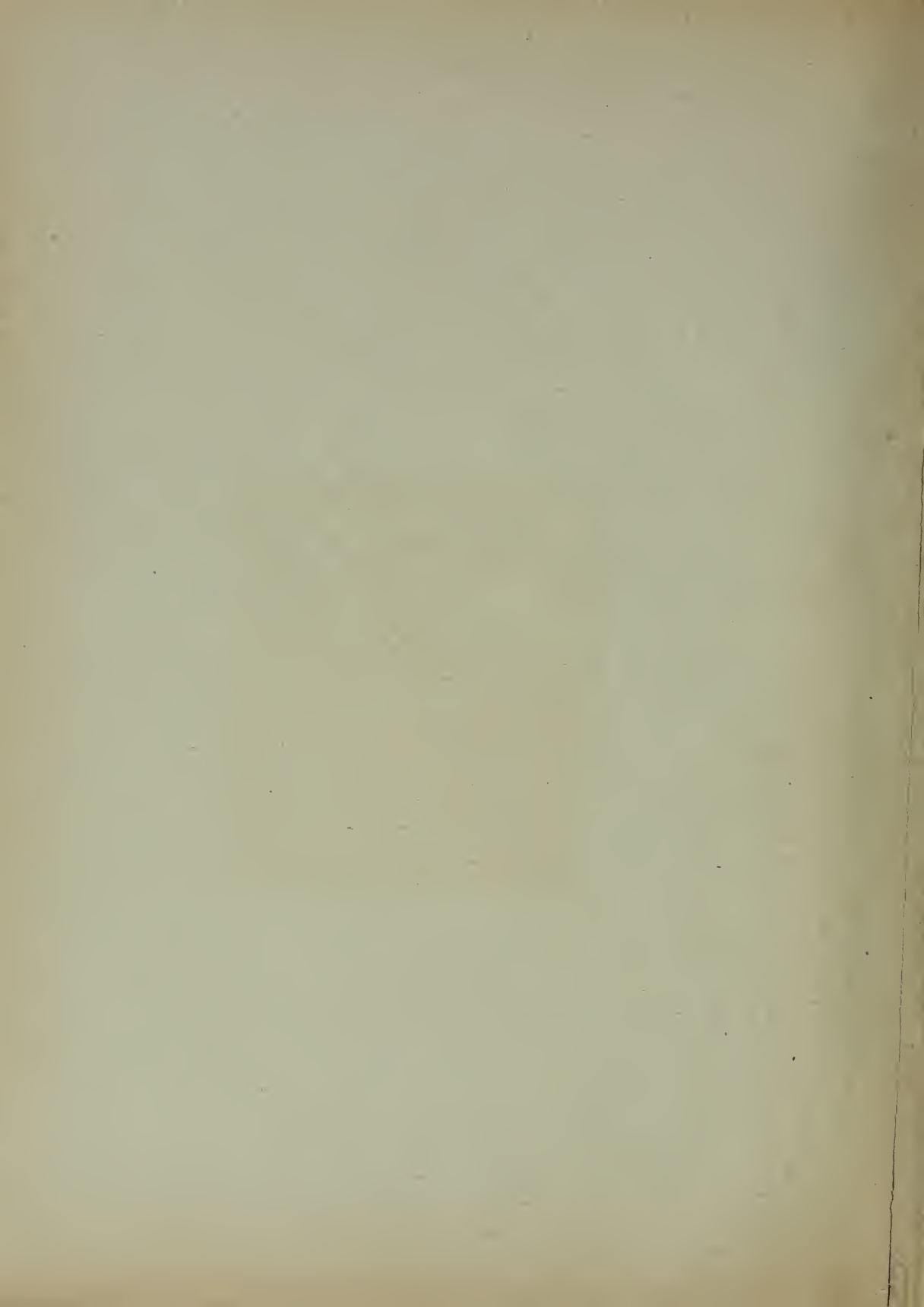


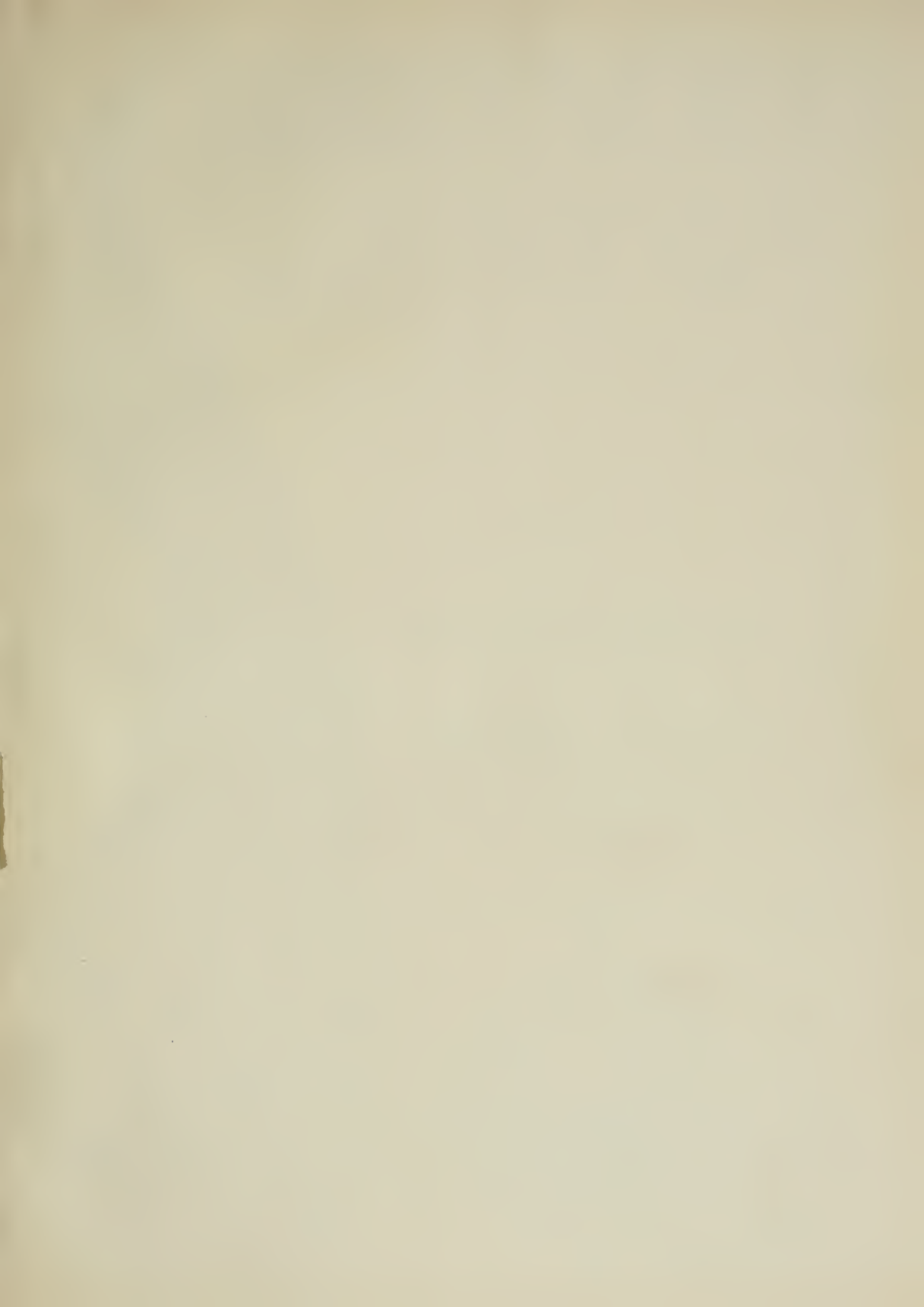


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# BIRD NOTES and NEWS

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ISSUED QUARTERLY.

By the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds.

VOLUME III.

March, 1908—December, 1909.

WITH TABLES OF CONTENTS

AND

INDEX.



London,

23, Queen Anne's Gate,  
S.W.



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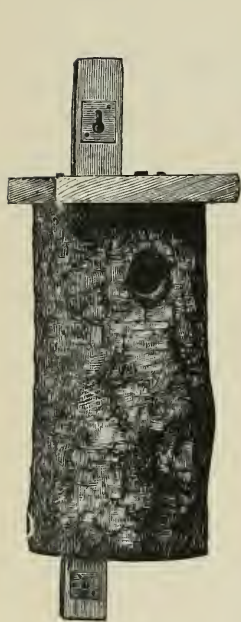
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# NESTING-BOXES FOR BIRDS.

THE ROYAL SOCIETY FOR THE PROTECTION OF BIRDS, 23, Queen Anne's Gate, London, S.W., has made arrangements for the supply of Nesting-Boxes for Wild Birds. The object is to facilitate the provision in gardens, parks, and shrubberies of artificial nesting-places for certain species of birds, and to provide patterns for the local and home manufacture of these.

Figures A, B, E and F represent Boxes made on the plan recommended by Baron von BERLEPSCH, and adopted generally in Germany, Austria, and other countries. Full description of these Boxes and their use will be found in a book entitled "How to Attract and Protect Wild Birds," recently translated into English; to be obtained of THE ROYAL SOCIETY FOR THE PROTECTION OF BIRDS, price 1s. 6d. (Post free, 1s. 9d.)



\* Fig. A. 1/6  
With brass hinges, 2/-



Fig. B. 2/-

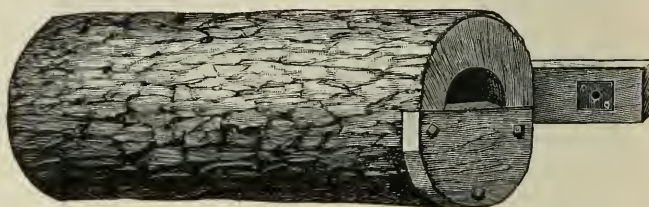


Fig. E. 2/-

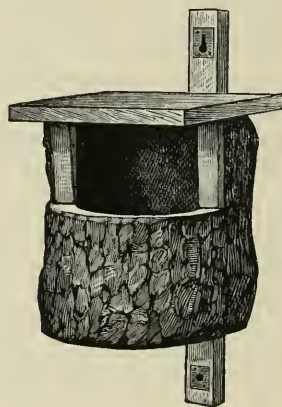


Fig. F. 1/6

These Prices do not include  
Carriage.

Box A is suitable for the Great Tit, Blue Tit, Marsh-Tit, Coal-Tit, Crested Tit, Nuthatch, Tree-Creeper, Wryneck, Pied Fly-catcher, Redstart, or Lesser Spotted Woodpecker.

Box B is for Starlings, Greater Spotted Woodpeckers, Wrynecks, Nuthatches, Pied Fly-catchers, Redstarts, Great Tits. The last five species settle in Box A as well as in B. The former suffices as a rule.

For the sake of completeness we have Box E for Swifts, with the boring of Box B, and a semi-circular opening.

The open Box F has a diameter of about  $4\frac{1}{4}$  inches, and a depth of about  $2\frac{1}{4}$  inches. It is made for such birds as Redstarts, Spotted Fly-catchers, and Pied Wagtails.

**All orders and other communications should be sent to the SOCIETY'S OFFICE, 23, Queen Anne's Gate, London, S.W., where Specimen Boxes may be seen.**

*\*A box somewhat similar to this pattern, English made, with swing-lid, can also be had. It is catalogued as A 4.*

**ENGLISH BOXES** can also be supplied, including those made by Mr. W. ALCOCK, Cheadle, Staffs, under the direction of Mr. J. R. B. MASEFIELD, Author of "Wild Bird Protection and Nesting-Boxes."

The designs for Figs. M and N are taken by permission from Mr. MASEFIELD'S book:—

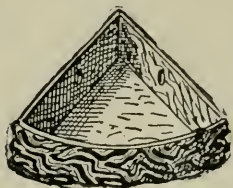


Fig. N. 6d.

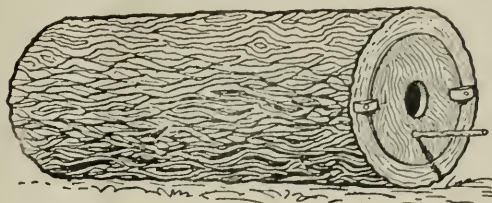


Fig. M. 2/-

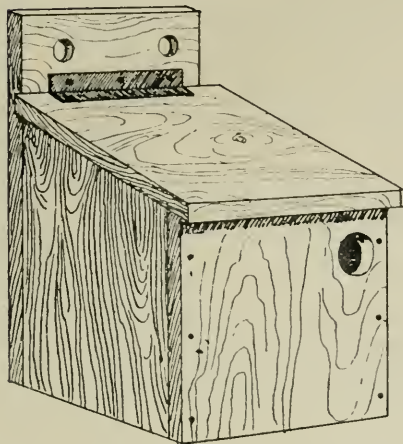


Fig. W., the "Walden," of plain hard wood, with square top and leather hinge, 2/-

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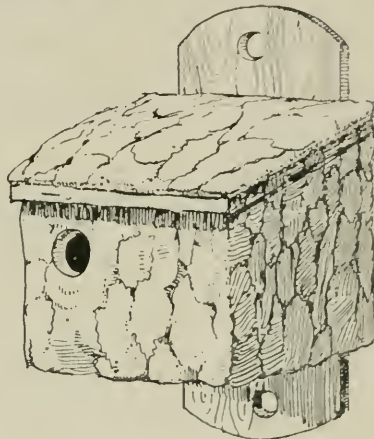


Fig. L., covered with bark, 2/-

**NESTING-BOXES** are intended more especially for Wild Birds that build in holes, particularly those that usually select old trees and other decaying wood, and therefore find few suitable places in the modern garden and shrubbery. They will not attract such birds as the Blackbird and Thrush or the Finch tribe in general.

It is advisable to have the Boxes in position some weeks before nesting-time, so that the Birds may get accustomed to the sight of them. An east or south-east aspect is better than the unshaded due south.

The Boxes, whether nailed against a wall or tree-trunk, or fixed in the fork of a tree, should be perfectly steady when fixed, as Birds will not take up their abode in an unstable erection. The upper part of the Box should incline very slightly forward. Boxes should be at a sufficient height to be safely out of the reach of cats, and inaccessible from a branch that a cat can climb. Birds should be disturbed as little as possible while nesting; several Boxes for one species of Bird may be placed near together, but different species should not be expected to nest in immediate proximity.

Every kind of Nesting-Box cannot be supplied, but the Society will endeavour to execute as promptly as possible orders sent in on the form attached to this paper; delay in some cases may be inevitable, owing to the increased demand. The manufacturers are receiving orders from all parts of the world. Over 3400 Boxes were supplied last season through THE ROYAL SOCIETY FOR THE PROTECTION OF BIRDS.

**The Boxes are not suitable for transmission by Parcel Post, being in most cases over the prescribed weight.**

FRANK E. LEMON, *Hon. Secretary,*

ROYAL SOCIETY FOR THE PROTECTION OF BIRDS,  
23, QUEEN ANNE'S GATE, S.W.

The Royal Society for  
the Protection of Birds.

FOUNDED  
1889.

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

*Incorporated under Royal Charter, 1904.*

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

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

**MEMBER**, by subscribing an annual sum of not less than Five shillings (5s.), or by compounding for life by a donation of Five guineas (£5 5s.)

Fellows and Members are, after election, entitled to receive a copy of every publication issued by the Society, and to attend and vote at all General Meetings of 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 Two-pence to cover cost of registration.

Associates receive cards on joining; Fellows and Members receive certificates of election.





*Phot. Keturah-Collings.*

THE DUCHESS OF PORTLAND,  
President of the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds.



# BIRD NOTES AND NEWS.

Issued Quarterly by the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds.

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[MARCH 25, 1908.

## BIRD-WATCHERS.



THE Watchers' Department of the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds represents perhaps the part of the Society's work most interesting to scientific ornithologists and to lovers of wild Nature. The need for it is not brought home conspicuously to the multitude, as is, for example, the need for some restriction on the plumage trade by the sight of the furiously-feathered headgear which is forced on public notice; or as the call for some effective check upon bird-catching is made obvious by pathetic and dismal glimpses of bird-life in dealers' shops. But if the necessity is not thus made evident, neither does the work suffer from that callousness of outlook which custom and familiarity breed in everyone. Some of the birds that are special subjects of Watchers' protection are little more than names to most persons, and are rarely if ever seen by many of their best friends. The majestic White-tailed Eagle, with his lofty eyrie in the remote Shetlands; the bold Skua, dwelling among the mountains and mists of the wildest Highlands; the Dotterel, driven by persecution to the moors and fells of Scotland and Westmoreland; the Bearded Tit, rarely emerging from its none too safe retreat in the Norfolk reed-beds; the dainty little Phalarope, nesting by a few lochs and loughs far away from the abodes of men; the sombre Raven and the handsome Chough, haunting some well-nigh inaccessible cliff-precipice; the Roseate Tern, jealously guarding its eggs on a remote shingled shore: these and others are, as living birds, no more intimately known to the great majority of persons than are the Trogons and Rupicolas, whose bodies gleam among the sheaves of the plume-

hunters' harvest in Houndsditch warehouses. But, though unseen and unknown in their wild dwelling-places, they appeal forcibly to the imagination as fellow-denizens of our island home; for the romance of Nature has always appealed to men of British race.

Such being the case, it might be supposed that our rarest birds would be safe in the wilderness and the solitary places where they have taken refuge from civilization; and that the only intruders on their peace would be men who themselves know the fascination of solitude, and whose eyes would follow with the sympathy of kinship the Buzzard circling above the forest, the Osprey poised over the mountain tarn, or the Peregrine soaring among wind-lashed headlands. Unfortunately, however, greed appeals more strongly than romance to a considerable number of persons, and wild life then becomes merely something to harry and despoil for personal gain. The Appeal just issued by the Watchers' Committee of the R.S.P.B. draws attention to the growth of that class of collectors who, under the name of British Ornithologists, are among the worst enemies with which British Ornithology has to reckon—"naturalists" who, in place of seeking to preserve the grandest forms of British bird life, ceaselessly endeavour to obtain rare "British-taken" eggs and birds, though at the price of the ultimate extinction of species. The high prices paid by such collectors for authenticated specimens are obviously a direct incentive to egg-stealing and bird-taking on the part of keeper and shepherd and dalesman, in defiance of the law for Bird Protection. As the *Daily News* (February 17th, 1908) puts it, in commenting on the Appeal, "the collector or his paid

agent will climb to the eyrie of the White-tailed Eagles and fight the birds for their last egg; he will rob the nest of the feeble St. Kilda Wren, or take toll as he walks by the nest of the Roseate Tern. A moderate risk of fine and the forfeiture of his booty does not deter him, and it becomes absolutely necessary to appoint special watchers to keep the birds under observation all through the nesting season."

"Perhaps in course of time," remarks the *Aberdeen Free Press* (February 17th), "we may educate these collectors out of existence . . . but until this is done we must take protective and preventive measures, and be grateful for the excellent work performed by the watchers of the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds.

"We in this part of the country have a melancholy example of bird persecution in the story of the Ospreys on Loch-an-eilean. It has been told in detail in the pages of the *Cairngorm Club Journal*, and is at once a tragedy in wild life and a disgrace to the men who perpetrated it. The Ospreys may never return to the ruined tower on that little Speyside loch, and it may be too late to repair that crime. The warning, however, may be taken, and every man who loves the country and its living things will give his influence to prevent similar and other outrages upon the rare animals of our land."

"As we have had occasion to point out more than once," says *Country Life* (February 22nd), "whoever is desirous of obtaining specimens of the nests and eggs of the rarest species can always do so in this country, in spite of the various Acts of Parliament meant for their protection. There is a constant and regular trade, which it is the object of the Society to which we have referred to stop. Obviously its continuation means the utter destruction of many species that are now thinned down to an almost disappearing point of rarity.

"The aim of those who wrote the letter of which we have made a text is frankly to obtain funds for the payment of these watchers and other necessary expenses.

