman, Mr. Ernest Bell, Mr. H. E. Dresser, Hon. Alfred Dobson, K.C., Hon. Mrs. Drewitt, Miss Hall, Rev. A. L. Hussey, Mr. F. King, Mr. Hastings Lees, Mrs. Lemon, Miss Pollock, Mr. Howard Saunders, Mr. Trevor-Battye, Mrs. Owen Visger, the Hon. Secretary, and the Secretary. Various subjects referred to the Council from the Autumn Conference were discussed, also preliminary arrangements for Watchers in 1906. Lady Hooker, Miss E. L. Turner, and Miss Vertue were elected Fellows, the Rev. H. N. Bonar, Life Member, and seventeen ordinary Members were elected.

COUNTY COUNCIL ORDERS.

CAMBRIDGE, Nov. 17th, 1905. E.F. Same as that of 1904, with Little Owl added to Great Bustard and Goldfinch for all-the-year protection.

DEVONSHIRE, Nov. 2nd, 1905. A.B.C.D.E.F. Identical with that of 1903, with the addition of the Clovelly district to the list of areas where all eggs are protected, and extension of the time for such protection to the end of 1910.

GLOUCESTERSHIRE, Nov. 9th, 1905. C.D.E.F.S. Practically the same as that of 1902, but deprives the Wood-Pigeon as well as House-Sparrow of protection, and gives complete protection to the Lapwing and its eggs.

NORFOLK, Nov. 6th, 1905. A.B.C.E.F.S. Identical with that of 1901, but completely protects Bittern and Little Bittern and their eggs. (Goldfinch still left without winter protection.)

BARON VON BERLEPSCH'S BIRD COLONIES.

[MRS. VISGER—"J. A. Owen"—is contributing an article entitled "A Bird Sanctuary" to the *Pall Mall Magazine*, from which we give some notes here, with her permission.]

Baron von Berlepsch, whose book on "Practical Methods of Bird Protection" has been translated into nine European languages, and 5500 copies of which work were bought and distributed over Germany by the Ministry of Agriculture, has devoted seven hundred acres of his estate, Schlossgat Seebach, in the northern part of Thuringen, to the cause of bird protection: first, by planting it with such trees and bushes as are favourable for their nesting habits; then supplementing further boxes in which the birds can safely nest and bring out their young; and, finally, providing the birds with the necessary winter provender in a cold and exposed region, where they must otherwise perish by thousands from hunger and exposure during the severe season. These bird sanctuaries are situated in the centre of a wide agricultural district, which has little cover for birds.

I visited Schlossgat Seebach this summer and cannot say too much in praise of the foresight shown in all the arrangements on this large domain, which is, indeed, in spring-time a busy city of feathered inhabitants. Of three thousand nesting-boxes securely and fittingly placed, ninety-five out of every hundred were occupied this spring. In one thicket (a little stretch planted with long bushes) there were one hundred nests built by the birds—three nests to every yard—that is of the rate of a nest to each foot of space. This would have appeared incredible to me had I not myself inspected the nests. One beautiful nest of the Garden Singer (*Hypolais polyglotta*) had shreds of silver-birch bark interwoven with its grasses and lichen. The Song Thrush and the Redbreast, which build so freely in our own gardens, only nest in the woods, as a rule, in Thuringen; the Thrush comes here, however, to nest, but the Redbreast never.

The Lesser Grey Shrikes had been driven away by a colony of two hundred Fieldfares that have been led to nest here in a long avenue of black poplars alternating with pollard willows, which are carefully topped and trimmed so as to make the side branches stronger for the support of the nests, which are built between the forks of these and the main trunk. Fieldfare nests are unknown in England and are rare in Germany; they are more

welcome there than the Shrike or Butcher Bird, which is a quarrelsome bird, especially during the breeding season.

A strong, close hedge of whitethorn and wild roses protects the grounds on the village side from the children, who might want to come a-birdnesting; ingeniously contrived traps secure marauding creatures, such as the martin, the fox, and the wild cat. Under the large trees are close bushes, in which nest such birds as the Hedge Sparrow and the Spotted Flycatcher.

A long hedge of wild roses again attracts birds of the family of Warblers, and innumerable Tits build low down in the bushes. Sparrows never build so low; they are too wary of marauding creatures; fifteen polecats alone were caught here in the traps during the month of September. A short young fir stem has a network of dead pine twigs bound about its base, and here Wrens build; whilst dotted about under larger growth are what would be wide spreading bushes—fifty of them—which are, however, tied round as we tie a lettuce. In these birds delight to build; forty-seven out of the fifty were inhabited.

In an outbuilding I saw five thick pine stems which had lately arrived from the Böhmer Wald, each having Woodpecker's nests in them, the cavities of the greater and lesser spotted species rounded, that of *Picus martius*, the Great Black Woodpecker, oval. These the Baron had procured so as to offer these species exact copies, in those he has made, of their own nests—care being taken to make even the slight hacked-out ascent by the birds in the wood before dipping down into the cavity below. Such things may seem trifling to the uninitiated; but they are of the highest importance in attracting wild creatures. Baron von Berlepsch considers that those species that nest in holes are of all birds the most useful.

Here and there are most ingeniously constructed feeding shelters so contrived that birds are protected from the weather as they eat. Small feeding boxes, also with sheltering covers, hang from trees, and from the branches of high pines are some on the principle of those poultry feeders and drinking vessels which fill as they are emptied by the birds; over the feeding troughs there is a metal bell-shaped cover. As I said before, suitable and regular feeding for the various species in the severe winters is of the highest importance.

A NEW French League for the Protection of Birds has been founded by Mlle. des Varennes, Editor of "La Revue des Animaux."

A NATURALIST IN FLORIDA.*

THE representatives of the plume trade display an ingenuity worthy of a better cause in the number and variety of the arguments which they bring forward to meet the hesitation displayed by many ladies when tempted by "osprey"-trimmed head-gear. At one time we are told that egrets are "farmed" for their plumes—somewhere; at another, that the feathers are moulted articles diligently picked up on a breeding-ground—somewhere; at another, that the birds are killed for food by starving natives, who sell the feathers to obtain a meagre living; at another, that the birds are a pest and must be killed, and it does not matter, because there are so many of them; and yet once again, that no birds are killed at all, that none could be found in numbers large enough to supply the plume market, and (whatever tales the plume auctions may tell) that ospreys are made out of quills and whalebone.

Meanwhile, naturalists like Mr. W. E. Scott, Mr. F. M. Chapman, Mr. Gilbert Pearson, and others give their testimony as eye-witnesses to the wholesale slaughter of the egrets and herons of the United States, a slaughter which is being repeated to-day in other lands. The latest testimony comes from Mr. Herbert K. Job, an American ornithologist, who in his new book, "Wild Wings," repeats and emphasizes his strong indictment against the plume hunters, quoted in a previous number (July, 1903) of this paper. Mr. Job penetrated, not as an investigator of the plume question, but as an ardent naturalist, the solitary marshes and wildernesses of Florida, into whose deepest recesses the last remnant of the Florida egrets have been driven by persecution. Even in these unsurveyed and trackless swamps it was no easy matter to discover the birds, or doubtless they too would have been extirpated by the hunters; and Mr. Job's guide in one expedition was the warden Bradley, who has since been killed in defending the birds from poaching traders. On the first sight of the lovely white birds in their nesting-ground, among the mangrove trees of an almost inaccessible bog, the explorer's feeling was one of pure rapture at the sight:

"Here I felt I had reached the high-water mark of spectacular sights in the bird-world. Wherever I may penetrate in future wanderings, I never hope to see anything to surpass, or in some respects to equal, that upon which I now gazed."

But then came the bitter knowledge that this

* WILD WINGS: Adventures of a Camera-Hunter among the larger Wild Birds of North America on Sea and Land. By Herbert Keightley Job, with 160 Illustrations after Photographs. London: Constable & Co.

charming vision need not have required a difficult journey through mosquito-haunted morasses, need not have been limited to the eye of the adventurous traveller.

"Years ago such sights could be found all over Florida and other Southern States. This is the last pitiful remnant of hosts of innocent, exquisite creatures slaughtered for a brutal, senseless—yes, criminal millinery folly . . . Florida has awakened to her loss, and imposes a very heavy penalty fine for every one of these birds killed. Sincerely do I wish that every one who slaughters, or causes to be slaughtered, these animated bits of winged poetry, may feel the full weight of the penalty of the statute and of conscience. Such inaccessible tangles of Southern Florida are the last places of refuge, the last ditch of the struggle for existence to which these splendid species have been driven."

The writer goes on to narrate the typical story of the plume-hunter Cuthbert, who "shot out" a large rookery in Southern Florida. He found an island of some two acres whose dense overgrowth of mangrove trees was almost hidden by the snowy plumage of vast numbers of nesting herons, egrets and ibises, "a theme for the artist, a vision for the poet." He left it a shambles, the ground heaped with dead bodies, strips of skin and plumage torn from their backs; the nests swarming with flies about the decaying corpses of starved nestlings. The same thing is going on wherever the dealer can pursue his prey and find his gold-mine in dead birds' bodies; and if, as in Mr. Watts' picture, angels shudder over the memory of these shot-out heronries, angels from another sphere must have many a grin as they hear the complaisant milliner assure her confiding customers that these wondrous nuptial plumes—mutilated and marred and degraded though they be—are scraped out of whale-bone or manufactured out of wood!

Even the present penalty in the States is, Mr. Job points out, not enough to cope with the enterprise of the plume trade. Other countries have no Audubon Societies or wardens.

"In these days," he adds, "there is arising a many-sided and tremendous problem in regard to saving the natural world from ignorant, short-sighted, commercial vandalism. Every tree must be cut down, every plant pulled up, every wild thing slaughtered, every beautiful scene disfigured, if only there is money to be made from it. What remedies are there to propose?"

An educational campaign, he answers, to arouse sympathetic interest in the lives of all harmless wild creatures, a campaign carried on by teachers and parents and clergy; and, in the case of the egrets, an agreement on the part of all nations concerned to penalize the killing of the birds and

the possession (including wearing) or exportation of all such plumes.

PLUME SALES.

THERE were 296 packages of "osprey" feathers offered at the Feather Sale on October 10th, 1905, mostly from India and Rangoon. Of birds-of-paradise there were 2586 light plumes and 4692 various, and "a good demand" is reported. Other bird skins on sale were hoopoes, seagulls, crested pigeons, cocks-of-the-rock, etc., together with a very large number of eagle and vulture quills.

FARMERS AND BIRDS.

THE question of "Birds and Agriculture" was brought forward at a meeting of the Central and Associated Chambers of Agriculture, held in London on October 31st, 1905, and a resolution was passed: "That this Council is of opinion that the depredations of birds are a serious loss to growers of various products of the soil, and that an official enquiry should be made as to what means should be adopted to prevent such losses." Mr. Ackers (Gloucester) said that in certain parts of England there was a strong feeling that the great increase in certain sorts of birds prevented the birds from getting enough of their proper food and caused them to prey upon the produce of the farmer. The kinds of birds and the means of prevention were matters of enquiry. Mr. Gardner (Worcestershire) thought the request frivolous, as the farmer had it in his own power to keep down pests.

STARLINGS AND CHAFERS.

Starlings almost invariably utilise holes for breeding, and they have, both in Belgium and Germany, been long supplied with artificial nesting boxes where natural nesting-places are not available. A box 10 to 12 inches in depth and 6 in. by 6 in. in cross-section, with a sloping and slightly overhanging roof, and a hole 2 to 2½ in. in diameter near the top, with a perch below, is commonly used for this purpose. Some years ago, in a large and richly-stocked nursery in Belgium, chafer beetles became so numerous as to be a very serious infestation. After trying by all known means to eradicate them, the proprietor observed that starlings devoured large numbers both of the larvæ and the mature insects. Taking a lesson from this, he erected about half a dozen nesting-boxes on 15-foot poles, and as they were immediately occupied by the birds he continued to provide boxes until 125 were in use. The result was that the chafer infestation grew gradually less and was finally completely overcome.—*Journal of the Board of Agriculture*, June, 1905.

BIRD AND TREE CHALLENGE SHIELD COMPETITIONS.

THE Society's Bird and Tree Challenge Shield Competitions, open this year to six counties, are happily going on in quite the right way, and each year show further improvement in the setting forth of genuine observation in simple natural language. Directed on the right lines by the teachers, to whom the Society's best thanks are due, the study evidently has the desired effect of stimulating and developing the children's quickness, intelligence, and sympathy. There is, however, still far too much iteration of lessons and passages from books, in some cases undigested, and in others not even understood; and it cannot be too well impressed upon the teams that reproductions of object-lessons are not what is wanted, and that extracts from books given as part of the competitors' own work are extremely likely to lead to the disqualification of the team. Better the baldest little notes, so that they be honest and true.