It is certainly not unfair that they should be allowed to publish such an appeal. There is no reason in the world why a very small section of the community should be called upon to bear all the expenses incidental to the preservation of our rare birds; for in the highest sense of the term the creatures of the air, the beasts of the field, and the fishes of the sea are the property of all who take their pleasure abroad. They amuse and delight the eye, they feast the ear, and they minister to that insatiable curiosity regarding their manifestation of life that seems to be essential to existence, if not part of existence itself. Whoever destroys them is acting against the public good, and we have the greatest sympathy with a society which exists for the purpose of protecting the wild creatures of this country from the hands of the depredator, whether he goes by the name of a pot-hunter or of a collecting naturalist."

The *Times*, in a leading article (March 2nd) on the Protection of Wild Birds, also refers to the extinction or threatened extinction of many of Britain's most interesting species, and adds: "The admirable work of the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds in appointing paid watchers to guard the nesting-places of the rarest species, deserves a wide extension of support; nor is this method of bird protection open to the utilitarian objections which can be urged in certain cases against the preservation of more generally distributed species."

For such sympathetic and outspoken articles as those quoted, and for the publication of the appeal in a large number of influential newspapers, bird-lovers may well be grateful to the Press, and the Society has also to thank the friends of Bird Protection who responded to that appeal. Other co-operation is likewise essential. In the first place, that of County Councils in the scheduling and all-the-year protection of rare species. And here may be noted the importance of protecting these birds even in districts where they may be little likely to occur; since to apply for such protection only when and where a rare species is found established is likely enough to bring about

the very thing feared, by advertising the bird's presence. The aid of landowners and tenants of sporting rights is important; and the support of magistrates in dealing with offenders is necessary if convictions are to produce any sensible effect. So long as the keeper who shoots a Harrier is allowed

to traffic in his specimen, and the man who shoots a Bittern because he "didn't know what it was" gets off with a nominal fine—both of these are recent cases—the law will not have much attention, and the work of Watchers will be proportionately more difficult.

## The Plume Trade.

THE following figures show the number of packages of "osprey" feathers and of skins of Birds of Paradise offered at each of the London plume sales during 1907:—

	"Osprey" packages.	Birds of Paradise.
February 12th ..	504 ..	4,728
April 6th ..	422 ..	3,831
June 11th ..	348 ..	4,244
August 2nd ..	315 ..	3,831
October 15th ..	548 ..	7,000
December 17th ..	200 ..	4,667

The totals cannot be exactly obtained by adding these columns, as no doubt a discount must be allowed for plumes left unsold on one day and offered again at the next sale. The total sum of the "osprey" packages is 2337, against 1868 in 1906; so that neither Queen Alexandra's expression of opinion, nor the various laws for prohibiting the export of such feathers, can be said to have had any effect on the efforts of the trade. The total number of Birds of Paradise shown is 28,300. Other features of the sales were the number of Crowned Pigeons from New Guinea (a very rare and beautiful species) and of Kingfishers; and the continued import of Impeyan Pheasants from India, and of Lyre Bird tails and Emu skins from Australia, where both these birds are supposed to be protected.

The first sale of 1908 was held at the Commercial Sale Rooms, London, on February 11th. For this sale 8631 Birds of Paradise were catalogued, and Crested Pigeons were again in large supply. There were 253 packages of "osprey" feathers offered, 110 of which were stated to be East Indian; nearly all sold, and prices were much higher. A large number of Terns and Kingfishers were included in the sale, the former chiefly from Japan, and from the same country one firm offered nearly 18,000 "Dominoes."

Sir Herbert Maxwell, in his *Naturalist's Notes in the Pall Mall Gazette* (February 25th, 1908), quotes from an Australian newspaper a description of the progress made at the Antipodes in the nefarious trade of plume-hunters:—

"In this case the victims were a colony of White Herons or Egrets, which supply milliners with 'ospreys,' a feminine decoration which appears to continue fashionable in some circles, although the Queen has pronounced her disapproval of adornment procured at the expense of so much cruelty. The writer describes a visit which he made in the height of the breeding season, involving a journey by boat of about twelve miles, this being the only practicable mode of approach. On arrival, evidence of a recent raid was only too plainly visible. As the boat approached, large white patches were to be seen floating on the water, or resting on the fallen trees in the neighbourhood of the heronry. These proved to be the carcasses of adult egrets, some fifty in number, about one-third, or perhaps more, of the entire colony. These birds had been ruthlessly shot while brooding their young, which, to the number of about a couple of hundred, had been remorselessly left to die a lingering death from hunger. Many had already succumbed at the time of the writer's visit, having fallen from the nests into the water below. Others from time to time fell from the nests to share the same fate, while others, again, perished from exhaustion as they sat on the nests. Perhaps the most pitiable sight of all was to watch those which had still sufficient strength to move and cry, attempting in vain to attract the attention of old birds, parents of other broods, flying past with food in their beaks for their own young."

The following extract from *La Nouvelle Mode*, of December 29th, 1907, forwarded by Mrs. John Galsworthy, is worth quoting as a glaring example of that combination of savagery and ostentation which appears to be a millinery ideal:—

"En voici un, forme Lamballe, en panne noire tendue, avec large draperie de skungs qui est la fantaisie la plus à la mode comme fourrure de chapeaux. Avec une aigrette très fournie d'une teinte assortie qui doit avoir pour le moins un pied de haut, on a le fameux chapeau de 800 francs, ce qui classe immédiatement une femme dans le domaine de la haute élégance.

"L'aigrette de 600 francs étant de rigueur, tout le monde comprendra quelles proportions elle peut atteindre. Pour la toque de fourrure dont le fond est en velours ou en loutre, les bords en chinchilla ou en zibeline assortis à l'étole et au manchon, l'aigrette peut être plus modeste."

Another member of the R.S.P.B. recently visited Chicago, when all the town was being attracted to one of the biggest stores in that amazing city by the exhibition of a "thousand-dollar hat." This triumph of costliness, displayed in a glass case, was of ordinary fur, ornamented with a single plume of

one of the rarest and most nearly annihilated Birds of Paradise. Its value lay in the fact that its race had been practically extirpated to fill the plume-hunter's bag. There seems to be a fine rivalry between Paris and Chicago as to whether francs or dollars can plumb the deepest depths of vulgarity.

## Economic Ornithology.







THE Larch Sawfly pest has recently appeared and done serious damage in the larch plantations of the Thirlmere district, whence Manchester obtains its water supply. An investigation of the area was consequently undertaken last year by Mr. C. Gordon Hewitt, B.Sc., Lecturer in Economic Zoology, University of Manchester, and he has presented two extremely interesting reports to the Waterworks Committee of the Manchester Corporation. After referring to the value of the afforestation—not merely in beautifying the district but in increasing, by condensation, the amount of water produced and purifying it by filtration—Professor Hewitt details the life history of the insect. He then deals with the remedial measures of hand-picking, burning, and spraying; and with the natural enemies of the fly, alluding in particular to the great assistance given by Rooks, Starlings, and Chaffinches. In his second report, November, 1907, Professor Hewitt reviews the steps taken and the expense and difficulty attending some of the remedies; and he dwells strongly on the importance of encouraging birds which feed on the Sawfly grub and other injurious insects, not only on account of the present attack, but generally in keeping down such enemies of forest trees. In a region like Thirlmere, where stone walls take the place of hedges, and small birds are not abundant, mere protection is not enough. This encouragement he advises should be given by (1) feeding during the winter time when the natural food cannot be obtained; (2) protection by strictly prohibiting bird-nesting, and the shooting of small birds;

(3) provision of suitable cover and nesting places, natural and artificial.

Of all the birds the Tits are, in Professor Hewitt's opinion, the most valuable from the forester's point of view; and he therefore recommends the provision of winter food suitable for these and for other useful birds, such as Chaffinches, Hedge-Sparrows, Starlings, Blackbirds, and Thrushes. Where possible hawthorn and wild fruit-trees might be planted. "Other birds which should be protected in the interests of the plantations are the Cuckoo, Flycatcher, Wagtails, Wren, and Jackdaw; also Woodpeckers, which, although they do a certain amount of damage to trees, are extremely useful in destroying the larvæ of beetles living in the bark and timber, and also other insects."

Temporary nesting places might, he suggests, be provided by making heaps of cut branches, such as are stacked for Pheasant cover; and for the Tits especially, nest-boxes should be hung in suitable places—a plan successfully followed in continental forests where birds are scarce. [In accordance with this advice, experimental nesting-boxes have been supplied by the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, and it is hoped that they will help to correct Thirlmere's deficiency of bird-life.]

"It needs no pointing out to the practical person," Mr. Gordon Hewitt sums up, "that if any considerable areas are to be afforested successfully, it is of the greatest importance to keep as large a stock as possible of the natural enemies of those insects injurious to woodland trees, in order to minimise as far as possible the risk of future outbreaks of these pests, which are not only external but internal also."




**Notes.**




### The DESTRUCTION of PLUME-BIRDS.

It is probable that a Bill will shortly be introduced into Parliament with the object of preventing the destruction of wild birds for their plumage. A conference on the subject, called by Lord Avebury, was held on March 13th, when representatives were present from the British Museum (Natural History Department), Royal Society, Linnean Society, Zoological Society, Selborne Society, and the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds. The general provisions of the proposed Bill were practically agreed upon.

### BIRD PROTECTION IN AUSTRALIA.

At the annual meeting of the Australasian Ornithologists' Union, held at Sydney on October 29th, 1907, Mr. Campbell, vice-president, read a paper on "Bird Protection in the Old World," in which he reviewed the steps taken in Europe for the protection of birds useful to agriculture, and strongly urged the necessity for similar measures for the benefit of the farmers and fruit-growers of Australia. No insecticide, he remarked, was so cheap as the natural one—birds. Mr. Mattingley, the secretary, dealt with the destruction of Egrets, as viewed from a utilitarian standpoint, laying stress on the utility of these birds. An excellent suggestion was made that a Model Bird Protection Law should be prepared by the Union, such as the Audubon Societies drew up for the United States of America.

### IN CANADA.

The Society for Nature Study and Bird Protection, which has made a successful start in Hamilton, Canada, is a welcome addition to the bird protection societies of the British Empire, and will, it may be hoped, spread to other parts of the Dominion, and, in the words of the prospectus, "build up a strong organization for the protection of our Canadian

birds." Its president, Mr. J. F. Ballard, and its secretary, Mr. H. C. Merrilees, are both members of the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, and its aims and objects are such as have the sympathy of every adherent of the home Association, namely:—

First: To discourage the wanton destruction of birds, their nests and eggs, and to encourage in its place an intelligent interest in living birds.

Second: To discourage the purchase or use of any plumage other than that of domesticated fowls or the ostrich.

Third: To disseminate information respecting the economic value of birds to agriculture, and their importance to man's welfare.

### THE BALANCE OF NATURE.

A better Bird and Tree sermon could scarcely be preached than that provided by the report on the Larch Sawfly presented to the Manchester Corporation by Professor Gordon Hewitt. The importance of Trees to water supply, and of Birds to Trees, is clearly set forth. Incidentally, the report furnishes a suggestive lesson as to the care which may well be exercised in dealing with any of Nature's arrangements. Useful small birds have been kept down in number by, among other causes, the numbers of the Hawk tribe in the region. The Hawks are, however, valuable in keeping down the numbers of mice, which attack seedlings and young trees. Yet again, the mice, and, especially, shrews, are useful in feeding on insect cocoons, which are commonly refused by birds, who eat the larvæ. Thus, the small birds, mice, and Hawks, have each their place in Nature's economy.

### TREE PLANTING AT HARROW.

Harrow School, though it has not yet adopted Bird and Arbor Day, has given special encouragement to afforestation since 1879. Any Harrovian who makes 50 runs in a *boni fide* school cricket match is entitled to plant a tree in the Philathletic field on the Roxeth side of the hill. Eighty-two trees attest the prowess of batsmen during twenty-eight years.

## The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds.

### ANNUAL MEETING.

THE Annual Meeting of the Society is to be held at the Westminster Palace Hotel, on March 27th. The Earl of Stamford will take the chair, and among those who are expected to take part are Lord Morpeth, M.P., Sir W. Portal, Archdeacon Wilberforce, and Mr. Thompson Seton.

A report of the proceedings will be issued to Fellows, Members, and Associates, with the Annual Report of the Society for 1907.

### COUNCIL MEETING.

THE Council of the Society met at 3, Hanover Square, on January 24th, 1908, when there were present: Mr. Montagu Sharpe (chairman) in the chair, Mr. Bell, Hon. A. Dobson, Mr. Dresser, the Hon. Mrs. Drewitt, Dr. Drewitt, Hon. Mrs. Henniker, Mr. F. King, Mr. Hastings Lees, Mrs. F. E. Lemon, Mr. Meade-Waldo, Captain Tailby, Mr. Trevor-Battye, Mrs. Owen Visger, the Hon. Secretary (Mr. F. E. Lemon), and the Secretary (Miss Gardiner).

**The Hon. Secretary's Report** stated that ten Bird and Tree Festivals had been held since December 13th; that Bird Protection Orders had been issued for Cambridgeshire, East Suffolk, and the County Borough of Bath; and that the Society's slides had been used for the illustration of thirteen lectures, as under:—

Dec. 19th—Havant	..	Mr. H. Beeston.
.. 19th—Cardiff	..	Dr. Paterson.
.. 21st—Poole	..	Mr. Parkinson Curtis.
.. 30th—Maidstone	..	Mr. J. H. Allchin.
Jan. 10th—Helensburgh	..	Miss O. G. Paterson.
.. 13th—Rattleston	..	Rev. J. G. Tuck.
.. 13th—Caterham Valley	..	Madame Weatherley.
.. 16th—Rosewell, N.B.	..	Col. Wardlaw-Ramsay.
.. 17th—Maidstone	..	Mr. Allchin.
.. 20th—Portmadoc	..	Mr. Edwards.
.. 20th—Midlothian	..	Col. Wardlaw-Ramsay.
.. 21st—Brockenhurst	..	Rev. J. E. Kelsall.
.. 22nd—Pershore	..	Mr. Hooper.

### The Finance and General Purposes

**Committee** presented the statement of accounts for the year 1907. The appointment of the following Hon. Local Secretaries was approved: Berkhamsted, Mrs. Gower, The Cottage, North Road; Loughborough, Mr. G. Frisby, of Quorn; Southsea, Miss Georgina Wolfe, St. John's, Granada Road. The following resignations were accepted with regret, and with thanks for their past services: Mrs. T. H. Thornely, on leaving Birkenhead; Mrs. Victor Veley, on leaving Oxford; Miss F. A. Smith, on leaving Penzance; and the death was reported of Miss Butler, H.L.S. for Royston, an old and valued worker for the Society. Mr. A. C. Allen, The Wyck, Hitchin, and Mr. W. R. Ogilvie-Grant, of the British Museum, were elected Fellows. The Earl of Carlisle was elected a Life Member, and thirty annual Members were elected as follows: Ernest Allen (Chislehurst), Miss E. E. Armstrong (London), Mrs. Boardman (Groombridge), Miss Leigh Browne (London), Miss Croom Brown (Oxford), R. Budgett (Buckingham), Mrs. Campbell (Liverpool), Miss Catty (Putney), Mrs. Guy Fenwick (Stamford), Mrs. Ferguson (Abergavenny), Mrs. France-Hayhurst (Wellington, Salop), Miss P. Haviland (St. Albans), Miss H. Hayhurst (Wellington), Rev. J. Hewitt and Mrs. Hewitt (Torquay), J. H. R. de Jersey (Midhurst), Lady Sybil Knox (Oakham), Rev. A. Kynaston (Bath), Mrs. Philcox (Horsell), Mrs. Bernard Player (Coulsdon), Miss Rowbotham (Yardley), Hugh F. Spender (London), H. Y. Stanger, K.C., M.P. (London), E. Vulliamy (Edinburgh), Miss Silvia Watney (Charlbury), Mrs. H. Winn (Yardley), Miss G. Wolfe (Southsea), Mrs. Zöhn (Royston).

**The Publication Committee** brought forward the Regulations for the International Gold Medal Competition, and the draft



*Phot. J. Thompson.*

THE EARL OF STAMFORD,  
Vice-President of the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds.  
Chairman of the Annual Meeting, 1908.





Annual Report for 1907, which were considered and approved.

**The Watchers' Committee** reported on the expenditure of the Fund in 1907, and the arrangements proposed for Watching in 1908; on the work of H.M. Coastguard in assisting Bird Protection; on the status of the Bearded Tit in Norfolk; and on measures to be taken with respect to intended raids on birds and eggs by certain dealers.

**General Business.**—Mr. Ogilvie-Grant was elected a member of the Council in the place of the late Mr. Howard Saunders. A long discussion took place with reference to the preservation of the Birds of Paradise in British, German, and Dutch New Guinea; and other important questions were considered.

Meetings of the Finance and General Purposes Committee and the Watchers' Committee were held on February 21st, when, *inter alia*, a proposed Bill for checking the importation of plumage was discussed, the framer of it, Mr. Buckland, a Member of the Society, being present by invitation. The Watchers' Committee also met on March 9th.

The Watchers' Committee of the Society have made a special appeal on behalf of the Watchers' Fund, through which breeding-places of rare birds are watched and grants made to local efforts for the same end. The letter was published in the *Times*, *Field*, and some fifty other leading newspapers. Donations and subscriptions received in response will be acknowledged in the Summer Number of BIRD NOTES AND NEWS.

## Bird Protection Orders.

THE following County Council Orders have been issued since January 1st, 1908:—

**LANCASHIRE.** March 4th, 1908. A (b), B E. Certain species added to the Schedule for the whole county, and certain species for county except Hundred of Amounderness. Certain eggs protected in whole county; others for county except in Amounderness. All birds protected throughout the year in the river Mersey between Liverpool and Warrington. Same as previous Order, but eggs of Lapwing now protected after April 20th.

**EAST SUFFOLK.** January 16th, 1908. B C F S. Close time extended to September 1st, except for Snipe and Wild Duck. Certain species added to Schedule and protected all the year. Sunday protection in the eastern portion of the county and in named parishes. Similar to Order of 1902, but protection then given to all eggs on a part of the coast is removed.

**YORKSHIRE, WEST RIDING.** January 25th, 1908. B C D E F S. Numerous species added to the Schedule and protected all the year. Eggs of various species protected. As Order of 1907, with the addition of Sunday protection throughout the West Riding, except in the Forest of Bowland.

**SCOTLAND.** The Scottish Orders have been renewed for three years, expiring on February 28th, 1911, with the exception of those for Elgin (no application) and Nairn (under consideration). Bute remains without an Order. Very few alterations are made. Complete Sunday protection is obtained for Kirkcubright and Fife; it is granted in each case for the whole county, without any of the elaborate specification of parts hitherto deemed necessary in English Orders. Sir Herbert Maxwell's plea for the Shellduck has resulted in all-the-year protection for the species in the adjacent counties of Dumfries, Kirkcubright, and Wigtown. The same three counties extend Close Time for Woodcock to October 1st. Inverness extends it to September 1st for most of the birds in the Schedule. Eccentricity in this line is achieved by Ross, where Gulls are allowed a nesting season only from March 1st to March 7th. Three counties—Caithness, Aberdeen, and Kincardine—protect the eggs of the Lapwing after April 1st; all other counties after April 15th. On the other hand, protection for game eggs, previously given in certain districts, is withdrawn for the reason that they are safeguarded by the Game Laws.

## Bird and Tree (Arbor) Day.

### INTER-COUNTY COMPETITION.

IN order that the success of PRIVETT School, as first winners of the Inter-county Bird and Tree Shield, might be celebrated in fitting style, a meeting was held at the County Council Chamber, The Castle, Winchester, on February 8th, under the presidency of Sir William Portal, vice-chairman of the Hampshire County Council. The gathering was arranged by Mr. D. T. Cowan, Director of Education for the County, who has from the first given the movement his invaluable support and encouragement. The chamber was crowded, and among those present were representatives of a large number of competing Hampshire schools. The Chairman, in explaining and commending the aims and objects of the Society's Competition, commented on the unique charm possessed by England in her beautiful hedge boundaries, and in the birds for which these formed a refuge and home. The chief enemies of some of our birds in days past had been the gamekeepers; and if in the days when they went to school there had been a Royal Society for the Protection of Birds we should not find such birds as Kestrels and Owls regarded as vermin, and rare species like the Bittern shot at sight. Other speakers were Mrs. Suckling, who expressed the hope that Nature study would become a subject recognised in County Council work, and that every county would have its Bird and Tree Day; Mr. J. Gathorne Wood (Chairman of County Education), Rev. W. H. Thomas (Rector of Privett), Mr. W. G. Nicholson, M.P., and Mr. Montagu Sharpe (Chairman of the R.S.P.B.). The Shield was handed over to Privett's headmaster and team by Sir William Portal. Mr. Sharpe presented them also, on behalf of the Society, with a framed silver medal as a permanent memorial of their success, and

Mrs. Suckling gave the school a coloured picture.

The two schools which were bracketed second for the championship, BUCKLAND (Berkshire), and YATTON (Somerset), had their festivals in December. Each received a bronze medal and also a permanent silver memorial, framed in oak, of their prowess in winning their County Shield in successive years. Buckland commemorated their fifth annual Arbor Day by planting strawberry and rose trees, and by fixing a nesting-box and bird-table in the school grounds. In the afternoon the Vicar (Rev. W. Bulmer) entertained all the school children to tea, and after the prize-giving and essay-reading, fairy tales were illustrated with lantern pictures. "The very name 'Bird and Tree Day,'" writes Mrs. Fletcher, "signifies to our children all that is enjoyable and pleasant." The pity is that a few more teachers with Mrs. Fletcher's enthusiasm should not have kept the County Shield Competition alive in Berkshire.

Mr. C. H. Bothamley, County Education Secretary for Somerset, speaking at the YATTON Festival on December 9th, said the scheme deserved every encouragement, first, from the agricultural point of view, and secondly, because of the great good done by the introduction of the competition into the schools. Not only was the Society doing an extremely useful work in endeavouring to prevent the extermination of rare birds, and to make people understand the value and habits of birds, but this particular effort was one which should be encouraged by all interested in the real education of children, in the development of their faculties and their training for the occupations of after-life. It was part of a movement for making school-teaching less bookish than in the

past, for dealing with real things, and throwing the children upon their own powers of observation and resource. The competition was good because in it the children were writing of things with which they were acquainted, and not simply abstract things. Addresses were also given by Miss Stancomb Wills, of Blagdon, who presented the prizes and medals, and by the Vicar (Rev. F. A. Mather), who presided, and who congratulated Mr. Mansey on the high position taken by the school. The school band led the procession to the Friends' Meeting House, where the gathering was held.

#### COUNTY COMPETITIONS.

**Bedfordshire.**—There was an overflowing audience at *Northill* School, on December 12th, when the Bedfordshire Shield and prizes were handed to the winning team by Mr. A. Ransom, who cordially congratulated teachers and scholars. The room was decorated, and the senior girls were dressed in white with trails of ivy and holly. The children gave an entertainment of songs and recitations; the report was read by the master, Mr. Evason; and speeches were made by Mr. Spooner, Director of Education for the County, and Mr. Vincent, one of the managers, who presided. The day was also marked by the erection on the school of a flag-staff and fittings, given by Captain Tippinge, R.N., and Mr. Thomson.

Other competing schools have likewise had pleasant festivities.

**Buckinghamshire.**—*Ellesborough* School had a most successful festival on November 27th, when the Shield and prizes were presented by Lady Alexandrina Cunliffe, in the Parish Hall, in the presence of a large gathering. Mr. C. G. Watkins, Secretary to the County Education Committee, complimented the school on the high honour it had won, and on its general state of efficiency, specially thanking Miss May Couper, hon. correspondent of the school, for the interest she took in its welfare. The

Rev. R. C. Clarke, Rector of the parish, was in the chair, and in his opening remarks he strongly deprecated the use of birds in millinery. The children went through a good programme of songs and recitations, having reference to birds and trees, under the head master (Mr. Arnold). The team was photographed, and a fine English oak was planted in the grounds adjoining the Hall, under the superintendence of the head gardener of *Ellesborough* House.

At *Hambleton* the certificate of excellence and awards were presented by Lady Esther Smith, and the Hon. W. F. Smith, M.P., expressed his sympathy with the movement, and his delight that *Hambleton* School had adopted the scheme and taken so high a place. Several trees were planted, and a Christmas tree was unloaded of presents. Noteworthy festivals were also held at *Prince's Risborough*, where no fewer than 30 essays had been written for the competition; at *Quainton*, where Lady Verney conducted the tree-planting; and at other centres.

**Cumberland.**—Lord Morpeth, M.P., and Canon Rawnsley were the chief speakers and the tree-planters at *Kirkoswald*. Lord Morpeth, in formally presenting the Shield and prizes, said they were all agreed that children ought to be encouraged to study Nature, and to learn to see what was around them. In towns the work was more difficult, but they would be astonished to know how many different birds were to be found even in London. The study of bird and animal life made country life much brighter, and more might well be done in England in growing suitable trees. He hoped many more schools in Cumberland would take up the work. Canon Rawnsley, in dealing with the great value of such training, thought the head master, Mr. Bradwell, must be the proudest man in the room in having done what he had for *Kirkoswald*.

*Greystoke*, *St. John's*, *Keswick*, *Cargo* and other schools likewise duly celebrated Arbor Day.

**Hampshire.**—*Privett* School, in addition to its Inter-County celebration, had a festival on November 29th, as winners of the County Shield. The children went in a pretty procession, carrying garlands and flags, to Basing Park, where a pink chestnut tree was planted by Miss Gertrude Nicholson. The meeting was held in the Schoolroom, when songs and recitations were given, and Mr. Cowan, Director of Education for the County, made a most encouraging speech, congratulating that little rural school and its head master, Mr. Paine, on the splendid position they had won.

The second prize-winners, *Sandown* Boys' and Girls' Schools, had a united festival on February 14th, and were favoured with delightful weather. A large and interested audience assembled in the Christ Church Parish Room, the Vicar (Rev. W. T. Storrs) presiding. The medals and prizes were presented by Mr. T. A. Wright, C.C., who with Miss Ward, acted as judges in selecting from 46 essays written by the scholars the 12 which were sent to the Society. Songs and recitations were given, and subsequently three trees were planted in the churchyard and one in the playground, bringing the number of Sandown's "Arbor Day" trees to 32.

*Havant* School, winners of the Third Prize, commemorated Bird and Tree Day by a lantern lecture on Birds from the Rector, Rev. Canon Scott. The Rev. L. E. Dowsett presided, and the R.S.P.B. was represented by Mr. Hastings Lees, member of Council. Local prizes were given for the best sketches and the most methodically kept note-books. In the morning a tree was planted in the playground, under the direction of Mr. H. Beeston, head master.—At *St. Peter's* Girls' School, Bournemouth, Mr. Parkinson Curtis gave an illustrated lecture on Thrushes.—*Hayling* School has the promise of a gold piece from Admiral Startin for the best essay of 1908, and prizes will again be given by Miss Sandeman and Colonel Collins, C.B.

**Somersetshire.**—The principal function of the *Long Ashton* Festival took place at Ashton Court, where the school children, together with their master, Mr. Gunston, the Vicar (Rev. L. H. Deering), Mr. Bothamley (County Education Secretary), and others interested, were received by Lady Smyth, who presented the Shield, medals, and prizes. A programme of Nature Study part-songs was performed by the scholars; and subsequent proceedings proved the young people's prowess in other departments, for the bread and scones prepared for the festival tea were made by the girls in the cookery class, and one of the speakers took occasion to refer to the excellent work done in the school gardens. Mr. Napier expressed the hope that Long Ashton would retain the Shield in 1908, but warned them that this meant continued hard work, since others were as anxious to win as they to keep it. The tree-planting took place on a later date owing to bad weather.

The Festival at *Exford* (Second Prize, tie with Clutton) was marked by the most successful entertainment ever given by the school children. The whole school went in procession to plant trees (given by the Rev. W. New) in the recreation ground and in the boys' playground. Tea followed, and in the evening a capital programme of songs and dialogues was gone through. The Rev. W. New presided, and referred to the approval with which the Bird and Tree work was regarded by H.M. Inspector, and to the all-important stimulus given it by the master, Mr. Brambley.

The proceedings at *Clutton* commenced with a parade of the school drum and fife band, and the speeches were diversified with part-songs, including pieces set for the Somerset Eisteddfod. Mr. W. R. Hinton, chairman of managers, presided, and in congratulating Mr. Pullen (head master) and the Team, spoke of the value of cultivating the faculty of observation. The Rector (Rev. J. Mans-

field) strongly impressed the lesson of kindness to birds and animals. The trees planted consisted of three climbing roses for the front of the school, and a stock of bush-fruit trees for an experimental fruit plot in the school

garden. At *Dyche* School, Bridgewater, a lantern lecture was given by Miss Agnes Fry.

[It is impossible to give a record of all the Festivals: a few only have been selected to represent each county.]

## The Young Naturalist.

*These extracts from Bird and Tree Essays, and others to be published from time to time, are selected not necessarily as showing the best work, but as characteristic of children's observations.*

On the 1st of April a pair of Robins began to build a nest in my watering-can hanging against the wall of my home. I watched them every day carrying dry leaves, moss, dry grass, etc., to build it with. After they had finished with it I took the nest out of the can and found the hollow where the eggs had been was right at the back of the can, but the front was filled with dead leaves, so that there was quite a platform for the bird to run along. Both birds were very tame, and came down every meal-time to be fed. One day one came into the kitchen and pecked crumbs from the floor under the table. Another day one of the pair flew after me right up to the school gates, a distance of over 200 yards.

NORAH WAVELL (Sandown Girls).

On March 25th I noticed a nest partly built, about 7 feet from the ground, in a purple-lilac bush. I watched to see what bird was building the nest, and I saw a pair of Goldfinches very busy at it. Mother had some early flowers tied to some stakes with wool, and the pretty little birds kept pecking at this to get the soft fibre to help in making the nest. When finished it was a very compact and elegant nest, the outside composed of fine moss and grass and lined with the wool and pieces of hair.

ANNIE MOULAND (Ridge, Hants).

The Wren builds its pretty nest among ivy in the hedge, on an ivied stump, or even among the ivy on the sides of trees. Sometimes the nest is made in very curious places. I have seen and sketched one built in an old fishing-net that was not in use. The little birds worked one of the meshes into a rough circular hole, and carried the materials inside. The net was hung on a beam in a cart-shed.

WILLIAM GRANT (Havant).

I have often seen the Wrens in a rose tree pecking away at the leaves, and when I went to look, to see what they were doing, I noticed that they were eating the green fly which does so much harm in the garden; and they also kill little slugs, snails, maggots, and grubs of all sorts. I have noticed that when it is searching for food it hunts in holes and crannies of all kinds.

SAMUEL COOK (Clutton).

The Beech leaves appear in the middle of spring; then they unfold from a kind of shell; this shell consists of hard scales, and it protects the young leaves from snow and rain. When they are first visible they are covered with tender hairs, and these give them a soft-looking appearance. They are a very pale and pretty green when they first appear, but they develop a darker green as time goes on. In the autumn, when the leaves change colour, they turn to yellow and orange, and when the sun shines on the tree it seems a blazing mass of golden light.

EDITH WHITEHEAD (Wraxall).

If you see the Spotted Flycatcher on a wall or a branch and go quietly, you can get very close to it and watch it. It never seems to be taking any notice of anything, and all of a sudden it will dash after an insect, catch it, and return to the same perching-place, and after a few minutes' stillness it will fly away rapidly in jerky loops and perch on the top of a wall perhaps, and watch for insects, and catch them while on the wing. It goes through some pretty tricks of flight as it pecks at one insect and misses it. It will fly right—left—up—down, as fast as it possibly can, with outstretched rapidly-beating wings, and when it has seized the fly or moth, perch on the branch of a tree, and in a few seconds it darts off again after another insect. It then stands and turns its head nearly right round, watching, and all of a sudden flies off after food, required, perhaps, to feed its young.

FRED GAYLOR (Exford).

On July 21st the Cuckoo and two of the Hedge-Sparrows hatched out. When they were first born there was not much difference between them, except that the Cuckoo had a hollow in the middle of its back and the others had not. At the age of two days the young Cuckoo began being mischievous by hitching the rotten egg out of the nest by means of the hollow in its back. The next day the two Hedge-Sparrows were turned out, and then the Cuckoo had the nest to itself. I used to sit on the log of a tree and watch the little Hedge-Sparrows feed it. They never seemed to be still for a minute, feeding it every three minutes. When two weeks old it grew too big for the nest, and began trampling it down, and when it was able to fly the nest looked nothing more than a mat of hay and twigs. I was also watching another nest of Hedge-Sparrows which were hatched two days after the others. It was surprising to see how much sooner they flew than the Cuckoo. They were fledged and flown in a fortnight, while the Cuckoo continued feeding from the little Sparrows for a fortnight or three weeks more.

RUTH CUNNINGTON (Clophill).

## BOOKS RECEIVED.

BIRDS OF BRITAIN.—By J. Lewis Bonhote, F.L.S., F.Z.S. With one hundred illustrations in colour, selected by H. E. Dresser from his "Birds of Europe," so as to give examples of the most typical species. The letterpress includes every species which has been known to occur in Great Britain. London: A. & C. Black. 20s.

BIRDS AS CONSERVATORS OF THE FOREST.—By F. E. L. Beal. The results of scientific enquiry into the work of Wild Birds in relation to forest trees—as destroyers of insects and small mammals, and as distributors of seeds. With fourteen coloured illustrations, by L. A. Fuertes. Biological Survey, U.S. Dept. Agr.

AQUILA.—Publications for 1907 of the Hungarian Ornithological Bureau. In Hungarian and German.

A BOOK OF BIRDS.—By W. P. Pycraft, A.L.S., F.Z.S. A general survey of the principal groups of modern birds, giving a concise account of those bird families which have representatives in Great Britain and of such species as are likely to be met with in Zoological Gardens or museums. With 30 coloured plates. London: Sidney Appleton. 6s. net.

A POWERFUL SERMON in support of the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds was preached at Kinnoull parish church, Perthshire, on Sunday, March 15th, by the Rev. J. Henderson, who dealt eloquently and trenchantly with the wearing of bird-millinery, the trapping and caging of wild birds, etc.

THE names of birds mentioned in the Glamorgan-shire Bird Protection Order are to be printed in Welsh as well as English.

## CLOSE TIME.

It may be well to remind readers that during the close or nesting time, the taking or killing of any wild bird by any person is illegal except (so far as regards *non-scheduled* birds) by owners and tenants, and their authorised agents, on their own land. Birds include nestlings; but the protection of eggs depends upon the local Bird Protection Order. It is also illegal to possess a recently-taken wild bird. In all convictions under the Acts, birds, eggs, nets, etc., may be confiscated by the Court.

## IN THE COURTS.

SHOOTING A BITTERN.—At Melksham Petty Sessions, on February 6th, Arthur Escott was summoned for shooting a Bittern on January 14th. Defendant said he saw a large bird flying over a field and did not know what it was. The bird had been sold to a man named Findley, in Bath. Let off with payment of costs, 9s.

"A DAY'S SPORT."—At Aylesbury Petty Sessions, on December 12th, George Wall was convicted of being in possession of four dead and eighteen live Linnets, birds protected all the year in Bucks, and of cruelty to two Goldfinch decoys. The police liberated the Linnets, but the decoy birds died. For the defence, a Wendover man named Jones said he asked Wall down for a day's sport; he had caught birds before, and should do so again in Hertfordshire. It was also argued that this being sport could not be looked upon as cruelty. Fined for the two cases, £1 and 10s. costs.

## BIRD NOTES AND NEWS.

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### A MODERN ST. FRANCIS.

[Lord Avebury's Bill to prohibit the importation of plumage, with exceptions in favour of the ostrich, the eider-duck, and also edible wild birds, has passed its second reading in the House of Lords.]



# BIRD NOTES AND NEWS.

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[JUNE 24, 1908.

## THE BIRDCATCHER AT WORK.



At the Annual Meeting of the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds it was briefly announced that a somewhat new departure had been made in the work by the engagement of a temporary agent or inspector to enquire into the traffic in British birds carried on by catchers and dealers. It is a natural corollary of the work of the Watchers among rare birds, and will, we believe, command public sympathy. By a coincidence, two of the chief speakers had, before this was mentioned, dwelt with special earnestness on the unhappy condition of what Lord Stamford aptly called "the democracy of the bird-world." The beautiful aristocrats of the bird-kingdom have had their Reign of Terror at the hands of the plume trade, and a strong force, headed by Lord Avebury, is now fighting their battle. The little brown democracy of our English lanes has enemies of another kind, of whom the deadliest is the man who goes out with net and bird-line and braced decoy to make thousands of captives for the town bird-shop and the street market. It was appropriate that the voice of a Wilberforce should be raised against the enslavement of free bird life.

The Society's inspector set to work in March, at the beginning of the statutory close season. For a short time he travelled by train, by cycle, or on foot, around various outskirts of London. Here, as elsewhere, he visited the Society's Hon. Secretaries; interviewed the police, obtaining from them all the information they could give on the subject, with statistics of local convictions under the Acts; took note of districts where posters were, or were not, displayed; gave cautions to bird-dealers as to the illegality

of possessing newly-caught birds in close time; and put in an occasional word at railway stations, whence birds were likely to be despatched. It may be remarked incidentally that in many places the police were found to be very uncertain of their duties and powers in the matter: for this the difficulties presented by the Acts themselves, and too often the discouraging nature of magisterial decisions, are more to blame than the village constable himself, from whom the Society's representative received most ready co-operation when required. At the same time it is patent that the lot of the country policeman living in a small place where bird-catching is an everyday occupation of men he meets day by day, is not an enviable one. If he prosecute it is quite uncertain that he can obtain a conviction; but it is certain that he will gain the enmity of his neighbours.

The first active encounter was in an Essex village, where a couple of men were found catching Chaffinches. The birds were released, and the men let off with a warning. In a later case in the same county, on Stratford marshes, a gang was broken up who have been in the habit of supplying quantities of birds to the East-end markets, principally common species, such as Starlings and Sparrows, sold at 2d. apiece for public-house "Sunday shoots." The inspector spent three mornings with these men, and was thus able to take the police direct to the spot and give full particulars of their doings and their abode. The spot was one difficult of access, between a watery slough and the railway line, and the G.E.R. lent a constable to aid the two plain-clothes policemen. As a result, two men were brought before the

Stipendiary Magistrate, and though no fine could be inflicted, as the birds taken were not scheduled species, two sets of nets (value £4), sixteen decoy birds, and twelve brace birds were forfeited.

It was, however, the neighbouring counties of Bedfordshire and Cambridgeshire that gave most trouble; and these two counties appear to be the headquarters of the bird-catching trade in the extra-metropolitan area. Certain villages were already well-known in this connection to the Society, and to the R.S.P.C.A., and were no doubt equally well-known to police and magistrates. At one of these places, inhabited by a notoriously rough class of people, four brothers are said to have lived for twenty years by bird-catching and allied pursuits, and to employ other men of the village to augment the catches. The bird-catchers here were watched for a week, while the police of three counties were put on the alert and gradually drew a cordon round the offenders. At length at the close of one day, two men were captured on their way to the railway station, their boxes taken, and 174 birds released in the presence of a magistrate, an expert being called in to identify the birds, and speak to their being newly caught. In one county these men were fined for bird-catching. In the other, in which the birds were seized, and where the Clerk of the Peace conducted the prosecution, the defence was raised that these were old birds from an "aviary," and that the defendants themselves had released those caught in close-time. The magistrates, possibly ignorant of the history of the case, dismissed it on the ground of insufficient evidence that the birds were recently caught.

A visit to another village is thus described by the inspector:—

"I went well over the neighbourhood, and found houses that look like small factories, with large piles of boxes outside, used as bird warehouses. All round the village the catchers are at work, and the worst of it is they have the permission of the owners. I saw scores of nests containing young birds starved to death through the old ones being

captured. Towards evening I went to the station, and on the way were children taking boxes of birds. I waited at the station, and as soon as the men began to arrive with large boxes I was so surprised at the quantities that I jumped into the train and went with them to Cambridge. They filled a large trolley. I went up to the Castle and saw the deputy-inspector of the county, informed him that many boxes of freshly-caught birds were on the platform, and asked him to wire the police to meet them at Liverpool Street. He declined, as he thought the permission clause covered the case. I pointed out that even if it covered the catchers it did not cover the dealers, and he is going to see what can be done. To give an idea of the trade done, I may mention that on Saturday morning on Cambridge platform fifteen large bird boxes, returned empties, arrived from a dealer in Newcastle for one catcher in this one village. The birds are packed in shallow boxes, about 4 inches high, without food or water. Returning to town I went to Commercial Street and told the inspector what was going on, gave him the times the birds arrive every night at Liverpool Street and Bishopsgate, and he is going to take the matter up."