Surely, too, a wider choice in the selection of subjects might be shown. Where are the whitethroat, willow-wren, corncrake, dabchick, pipits, wryneck, jay, even the greenfinch? to name a few familiar species at random. But for some praiseworthy exceptions it might be supposed that the only birds known to country children were the thrush, blackbird, lark, rook (no crow), and robin; with in some places a swallow (no swift), and in others a wren (never a goldcrest). That the less ordinary birds can be treated at least as successfully is proved by the fact that four of the best essays sent up are on the shrike, owl, nightjar, and coot. The total number of species represented in the competition is thirty-eight, Hampshire and Cumberland showing the greatest variety. Of trees, thirty-four kinds are included, but one essay in every ten is on either an oak or a horse-chestnut.

The awards are as follows:—

- BEDFORDSHIRE—Clophill School.
- BERKSHIRE—Buckland School (fourth year).
- CUMBERLAND—Kirkoswald School.
- HAMPSHIRE—1, Privett School; 2, Bitterne Park Girls; 3, Sandown Boys.
- SOMERSET—Yatton School.
- WESTMORELAND—Warcop School (third year).

The judges were Mr. Montagu Sharpe, Chairman of Council, Mr. Ernest Bell, Mr. W. H. Hudson, F.Z.S., Mrs. F. E. Lemon, F.Z.S., and Mr. Howard Saunders, F.Z.S.

BEDFORDSHIRE.

In reading the Bedfordshire essays the practical and utilitarian quality either of the Bedfordshire character or of the school-teaching is very striking. Both birds and trees are looked at largely from the point of view of their value as timber or their tastiness in pies! Even the beech and the oak, it is hinted, are apt to be cumberers of agricultural ground; the blackbird is a thief, the sparrow "low and cunning." Clophill, having made a notable step forward in the twelvemonth, sends a very good set of essays, careful and intelligent, and winning the Shield and prizes. Two of the writers attempt the autobiographical method, which has commended itself to schools in several counties this year, though almost entirely absent before. It is not an easy style to manage successfully, but the little Clophill writers master it very creditably and prettily. The Ashton Boys (Dunstable) team express themselves remarkably well, taking second place; but Tempsford is even more obviously working upwards in the right way, and will probably bear off the Shield another year. All these three schools, however, would do better not to "lift" sentences from books. Leagrave shows genuine observation, and Morhanger is a notable new-comer, whose essays are fresh and pleasant reading. Biscot, Barton Manor, and Eaton Socon also merit commendation, and Woburn and Keysoe have promising teams. Sandy and Colmworth, which took first and second places last year, are missing from the list.

BERKSHIRE AND WESTMORELAND.

In Berkshire and Westmoreland the number of competitors, never large, has fallen so far below the minimum required by the conditions of the competition that the Shields must have been withdrawn but for the excellent quality of the work sent in by the few competing schools, and the hope that other schools may be encouraged to take up the work next year. Warcop, indeed, having won the Shield two years, offered to stand aside this year, so as to give a better chance to schools less well-equipped by long training in nature-study; but for 1905-6, at any rate, the trophy again goes to this school, whose essays are on a high level for composition, fullness, and accuracy. The trees indicate local study, but better justice might be done to the interesting birds of the district by the selection of more uncommon species. The Beetham team write of

birds with nice feeling and in a pleasant way, but their trees are far too bookish.

As regards Berkshire, it must again be said that Buckland stands out as champion among all the counties. The essays are so intelligent, so bright and spirited, and so full of observation and suggestion, that they are most entertaining to read, and constitute a delightful example of nature-study of the right kind. Burghfield takes second place, and sends in very creditable work, the trees being especially good.

CUMBERLAND.

There was no difficulty in awarding the Shield or Cumberland, Kirkoswald being conspicuously at the head for genuine and personal observation, in spite of one or two lapses into book sentences. Two papers, by a girl of eleven, show remarkable originality and accuracy; and the essays on trees are all good in matter and natural in style. The trees, too, are the best in Borrowdale's set, which is given second place. Greystoke is highly to be commended for choosing less familiar birds; its essays are painstaking and well illustrated. The Calderbridge team send long and elaborate pieces of work, detailing a great amount of information in admirable style and handwriting. St. John's, Keswick, write nice little essays, and have paid much attention to local conditions. Maryport sets a notable example by the amount of interest taken in the competition, twenty-six children besides those sending in essays having joined the team; their work is of very varied quality, but indicates the presence of a zealous teacher. Upperby's efforts are very creditable, both for information and good feeling, and the team will do better still next time. It would seem that Cumberland children remain at school longer than most country boys and girls, the average of age being high; but it by no means follows in work of this kind that excellence is in proportion to age.

HAMPSHIRE.

Hampshire sends in a capital collection of essays, showing a considerable advance both in numbers and quality upon last year's competition; and the half-dozen schools placed in the first class are so nearly on a level of excellence—though excellence wholly different in kind—that any one of them may carry off the Shield in 1906. After much consideration the judges give the award to Privett on account of the enthusiasm and sincerity evidenced by the team, and the accuracy of their observations; the selection of the subjects like the Shrike

(a capital piece of work) and Whitebeam also indicates a welcome freshness of mind and eye. Privett's victory is good proof of what may be done in a small country school, for Privett is a little village remote from towns, though surrounded by lovely country. The second and third teams, on the other hand, come from towns. The Sandown essays show extremely close and careful observation, and the tree sketches are quite charming. The Bitterne Park girls also draw well; their essays, excellent as they are, trees especially, would be better for a little pruning. Closely following these three winners come Hayling, showing the true naturalist spirit in their essays, especially those on the Kingfisher and bay-tree; Sandown girls, with a pretty gracefulness all their own; and Bitterne boys, whose errors in fact are largely redeemed by the real intelligence manifested. There is again but a narrow division between these and the schools placed in the second class. East Stratton and Headley, both admirably taught, do credit to their teaching; it is pleasant to read of the nature-study rambles and the interest taken in the competition at Stratton; and the natural history is sound as well as sympathetic in both these schools. The Ridge and Havant papers are careful, intelligent and well written. The Ventnor girls, who display a genuine feeling for nature, will do still better when they trust more to their own outdoor notes and choose less familiar birds. Very good essays come from Yateley, things taught being amplified by things seen; and the Godshill team remember excellently what they have learned. It is only possible to briefly commend Pennington, Eversley, Lymington (British School), Hinton Ampner, Barton Stacey (with a delightful Owl essay, almost as good as anything in the prize sets), Milton, West End, Laverstoke, Bramdean, Boldre, Wickham, and North Stoneham.

SOMERSET.