This extract perhaps sufficiently indicates the nature of the inspector's work.

The two great stumbling-blocks in the way of convictions are the "recently-taken" clause, and the terms of the clause enabling permission to be given by the land occupier. In the first case it would almost seem that each bird must be seen in the net, in the bird-catcher's box, and positively identified in court, before "the advantage of the doubt" is denied to the catcher. With regard to the latter, occupiers of land have the right to destroy non-scheduled birds, on the score of protection of crops; but it is monstrous to suppose that the law intended this to legalise the taking of innumerable birds for the profit of professional bird-catchers.

The other side of this business concerns the dealer. When the Society's inspector began his round, box after box of newly-caught birds was being despatched from various railway stations to dealers and others in such places as Shoreditch and Bethnal Green, for shops, Sunday markets, and shoots, and also to many parts of England. The possession or sale of all these birds would be illegal, and in a score of instances the addresses of the consignees were communicated to the police of the districts. The inspector also had an interview with the

Chief Commissioner of Police at New Scotland Yard, and travelled to Manchester to see the head of the Constabulary in that town. There have certainly not been a score of convictions for illegal possession; and it may be safely concluded that birds caught one day in Cambridgeshire would (had the dealer been challenged) have been declared to have spent six weeks in captivity by the time they reached Newcastle or Liverpool next day. There can, however, be no doubt that the action taken by the police, the cautions given, and the knowledge that the trade was being closely watched, put a sudden check on the whole business.

The investigation shows that in certain places, once centres of bird-catching, a prominent display of placards, the activity of cycling police and plain-clothes men, and the seizure of nets and decoys by the magistrates, have cleared the country of these

loafing vagabonds. On the other hand, it has to be remembered that to obtain such results as followed his work, the Society's inspector devoted his whole time and energy to it, and took infinite trouble to obtain every possible proof and detail, and to obviate the possibility of false addresses. If such an expenditure of time and trouble is to be needed in every case, then the law or its enforcement is seriously in fault, and a shorter way must be found. It must be remembered also that these cases occurred in close time: that close time lasts for but a part of the year, and that for ten birds caught in the spring many hundreds are swept from the green fields into the bird-catcher's boxes and the dealer's shop in autumn.

It can fairly be claimed that what has been done during the spring of 1908 has had a good effect, but it has emphasized the fact that much still remains to be accomplished in order to deal adequately with the evil.

## Bird Protection Orders.

The following Bird Protection Orders have been issued since March 25th, 1908:—

**BERKSHIRE.** April 28th. A (b) B F S. Practically the same as the Order of 1901. All birds protected on Abingdon Common; Sunday protection in certain districts; half-a-dozen species added to the Schedule, and certain others protected all the year, including Goldfinch, Kingfisher, Owls, and Woodpeckers.

**CUMBERLAND.** May 14th. C B E F S. Close time extended to September 1st, except for Plover and Wild Duck. Numerous species added to the Schedule, and eggs protected. Sunday and Christmas day protection for the chief species sought by the catcher, and also for the Shore-lark and Lapland Bunting.

**GLAMORGAN.** April 28th. A (e) A (b) B E F S. Identical with Order of 1906, with addition of full protection for Merlin and Golden Eagle. Protection for all birds and

eggs on Worms Head for five years; Sunday protection; full protection for the large Hawks, Raven, Chough, Owls, Woodpeckers, Goldfinch, Nightjar, Bittern, Razorbill, Guillemot, Puffin, and other species.







**SWANSEA.** April 7th. A (b) E F S. All birds protected throughout the year on the sands and seashore; all birds protected on Sundays. F and E lists practically the same as for the county.

**CAITHNESS.** March 25th. Sunday protection. Additional.

**KINCARDINE.** March 25th. Sunday protection. Additional.

**BANFF.** April 10th. B E F. General Order for Northern Division of Scotland, with certain additions.

**DONEGAL.** April 25th. E. Eggs of Chough, Raven, Golden Eagle, Phalaropes, Terns, Red-throated Diver, and Petrels protected for five years.




**Notes.**




**The B.O.U. and BIRD PROTECTION.**

At the annual meeting of the British Ornithologists' Union on May 20th, the following addition to the rules was moved by Mr. H. F. Witherby :—

“That on satisfactory evidence being furnished to the Committee that any member of the Union has taken or caused to be taken, or killed or caused to be killed, after June 1, 1908, or purchased, knowing it to have been taken or killed in the British Islands, any egg or bird as detailed below, the Secretary of the Union shall be directed to remove the said member's name from the list of members, and to inform the said member of the fact in writing. Further, that no member removed under this law shall be allowed to stand as a candidate for re-election within the space of five years, and that should such member be proposed as a candidate after this lapse of time, then it should be clearly printed in the list of candidates that such candidate had been removed under this law.”

The appended list contains the names of (a) species to which this rule is intended to apply at all times; and (b) species to which it is to apply in the breeding season only, the prohibition as to eggs applying to both lists :—

(a) Bearded Tit, Golden Oriole, Hoopoe, Marsh-Harrier, Hen-Harrier, Montagu's Harrier, Common Buzzard, Golden Eagle, White-tailed Eagle, Kite, Hobby, Osprey, Common Bittern, Spoonbill, Kentish Plover, Avocet, and Chough.

(b) Crested Tit, Snow Bunting, Grey-lag Goose, Dotterel, Red-necked Phalarope, Ruff, Whimbrel, Black Tern, Sandwich Tern, Roseate Tern, Great Skua, Black-throated Diver, Red-throated Diver, and Greenshank.

Although this salutary rule was not passed, the fact that it was introduced in such a body as the B.O.U., and was referred to a committee for consideration, indicates the scientific ornithologists' growing conviction that men who are doing their best to exterminate rare birds, and to evade the laws of the country, are unfit to be ranked as British naturalists.

**THE PURCHASING COLLECTOR.**

The need of a general list of protected birds, not only for the B.O.U., but for the whole country, has been repeatedly urged by the R.S.P.B. It is absolutely essential for the preservation of rare species that some such list as that suggested by Mr. Witherby, (a) quoted above, should be scheduled for protection throughout the year by every County Council in England and Wales. (Scotland has practically such a list, and the Act of 1896 does not, unfortunately, apply in Ireland.) While the law remains as weak as it is on the question of possession, it is also especially desirable that the protection rules of any ornithological body should be aimed at the man who purchases rare birds. When the time comes for amending the law, it may possibly take a similar course. If it followed automatically that Eagles, Bitterns, Harriers, etc., instead of being readily sold to collectors, became, as soon as shot, the property of the State or the County Council, without fee or payment to the shooter, then farmer, labourer, and keeper would, at any rate, not be encouraged by the hope of monetary gain, as is at present the case, to repeat the performance on the first opportunity.

**BIRD PROTECTION IN GERMANY.**

Germany is well on the way towards adopting the provisions of the International Bird Protection Convention. The Special Committee appointed by the Reichstag to consider the subject of further legislation for preserving wild birds have passed a series of resolutions which will be brought before the supreme body in the form of a Supplementary Bird Protection Bill. The main features of the Bill will be: (1) The prohibition of all destruction of nests, eggs, and young

birds, together with the sale, transit, and export and import of nests, eggs, and young birds of European species. Certain exceptions are made in the case of nests on buildings, and of the eggs of Plovers and Gulls. (2) Prohibition of all birdcatching when the ground is covered with snow; of birdcatching and killing with nets and weapons at sight; of birdcatching by means of poisoned substances, or by blinded decoys; of the use of bird-lime, traps, and nets. (3) A close time from March 1st to September 1st, during which the catching and killing, sale, purchase, import, export, transit, and transport of all European birds, dead or alive, is forbidden; Titmice, Nuthatches, and Treecreepers to be protected all the year. The law is not to apply to game birds, and to certain named species; but none of the birds thus removed from general protection may be caught by traps or snares.

#### **WILD-FOWLING ON NAVIGABLE RIVERS.**

The Severn wildfowl-shooting case, which recently occupied considerable time and attention in the Chancery Division, is of some importance to bird protectors. The action was one for trespass on certain lands in Gloucestershire, brought by Lord Fitzhardinge, and the defendant was a Mr. Lewis Purcell, who claimed the right to shoot wild fowl thereon. The "lands" in question consist of the River Severn, from high-water mark to the middle of the channel, within three of Lord Fitzhardinge's manors. The final decision, therefore, depended on the question as to whether or no all the King's subjects possess the right to shoot wild fowl on the foreshore and in the bed of a tidal river. In this respect the learned judge held that the rights of the public were those rights of passage and fishing which are known to common law in the sea and its foreshore; and he found, he said, no suggestion in the authorities of any such public right of wild-fowling as suggested,

either in the sea itself or in the channels of public navigable rivers. It was argued that defendant had a right to be in his boat on the Severn, and being there, could not be prevented from killing wild birds, in which there was no property known to law. Mr. Justice Parker, however, held that this right was only one of passage, justifying no claim to shoot the wild fowl as he passed along. Further, added his lordship, "I am not satisfied that the common law recognises no proprietary right at all in wild birds." The finding (April 13th) was accordingly that Mr. Purcell had failed to establish his claim or to justify his acts. This judgment establishes that, whatever custom or tolerance may allow, the public have no right to shoot wild fowl on a navigable river.

#### **THE BIRD MARKET.**

Mrs. Fuller Maitland, whose keen sympathies with wild life are never keener than when roused by the pathetic misery of captive birds in street or shop, writes (April 23rd, 1908):—

"The other day I bought two little Waxbills from a man who was hawking them on a stick in the street, in the bitter wind. I bought them only to bring them in out of the wind and the fumes of the petrol motor-omnibuses. One died yesterday, I think of pneumonia, and I could not have believed that such a tiny being could have suffered as it did just before it died, breathless and convulsed. I hoped that it might recover with warmth and care, but if the other begins to be really ill in the same way, I shall have it chloroformed to avoid such suffering. The worst of it is that birds are dying in the same needless misery every day. I feel more strongly than ever the brutal cruelty of the cage-bird traffic, and do hope and trust the Society will do all it can to reduce the suffering of these helpless little things that die by the thousand of pneumonia and neglect."

#### **WILD BIRDS' PROTECTION BILL.**

A Bill to prohibit the catching or taking of wild birds by means of hooks or similar instruments was read a first time in the House of Commons on June 17th. It is backed by Sir F. Banbury, the Marquess of Hamilton, Lord E. Talbot, and Colonel Lockwood.

## The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds.

### COUNCIL MEETING.

THE Quarterly Meeting of the Council of the Society was held at 3, Hanover Square, on April 10th, 1908, Mr. Montagu Sharpe (Chairman) presiding. The members of the Council present were: Mr. Ernest Bell, Hon. Alfred Dobson, Mr. H. E. Dresser, Miss Hall, Hon. Mrs. Henniker, Sir George Kekewich, M.P., Mr. Hastings Lees, Mrs. F. E. Lemon, Mr. Meade-Waldo, Mr. Ogilvie-Grant, Miss Pollock, Mrs. Owen Visger, and Mr. F. E. Lemon (Hon. Secretary).

**The Hon. Secretary's Report** stated that a special appeal against the use of the pole trap, signed by the President, Chairman, and Hon. Secretary of the Society, had been sent to over two thousand owners and tenants of shootings, together with a copy of the Pole Trap Act; that six Bird Protection Orders had been issued, and that the Scottish Orders had been renewed with certain alterations; that entries had been received from Beds, Bucks, Cumberland, Hampshire, and Somerset for the Bird and Tree (Arbor Day) Challenge Shield Competitions in 1908, while the Norfolk County Council had agreed to work the competition in that county, the Society giving a shield and undertaking the final judging; a similar arrangement had been made in Warwickshire, and the scheme was also to be tested in Cambridgeshire and Northamptonshire. Lectures illustrated by the Society's slides had been given as follows:—

Jan.	27—Halstead	.. Mrs. Nelson.
Feb.	4—Cardiff ..	.. Dr. Paterson.
..	5—Badminton	.. Mrs. Harford.
..	14—Dyche School, Bath	Miss Agnes Fry.
..	15—Cardiff ..	.. Dr. Paterson.
..	17—Bolton ..	.. Miss Barlow.
..	18—Great Barton	.. Rev. J. G. Tuck.
..	21—Waterfoot, Mnehr.	Mr. H. Metcalfe.
..	22—Hitchin ..	.. Miss M. Thompson.
..	22—Sandhurst	.. Mr. Hastings Lees.
..	24—Wellington Coll.	Mr. Hastings Lees.

Feb.	25—Oxford Cathedral School ..	.. Mr. Hastings Lees.
..	27—Storrington ..	.. Mr. Haines.
..	28—Meopham, Kent	Mrs. Arnold.
..	29—Addingham ..	.. Mr. Herbert Walker.
Mar.	3—Llanishen ..	.. Mr. Care.
..	9—Romford ..	.. Miss Clifton.
..	11—Quorn ..	.. Mr. Frisby.
..	12—Poole ..	.. Mr. Parkinson Curtis.
..	17—Ringwood ..	.. Rev. J. E. Kelsall.
..	18—Christchurch ..	.. Rev. J. E. Kelsall.
..	19—Havant ..	.. Mr. Beeston.
..	20—Brompton, S.W.	Miss Burra.
..	24—Tostock ..	.. Rev. J. Tuck.
..	25—Bury St. Edmunds	Rev. J. Tuck.
April	2—Meopham ..	.. Mrs. Arnold.
..	10—Bristol ..	.. Mr. H. V. Webb.

The Rev. J. G. Tuck kindly arranged two drawing-room meetings, and remitted £1 18s. to the Society.

**The Finance and General Purposes Committee** brought forward the quarterly statement of accounts, which was passed. Two Hon. Local Secretaries were appointed, viz., Mr. R. H. Stenhouse, for Inverness-shire, and Mrs. Flisher for Southampton. Mr. W. J. Percy Player, of The Quarr, Clydach, Mr. W. Graham Greene, C.B., Park Lane Chambers, W., Mrs. Pennell, Goodford Park House, Devon, and Mr. Eric Parker, Holmthorpe, Weybridge, were elected Fellows. Mr. A. St. George Caulfield, Lymington, was elected a Life Member, and the following thirty-three were elected as annual members:—W. H. Allen (Bramber), Miss Agnes Burra (London), E. Chitty (Dover), E. C. Chitty (Dover), J. D. Cradock (Quorn Court), W. Parkinson Curtis (Poole), Mrs. Randall Davies (Hythe), Miss Violet Edgell (Storrington), O. A. Ellis (Barrow-on-Soar), Mrs. Flisher (Southampton), Clifford Hackney (Hythe), Mrs. Brewis Havelock (Brocklesby), G. Mitchell Hedges (London), C. V. H. Helyar (Taunton), Mrs. Percy Herrick (Loughborough), Miss R. E. Horridge (Derby), Miss A. Lowndes (Petersfield), Major McNair, R.A. (Brighton), Miss M. Gibson Mahony (Kingstown), Mrs. Cotton Minehin (Wimbledon), Miss C. M. Newton (Cambridge), Hon. Mrs. Parsons (Sandhurst),

Miss H. Preston (Bournemouth), Mrs. H. S. Pullar (Bridge-of-Earn), W. P. Pycraft (London), Henry E. Rose (Bourton-on-the-Water), Mrs. Rousseau (Maidenhead), G. Sharp (Marlborough), H. P. Wardell (New-bridge-on-Wye), E. H. Warner (Quorn Hall), Mrs. E. L. Williamson (India), Miss H. V. Wilson (London), Miss Wright (Winchester).

The Committee reported the engagement for three months of a travelling inspector to deal especially with birdcatching and bird-shops, and to assist the Watchers' Committee when required.

**The Publication Committee** reported that a translation was shortly to appear of a book entitled "How to Attract and Protect Wild Birds," setting out the methods adopted by Baron von Berlepsch, in Germany. As the circulation of the book would be likely to foster and promote the protection of birds, the Committee recommended the purchase of a certain number of copies upon the terms offered by the publisher, which recommendation was adopted.

**The Watchers' Committee** reported that the special appeal for funds had resulted in about £100 being subscribed to the Watchers' Fund. Further arrangements for watching in various localities were reported.

**General Business.** Upon the report that a meeting of representatives of the Royal Society, the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, the Linnean Society, the Zoological Society, the British Museum (Natural History) and the Selborne Society, for the consideration of the Importation of Plumage Bill, as drafted by Mr. James Buckland, had taken place at the house of Lord Avebury on March 13th, and that the result had been that Mr. Montagu Sharpe had been asked to re-draft the Bill, so as to embody the proposals for alteration put forward, the Bill as re-drafted was discussed and approved, and a petition to the House of Lords in favour

of it was, after consideration, signed and sealed on behalf of the Society.

Meetings of the Finance and General Purposes, Publication, and Watchers' Committees were held on June 19th. It was reported that the Importation of Plumage Bill would reach Committee stage in the House of Lords on June 22nd, when Mr. Montagu Sharpe and Mr. Lemon had been summoned to give evidence. The inspector's report of his three months' work was read and approved. The action to be taken in several cases of infringement of the Bird Protection Acts was discussed. It was agreed that a Conference of Local Hon. Secretaries and other workers should be held during the coming autumn.

In response to the special appeal issued by the Watchers' Committee, the following amounts have been received in subscriptions and donations:—

- £25—C. Milnes Gaskell.
  - £15—The Duchess of Bedford.
  - £5 5s.—Rev. A. L. Hussey.
  - £5—T. Baring, Miss E. Field, W. J. Percy Player, Miss A. Radcliffe, Conrad Russell, C. H. Saunders, Anonymous (Oxford).
  - £3 3s.—J. L. M. Borough.
  - £3—Boyd Alexander, Mrs. Christie, Hon. Mrs. Drewitt.
  - £2 2s.—W. H. Beaumont, T. H. Scott, A. Holt Macpherson, Mrs. Fuller Maitland.
  - £2—J. A. Harvie Brown, Sydney Brock, Mrs. G. Brooksbank, The Misses Ford, J. H. Gurney, W. Waterhouse Gibbins, Miss F. Russell, G. J. Talbot.
  - £1 10s.—Mrs. A. M. Boyle.
  - £1 1s.—Mrs. Ashton Allen, G. E. Blundell, F. C. H. Borrett, H. W. Brett, H. Brinsley Brooke, L. C. Creagh-Haward, Dr. Drewitt, Miss A. Garrett, Rev. H. S. Gladstone, E. J. Harford, Keith Henderson, H. J. Johnson, Mrs. Massey, W. E. Moore, Lieut. H. Pennell, R.N., Dr. F. Penrose, H. Rodgers, Captain Tailby, J. Thornely.
  - £1—A. Craig, Keith Henderson, Collingwood Ingram, Miss Jeffrey, Mrs. H. King, A. E. Price, A. A. Ure.
  - 15s.—R. Burrowes.
  - 10s. 6d.—Norman Graham, Miss Hutton.
  - 10s.—Miss Baxter, H. B. Booth, H. Barringer, T. B. Cohen, G. W. Chitty, Miss Chawner, —Hewitt, Mrs. Maynard Proud, F. H. T. Streatfeild, C. W. Ware.
  - 5s.—Miss Anderson, Mrs. Willis Bund, J. H. Hay, T. B. Jeffery, H. Johnstone, Miss F. E. Lines, B. Lonsdale, J. Macdonald, Mrs. Poynting, Frank Russell, Dr. W. B. Russell, F. G. Swan, Mrs. Waller.
- Amounts under 5s.—14s. 6d.

## The Plumage Prohibition Bill.

THE Bill to prohibit the importation of Plumage was introduced into the House of Lords by Lord Avebury, and read a first time on May 5th. The Bill provides that:—

Any person who, after January 1st, 1909, shall import or bring into the United Kingdom for the purpose of sale or exchange the plumage, skin, or body, or any part of the plumage, skin, or body of any dead bird which is not included in the schedule of exemption to this Act shall be guilty of an offence, and shall, on summary conviction, be liable to a penalty of not exceeding £5, and for every subsequent offence to a penalty of not exceeding £25, and in every case the Court shall order the forfeiture and destruction of the articles in respect of which the offence has been committed.

Names of foreign wild birds may be added to or removed from the schedule by consent of the Privy Council. The Act is not to apply in the case of specimens for a scientific purpose, imported under a license from the Board of Trade; nor to plumage forming part of wearing apparel which is the *bona fide* property of any person entering the United Kingdom, and is not for sale or exchange. The birds exempted as named in the schedule, are "Ostriches, Eider Ducks, and wild birds used as articles of diet."

The second reading was taken on May 19th, when petitions in favour of the Bill were presented from the Zoological Society of London, the Linnean Society of London, the Selborne Society, and the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds.

Lord Avebury said that the Bill was introduced on behalf of the Societies just named, and that he also presented a petition from the members of the Royal Society. In fact, it had the general support of the naturalists of the country, and especially of all lovers of birds. It was no doubt of a somewhat peculiar character, but the circumstances were exceptional. The most beautiful species of birds were being rapidly exterminated. At the plume auctions held in London during the last six months of 1907

there were catalogued 19,742 skins of the Birds of Paradise, 1411 packages of the nesting plumes of the White Heron (representing the feathers of nearly 115,000 birds), besides immense numbers of the feathers and skins of almost every known species of ornamental-plumaged bird. For the year the sales of egrets amounted to 190,000, and of Birds of Paradise over 28,000. At the June sale, held at the Commercial Sale Rooms, 1386 Crowned Pigeons' heads were sold, while among miscellaneous bird-skins one firm alone catalogued over 20,000 Kingfishers. A deplorable feature of recent sales was the offer of large number of Lyre birds' tails, and of Albatross quills. The constant repetition of such figures as the above—and these plume sales took place every two months—showed that the Legislature must choose between the extermination or the protection of the birds in question. A precedent for legislation on this subject existed in the law that now obtains in the State of New York. He commended the Bill to the favourable consideration of the House on scientific, æsthetic, humanitarian, and economic grounds. It was evident that unless the slaughter was stopped several species of birds would be absolutely exterminated, and these birds were the most beautiful. Moreover, birds' feathers in hats were not ornamental, but, under the circumstances, repulsive. Coming to the humanitarian reasons, they knew that birds, beautiful at all time, were pre-eminently so at the breeding season; and just when our best feelings would induce us to give them a close time they were ruthlessly destroyed. The history of the Snowy Heron, from which the so-called "ospreys" were obtained, was especially pathetic. Mr. Pearson, of the North Carolina Audubon Society, had



given a graphic description of the scene of havoc wrought by the hunters, and the same thing was happening not only over Florida and the whole Gulf Coast of the United States, but also in California and great districts of South America. Dealers often stated that "aigrettes" were manufactured, but this was not so; man had never yet been able to imitate successfully these beautiful plumes. Even the stiff plumes, or "stubs," were not manufactured, but were the plumes of a larger species belonging to the same family. He was glad to see that this Bill had been most cordially and sympathetically received by the Press, but one or two writers had expressed the opinion that it would have little chance if women had votes. On the contrary, he (the noble lord) firmly believed they would welcome it. Her Majesty the Queen, they gratefully recognised, had done much to check the wearing of plumes. It was sometimes said that the only effect of excluding feathers here would be that they would be sold abroad. If this were so, we should then at any rate have no responsibility; we should not be parties to this cruel trade. But if their lordships and the other House passed this Bill, English ornithologists and lovers of birds would appeal to brother naturalists abroad, and he believed they would initiate similar legislation on the Continent and thus put an end to this cruel, wanton, and barbarous slaughter.

The Duke of Bedford, in supporting the second reading, said if there were any objections to this Bill they would probably come from the trade. The value of the plumes to the wearers did not consist in the fact that the feathers belonged to rare birds, but that they were the fashion of the moment. At the present rate of destruction the extinction of many of the most beautiful creations of Nature was inevitable, and the prohibition of the use of the plumage now would be only anticipating what, as far as the trade is concerned, must be the result in a few years. This Bill sought to bring

about by the preservation of the birds, those conditions which as far as the supply of birds' feathers to the trade is concerned, must ensue on their destruction.

Earl Beauchamp was sure the objects of the Bill would commend themselves to every member of the House, but some hesitation was felt by the official mind as to whether the Bill, as drawn, would entirely accomplish its object. He ventured to suggest that it might be more efficacious to prohibit exports from our Colonies rather than to prohibit imports into this country. Steps had already been taken in the Bermudas, Barbados, Trinidad, Fiji, Natal, St. Vincent, and elsewhere, to prevent the exportation of these birds and their plumage. A large quantity of plumage was brought into this country, made up, and exported to the Continent, and it is not impossible that such legislation would divert that trade to the Continent without the advantage sought for being attained. There was one other consideration, and that was that there were some species in danger of extermination which, though very beautiful, were often a great inconvenience, and sometimes a considerable nuisance in the countries in which they were found. His Majesty's Government were very anxious to assist in securing the objects in view, and he would suggest that the Bill should be referred to a Select Committee, who would be able to consider the suggestion that representations should be made to foreign countries as to how far they would be willing to assist by preventing export.

The Marquess of Lansdowne thought that a very strong case had been made, both upon humanitarian and scientific grounds, for some effort to prevent the extinction of a number of interesting birds; and he agreed with the suggestion that an endeavour should be made to obtain the co-operation of foreign countries.

The Lord President of the Council (Lord Tweedmouth) said the only fault he found with the Bill was that he feared its provisions

might not carry out what was desired. Birds would continue to be killed in their own habitat, and enquiries in the millinery shops of London would probably show that a very large number of feathered hats came from Paris, and perhaps still more were sent from Germany marked as from France.

Lord Ashbourne said it was obvious that a measure proposing to interfere with fashion and to a certain extent with trade, must be surrounded with difficulty; but the introduction of the Bill was the only practical step yet suggested to bring the matter before the notice of the public, and by that means to influence fashion. This discussion would put the matter in a practical shape before the minds of men and women, and he could not help thinking that by degrees fashion would play a potent part in putting an end to the destruction of these birds.

The Bishop of Southwark was glad that the noble and learned lord had given a warmer expression of sympathy than was elicited from the noble Earl who represented the official mind in this matter. He did not think we could rely very much on the influence of opinion and fashion. This was not a new matter. It had been for a long time before leaders of fashion, and the great influence to which the noble and learned lord referred had been exerted, but the efforts that had been made had failed. He hoped the treatment which it was proposed to give the Bill would not be a dilatory treatment, because not only did the thing want doing but it wanted doing quickly.

Lord Avebury explained that the Bill made it impossible for milliners to bring over from Paris hats containing plumage; and as regarded Lord Beauchamp's statement that it would be more efficacious to stop export, a great number of these birds came from South America, Russia, and China—countries from which it was impossible for us to stop export. It was only recently that these birds had been killed in such large numbers, and it had been greatly owing to

the fact that there had been such a profitable sale in this country. Therefore, if we stopped the sale in this country we should put an end to a very important reason for the destruction. There was no wish to prevent the agriculturists of the countries concerned from taking any steps considered necessary, but it was felt that on the whole birds did a very great deal of good to agriculture. As it was the opinion of the Leaders on both sides of the House that it would be desirable to refer the Bill to a Select Committee, he would be very glad to adopt that course.

The Bill was accordingly referred to a Committee, consisting of the Duke of Rutland, the Duke of Bedford, the Marquess of Bristol, Lord O'Hagan, and Lord Avebury.

#### PRESS COMMENTS.

"All sportsmen, naturalists, and we hope all women, will welcome Lord Avebury's Bill. It is a pitiable thing that, in spite of the example of the Queen and of the War Office, where Lord Lansdowne accepted a substitute for the 'osprey' plume, women should have continued to welcome the fashion for egret plumes for hats."—*The Outlook*, May 23rd.

"The Bill should serve a very good purpose. It should concentrate attention on the waste and unspeakable folly involved in this destruction of rare and beautiful life; and help to shame people out of wearing Birds-of-Paradise. Pretty hats and bonnets are a necessity, a virtue in women, but this millinery is monstrous."—*Saturday Review*, May 16th.

"We are inclined to think that to achieve the ends of the Bill without penalising ourselves international action will be necessary. We sincerely hope that the Select Committee will speedily recommend a practical measure."—*Spectator*, May 23rd.

"It is to be hoped that the Government will use its influence, as Lord Beauchamp suggested, to bring about the prohibition of the export of skins and plumes from the countries of supply. But the two methods of checking the trade should be complementary, not exclusive. . . . This surely is a question on which any Government may dare to be bold. Public opinion is divided about vivisection; it is not even absolutely unanimous about some of the practices covered by the Spurious Sports Bill. But this use of murdered beauty for adornment has no articulate defender. There is hardly even a fashion paper base enough to advocate it outside its advertising columns."—*The Nation*, May 23rd.

"It is impossible not to be surprised and difficult not to be shocked at the enormous number of skins,

or parts of the plumage of certain peculiarly ornamental birds which are offered for sale in this country."—*Country Life*, May 23rd.

"If the Select Committee to which the Bill has been referred can give it a sound practical form, every lover of nature will be gratified, and women may be induced to look less like savages than they do when decorated with the trophies of remorseless slaughter."—*Pall Mall Gazette*, May 20th.

"The excuse that women do not realise the amount of cruelty practised on the most beautiful and innocent of creatures in order that the dictates of fashion may be followed, has been accepted long enough. Every effort should be made to open their eyes, but we believe that the only sure way of saving the birds will be to pass the Bill."—*Guardian*, May 27th.

"A step is being taken in the right direction, a blow is being struck at the root of the evil, for the new Bill attacks those who, by supplying feathers, foster a demand for such adornments."—*Daily Graphic* (Mrs. Hugh Adams), May 21st.

"To pass from the proposal to regulate our own imports of the crueller bird ornaments to the asking of foreign Governments to stop their exports is a decided retreat. We shall be interested to hear how the negotiations promised by Lord Beauchamp proceed, but we trust that they will not in any way hinder the passage of Lord Avebury's Bill through Select Committee."—*Daily News*, May 20th.

"There may be difficulties in working the Bill, but it is certainly a step in the right direction, and would prevent the perpetration of a vast amount of ruthless barbarity."—*Referee*, May 22nd.

"A measure that all humanitarians, as well as all lovers of birdlife, will earnestly desire to see become law."—*Modern Society*, May 23rd.

"Lord Avebury deserves hearty support."—*Aberdeen Gazette*, May 14th.

"If women will not obey the dictates of humanity of their own free will, it is time law stepped in to

render existing atrocities impossible."—*Blackpool Gazette*, May 14th.

"The demand in the Bill now before Parliament is likely to meet with almost universal sympathy and support."—*Western Daily Press* (Bristol), May 15th.

"Whatever milliners and their fashionable customers may think of Lord Avebury's Bill, there can be no doubt that all right-feeling men and women not blinded by a heartless vanity, will sympathise with its objects."—*Glasgow Evening News*, May 20th.

"The critics of Lord Avebury's Bill suggest that the slaughter can best be stopped locally by such legislation for the protection of birds as we have here at home. That is true enough, but the English Parliament cannot make local legislatures pass laws, while Parliament can stop the plumage coming into the country. If Parliament does decide to stop it, then the other legislatures can pass their local laws or not, but England has set an example."—*East Anglian Times* (Ipswich), May 20th.

"Every reasonable exemption has been made, and it is to be hoped that by the end of the present Session of Parliament this much-needed measure will have passed into law."—*Liverpool Echo*, May 15th.

"The wail of the wholesale feather trade, which is beginning to be heard since the welcome to Lord Avebury's Importation of Plumage Bill, gives one unintentionally an excellent piece of news. For it is an item of their gloom that nearly all the raw skins and plumage used throughout the Continent come into the London market in the first instance. . . . Of course it is possible that foreign countries would obtain their supplies direct, but at least if the Bill passes, the deplorable trade would be so disorganized that it might never return to the present appalling statistics of slaughter."—*Manchester Guardian*, May 27th.

## The Plume Trade.

THE second and third of the year's Feather Sales were held at the Commercial Sale Rooms on April 14th and June 10th. On both occasions there was a numerous attendance of buyers, and "a good demand" is reported. At the former there were 338 packages of "Osprey," chiefly East Indian and Rangoon, and 270 Impeyan Pheasants. Some 6800 Birds-of-Paradise were catalogued. Among the notable features of the sale were the great number of Parrots (8299 entered by one firm), chiefly Indian paroquets; the Kingfishers (8920), the Victoria and Coronata Crowned Pigeons (1937 from one firm, 5350 by another), and over 15,000 Sooty Terns, the

last-named having the trade name of "Dominoes." At the June sale 15,500 Sooty Terns were again catalogued. This no doubt means that some breeding-place of the species has been raided and all the birds killed. A number of other species of Tern were also on sale. Kingfishers were in large supply, selling at 3½d. to 3¾d. each. Impeyan Pheasants were 9s. 3d. each. Trogons 9d. to 2s. 7d., Orioles 1¼d., Tanagers 4¼d., Ruby Humming-birds 1½d. Victoria and Coronata Pigeons were represented by over 8000 heads and crests. There were 205 packages of "Osprey," mostly from Asia; and 6190 Birds-of-Paradise.

## IN THE COURTS.

"RECENTLY TAKEN."—An appeal case of some importance as bearing on the "recently taken" clause of the Act, was heard in the Court of Appeal on April 1st, 1908. In August, 1907, the R.S.P.C.A. summoned a bird-dealer named Young, of Sclater Street, Bethnal Green, for the possession of seven young Larks. Two of the Society's Inspectors stated in evidence that they saw the birds and considered them to be young Larks, recently taken, because they were very wild, beating themselves against the bars of the cages, and their feathers were of a light colour. The defendant was not called to show how or when the birds came into his possession; and the Magistrate (Mr. Biron) intimated that there was no evidence before him that the Larks were recently taken, and dismissed the case.—The Lord Chief Justice said that there was evidence which called for an answer, and in his opinion the Magistrate ought to have considered the case further. Mr. Justice Ridley and Mr. Justice Darling concurred.

THE POLE TRAP.—At the Andover County Bench, on May 8th, 1908, two gamekeepers, William Feltham and Alfred Edward Hyne, were summoned for setting a pole trap in Wherwell Wood. Information of the existence of the trap was given by a member of the Council of the R.S.P.B., and the R.S.P.C.A. prosecuted. Mr. P. E. J. Talbot, who gave evidence on subpoena, said he saw a Jay caught by its leg in a steel trap fixed to the stump of a tree about 3 feet from the ground. The trap had fallen and hung suspended, with the bird's beak about 2 inches from the ground. The flesh of the bird's leg was torn away, and showed the bone. The bird was alive, but witness killed it. Inspector Hampshire stated that Feltham admitted setting the trap to catch Jays, and showed him two more traps in the wood. For the defence it was urged that Hyne did not "knowingly permit" as he had no knowledge of the particular trap found; that the Jay was "vermin," and the keepers had a right to protect themselves against it, and that the bird would not have been injured unless it had gone after the eggs in the artificial nest on the trap.—Hyne was dismissed, and Feltham fined 5s. and costs. The Magistrates agreed to state a case.

ILLEGAL POSSESSION. — At Haverfordwest on April 25th, T. H. Brooks, of Cardiff, and T. Reed, Penarth, were fined, with costs, £1 10s. 6d. each for possession of Puffins taken from Skomer Island. Mr. J. J. Neale, lessee of the island, prosecuted as a warning to other visitors to Skomer.

CRUELTY TO NIGHTINGALES.—At the Reigate County Bench on June 13th, Thomas Bateman, bird fancier, 31B, Percival Street, Clerkenwell, was summoned for bird catching and cruelty to two Nightingales. Inspector Green, R.S.P.C.A., stated he found the defendant catching wild birds at White Bushes, Horley. His top coat was composed of numerous pockets, and in one of them he found two Nightingales with their legs tied together. They were in a terrified condition and were evidently suffering great pain. The officer also found on defendant 19 bird bags and 13 spring traps. It was stated that the defendant advertised in newspapers Nightingales at 5s. each and 7s. 6d. each. Defendant, who pleaded guilty, was fined £3 3s. 6d., inclusive of costs, and the traps forfeited.

SHOOTING A BITTERN.—Thomas Hooper, labourer, was summoned at Fordingbridge, on April 10th, for shooting a Bittern, at Breamore. The Bench considered that the man did not know what bird it was, and dismissed the case.

BIRD-CATCHING.—At Caxton, on April 10th, Hezekiah and Walter Emery, bird-catchers, of Gamlingay, were fined 18s. 6d. and costs, for catching wild birds. They had several dozen Linnets and some Chaffinches, two large nets, and several decoy birds. They said it was their living, and they had always caught birds till May and never been interfered with.—At Biggleswade, on April 24th, the same defendants were charged with being in possession of wild birds. Police-constable Haylock, of the Cambs. Constabulary, saw the men catching birds on March 19th and 20th, and on March 20th, Sergeant Bliss, of Sandy, found them driving to Sandy Station with four crates containing 148 Linnets, 12 Greenfinches, 11 Chaffinches, and a Lark. He took possession of the birds, which were in a wild state, and liberated them. The men said they had had the birds since January; and the Bench dismissed the case on the ground that there was not sufficient evidence that the birds were recently caught.—At Luton, on April 16th, Anthony Barford and John Clifton were summoned for taking Linnets. They were caught in the act. Mr. W. W. Marks, Clerk to the County Council, who prosecuted, said defendants were professional law-breakers, and through the work of men of this kind hundreds of birds were being caught and sent to London every week, and the rarer species were becoming rarer and rarer. From the Dunstable district alone an enormous trade was done in Larks, and small fines would not stop the practice. The County Council looked upon these prosecutions as of great importance, but the difficulty in the past had been to catch the offenders. It remained with the Bench to stamp out the business of catching these miserable little birds. Barford was fined £2 and Clifton 30s.—At Stratford, on April 8th, two Leytonstone bird-catchers were summoned for catching birds and for cruelty to decoys. The birds in this case not being a scheduled species, the summons was dismissed with a reprimand on payment of costs, but Mr. Gillespie ordered the whole plant, including the decoy birds, to be forfeited, and further fined the men 15s. each for cruelty.—At Cambridge, on May 9th, William Casey was charged with catching 28 Linnets and Greenfinches on land occupied by Mr. Millard, of Station Farm. The defence was that Mr. Millard had given permission, and as he was too ill to appear, the case was adjourned.

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*Photo. J. G. Short, Lyndhurst.*

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

# BIRD NOTES AND NEWS.

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## THE WILD BIRDS PROTECTION ACT, 1908.



THE Wild Birds Protection Act of 1908 is the direct and immediate outcome of Mr. W. H. Hudson's recent work on *The Land's End*.

In one chapter of this book Mr. Hudson describes how the wild semi-migrant birds which flock in winter to the westernmost district of Cornwall are caught by means of the "teagle." This is an instrument consisting of small fish-hooks, which are made for the purpose and sold at a penny a dozen, fastened by thread on to a string and baited. Any birds that succeed in breaking the thread and getting away, carry the hook in their gullets and must perish miserably. It would not appear that humanity is much taught in Cornish churches or chapels or schools, or that laws for the protection of birds and animals have been so far very successful in the duchy. In twelve years the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds have not been able to induce the Cornish County Council to go beyond the protection of the Chough's eggs in Bird Protection Law; possibly this may remain on their bye-laws when all the Choughs themselves are exterminated in Cornwall. Sir Frederick Banbury has, however, seen to it that fishing for birds shall at any rate be illegal. *The Land's End* determined him on the immediate introduction of the measure, and he is to be congratulated upon having achieved this success. The Act provides that :—

"Any person who shall take or attempt to take any wild bird by means of a hook or other similar instrument 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 use of the "teagle" has been feebly excused on the ground that, in some cases at any rate, the birds are killed for food. As a systematic method of taking birds it is but a small part of the whole hateful business of birdcatching — by traps, by lime, or by means of braced and tortured decoy birds — which a country, at last grown civilized in its outlook on birdlife, will sweep from its fields and lanes. Were the whole truth about this trade realised, as Mr. Hudson's book has enabled his readers to realise the barbarities of the "teagle," there would be few apologists left for its brutal followers. Even under present conditions, it may be safely said that Sir Frederick Banbury would have had the feeling of a large proportion of the nation with him if, instead of banning the hook merely, he had boldly asked Parliament to adopt that clause of the International Convention for the Protection of Birds which forbids "the construction and employment of traps, cages, nets, nooses, lime-twigs, or any other kind of instrument used for the purpose of rendering easy the wholesale capture or destruction of birds."