The competition was extended to Somerset this year for the first time, so that it is not surprising if the essays are not, as a whole, so good as those of some other counties. Nevertheless the schools of the county make an excellent start, and one that promises well for future years. The worst fault is the common one, that competitors do not write sufficiently from their own observation, but trust too much to facts they have found in books or learned from their teacher. Observation, however, is not a thing that can be acquired all at once, for the training of the eye is much more difficult than the training of the verbal memory,

so that improvement may be hopefully looked for. Yatton, the first winner of the Somerset Shield, sends an admirable set of essays, written mainly from observation and manifesting keen interest in the subjects. All are good, though that on the Coot may be especially commended, because the bird is not easy to watch; and the drawings and impressions of leaves and flowers are wonderfully good. The *proxime accessit* is Clutton, which has struck out a line for itself by writing essays in the form of letters addressed to friends overseas who might be supposed to be unacquainted with British birds and trees. The idea is well carried out. If the birds had been as good as the trees in the papers of the Frome (British school) girls, the second place would have been theirs, two of the tree essays especially affording a capital example of natural description in place of the dry botanical details so often furnished. The Donyatt team, on the other hand, write best about birds, and there are some very pretty and quaint touches in their essays. Special commendation must also be given to Castle Cary, mainly on account of the two singularly good essays by one member of it—a little lass of eleven—and to Yeovil, whose essays are all intelligent and careful. Catcott, with some good and original bits, and Exford, who date their notes with solemn precision, will do better next time; so, too, will the Frome (British) boys and Exford if they will not try so hard to remember what the book says.

It is hoped in the next number of BIRD NOTES AND NEWS to give an account of some of the festivals. The Speaker of the House of Commons has kindly consented to perform the ceremony of presenting the Society's Cumberland Challenge Shield to Kirkoswald School on December 12th, and Sir Edward Fry presented the Society's Somerset Shield at the festival at Yatton on November 24th.

THOUSANDS of swallows returning southward were overtaken by severe cold in Switzerland. Many were frozen to death; others, which fell exhausted, were cared for by the inhabitants and sent on by train to Italy, where they were liberated.

COMPLAINT is being made in Glasgow of the slaughter of birds by Italians in the outlying suburb of Carmyle. One man was seen to fire at a kingfisher from a Clyde-side footpath, and another said he had shot six the previous season for stuffing. A third of these gentry is stated to come from Airdrie to shoot blackbirds and thrushes for eating, having a special all-round pocket in his coat in which to cram his "game."

"OBSERVATION" AND "NATURE STUDY."

THE Board of Education has recently (1905) issued a blue-book of "Suggestions for the Consideration of Teachers and others concerned in the work of Public Elementary Schools," which contains a chapter devoted to "Observation Lessons and Nature Study."

In the first place the distinction between the two, rather arbitrary in character, is explained:

"In the lower classes teaching about common things will be directed mainly to cultivating exact observation. Lessons with this special intention are most accurately described as observation lessons, but are more commonly called object lessons. In the higher classes the power of exact observation is presupposed, and the main purpose of the lessons is to exercise the scholars in reflecting and reasoning upon the results of their own direct observation. Lessons of this kind are now commonly described as nature study."

The power of exact observation is supposed to be mastered, it is interesting to note, at the age of ten, when Nature Study proper is to begin; but the general comments of the chapter go to show that the two things have one aim and idea, and that the young may cultivate observation by observing living things as well as by the suggested study of the grocer's window, and the uniform of postman and telegraph boy "to the last button."

"The first and most important aim of observation lessons is to teach the scholars to observe, compare, and contrast; the second is to add to their knowledge of common things. . . . But good object teaching has other results which, though indirect, are as important as these. It opens up a readily accessible field for the exercise of brain, hand, and eye, and thus makes the lives of children more happy and interesting; it directs the attention of the scholars to real things, makes them acquainted with simple natural facts, and will develop a love of nature. . . . Class excursions in or out of school hours will enable teachers to obtain suitable objects for the lessons, and will also encourage the study of plants and animals in their usual surroundings as living things."

Equally admirable are the generalizations with regard to Nature Study, and, it may be said, equally are they in accord with the aims and rules of our Society's Bird and Tree Competitions.

"The main factor which marks off Nature Study from other school subjects should be that in it the instruction proceeds solely from the actual object, and never from description or reading. . . . The teacher should then be very jealous not to waste this unique opportunity, it is his one chance of teaching from the real; as soon as Nature Study is taught from the book and the blackboard it be-

comes worthless as Nature Study, even though interesting or useful information is imparted to the scholars . . .

"Certain auxiliaries in Nature Study teaching merit a little examination. A number of reading books on natural history and country life have been prepared, but they should be very sparingly used. Reading about birds and insects and the like may kindle observation, but too often becomes a substitute for it. Natural history reading books, again, have an unhappy way of repeating well-worn errors and slipshod half-truths. If a Nature Study reading book be wanted an endeavour should be made to secure one containing descriptions by original observers, and not mere accounts put together by a compiler."

The suggestions are less satisfactory in regard to the definite study of wild life. In the first place it is laid down that—

"Natural history itself, the study of the habits of birds or insects or plants, is apt to be too unsystematic, too little controlled, and lies too much out of school to be a good subject,"

and it is further stated that

"Without doubt the collecting instinct is the great motive power in natural history pursuits, and most naturalists begin as collectors. If collecting is repressed, interest is apt to be repressed also. But the habit of collecting may become a habit of destruction, and therefore the teacher should make the nature study class his opportunity for developing a respect for living things, for birds' nests, and rare plants. Children should pluck flowers carefully, so as not to injure the plant; boys should be content with a single egg of each kind." . . . "The collecting instinct is most easily developed in smaller towns within touch of the country; the teacher can encourage his boys to spend their holidays to advantage in this way, provided he checks the growth of predatory and destructive habits."

This is true: but it too contains well-worn half truths. Collecting, no less than the reading-book, "may kindle observation, but too often becomes a substitute for it." The best teacher of Nature Study will not spend time "encouraging" the collecting instinct while hoping to check predatory habits, but, without "repressing" will aim at leading his pupils beyond the dusty little world of dried collections and labels, from and through observation of living things, to sympathy and understanding, and from the elementary instinct of acquisitiveness to a genuine interest in Life and her children. But possibly this is outside the lines on which Blue Books are laid.

TWO pairs of kites are stated to have safely hatched young in their last remaining British breeding-place in Wales this summer.

IN THE COURTS.

BUCKS.—A prosecution under the Pole Trap Act of 1904 was dealt with by the Wycombe magistrates on October 13th. Harris Gomm, of Flint Hall Farm, West Wycombe, was summoned for using the pole-trap near his pheasant pens. He said it was there for the destruction of jackdaws, owls, magpies, and other wild birds, and pleaded ignorance of the law. Supt. Summers read an extract from a letter received from the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, asking that enquiry might be made into the matter, and proceedings instituted if necessary, in order to make the law better known. He only wanted the case to act as a warning to others. Defendant was accordingly let off on paying costs.