All readers of BIRD NOTES AND NEWS will be glad to have the portrait of Mr. Hudson, which appears as frontispiece. One of the first and firmest friends of the Society, Mr. Hudson has been on its governing body since the formation of a committee. His interest has been untiring, and the leaflets he has written for its publication have brought to the front not only the general question of Bird Protection, but the specific evils of the plume trade, the pole trap, the collecting craze, and birdcatching.

## THE IMPORTATION OF PLUMAGE BILL.

### SELECT COMMITTEE.



THE Select Committee of the House of Lords, appointed for the consideration of the Importation of Plumage Prohibition Bill, met (as briefly stated in the Summer Number of *BIRD NOTES AND NEWS*) on June 22nd, 1908, and held further meetings on June 24th, June 30th, July 8th, and July 13th. The Committee consisted of Lord Avebury (Chairman), the Duke of Bedford, the Duke of Rutland, the Marquess of Bristol, and Lord O'Hagan.

The following witnesses were heard: Dr. Bowdler Sharpe (Head of the Ornithological Department, Natural History Museum); Mr. James Buckland, C.E.; Mr. Montagu Sharpe and Mr. Frank E. Lemon (Chairman and Hon. Secretary, Royal Society for the Protection of Birds); Mr. W. H. Rosenberg, F.Z.S., F.E.S. (collector and dealer in Natural History specimens); Sir Nathaniel J. Highmore (Solicitor to the Board of Customs); Mr. H. Fountain (Board of Trade); Mr. C. G. Todhunter (lately Collector of Customs at Madras); Mr. J. Arthur Barratt (New York Bar, United States Supreme Court Bar, Legal Adviser to the U.S.A. Embassy); Lord Stanmore (formerly Governor of New Brunswick, Trinidad, Mauritius, Fiji, New Zealand, and Ceylon); Colonel Charles Ryan (deputed representative of the Commonwealth of Australia, and member of the Australian Ornithologists' Union); Captain Albert Pam (member of the Council of the Zoological Society of London); Mr. R. B. Marston (editor of "Fishing Gazette"); Mr. H. Leafe (manager, Messrs. Farlow & Co., fishing-tackle dealers); Mr. Eugene Henneguy (of Messrs. Melles & Co., on behalf of the wholesale distributing firms of London and the Textile Trade section of the London Chamber of Commerce); Mr. S. H. Weiler (ostrich and fancy feather merchant); Mr. C. F. Downham (manager, Messrs. Sciana & Co., ostrich and

fancy feather merchants); Mr. Ernest Figgis (Messrs. Figgis and Co., feather brokers); Mr. Matthew Hale (feather broker); Mr. Emil Mosbacher (Messrs. Mosbacher & Jubb, feather manufacturers); Mr. G. K. Dunstall (fancy feather dealer).

On July 13th, the Select Committee reported as follows to the House of Lords:—

#### REPORT OF COMMITTEE.

1. The Committee have heard the evidence of Dr. Bowdler Sharpe, head of the Ornithological Department of the Natural History Museum, and of other ornithologists. They have all expressed the opinion that, of the birds which it is sought to protect by the Bill, some are at present in danger of extermination, and others are being greatly reduced in numbers.

2. Several witnesses have been heard who represent the Drapers' section of the London Chamber of Commerce. These witnesses have based their opposition to the Bill: (1) on the grounds of the injury to their trade at home, and to those engaged in it, as well as to their business as distributors to foreign markets; (2) on the assertion that there is no risk of the extermination of rare birds under the conditions at present existing; (3) on the allegation that legislation in Great Britain without the co-operation of foreign Governments and of the Colonies would not effect the object desired. They have further asserted that large numbers of the feathers of Egrets which are imported are moulted plumes, and that their collection does not involve the destruction of the birds. The Committee have given careful consideration to these arguments.

3. Upon the first point raised, the Committee see no reason to suppose that the exclusion from the market of the plumage of rare birds would materially affect the feather trade of the country as a whole. The great bulk of the imports in that branch of commerce consists of feathers of the ostrich and other birds which are exempted under the Bill, and the feathers which would be excluded are of relatively small value. Any reduction, therefore, in the importation of feathers of birds protected by the Bill, would, in the opinion of the Committee, be counterbalanced, or so far as employment in this country is concerned more than



counterbalanced, by the use of other feathers or of artificial flowers.

4. On the question of the extermination of rare birds, the Committee have received valuable evidence from persons acquainted with the conditions in Australia, India, South America, and other countries from which plumage is sent to Great Britain. This evidence has been such as to show conclusively, in the opinion of the Committee, that not only are birds of many species slaughtered recklessly, but also that the methods employed for slaughter are such as in many cases, and especially in that of Egrets, involve the destruction of the young birds and eggs. Birds are, as a rule, in their finest plumage at the time of nesting, and have been shown to be especially the prey of hunters at that season. The Committee have carefully considered the facts submitted to them, and they are satisfied that while many birds are being greatly reduced in number, others are in danger of being actually exterminated. They are also of opinion that the feathers of Egrets imported into Great Britain are obtained by killing the birds during the breeding season, and that few, if any, are moulted plumes.

5. The Committee have therefore had to consider whether it is possible, by a Bill prohibiting the import of the plumage, skins or bodies into Great Britain, to reduce the destruction of the birds within reasonable limits. It appears clearly from the evidence that the enactments of British Colonies and certain foreign countries, which provide a close season for wild birds, and of India, which prohibits their export, are to a considerable extent ineffective, partly on account of the open market in this and other countries. Mr. Todhunter, who attended on behalf of the India Office, showed the difficulties of preventing illicit exportation. He also quoted instances to prove that the Bill would be of the greatest assistance to the Government of India. Colonel Ryan, who was requested to give evidence by the Representative of the Commonwealth of Australia, expressed similar views with regard to the Australian Colonies. Mr. Barratt, to whom the Committee were referred by the American Embassy, set out very clearly the laws of the United States of America upon the subject, and he stated that the Bill would very much strengthen the laws of that country. The Committee believe, therefore, that the Bill would not only be of general advantage, but would also render more effective the legislation of India, of Australia, and of the United States.

6. As regards the third objection, while the Committee are strongly of opinion that the Bill would be useful in itself, they consider that it would be more effective if legislation of the same kind

were adopted by other countries. They trust, therefore, that His Majesty's Government will endeavour to secure international action with a view to the preservation of rare and beautiful birds, and that the Bill may be made the basis of representations to other Governments in order to induce them to pass similar laws.

7. The Committee have been impressed by representations made to them on behalf of fly-fishers in Great Britain, and having regard to the very small quantity of feathers used for the manufacture of artificial fishing flies, they have inserted in the Bill amendments for their protection.

8. Evidence has been given as to the practical working of the Measure by representatives of the Board of Trade and of the Board of Customs. The Home Office has also submitted a memorandum on the subject. The Committee are satisfied that its provisions are such as can be carried out in practice and without difficulty by the public Departments concerned. They are indebted to Sir Nathaniel Highmore, Solicitor to the Board of Customs, for his assistance in suggesting amendments to bring about this object, which they have been glad to adopt.

The Bill, as amended and strengthened in Committee, was read a third time on July 21st. It was introduced into the House of Commons on July 22nd by Lord Robert Cecil, and read a first time.

The principal clauses now stand thus:—

1. Any person who, after the commencement of this Act, shall have in his possession for the purpose of sale or exchange the plumage, skin, or body, or any part of the plumage, skin, or body, of any dead wild bird imported or brought into the United Kingdom on or after the first day of January, 1909, which is not included in the schedule to this Act, or otherwise exempted from the operation of this Act, shall be guilty of an offence, and shall on summary conviction be liable for the first offence to a penalty of not exceeding five pounds, and for every subsequent offence to a penalty of not exceeding twenty-five pounds, and in every case the Court shall order the forfeiture and destruction of the articles in respect of which the offence has been committed.

2. The Privy Council may at any time, by notice published in the *London Gazette*, add to, or remove from, the schedule to this Act the name of any other foreign wild bird, and thereupon the provisions of this Act shall take effect as if such bird had been included in or removed from the schedule to this Act.

5. (1) Subject to the provision in sub-section (2) of this section nothing in this Act shall apply to—

(a) wild birds imported or brought into the United Kingdom for use as articles of diet;

- (b) anything done by virtue of a licence issued from time to time by the Board of Trade under such conditions and regulations as they may prescribe for the purpose of supplying specimens of any birds not included in the schedule to any natural history or other museum or for the purpose of scientific research; or
- (c) the plumage, skin, or body, or any parts thereof, of any bird not included in the schedule to this Act and forming part of the wearing apparel being *boni fide* the property of and either actually in the use of or accompanying any person entering the United Kingdom; or
- (d) the plumage of any bird not included in the schedule to this Act imported or brought into the United Kingdom for use solely in the manufacture of flies for the capture of any species of fish.

SCHEDULE.

BIRDS EXEMPTED.

1. Ostriches.                      2. Eider Ducks.

The minutes of evidence have been published in a Parliamentary Blue Book, which can be obtained, price 6d., through any bookseller, and it is therefore only necessary here to give a few extracts from statements made by witnesses, *pro* and *con.*, on points of special interest to readers of BIRD NOTES AND NEWS, with some fuller details of the evidence supplied by Mr. Montagu Sharpe on behalf of the R.S.P.B.

The questions asked, where no other name is given, were put by the Chairman of the Committee.

**THE ANTI-PLUMAGE MOVEMENT.**

MR. MONTAGU SHARPE: Thirty years ago (January 28th, 1876) Professor Alfred Newton, Professor of Zoology at Cambridge University, chairman of the Bird Protection Committee British Association, protested in the "Times" against the enormous sales of birds' feathers held in London, and especially against the quantities of Heron and Egret plumes, and of Humming birds. In 1887 a series of papers appeared in the "Auk" (the organ of the American Ornithologists' Union), in which Mr. W. E. D. Scott drew attention to the vast destruction of Egrets, Spoonbills, Ibises, Terns, and other birds, in Florida, by the plume-hunters. The subject was again alluded to by Professor Newton in his "Dictionary of Birds" (1893), where he says (in article on "Extirpation"): "Unless laws to stop it" (*i.e.*, "this detestable

devastation") "be not only passed but enforced, it will go on till it ceases for want of victims." In 1899 (February 25th) he wrote a further letter to the "Times" on the destruction of Egrets and Birds of Paradise, in which he observed that in many cases "no protective law can be of the least use in staying the slaughter, for there is no local authority to enforce it."

Chairman: Then I think, at the suggestion of your Society, I asked a question on the subject of military plumes in the House of Commons?—Yes, the Society had in 1898 submitted a statement to the Commander-in-Chief (Lord Wolseley); in September, 1899, an Army Order was approved by Her Majesty Queen Victoria, discontinuing the use of "osprey" plumes by officers of the Hussar and Rifle Regiments, and approving the use of plumes of ostrich feathers in their place. In 1900 the Government of India issued a Circular to all the local Governments and Administrations with reference to the protection of wild birds in India. As a result of this enquiry, the Government issued an Ordinance in 1902 (*Customs Circular No. 13, of 1902*) prohibiting the exportation from British India of skins and feathers of all birds, except feathers of ostriches and skins and feathers exported *boni fide* as specimens of natural history.

**EXPORT AND IMPORT.**

MR. MONTAGU SHARPE: The prohibition of export will never be entirely successful while a lucrative market remains open in London. We welcome and are very glad indeed of the Indian legislation, but there is always smuggling going on, and there always will be. Moreover, a very large proportion of birdskins come from countries where it is at present utterly hopeless to look for the imposition of laws for the protection of birds, or for the prohibition of the export of skins.

You would like to see three measures of preservation of birds: (1) Laws prohibiting the killing of certain birds; (2) Laws prohibiting the export of plumage; and (3) Laws prohibiting the import; and you would like to see them co-existent?—If they were all in operation I should think the destruction would be reduced almost to nil.

MR. FRANK E. LEMON: I consider that the export laws of some of our Colonies and India would be greatly assisted if some such Bill as this were passed. South Australia has an export law, so also have the Bahamas, British Guiana and Cyprus. There were others mentioned in the House of Lords, the Bermudas, Barbados, Trinidad, Fiji, Natal, and St. Vincent. With regard to British Guiana, we have recently had some correspondence with the Governor there, and we were able to tell him

of specific cases of importation to this country, and also of specific cases of requests for a supply of birds from a portion of his territory. In order to try and stop the export a special reward was offered by a public notice of May 11th, 1907. If we had here a law preventing the import, I take it that we should strengthen his hands very considerably.

MR. FOUNTAIN: So far as the figures of the imports of ornamental feathers are shown, they amount to somewhere about £2,000,000 worth, of which the bulk are from the Cape of Good Hope, and mainly ostrich feathers; but there remain about £700,000 to £800,000 worth of other feathers, and it seems to us that that is rather a large trade to prohibit. A very large proportion of the trade comes from France, and we are naturally not particularly anxious to interfere with our commercial relations with France. . . . It seems to us that to prohibit the importation into one particular country would be but a very small step towards the preservation of whole species of birds.

*Marquess of Bristol:* There are a number of countries—India and some of the Colonies—which have rules against the export of these birds; is there any way in which you could render assistance to these countries in making effective their prohibition against export?—I doubt if we could do very much, as the bulk of the feathers, other than ostrich feathers from the Cape, come to us through France, and to some extent through Germany, and we should have no means of knowing what the country of origin of the birds was.

Would it be possible to obtain that information through the Board of Trade, so as to assist those countries?—I do not see how that would be possible.

*Chairman:* If feathers come from Calcutta or from Bombay, the export of which was prohibited by the Indian Act, would it not be tolerably clear that they had been introduced in violation of the Act, and could not the Board of Trade do something?—I do not think so; because out of the total importation of ornamental feathers of all kinds, only £1000 come direct from India.

### SMUGGLING FROM INDIA.

SIR NATHANIEL HIGHMORE: The exportation from India is done in rather an artful way, and fictitious names are used, or fictitious addresses sometimes, and the skins of birds are exported in cases described as containing cowhair or horsehair. We have had three or four communications from the Indian Customs of cases having been exported, and they have sent a cable over to us to ask if we

could examine the cases when they came here. The first of those that we had this year was on March 5th, relating to six cases of cowhair coming by a particular ship. We found that under a layer of horsehair there were 820 lbs. of birdskins—paroquets, and the number of skins was 6400. We placed these birdskins under detention, because under the Customs law, where the master of the ship makes a report, he is bound to state the true facts in connection with it; and if he states that the contents of a case are not what they turn out to be, the goods are liable to be taken to the King's warehouse, and the report can only be amended by consent of the Commissioners of Customs. After the explanation had been given, we allowed the report to be amended, because we had no substantial power to do otherwise.

If this Bill had been in operation then, you would have been able to act?—Yes, to detain them entirely. . . . This particular importation led to further inquiries with regard to several other importations that had come in. We then discovered that between December 20th, 1907, and February 15th, 1908, there had been five other importations, in two instances of four cases and in the other three of five cases, of dead birdskins, and they were all declared as either cowhair or horsehair. We had also two telegrams in March of this year relating to osprey feathers that were sent by parcel post. The Postmaster-General in one case sent them back to the Indian Post Office from which they were sent, and in another case the feathers are at the King's warehouse at the present time, awaiting instructions as to their disposal. There was another case which the Post Office had, I think, last November, in which a parcel was described as some form of dress material, and that parcel was found to contain feathers, and was also sent back.

*Marquess of Bristol:* In matters of this sort, where you know imports have been made into this country of things which are supposed not to be exported, you can take action without instructions?—We could, if this Bill passes. . . . Even when the explanation was obtained from India, we had no power under the British Customs Law to do otherwise than give them up. We had no power to destroy them; we had no real power to detain them merely because there had been a technical breach of the Customs Law. . . . If the master of the ship had known they were birdskins and had reported them as such here, we could have done nothing.

*Marquess of Bristol:* The country from which they were imported could have prosecuted?—Not without the goods being sent back to them. In one case, where the goods were sent back by the Post

Office, they did, as I understand, prosecute, but we had no powers to reship the goods to Calcutta.

*Chairman*: Would there, in the judgment of your Department, be any special difficulty likely to arise in carrying out the provisions of this Act?—I do not think so.

It may be evaded?—It may be evaded; but if this Bill passes, and we found birdskins or plumage in a ship, we should seize it at once.

### EXTERMINATION OF SPECIES.

*Evidence put in by MR. MONTAGU SHARPE*: The necessity for checking through the English markets the destruction of wild birds by the plume-hunters has existed for many years, and this has now become imperative if certain species of birds are to be preserved from extermination. Among these birds are the following:—

Many species of Herons and Egrets, such as		
Little Egret	Garzetta garzetta	China, Japan, India, Africa.
Blackfooted Egret	Garzetta nigripes	Moluccas, Java, Australia.
Snowy Egret	Leucophoyx candi- dissima	America.
The Birds of Paradise	Paradiseidae	New Guinea.
Recent evidence as to the war of extermination against these birds, and the threatened extinction of <i>P. rubra</i> , <i>P. apoda</i> , <i>P. minor</i> , and <i>P. jobiensis</i> , was given by Mr. Walter Goodfellow at a meeting of the British Ornithologists' Club, June 19th, 1907.		
Rifle-bird	Ptiloria paradisea	Australia.
Lyre-bird	Menura superba	Australia.
	<i>M. victoriae</i>	
Impeyan Pheasant	Lophophorus impeianus	Southern Cash- mere.
	<i>L. refulgens</i>	Southern slopes of Himalayas.

In a less degree the following:—

Rollers	Coracias	India and elsewhere.
Feathers known in the trade as "Jay." Of the two Indian species, <i>C. indicus</i> and <i>C. affinis</i> , "thousands upon thousands are annually destroyed," says Newton (Dictionary of Birds, p. 794), "to supply the demand for gaudy feathers."		
Tody	Tudidae	Antillian subregion
Quetzal and other Trogons	Pharomacrus mocinno	Guatemala
Cock-of-the-rock	Rupicola crocea	Guiana and lower countries of the Amazon
Rhea	Rhea americana	South America.

Feathers known in the trade as "Vantour" or "Vulture." "So great has been the slaughter during the last few years, averaging, we are told, 300,000 to 500,000 per annum, that one may now ride hundreds of leagues from Buenos Ayres without seeing one." (Harting & Rosenthal, "Ostriches and Ostrich-farming.")

Emeu	Bromaeus novae-hollandiae	Australia.
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"Further and further it will be driven until it be extirpated, unless some law be instituted to check its wanton destruction." (Gould's "Birds of Australia.")

Moreover, the waste of life is in many cases accompanied with great cruelty, the birds being killed at the breeding season: the "osprey" plumes are the breeding plumage of the Herons and Egrets. The tail for which the Lyre-bird is killed is also developed only at this season. The plumage of all birds is most brilliant at mating-time. Some species, as for example the Scarlet Tanager, are gaily-coloured then only.

*DR. BOWDLER SHARPE*: My attention has for many years been called to the considerable destruction of birds for the purposes of hats and other articles of dress.

*Chairman*: And is it your opinion that the matter has gone so far now that some birds are in danger of extermination if nothing is done to prevent it?—Certainly.

*MR. G. K. DUNSTALL*: As to the question of extermination, I have had acquaintance with these birds practically all my life, and, so far as the main things which we handle are concerned, there has not been the slightest sign of the quantity falling off . . . in fact, there are a number of birds which we thought were rare years ago, and now they come in by the thousands freely and plentifully.

*Chairman*: You say there are not many Egrets in Florida now?—Very few. There never were many. You can soon exterminate a small number of birds in a small part of the country. If there were Egrets in the Isle of Wight they would soon be exterminated.

But Florida is very much larger than the Isle of Wight?—Yes.

We have had it in evidence that the Egret used to be very common in Florida, and that now it is very rare?—It could be easily exterminated in Florida.