CHESHIRE.—Two men charged by the police at Chester Castle, on September 9th, with shooting curlews on the Dee, were dismissed because the Bench were unaware that these birds were protected by the Cheshire County Council Order. On the following Saturday it was explained that the bye-law produced in Court was not the latest, and that "after a search" a 1904 bye-law had been discovered by which the shooting of wild birds of every kind on the Dee and Mersey is prohibited. The bye-law, added the magistrates' clerk, was passed "not so much in the interests of birds, but in the interest of the navigation of the river."

SUFFOLK.—Samuel George Pritchard, a Colchester bird-catcher, was convicted at Samsford, on October 3rd, of having a number of newly-caught goldfinches in his possession. He admitted setting nets and taking the birds, but said he thought he was in Essex. Fined £1.

CARMARTHEN.—At Llandilo, on November 3rd, a rural postman was charged with having fifteen newly-caught goldfinches in his possession. The police found him carrying a small cage wrapped in brown paper containing the birds, which had their wings tied; he gave various explanations as to how he came by them. There was much controversy in Court upon the laws and bye-laws, in the course of which the clerk declared that if the Bench read all the Acts on the matter they would have a headache. The summons was dismissed, but the police were instructed not to let the matter drop.

DERBY.—At Derby Police Court, on October 9th, a bird-catcher was fined 5s. and costs for cruelty to decoy linnets, which had their wings and legs cut by cords. Defendant said he must do something for a living.

KENT.—Four Hoo men were charged at Rochester on October 6th with catching linnets and with cruelty to decoy birds. They had the decoys in cages in a gravel pit. Three denied being there to catch birds, and the other said that they had not succeeded in catching any. The magistrates contented themselves with fining two of them 2s. 6d. and costs each for the cruelty, leaving defendants in possession of the birds.—At Malling, on September 18th, the Bench fined a bird-catcher £2 and 10s. costs for cruelty to a decoy linnet, the Chair-

man saying they were determined to stop such brutal conduct.

SURREY.—A Mitcham brickmaker, summoned at Croydon for catching linnets and cruelty to decoys, was fined 23s.—At Kingston County Bench, on October 4th and 11th, six men were charged with taking linnets on Arbrook Common, and with having wild birds in their possession. In one case the police seized five chaffinches, nine linnets, eleven redpolls, nets, and twenty-seven trap cages. All were fined 10s. each, and their tackle confiscated, one being mulcted an extra 5s. for giving a false address.

YORKSHIRE.—At Leeds, on September 19th, a boy of 11 was fined 2s. 6d. and costs for taking linnets at Adel, where a great deal of bird-catching goes on. The boy acknowledged having caught ninety birds.

ESSEX.—Five men were charged at Stratford, on October 11th, with using nets for bird-catching, and with possession of newly-caught birds. Three were let off with fines of 5s. and costs, nets to be confiscated, and birds liberated. In the other case two men went into a field with twelve decoy birds in cages and four attached to a "pulley spring." The birds were harnessed to a peg by string, which was worked from a distance by means of a pulley, and were in a dying state when found by the police. The men said people were allowed to catch birds in other parts of the country, and did not know but what they might in Essex. Fined 10s. and costs, traps confiscated.

Similar bird-catching cases are reported from various other Courts.

CHRISTMAS CARD.

NOW READY.

"Mid the Golden Gorse," the Society's Christmas Card for 1905-6. Specially painted for the Society by Mr. ARCHIBALD THORBURN. Reproduced in colour. With or without Calendar for 1906.

Copies of last year's card, "**The Song of the Season**," with illustrations in black and white from pictures by Mr. MACWHIRTER, R.A., may also be had.

Price of either card, 2d. each; 1s. 6d. per dozen. *Specimen card is presented with this number of BIRD NOTES AND NEWS.*

Next Issue.—The next Number of BIRD NOTES AND NEWS will be ready on April 1st, 1906.

Reading Cases for BIRD NOTES AND NEWS can be obtained from the office at a cost of 1s., including postage. They will be found very useful to keep the numbers together, and also for use in Public Libraries.

BIRD NOTES AND NEWS will be sent post free to any address for 1s. per annum, payable in advance.

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

TO OUR READERS.

WITH this issue of BIRD NOTES AND NEWS is published a Supplement containing a Report of the Conference of Workers held in London on October 10th, 1905. The number and variety of the subjects touched upon, of suggestions made, and of avenues of work pointed out at that Conference, and the necessity for further effort so strongly dwelt upon, indicate to some extent the multitude of the calls and demands that continuously reach the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds.

The need for work, and the will and the ability to do it, are not lacking. The Society has able guidance, and has facilities and machinery for carrying out many important schemes for the better preservation of Wild Birds. The funds only are wanting. But unfortunately that want cripples effort to a deplorable extent. Will not those who are interested in bird-life, and who wish to see our country not only maintain its position as the land of birds and song, but to see it also the home of many rare and beautiful species now on the verge of extermination, will not they help the work by providing additional funds and by enlisting the co-operation of new adherents?

WATCHERS must be employed if rare species are to be protected through the breeding season; but they cannot be employed without payment of wages.

PUBLICATIONS of various kinds are necessary. They mean additional printers' bills and heavy postages.

LEGAL, PARLIAMENTARY, INTERNATIONAL, EDUCATIONAL and PROPAGANDIST work involve outlay of many kinds.

BIRD AND TREE DAY COMPETITIONS, which have proved successful beyond expectation in arousing interest among children and teachers, can be conducted at present in only six counties and in elementary schools only. Even so they constitute a very serious item in the Society's expenditure. County residents and public bodies might well assist in this national education without necessarily linking themselves with every department of the Society's work.

Nomination forms for Fellows and Members will be gladly provided, and reports and literature forwarded. Fellows subscribe one guinea per annum, Members five shillings, Associates from one shilling. Special donations may be placed to the Watchers' Fund or the Bird and Tree Competitions where desired. Cheques and postal orders should be sent to the Hon. Secretary, Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, 3, Hanover Square, London, W

Supplement to Bird Notes and News.

THE ROYAL SOCIETY FOR THE PROTECTION OF BIRDS.

AUTUMN CONFERENCE.

A VERY pleasant and useful gathering of friends of Bird Protection was held on Friday, November 10th, when a Conference of Local Hon. Secretaries and other members of the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds took place at 26, George Street, Hanover Square, London. Some little time previously leading workers for the Society had been invited to contribute papers or to suggest subjects they would wish to have discussed, and the invitation was so well responded to that between thirty and forty separate items appeared on the agenda paper, affording proof of the interest taken in the work by friends in very many parts of Great Britain. It was, of course, impossible to deal with all of these, or to consider any subject thoroughly; but the meeting certainly served, not only to bring workers together for informal interchange of ideas, but also to call forth a variety of valuable and stimulating thoughts and suggestions, and, incidentally, to indicate how wide is the field open to the Society's efforts where workers and funds adequate to the need. Several topics which could be only lightly touched upon were referred to the Council for further consideration.