*MR. DOWNHAM*: Some years ago, when Egret feathers were very fashionable, a raid was made on Florida in general, and it was found necessary, in consequence of these Heron nesting-places being broken up, to legislate and protect them. But they were not exterminated; they migrated. They were not all killed. You might just as well say that because you do not see foxes on Hampstead Heath foxes are exterminated; but they have merely been driven away from that particular neighbourhood.

*COLONEL RYAN*: In the more settled parts of Australia Egrets are almost exterminated. I can give you an example of what came under my own personal notice about four years ago, of a rookery where two young men went down and destroyed, and I think they sold, over 400 plumes. The destruction of 400 birds meant, of course, the

destruction of four times that number, because they were all breeding at the time.

Some trade witnesses have assured the Committee that the Egret's feathers which are sold are generally dropped plumes, and not taken from the killed birds. What would you say with regard to that statement?—That is not so in Australia. It is absolutely necessary to kill the birds. . . .

LORD STANMORE: I was Governor of Ceylon for a period of seven years; and during even those seven years I noticed a most marked diminution in the numbers of the Egret. When I first went there in 1883 they were quite common; in 1890, when I left Ceylon, they had become rare. I travelled a great deal in different parts of the country, and the change even in that short time was most marked.

#### THE LYRE-BIRD.

COLONEL RYAN: . . . The Lyre-bird will be an almost extinct bird before very long, as the destruction is going on at the present time.

*Duke of Rutland*: But there are two State Acts regulating the sale?—Yes, but they are not enforced.

I suppose it is the price that is got for them here that leads very much to their destruction in Australia?—Yes.

MR. MONTAGU SHARPE: The Lyre-bird is protected in Australia, but the tails continue to come into the English market; it is stated (J. W. R. Clarke in "Sydney Morning Herald," September 15th, 1905) that on one day of 1905 twelve dozen Lyre-bird tails were sold at Sydney Woolstore for export to London.

#### DESTRUCTION OF OWLS.

DR. BOWDLER SHARPE: Amongst other useful birds that are being destroyed by thousands are Barn Owls. In 1900, when I was in Paris, we had a Congress meeting on the subject, and the whole of the French milliners' shops were full of hats with the head of the Barn Owl (coloured pink) on them, and I found that about 3500 had been sent from Peru, along with 200,000 magpies and other birds.

#### MOULTED FEATHERS.

MR. MATTHEW HALE: It is assumed that all the Egret feathers that are shipped over here are of birds that are killed; but I can assure you a tremendous quantity of these feathers are dropped at moulting times; they are not taken from live birds. Large quantities are picked up on the moulting ground and shipped here. They are not quite so good as the others, but they are sold in enormous quantities; and this finds a great employment, you must remember, for a number of these Indians, who would be starved otherwise.

*Chairman*: We have had evidence that practically none of these feathers are moult feathers—the moult feathers are rarely found. Are you speaking from personal knowledge?—I am positive. It is well known to us.

MR. DOWNHAM: Venezuela, from which these Egret feathers principally come, represents a very small corner of South America, and it would take very many years—if they were able to get at even the vast quantity that live in Venezuela alone—to exterminate that bird. Venezuela, or round the Orinoco, is to a great extent covered with marshes and swamps, malarial places, which are only accessible at certain times of the year. The Egret breeding at the end of the flood season and assuming these feathers, moults directly after the breeding season, and it will be found, by close examination of these feathers, that 80 to 90 per cent. are old feathers that are picked up off the ground after the moult. Many of these places are protected to a certain extent. It is not easy to protect any land in Venezuela, where it is so very wild, but wherever a man exists who is able to protect these nesting places, he does not allow the nesting places to be molested until after the moult of these nesting plumes. . . .

*The Duke of Rutland*: That is your opinion?—No, it is not my opinion; it is knowledge I have gained.

It is not your personal knowledge; you have not been there yourself?—I have not been there myself.

MR. WEILER: The tale told about their being shot at breeding time is a fairy myth. A few birds may be shot, but the majority are allowed to live. In one or two cases, such as the Birds of Paradise, that may be the case, but certainly not with the Egrets.

*Chairman*: Your evidence is diametrically opposed to the evidence of ornithologists, which we have heard, and therefore when you tell the Committee that these feathers are picked up, and that the birds are not really destroyed when they are nesting, I gather that you have never been in those countries, but are speaking from general impression?—I am speaking from what I have heard and studied and what I have read.

CAPTAIN ALBERT PAM: I have travelled a good deal in South America, and have had some experience, more especially with the Egrets on the Amazon and the Orinoco. The birds are undoubtedly being slaughtered in very large numbers, and in the breeding season. Dr. Hagnmann, who was for many years junior curator of the museum in Para, on the Amazon, to whom I wrote on the subject, confirms me that the birds are shot on the Amazon,

that the numbers are being very rapidly diminished, and that the number of feathers picked up from the birds that moult is so infinitesimal that it would hardly count at all.

*Chairman* : Then practically the feathers sold are not moulted feathers, but feathers from birds that have been shot?—Yes.

It has been alleged before the Committee by one or two witnesses that the Amazon extends over such an enormous area that practically it is impossible even to reduce the number of the birds; but I gather from what you have already said that, though that is, of course, true, the breeding places are comparatively restricted?—Yes.

Therefore, during the breeding season it is comparatively easy to destroy the birds?—Yes.

And the destruction of the parent birds involves the death of the young?—Yes.

*Marquess of Bristol* : Have you ever come across moulted feathers from the Heron?—No; it would be a difficult thing to find one feather. If you wished to collect feathers you would have to walk several hundred yards for each individual plume you picked up, and in the jungle of the Amazon it would be an extremely difficult occupation.

*Chairman* : Practically the idea of their being moulted feathers may be absolutely put aside?—Absolutely.

[Dr. Hægmann wrote, May 24th, 1905 :—"It is a worthless contention on the part of importers that the Egrets are not killed for the purpose of obtaining the feathers. An absolute proof of this is the fact that the Egrets in China, which are closely related to the South American kind, have been almost entirely exterminated."

On June 23rd, 1908, he wrote :—"As I told you in my letter of the 24th May, the Egrets are shot in Brazil, and in the whole of the rest of South America, for obtaining their feathers. In most cases, the men who shoot these birds are the collectors of rubber and other products, who look upon the collection of osprey plumes as a lucrative secondary branch of their collecting business. We can state, without fear of contradiction, that practically all Egrets are killed, that is to say, shot, in order to obtain their feathers, because only in this manner can the feathers of the adult birds, which are the most valuable, be obtained. There can, therefore, be no doubt that the birds are being more than decimated, and will soon be exterminated. It would, therefore, be a greatly desirable achievement if the English Parliament could take steps to prevent the slaughter in such huge quantities of these Egrets."

#### "ARTIFICIAL OSPREYS."

*MR. MATTHEW HALE* : I see down here "Birds of Paradise"; but I can assure you some are not Birds of Paradise at all: they are simply dyed feathers. It is the same with your Egrets there [indicating specimens before the Committee]; you would have to have a very clever detective to be able to go round and tell you which were the horsehair and which were the real Egrets.

Imitations are made from bristles and horsehair, and it is done so wonderfully that it is very difficult for anyone but an expert to be able to tell you which is which.

Do you say these are made of horsehair?—I do not say they are; but I say imitations are so made and you cannot tell unless you get close to them.

*DR. BOWDLER SHARPE* : I have had dozens of so-called artificial Egret feathers submitted to me at the Museum. There never was one that was: they were all of them feathers of Egrets.

And they are all taken from the birds just at the time of nesting?—Yes.

Because it is only when they are nesting that they have these beautiful feathers?—That is so.

*MR. HENNEGUY* :

*Chairman* : I suppose if feathers of these foreign birds were less used in hats there would be a greater demand for the feathers of poultry?—Not at all, there is no similarity at all. These beautiful feathers have a lightness and brightness and beauty which is not to be approached by the feathers of a Barn Fowl, any more than a piece of glass is like a diamond, or ginger-beer is like champagne.

#### THE BIRD OF PARADISE.

*MR. DOWNHAM* : There is pretty substantial evidence that there is no question of extermination, because the Dutch Government very recently offered to sell to one firm the whole of the shooting rights of Dutch Guinea; but they asked such a price that it would be impossible to accept their terms, unless they could be sure of killing every bird.

*Marquess of Bristol* : Does the fact that the Dutch Government are prepared to sell the shooting rights over the whole of New Guinea prove that the birds are in no danger of extermination?—I wanted to point out that there could be no question of extermination, if the Dutch Government were making use of the shooting of the Birds of Paradise to yield part of its revenue. If they could find one or two firms who could take over the shooting rights, those firms would have to engage every native that they could find to blaze away at these Birds of Paradise in order to recoup themselves for the money that they would have to pay to the Dutch Government.

*Chairman* : Would not that rather tend to exterminate the birds?—It would certainly. But what I wish to point out is that the present mode of killing the Birds of Paradise does not tend to make that extermination possible.

*Marquess of Bristol* : How long are these shooting rights let for?—About six months.

Do they stipulate for any stock to be left at the

end of the term of shooting?—No; when a man once gets his licence he can go and shoot as many as he can find.

COLONEL RYAN: In British New Guinea there is a continuous close season, but a good number of permits, in fact too many, I think, are given by the Government. But I feel quite satisfied that pressure could be brought to bear on the Commonwealth Government, which has jurisdiction over New Guinea, to stop the practice of the destruction of Birds of Paradise. I am perfectly certain that the Prime Minister of Australia, Mr. Deakin, would do everything that he possibly could to stop their further destruction.

If we were to show our desire in Great Britain for the preservation of these birds by passing some legislation of the character now before the Committee, do you think it would influence the Government of the Commonwealth?—I am quite sure that it would, and I am quite sure it would be an inestimable boon to Australia.

#### THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.

MR. DOWNHAM: No legislation exists in the State of New York. I have sufficient evidence of that when I can prove to you that the goods are being admitted into the State of New York.—But the law may be evaded?—No, there is no law evaded. I have made all possible enquiries on the point, and I have been satisfied that there is no law whatever which prohibits the importation into the State of New York of these wild plumages.

MR. DUNSTALL: American State laws and general laws only concern themselves with native birds of the United States. The Paradise Bird, not being a native of the States at all, is not mentioned in any of those laws. There are—there were, rather—a few Egrets in Texas and Florida, but in nearly all the States you can deal in foreign Egret feathers.

MR. BARRATT: There has been legislation throughout the United States since 1886 on the subject of the importation of plumage birds and non-game birds and plumage itself. In 1886 the American Ornithologists' Union formulated a Bill designed to protect such birds. It is a Bill which has been known as what is called the Model Law. It was adopted by the States of New York and Massachusetts in 1886, and since that time it has been adopted by about four-fifths of the States in the Union. Under the Federal Act you might have importation of plumage or birds into the United States; but the moment they come within the State of New York or the State of Louisiana they come under the provisions of the State Law, and if that State Law forbids any dealing in them,

or possession of them, any one transgressing the law may be prosecuted under the terms of that State Act.

And the object of these laws is, first of all, to preserve the birds within the country, and then, secondly, to prevent the United States being made a market for birds which have been killed in other countries?—Yes, it is so. . . . We had, in the Louisiana case, a prosecution and conviction for the possession of Egrets which had been imported from a foreign country, allowed under the Federal law, and their possession forbidden under the State law. . . . It was only in 1902 that they added this latter part of the section, including "plumage, skin or body." Prior to that it simply said "wild birds"; and to make the statute plain, and obviously to cover cases of that kind, they added that further section.

#### THE HOME MARKET.

Chairman: You consider that the passing of this Bill would very much reduce the use of these plumes in English hats?

MR. HENNEGUY: As far as the feathers dealt with by this Bill are concerned, it would entirely destroy the trade. . . . It would entirely shift the market from London to other European places.

Then, I ask you, would the ladies abroad wear more feathers?—Not that I know of, because they wear plenty now.

If the English ladies wore less, and I foreign ladies did not wear more, it would diminish the number of feathers used?—It would have the effect, very likely, of making feathers cheaper on the Continent, and of therefore making them more popular, and therefore there might be more sold.

If a lady is prevented, as you told the Committee she would be prevented by this Bill, from wearing Egrets in her hat, she must wear something else?—A certain number of ladies would naturally be debarred from wearing Egrets; but most of the people who wear these expensive feathers would undoubtedly go abroad for them.

MR. MOSBACHER: These bright birds' feathers are as a rule much dearer than feathers that are not so bright, and, therefore, it is only the better class of people who can afford to buy these higher-priced goods. If we stop the importation of these, all our ladies who can afford better prices will go to the other countries and buy these trimmings. . . . We use the barn-yard plumages to complete articles of greater value; and it is the better trade which is concerned, which ultimately will be entirely lost; if France and other countries are able to use these brighter feathers and we are not allowed to use them, our trade will be taken away.

MR. DOWNHAM: I should estimate that 80 per cent. of the raw feathers and plumages of wild birds that arrive from abroad are distributed to some other countries, and that there would be only about 20 per cent. manufactured here. . . . A substitute must be found for the wild feathers: something bright must be found, and it may be that they will use ribbons or flowers manufactured abroad; and the consequence of that will be to destroy to a great extent the manufacturing that goes on in this country.

Why should it necessarily be flowers manufactured abroad?—Because I find on making enquiries that a great proportion of flowers are manufactured abroad; and this particular form of millinery is a cheap form; and to substitute a cheap form of millinery you must go for a cheap flower or ribbon, or some other substitute which is cheap; and it is these cheap articles which are manufactured abroad. . . . The 20 per cent. of wild feathers that are used in manufacture in this country are used with a great many other articles, and produce what I call a “cheap mount.”

### THE LABOUR QUESTION.

MR. MONTAGU SHARPE: The view which my Council take, after having got the best advice they can, is that the manipulation of feathers employs very little labour in proportion to that employed in the making of artificial flowers, ribbons and other ornaments, which would replace bird plumes in ladies' hats.

MR. WELLER: The ostrich feather trade and the fancy feather trade go hand-in-hand. There are certain times of the year when people employed by us, and by other factories, are employed on ostrich feathers. Towards the autumn, when the ostrich feather goes out of curl, a harder feather must be used, and our work goes to fancies, and the workpeople manufacture other plumage mixed up with wild. But certainly some of these hands would be thrown out of employment at once.

MR. MOSBACHER: This trade does not go on always; it is mostly in the fall of the year, and the autumn, when these birds are employed. In the summer season our firm makes artificial flowers, and other people occupy themselves with ostrich feathers; but of course we could not keep anything like the number of hands that we do if this Bill were passed, and we had not the fancy feather trade for these girls to fall back upon. Between 4,000 and 5,000 people are employed in this trade; but if this Bill passes I should say only about 1,000 or 1,500 would be able to find a living.

MR. DOWNHAM: Of the imports of these articles

that you wish to prohibit I estimate that 20 per cent. are manufactured here.

They are all foreign produce; they are cleaned, arranged, and made up here, but they are all foreign products?—Yes.

You say that the Bill would diminish the demand for labour in this country, but as it would replace a certain quantity of feathers, which are grown abroad, by a certain quantity of articles which are made in this country, clearly it must tend to increase the demand for labour in this country?—I am afraid I cannot agree with that way of putting it. On the question of labour there may not be so much difference one way or the other; but I cannot admit that it would increase under the Bill.

MR. MONTAGU SHARPE: Although London is the great plume market of the world, and to stop import into London of certain plumage would have a great effect on the trade in birdskins, it is not probable that English trade or English labour would suffer materially. The goods come here to be bought and sold, but most of the buyers are foreigners, and most of the feathers are sent out of this country in their raw state to be made up in France and Germany. . . . As far as can be ascertained, there is no desire, except among those immediately engaged in the plume trade, for a continuance of the feather-wearing fashion. If the Press may be taken as an index of public opinion, general feeling is strongly against the fashion.

### SHOULD ENGLAND LEAD ?

DR. BOWDLER SHARPE: I think we ought to lead. I have had a little to do with International Congresses, where we always have a section for the protection of birds, and England is, I think, the only country that has done anything practical, with the exception of America; but I fancy that there is enough movement now in some other countries to cause them to follow our lead. I think it is a good thing to have shown the way.

You think that if we pass this Bill, or some similar Bill, we might reasonably hope that foreign countries would support us in that action and pass similar legislation?—I think they would.

MR. JAMES BUCKLAND:

*Chairman:* There has been a suggestion thrown out that we should defer any action in this country until we could secure the co-operation of other countries. What view do you take upon that point?—I hardly regard it as practicable, because many of these birds come from islands where there really is no responsible Government. . . . Sir Horace Tozer tells me that if a Bill of this description were passed in England, within a year he would undertake



that Queensland, at all events, and he thinks the whole of the Australian Commonwealth, would pass measures prohibiting the export.

*Marquess of Bristol*: Would they not do so if the Bill were not passed?—No, they will not; they think it is of no use, that it only opens a door to smuggling.

**MR. MONTAGU SHARPE**: If England will take the lead, I have not the least doubt that other nations will come into line. For instance, in Hungary there is a desire for international action owing to so many birds being migratory. . . . Judging by the pleasant relations existing between the two countries at the present time, the French might very likely be willing to take action upon the same lines.—French men of science are of the same opinion as English men of science?—I think so, on all subjects connected with birds.

UTILITY OF THE BILL.

**MR. TODHUNTER**: The Bill would help the Government of India greatly. Their present remedy is a very partial one—the prohibition of exports. They are powerless now even when we can trace illicit export. . . . My personal opinion, as a Customs officer, is that the Bill would be most useful and helpful to us.

**COLONEL RYAN**: We would hail with the greatest delight the passage of such an Act as you have in contemplation.

**LORD STANMORE**: I have already given a strong expression of my opinion, that while direct prohibitive legislation is of comparatively little use, the imposition of an export duty upon the skins of birds produces an immediate and telling effect, so far as regards those that are sacrificed for commercial purposes.

I think you added that an import duty would have the same effect?—It is a natural complement to the export duty in the Colony.

**MR. FOUNTAIN**: We see no difficulty at all, if the Bill were approved, in carrying out the functions that are put upon us, and we should be perfectly prepared to undertake them.

Number of packages of "osprey" feathers and of skins of Birds-of-Paradise offered at each of the London Plume Sales during 1907:—

	Osprey Packages.	Birds-of-Paradise.
February 12th	594	4,728
April 6th	422	3,831
June 11th	348	4,244
August 2nd	315	3,831
October 15th	548	7,000
December 17th	200	4,667

During 1906:—

February	327	8,508
April	260	7,185
June	259	11,811
August	242	3,948
October	485	5,700
December	255	3,600

The quantity of feathers to a package varies greatly, but the 1,411 packages catalogued in the last six months of 1907 were admitted to represent 115,000 birds, "the majority of them" Herons, and one-third White Herons "Six birds," said Mr. Downham, "furnish one ounce of feathers."

Crowned Pigeons	7,669	June 10th, 1908
" "	5,000	April 14th, 1908
" "	10,700	February 11th, 1908
" "	4,818	December 17th, 1907
" "	3,940	October 14th, 1907
" "	7,000	February 12th, 1907
Sooty Terns	16,500	June 10th, 1908
("Dominoes")	16,700	April 14th, 1908
" "	18,000	February 11th, 1908
Lyre-Bird Tails	100	December 17th, 1907
" "	80	August 3rd, 1907
Impeyan Pheasants	272	April 14th, 1908
" "	300	December 17th, 1907
" "	261	June 11th, 1907
" "	346	April 16th, 1907
" "	138	February 12th, 1907
" "	191	December 11th, 1907
Kingfishers	20,615	June 11th, 1907
" "	15,000	April 11th, 1906
Terns	14,400	April 11th, 1906.
("Sea-Swallows")		
Albatross Quills	15,000	February 12th, 1907
Rhea Feathers	26 cases	June 11th, 1907
("Vulture")		

These examples are given only as instances. They do not represent the whole of the birds of the various species named offered within the period from which the quotations are given.

Other birds catalogued in large numbers include Owls, Red and Bronze Ibis, Orioles, Tanagers, Hoopoes, Cardinals, Parrots, Trogons, Argus Pheasants, Humming-birds, Blue Creepers, Canaries, Cock-of-the-rock, "Jays" (Rollers), quills of "Albatross," Pelican, Bustard, Crane, Eagle, Heron, Osprey.