The Chairman of the Council, Mr. Montagu Sharpe, presided, supported by Mr. Ernest Bell, the Hon. Alfred Dobson, Hon. Mrs. Drewitt, Miss C. V. Hall, Mr. Hastings Lees, Sir George Keke-wich, Mr. Francis King, Miss L. Pollock, Mr. Trevor-Battye, Mrs. Owen Visger, Mrs. Lemon, and Mr. F. E. Lemon (Hon. Sec.), members of the Council. The Local Secretaries present were: Miss Barne (N.E. Suffolk), Mrs. Bates (Harlesden), Mr. R. B. Black (Dumbarton), Miss Butler (Royston), Mrs. Care (Cardiff), Miss Clifton (Romford), Rev. Allan Ellison (Mid Herts), Rev. Dr. Finch (Kensington), Mrs. W. B. Gerish (East Herts), Mrs. Hocking (Highgate), Miss Holcombe (representing Miss Thomas, Llanigon), Mrs. C. W. Lane (representing Miss H. Thorowgood, Kettering), Mr. J. R. B. Masefield (North Staffs), the Hon. F. S. O'Grady (Derbyshire), Mrs. A. G. Pollock (Mickleham), Mrs. Richard Roscoe (Hampstead), Miss M. E. Ruston (Lincoln), Mrs. Lawrence Pike (Wareham), Miss Salisbury (Nantwich), Miss A. C. Shipton (Retford), Mr. J. C. Stebbing (Fulham), Mrs. J. Thornely (Esher), Mrs. T. H.

Thornely (Birkenhead). Letters indicating subjects they wished brought forward had been received from nearly twenty others, who were unable to attend.

Among the company were also Miss Julia Andrews, Miss Gray Allen, Mr. Arnold (Meopham Court), Mr. Cosmo Blore, Miss Cameron, Madame Starr-Canziani, Mrs. Baillie Guthrie, Mr. W. Hartmann, Mr. Herbert Helme, Mr. and Mrs. J. O. Herdman, Miss A. C. Jeaffreson, Mrs. Francis Knight, Mrs. Marshall, Mr. and Mrs. A. H. H. Matthews, Miss C. E. Mordan, Mrs. Nelson, Mr. Clement E. Pike, Hon. C. M. Powys, Mrs. Probart, Mrs. W. E. Scott, Mrs. Trewby, Miss E. L. Turner, Mrs. Fisher Unwin, Rev. S. E. Vardon, Mrs. Warton, Mrs. Ellis Walton, Mr. T. F. Wells, Mr. C. C. Whitworth, Mrs. Willis Bund, Lady Wyllie, and many others.

The guests were received by Julia, Marchioness of Tweeddale, a Vice-President of the Society, who in a few words of hearty welcome congratulated the Society on the wonderful progress it had made, and expressed her pleasure that so many were present, in spite of the weather, to evince their interest in the work and their desire to do more. She hoped that every lady and gentleman connected with the Society worked among their friends to secure new members, as she herself always did, thus, as it were, accumulating interest. She had personally enlisted five new members during the short time she had been associated with the Society, and trusted everybody else had done a great deal more. She was sorry that ladies were still so wicked about wearing birds; her milliners knew that it was no use showing her bird-trimmed millinery, as she would not on any account wear such things.

BIRDS IN MILLINERY.

Madame Canziani opened the discussions with a paper on "Possible ways by which the Society might extend its usefulness," in which she appealed for special effort and concerted and energetic action to put a check upon the enormous destruction of birds for millinery. It was estimated that for trade purposes between 200 and 300 millions of birds were slaughtered annually, England alone importing twenty-five to thirty millions. She advocated an urgent protest to the editors of all papers publishing fashion articles, begging them to forbid mention and illustration of hats trimmed with birds and aigrettes; a similar protest to drapers and milliners, pointing out that while the foreign trade of the plume-hunter flourished our own home trades

in ribbon, lace, velvet, artificial flowers, etc., must suffer in proportion; and a strong appeal to the bishops and clergy of all denominations, begging them to preach in all the churches against this wanton waste of life, which was a disgrace to our Christianity, in order that henceforth no woman might sin in ignorance.

A proposition from Mrs. Edward Phillips that a public protest, signed by leading ornithologists, against the bird-exterminating fashion of "murderous millinery," should be addressed to the Queen; and a further suggestion for a petition of a similar kind from the women of England; were referred to the Council.—Mrs. J. H. Thornely (Birkenhead) and Mr. Edward Ash (Headingley) advocated arrangements being made with milliners all over England for a general show of birdless millinery, such as had been successfully organised at Southport.—Mrs. Nelson (New Malden) spoke of the encouragement due to milliners who refused to sell, or at least to display, birds and "ospreys," as was the case with two leading firms in her suburb; if large establishments could be induced to do this the smaller ones would follow.—Miss Conyers (Ilkley) indicated the difficulty of approaching the wearers of plumes, a matter requiring much tact, and likely to be met with more careful consideration from ladies when they were not caught, so to speak, red-handed.

Captain Tailby thought the first suggestion went to the root of the matter, since everybody took example from the leaders of Society. Etiquette prevented people bringing the matter plainly before the Queen personally, and therefore the only way was by means of a public protest which could not be burked, and must reach her; and he was sure that Her Majesty would then be the very first in the land to back up the objects of this Society. He ventured to say that ninety-nine out of every hundred women of all ranks did not read leaflets or newspapers. The second point was to persuade the clergy to talk to their congregations; they had the advantage that their hearers could not escape them. Thirdly, there was the Press. Not only were foreign birds killed to supply plumes, but gulls and terns were being worn by the lowest classes, and since that was the case, there was practically no limit to the slaughter of our own British birds.—Mr. King heartily supported an appeal being made to the Queen by the women of England.—Mrs. Fisher Unwin urged the preparation of posters representing the slaughter and desolation produced in the South American heronries by the plume-hunters.—The Rev. A.

Ellison said he felt that the clergy might do a good deal for the preservation of rare birds, and for the checking of plumage-wearing, not perhaps always by sermons, but certainly in lectures. They no doubt had exceptional opportunities for personal influence, and a large number of them took an interest in bird-life. He thought it would be worth while to make another appeal to them for help.

METHODS OF WORK.

To the section devoted more especially to the working of the Society, Mr. W. Percival Westell (St. Albans) contributed a paper on "Individual Effort," in which he dwelt upon the necessity for timely zeal in order to enlist the practical sympathy of the many persons interested in birds, and to turn them into bird-protectors and supporters of the Society. The wearing of plumage was, he believed, in almost every instance the result of ignorance, and a word in season might result in the headgear being thrown on the rubbish-heap. Those branch secretaries who could lecture, preferably illustrating their remarks by lantern slides, might secure many converts to the preservation of wild life, and also raise funds. In lecturing to school children he made a practice of offering prizes for the best essays upon the lecture, and the results had been as pleasant as they were surprising. There was often an opportunity of speaking a kind word to boys met rambling down country lanes; of taking parties of juveniles or adults for country walks and talks; of a word in season to gamekeeper, farmer, or bailiff; of writing an opportune letter to the local Press. He had been much struck in the last year or two by the kindly feeling towards birds shown by many of the younger boys, and considered that too much importance could not be attached to the inclusion of Nature study in the school curriculum.

Mrs. Boyle (Kensington) recommended that local secretaries should seek especially to interest people in living birds, and to encourage a knowledge of the songs and notes of birds. Could not they sometimes take out little parties of adults or children and teach them to know the various songs of "our minor poets"? It was quite extraordinary how few people knew one bird from another by its notes.

Miss E. Smith (Sutton) advocated the formation of a lending library of ornithological works for the use of secretaries; probably writers of books would give copies of their works to the Society for this purpose.—The suggestion was referred to the Council.

LECTURES AND LECTURERS.

The need for more lectures, to advertise the Society, to diffuse a knowledge of bird-life and of bird-protection laws, and to stimulate interest in the work, was urged by Miss Simms (Charmouth) and Miss Churton (Brighton). Miss Simms pleaded for a touring lecturer to visit country districts in particular, arousing fresh interest and inspiring new life and activity, and encouraging local workers. Hospitality would no doubt be offered by the local secretary, and surely someone would volunteer for such work.—Mrs. Care spoke of the good that might result from a lecture or meeting in Cardiff.

Mr. Hastings Lees at once expressed his readiness to give a talk or lecture on birds in any place not too far from London, say not more than 200 miles distant; he would bring a selection of the Society's lantern slides, and the only expense, if hospitality was given, would be the railway fare. (Mr. Lees was booked for some half-a-dozen lectures by the end of the afternoon.)

Mr. Masefield, in a thoroughly practical paper on "Local Bird Lectures, and how to make them interesting," supplied hints for those willing to undertake a lecture in their own neighbourhood. For audience they should aim at getting women of fashion, teachers, agriculturists, gardeners, boys and girls. It was well to deal mainly with birds of a restricted area, of the locality or parish, or even of some particular garden, and to show slides of those less frequently seen. He usually began with a brief *résumé* of British birds, their numbers, species, migrations, etc., with some account of those lost to us; passing on to the causes which led to their diminution, especially the raids of the collector, bird-catcher, Cockney sportsman and gamekeeper. The use that every bird has in nature should be noted, why they should be preserved explained, and something said as to what was being done by Acts and Orders, and what might be done. Referring to the importance of bird sanctuaries, he said that in his own garden, where nesting-boxes were freely provided, he had had forty-two species nesting, and had counted seventy nests at one time. He was not sure how far it was wise to make a secret of the nesting-places of rare birds; collectors always knew of these, and the interest felt by the public tended towards protection.

Mr. A. H. Matthews put in a word of warning to lecturers in country districts not to take too extreme a view by advocating the unqualified preservation of all species in the present state of

agricultural opinion. Farmers had to be reckoned with; and there was no doubt that some species had unduly increased, such, for instance, as the starling—a favourite of his and a most engaging bird—to the damage of crops and the driving away of the woodpecker. The resolution came to by the Chambers of Agriculture, that there should be a departmental enquiry, was one the Society might well support. The destruction wrought by birds was obvious and conspicuous, while the good services they rendered were very little seen, and a careful scientific enquiry was needed to establish the truth and bring it home to the farmer.

The Chairman thought that the Free Library authorities, who often arranged lectures, might be willing to help in the matter of bird lectures.

The Hon. Secretary reminded those present that several typed lectures adapted to various audiences had been prepared and could be borrowed.

A paper by Mrs. Gerish, "How we attracted birds to a new garden," was not read, but will appear in a future number of BIRD NOTES AND NEWS.

(Mr. Clement E. Pike, F.R.Hist.S., kindly offers to give his lecture, "The Bird in Art, Song, and Nature," for the benefit of the Society, where any secretary arranges a meeting.)

[Information as to the Society's slides may be had from the Office, Hanover Square; in addition to the typed lectures descriptive notes on the slides, for the use of lecturers, are in preparation.]

THE TRAFFIC IN BIRDS.

An eloquent paper on Bird-Catching came from Mr. John Carey (Perth), who, speaking from observation extending over many years and from information collected, stated that birds were being more and more caught, during all the open season, in Scotland. This fact was to be accounted for to some extent by the numerous winter bird-shows held all over the country, with the reprehensible custom of giving prizes for caged wild birds. Miners were notorious for keeping birds for show, and in mining districts several cages were to be seen at almost every house in some streets. A further cause for the increased trade was the ease with which, in these days of weekly half-holidays, monthly holidays, and cheap railway fares, men from the towns go out into the country to spend their spare time bird-catching for gain. An appeal to such would be met with some such reply as "That's all very good, but folk want birds. If we didn't catch them others would. We don't catch them for pleasure, but for their price. Folks are

glad to buy them; a bird is cheery in a house." Yet another reason lay in the mawkish sentiment expressed by superficial observers who talked of the humanising and softening influence exerted by captive birds in the slums. In the course of thousands of visits to the slums, the writer had seen many a captive bird—miserable prisoners in foul little cages, hung near the ceiling to be "out of reach of the cat," with slimy water and dirty seed, its possessors as a rule oblivious of its presence, utterly careless of its comfort: a thing of less value than a broken chair or a cracked dish. Persons in less humble circumstances often kept wild birds because they were "so fond of them"; and to these was recommended a visit to a bird-dealer's shop now and then, that they might see what their fondness cost its victims. Two such visits were described. In one dismal shop the listless, sickly condition of the birds was ascribed to the dullness of the day, and the visitor invited to return when the gas was lit. Asked if close time affected the trade much, the dealer replied, "Close time! birds are wild in spring, and in summer are busy with their young, but we are all right as long as autumn and winter are left us." In the second case, birds of many species, home and foreign, were crowded up amid dirt and stench, in company with rabbits, pigeons, guinea-pigs, and fancy mice; almost all looked sickly, some dying. Comment on the somewhat high prices met with the rejoinder, "You must consider how many of the birds die, we must make up for the loss." "No wonder they die in such an atmosphere." "We can't keep them in a drawing-room, and the door is open." The birds also frequently suffer, in places littered with seed, and where cats cannot be kept, from inroads of mice, which sometimes nibble their feet off or gnaw through their wings. The remedy for this hideous misery and mockery of existence for the wild birds lies in legislation; in an Act of Parliament to make the keeping of caged birds illegal, to put an end to the traffic, to check this spoliation of a valuable national asset—a heritage of beauty and song in a land often cold and grey—and to leave the birds the liberty that is theirs by divine right, "that they may fly above the earth in the open firmament of heaven." Meanwhile, let each member of the Society do something for birds; rouse public opinion, write to local newspapers, with facts and details as to the work of bird-catchers in the district; drop a sentence or two in conversation, speak in the school and the Sunday-school. It is so easy not to see, not to care; but a visit to a bird-dealer's shop in some obscure

street would surely stimulate anew to exertion beyond a mere conventional expression of pity.

The catching and caging of wild birds, and the question of bird-shops, brought also strong protests and appeals from Mrs. Fuller Maitland, Mrs. C. Q. Roberts, Mr. L. Downing Fullerton, Mr. James Mott, and Mrs. J. O. Herdman. Mr. Stebbing described the method of catchers near London in catching birds as they came to drink at a stream, and exhibited the net they had employed and of which he had dispossessed them. (Mr. Stebbing presented the net to the Society.)—Mr. Herdman hoped that in any petition to Her Majesty allusion would be made to this subject. When a bird was killed its miseries were ended; but when it was caught they were only begun.

Mrs. E. Phillips desired the meeting to consider the propriety of appointing an inspector in plain clothes to pay surprise visits to special places and report as to the illegal capture, caging, and destruction of British birds, with a view to prosecutions; and Mr. Ash asked if a fund could not be opened to pay for inspectors.

The Chairman said that the condition of bird-shops and how far they could be reached by the law was already under the consideration of the Council. Inspectors were a matter of ways and means. If the Society had an annual income of thousands instead of hundreds many things might be undertaken.

Mrs. Fisher Unwin described the wholesale manner in which birds are caught on migration in the Tyrol and Italy. No sentiment could appeal to the people, who were very poor and used the birds for food with their *polenta*; and the cruelties practised on every hand were very great. Possibly a leaflet couched in the simplest language might be of some use.

The Chairman explained that the Society had already been in communication with Mr. Hawksley, of the Rome and Naples S.P.C.A., who, when in England, had attended a meeting of Council by special arrangement that the subject might be thoroughly discussed.

EDUCATION.

Mr. F. B. Kirkman, in opening the discussion on teaching in schools, said the question was how to protect birds from boys. What they had to do was to check two instincts of the boy's nature, the instinct to destroy and the instinct to collect. The ordinary boy's collection of eggs was of necessity wholly useless from a scientific point of view, and the student of oology must go to the great national

collections, or trust to books. The difficulty was best met by developing another instinct, that of curiosity, and thus bringing back the boy to the nest, not to destroy or collect, but in the spirit of sympathy and enquiry. Leaflets were of little use. The Society's Bird and Tree Competitions were an entirely right method, but so far, owing to lack of funds, they were confined to elementary schools and to certain counties. He would like to see them extended to secondary and especially to preparatory schools, where games were not so greatly in the ascendant, and where the masters in walking out with the boys had so much opportunity for directing nature study. A list of questions similar to that in use might be set, and a leaflet showing the principles on which they should proceed, and a bibliography of useful books prepared; but he should be inclined to leave the detail exceedingly elastic, that masters and mistresses might carry out their own methods. He believed the masters were quite ready to help if they knew how, and he suggested a letter to the organ of the preparatory schools, and communications, with offer of lectures, to the schools themselves.

Mr. Helme suggested that prizes might be given for bird essays by children in connection with local flower shows, and these prize essays published in the parish magazine.—The Chairman described the working of the Society's Bird and Tree Competitions, two of the handsome challenge shields given to winning schools being exhibited on the platform.

Mr. Masefield showed some excellent model eggs recommended for the formation of school and other collections. After much experiment a manufacturer in the Potteries had hit upon the right material, and was prepared to make models of every British egg if a guarantee fund of £20 was raised.—Mr. L. Mellersh (Cheltenham) drew attention to the lack of good coloured prints of birds for the use of schools, and advocated the formation of a special committee to enquire into the cost, etc., and a special fund to deal with it, believing that such plates would ultimately pay for their production.—The Chairman said these things had been thought of years ago, but they were a matter of funds, and the funds did not exist. The question, however, should again receive consideration.

ACTS AND ORDERS.

Among a number of other subjects entered on the programme, questions and recommendations with regard to the enforcement of the present Bird Protection laws were down to the names of Mr.

J. H. Buxton (Ware), Miss Clifford (Bristol), Mr. J. Elliot (Hoylake), Mr. T. A. Coward (Bowdon), Mrs. Arnold (Meopham), Mr. Ash (Headingley), and Miss F. Smith (Penzance). It was contended that the state of the law was insufficiently known, and that the notices were often so complicated as to be incomprehensible to the ordinary man; and it was asked whether the Society could not issue some translation or simplification.—The Hon. Secretary announced that, in reply to a letter from the Society, the Home Office had undertaken to direct the local authorities to send copies of new Orders to the Chief Constable and the Clerks to the Justices of the districts affected.—With regard to the question of how to awaken in the Constabulary an interest in, and a sense of their duties under the Wild Birds Protection Acts, the suggestion was made that it was well to be on friendly terms with the local officer, and that a little acknowledgment of his efforts might not come amiss.

The meeting closed with a vote of thanks to the speakers and contributors of papers, and to the Chairman, and with many expressions of the hope that the Conference might be made an annual institution.

FISHERMEN AND GULLS.

FAILURE of the sardine fishery is not the only disaster which has this year befallen the Breton fishermen. The gulls and other sea birds are also vanishing from the coast. This intensifies the calamity, because they are valuable auxiliaries to the fisherfolk. They are to him what the pointer is to the sportsman. Where the shoals of sardines are there do the seagulls gather in flocks, and the fishing boats in the season follow their movements with a confidence that is never betrayed. But people with cheap shooting licences have of late years wrought such havoc among these birds that they are deserting the coast, and Brittany feels her misery becoming more than complete. Petitions are being signed in the province praying for legislative prohibition of such useless slaughter.—*Globe*, October 20th, 1905.

AMONG rare birds recently shot are two Hen-Harriers (now very rare birds) and a white Stork near King's Lynn; a Quail at Lopham Fen; a Buzzard near Winchester; and a Pelican at Little Eaton, Derbyshire.



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