The following figures taken from the advertisements and catalogues of the Feather Sales held at the Commercial Sale Rooms, London, afford some details of the numbers of various bird skins and plumes dealt with at these sales:—

## The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds.

### COUNCIL MEETING.

THE Council of the Society held its quarterly meeting on July 17th, 1908, Mr. Montagu Sharpe (Chairman) presiding. Present: Mr. Ernest Bell, Hon. A. Dobson, Mr. H. E. Drosser, Hon. Mrs. Drewitt, Miss Hall, Mr. Hudson, Mrs. F. E. Lemon, Mr. Meade-Waldo, Mr. Ogilvie-Grant, Miss Pollock, Captain Tailby, Mr. F. E. Lemon (Hon. Secretary), Miss Gardiner (Secretary).

**The Hon. Secretary's Report** gave particulars of the progress in Committee of the Importation of Plumage Bill; of Sir Frederick Banbury's Bill dealing with the "teagle"; and of the seven Bird Protection Orders issued since the last meeting of the Council; and stated that lectures had been given, on April 9th, at Cuckfield, by Miss Paine, and on July 7th at Romford, by Miss Clifton.

**The Finance and General Purposes Committee** presented the statement of accounts for the quarter. Two Hon. Local Secretaries were appointed: Miss H. P. Gotch for Kettering, and Mrs. George Chichester for Pilton, Barnstaple; and thanks were accorded for the past work of Miss Wicksteed and Mrs. Nicholson, resigned. Seven new Fellows were elected, namely, Hon. Mrs. Alfred Dobson, Lexham Gardens, W.; Miss Byas, Alexandra Club, W.; H. Brinsley Brooke, British Legation, Berne; A. H. Louis, Middle Temple; Mrs. Markham, Morland, Penrith; Mrs. John Noble, Park Place, Henley-on-Thames; Mrs. Williams-Freeman, Egerton Gardens, S.W. Mr. William Weir, of Kildonan and Adamton, Sutherlandshire, was elected a *Life Fellow*; and Mr. A. W. Oke, of Orierton, Highfield Lane, Southampton, a *Life Member*.

The following were elected Members:—

Mrs. Arthur Allen (Ilminster), Mrs. Allport (Bedford Park, W.), The Dowager

Lady Borthwick, Captain Baldwin (Hythe) Mrs. Bartrum (Bromley), Dr. J. C. Baker (Aylesbury), W. Bennett (The College, Brighton), Major R. Hunter Blair (Edrom, N.B.), Rev. W. H. Brown (Brighton), Mrs. W. Benson (Fourstones-on-Tyne), Miss Olga Briggs (Wilmslow), Mrs. H. Cohen (Headingley), Mrs. Cole (Berkhamsted), Miss Coulson (Houghton Hall, Carlisle), Mrs. Cumberlege (London, W.), Miss Dickenson (Mickleham), Miss Drummond (Fredley, Dorking), Mrs. Farmer (Oatlands), Mrs. Foss (Totteridge), Holdsworth Gunn (N. Finchley), E. H. Hensman, M.A. (Head Master Quorn Grammar School), M. Haworth-Booth (London, S.W.), Mrs. Henderson (Berkhamsted), T. G. Jackson, R.A. (Wimbledon), A. Kennedy (St. John's, S.E.), F. L. King, M.A. (The College, Brighton), Miss Lambart (Colwyn Bay), Mrs. Lathbury (South Kensington), W. C. Littler (Launceston, Tasmania), Mrs. Milvain (Alnwick), A. Moir (Dumfries), J. W. McLellan (Westgate-on-Sea), Mrs. G. Miller (Rock Ferry), Miss Oakeshott (Rock Ferry), Mrs. Lawley Parker (Edgbaston), Miss E. M. Powell (Sydenham Hill), C. S. Prichard (58th Regt.), D. Potter (London, S.E.), Miss Coxwell Rogers (Cheltenham), Miss Roscoe (London, W.), Mrs. Whitworth Russell (Kensington), Frank Russell (Blackheath), Mrs. Scott (Bournemouth), Mrs. Severn (Coniston), Captain J. C. Scott (Killiecrankie House), H. Pendrell Smith (Blackheath Park), F. G. Swan (Cambridge), C. Hewlett Taylor (Croydon), Miss C. Thompson (Southsea), G. Stuart Thomson (Barrow-on-Soar), Mrs. Worthington (Duffield), Mrs. Fitzherbert Wright (West Hallam Hall, Derby).

The following societies had become affiliated: Woking Field Club, Louth Antiquarian Society and Field Club, Midland Railway Natural History Society, Brighton College Natural History Society.

**The Publication Committee** reported on the arrangements made for the next season's Christmas card, etc.

**The Watchers' Committee** reported on the Watching arrangements at Dungeness,

in the Isle of Wight, Anglesey, Aberdeenshire, the Shetlands, Cornwall, Surrey, and elsewhere, and the work done; and on the prosecutions at Lydd and Aberdeen. The efforts made to suppress the use of the pole trap were also reported, together with the prosecutions undertaken by the R.S.P.C.A.

**General Business.** The arrangements for the Autumn Conference were discussed; the work of the inspector employed by the Society during April, May, and June (of which an account appeared in the Summer number of BIRD NOTES AND NEWS) received the approval of the Council, and proposals for obtaining his services in the autumn were considered; steps to be taken with regard to the Plumage Bill were debated, and other subjects were discussed.

#### AUTUMN CONFERENCE.

A conference of Hon. Local Secretaries and other workers and friends of the Society will be held on Wednesday, October 28th, 1908, at the Royal Horticultural Hall, Westminster, S.W. The meeting will not be in any sense a public one, as perfect freedom for discussion among members is desired. Cards of invitation are being forwarded to all Fellows and Members, and will be gladly sent to any of the Associates of the Society who are interested and are able to attend. It is hoped that the Princess Victor of Hohenlohe-Langenburg, the Rance of Sarawak, and other Vice-Presidents of the Society will be present. After the conference Mr. Oliver Pike will kindly show some of his cinematograph and other pictures of bird-life.

#### EGG-LIFTING.

Two prosecutions have arisen this season out of the work of Watchers employed by the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds; both resulted in convictions.

On July 25th, at Lydd Petty Sessions, J. Frank Peters, of 52, Brown Street, Manchester, was summoned for taking three eggs of the Common Tern and three eggs of the Blackheaded Gull in an area protected

by the Kent Bird Protection Order. Mr. R. Thomas, barrister, instructed by Mr. J. Bannon, prosecuted on behalf of the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, and defendant, who did not appear, was represented by Mr. J. T. Walldon. Defendant was seen on the beach near Dungeness on May 28th, in the neighbourhood of some nests, by Dr. Ticehurst and Mr. M. J. Nicoll, who, when they reached the nests, found that one was empty. A Watcher was sent in pursuit, and the eggs were found in defendant's possession. Mr. Peters had been to Dungeness in 1907, and had then obtained permission to visit this breeding area. He had no permission this year, and a notice-board prohibiting the taking of eggs was within a few yards of the robbed nests. Mr. Thomas urged that an example should be made because of the difficulty of detecting offences and the expensive methods of protection needed.—Fined £3, being half the maximum penalty, and £3 3s. costs, the Bench saying that although this was the first case brought before them the egg-taking had been so frequent that they could not deal lightly with it.

On June 27th, at Aberdeen, William Simpson pleaded guilty to taking four eggs of the Eider Duck from the Links of Collieston. He was seen by the Watcher appointed by the Society apparently searching for eggs, and was caught in the act of taking them. The Sheriff asked if eggs got in that way were disposed of in the market. The Fiscal, who prosecuted, said this was unquestionably the case, as they were rare and valuable; it was impossible to get at the people who bought them, as the eggs were sent off to London. A fine was imposed in respect of each egg.

#### CHRISTMAS CARD.

The Society's Christmas card for the coming season has been specially painted by Mr. Robert Morley, whose delightful paintings of animal life are well known. It is entitled "In the Belfry."

## Economic Ornithology.

### SPARROWS AND SPARROW CLUBS.

THE question of Sparrows and Sparrow Clubs has been brought to the fore by letters on the subject from Mr. Rider Haggard in the *Times*, and by the formation of the Incorporated Society for the Destruction of Vermin, in whose prospectus the Sparrow is included with rats, fleas, ticks, etc., as "vermin noxious to man." One of the objects is stated to be the formation and encouragement of Rat and Sparrow Clubs. The Board of Agriculture, replying to a correspondent, says that the utility of the Sparrow has been the subject of controversy, but the weight of opinion appears, on the whole, to be adverse to the bird; and that the Board certainly does not propose that the very limited amount of protection afforded by the Acts should be extended.

The new society has, however, met with vigorous opposition in the Press, notably in able articles in the *Saturday Review* of August 29th and September 5th, and the *Nation* of August 29th. The following letter has been addressed to the Board of Agriculture by the Hon. Secretary of the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds:—

"The attention of this Society has been called to the controversy on the Sparrow question in the columns of the *Times* and other newspapers, and to the official expression of opinion given by the Board of Agriculture.

"Without desiring in any way to differ from the Board's pronouncement, or to advocate for the House Sparrow any further protection than the very slender amount given under the Wild Birds Protection Act of 1880, may we venture most respectfully to ask your Lordship's consideration of the following facts?

"The letter from the Board of Agriculture has been assumed in many quarters (as indicated by comments in the Press) to advocate unrestricted destruction of the Sparrow and, as the popular

means to an end, the formation of Sparrow Clubs in country villages.

"1. A large proportion of so-called Sparrow Clubs, however, do not confine their attention to House Sparrows, but offer rewards, frequently larger rewards, for the destruction of other species, such as Thrushes, Blackbirds, Tits, Starlings, Chaffinches, Larks, Bullfinches, Jays, Magpies, and Hawks, or of 'small birds' without discrimination.

"This Society has called the attention of the Home Office and of local authorities to cases in which species actually protected by a county Bird Protection Order were on the black list of a Sparrow Club in that county.

"2. In cases where other birds are not specifically mentioned it is fairly certain that they are largely destroyed through carelessness or ignorance on the part of those who kill the birds, and those who receive the heads. "Sparrow" is the common country name for any small plainly-coloured species. Not only finches but useful insectivorous birds, such as Hedge Sparrows, Flycatchers, and various Warblers, are thus destroyed.

"4. At a meeting of the Kent Fruit Growers' Association, held on June 8th, 1908, the following resolution was passed:—

"That having regard to the fearful ravages committed by caterpillars in the orchard, and with a view to remedying the same, it is desired to impress upon fruit growers, buyers, and all others connected with agriculture, the necessity of stopping the wanton destruction of birds."

"5. The methods of the Sparrow Club, in stimulating a wholesale destruction of birds, especially by boys and youths, are wholly opposed to the efforts of humane societies and of school teachers to check destructiveness and cruelty, and are contrary to the whole trend of modern education and legislation.

"It appears to this Society that these objections are inseparable from the Sparrow Club, and must remain so at least until a knowledge of birdlife, and of the habits and food of birds is much greater and more widely diffused than is the case at present.

"We therefore venture to hope that the Board of Agriculture will not give its approval to a form of bird-destruction which has been productive of so much harm, and is mischievous in its tendencies and its results."

### SIR HERBERT MAXWELL ON THE SPARROW.

An appeal has been circulated through the public Press, which, if I understand it aright, is intended to enlist Sparrow clubs for the destruction of rats and rat clubs for the destruction of Sparrows. Now, this seems to be a mistaken proposal, founded on the assumption that the house Sparrow is a kind of vermin as destructive and detestable as the grey rat. Nothing could well be further from the truth. . . . Sparrows are not in the same category as rats, either morally or physically. At certain seasons they are mischievous, but at others they are distinctly beneficent, which rats never are. Sparrows eat a lot of grain and wheat; in towns, where grain is not grown, they pick crocuses to pieces in spring, which is very aggravating to the natty householder and the diligent park-keeper; but they also eat a vast number of caterpillars, grubs, and various insects which are hurtful to various crops. Decimation, perhaps, but, in the name of Lydia, not extermination. I submit that the case against the Sparrow is not sufficiently grave to justify the extirpation of his race. Sparrows go in flocks in hedgerows round harvest fields. If bad weather delays the operation of leading they get more than their fair share of grain; but the farmer can protect himself by expending two or three cartridges among them. If an indiscriminate crusade were declared against Sparrows, there would be a great throwing up of hats (so to speak) in lepidopterous and coleopterous circles. Green caterpillars would grin delighted, and chafers would greatly chortle. But the crusade would not succeed, for every town is a Sparrow preserve, whence these dingy but light-hearted little rascals would spread outwards to replace their slaughtered brethren of the farmyards. Meanwhile, much mischief would be wrought in another direction. Members of Sparrow clubs are not as a rule practised ornithologists. In their eagerness to win the prize for the best bag they would net the bushes at night.

Linnets and Finches, Buntings and Warblers would be destroyed by hundreds, and much of the good result of the Wild Birds Acts would be undone.—*Pall Mall Gazette*, Sept. 16th, 1908.

### "THE FEEDING HABITS OF BIRDS."

Mr. C. Gordon Hewitt, of Manchester University, read a paper before the meeting of the British Association at Dublin, on September 4th, on a proposed "Enquiry into the feeding habits of British birds." He remarked that it was becoming increasingly difficult for zoologists studying economic problems to form a definite opinion with regard to the economic status of many species of the birds of our islands, such as, for example, the Rook, Jay, Starling, Chaffinch, and other finches, and many others. This difficulty was entirely due to the absence of any precise information as to the food habits of our birds. There existed a large amount of evidence obtained from observers, such as fruit-growers, game-keepers, sportsmen, and others; and although some of this might be useful, much of it had been distorted on its way through the prejudiced glasses of the observer. What was really necessary in order to obtain as accurate a conception as possible of the economic status of any species of bird was the actual dissection and recording of the contents of the crops and stomachs of a large number of individuals killed not only in different months of the year, but also in different localities. The Wild Birds Protection Act did not rest, in its present application, on a proper scientific basis. Its provisions should be framed on the basis of the economic value of the birds to be protected. It was a common belief that Rooks were very destructive to field crops, when subsequent investigation showed that they had more largely fed on insects.—An interesting discussion followed this paper. Professor C. J. Patten (Sheffield) deprecated the wholesale destruction of Bullfinches under the mistaken idea that they were dangerous to certain crops. Mr. R. J. Ussher protested against the wholesale destruction of Owls, and especially of the Barn Owl in certain parts of Ireland, where it seemed to be the fashion to have a stuffed Owl in many of the houses. It was deplorable that a bird of such use as the Barn Owl should be indiscriminately marked out for destruction.




**Notes.**




### THE PLUMAGE IMPORTATION BILL.

For those who have not had time to read through the forty-seven page Blue Book, or to collate the evidence relating to the various points, a series of extracts are given in this number of BIRD NOTES AND NEWS from the statements made before the Select Committee both for and against the Plumage Bill. The question naturally divides itself into two sections—that of the birds, and that of British trade and labour. On the first of these, the trade statements can hardly be taken as of serious value. They consist of flat contradictions, wholly unsupported by evidence, of all that has been said on the subject for years past by travelled naturalists and scientific writers, who have no personal end to serve. The assertions of one witness, for instance, as to the Egrets of Florida, will afford grim entertainment to Audubon Societies who are employing armed wardens to protect the remaining birds against the plume-hunter. Those as to Venezuela will equally amaze anyone who possesses a tittle of geographical knowledge of the country, or who remembers the protest made not many years ago, even in a Government Blue Book, against the terrific slaughter of Egrets in that country. The trade representatives, in fact, protested too much.

The legend of “artificial” and “imitation” plumage has received its death-blow from its inventors, for the trade were emphatic that poultry feathers and the like bear no resemblance whatever to the imported wild-bird plumes—they are “as ginger-beer to champagne,” “dowdy,” impossible. And though one speaker clung desperately to the old tale of “horsehair” ospreys, he did not put in a specimen of

this elusive article. There was indeed a stand taken on the theory of “moulted” plumes—the most incredible story of all—the story that plume-hunters, instead of shooting out a “rookery” of birds and taking the patch of skin bearing the nuptial plume, patiently stalk the jungles and swamps to collect one by one the widely scattered moulted and draggled feathers, and that the trade carefully clean and prepare this unpromising material. Here, again, the trade asked too much of their hearers.

The relation of the Bill to trade comes more within the province of trade witnesses, and readers will sympathise with Messrs. S. H. Weiler, Emil Mosbacher, Eugene Hanneguy, and Sciana & Co., in their anxiety as to British interests. If, however, such an Act was not likely to have far-reaching effects in protecting birds and demoralising the whole business, it may be at least doubted whether it would excite so bitter an antagonism in these English patriots with the very un-English names. Apart from possible Continental or international movements, the result in strengthening bird protection and export laws in our own Colonies is a strong fact to be set against the trade declaration that not a bird will be saved. The evidence of smuggling in India is particularly interesting reading.

The facts of the labour question, disentangled from irrelevant and contradictory statements, appear to be these. London is the great receiving port for plumes from abroad, and on this fact the supporters of the Bill base their contention that an English law is required to save the birds from extermination. Of the imported feathers, 80

per cent. now go out of England to be made up on the Continent in foreign factories; if Lord Avebury's Bill becomes law, these feathers worked up in Paris or elsewhere, will not be able to enter British ports; but no British workers will of necessity lose thereby. On the other hand, as one witness said, "substitutes must be found," and therefore labour generally will undoubtedly benefit. The small amount of making up of foreign fancy-feathers now done in England is a seasonal occupation for girls engaged at other times in manipulating Ostrich feathers. If British manufacturers can supply nothing to replace the fancy-feather scraps, the cheap mount business may suffer, but it will be strange if British manufacturers do not welcome the opportunity to supplant Continental imports with goods made by British workers.

The feather merchants naturally take their trade very seriously, as though "ospreys" were the staff of life instead of a profitable "trimming." When the Bill has passed, tens of thousands of women will cease wearing pieces of dead birds in their hats without giving so much as a thought to the matter, and will still find new hats desirable and charming. Milliners will experience a happy relief in no longer being compelled to apologise or lie in order to sell their wares. No one credits the picture of Englishwomen of all classes swarming over to France in order to persist in a discredited "mode." The "fashion" will have changed, and birds will "go out," as crinoline went out after its dangers and ugliness had tired the public, and as yellow ruffs went out when a celebrated murderess was executed in one.

On one point the feather merchants were noticeably embarrassed. They were loth to acknowledge the truth of figures showing enormous bird-destruction. They could not dispute them for fear of indicating that the supply of birds was being reduced. It is also worth noting that not a single state-

ment advanced by the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds has been disproved or shaken.

#### BIRD PROTECTION IN AUSTRALIA.

"The protests against the shameful destruction of birds for their plumage for the purposes of millinery have so far," says the *Sydney Worker* (July 23rd), "been futile as far as Australia is concerned. A few insect-eating birds have been protected, but nothing has been done to protect many beautiful species, which have, in consequence, become almost extinct. A deputation representing the Ornithological and Natural History Societies of the Commonwealth was to wait this week on Mr. Deakin to request legislative restriction on the trade in plumage birds. Legislation is proposed on the lines of Lord Avebury's Bill, recently introduced into the British Parliament." Mr. Deakin has also been questioned on the matter in the House of Representatives, and expressed his personal sympathy with the movement.

#### "OSPREYS" ON THE STAGE.

"There are many people at work producing fashion," said one of the trade witnesses to the Plumage Bill Committee. Some of these people are undoubtedly connected with the theatre, where coming styles of costume are commonly seen in such sumptuous extravagance as impresses the public mind. Several leading actresses have declared themselves against the wearing of ospreys and the like, but it has been said that many are in the hands of managers and costumiers, and cannot exercise their own taste or preference. It is the more interesting to know that a clever young actress, who is playing a leading part in one of the most popular plays now running, and who was allotted in one scene a hat trimmed with osprey plumes, at once went to the manager, and as an adherent of the R.S.P.B., asked to be allowed to change the feather. No difficulty was made in granting the request.

### THE FEATHER SALES.

The plumes offered at the Commercial Sale Rooms on August 5th, included a very large supply of Indian Paroquets; some Indian Rollers; 263 packages of Egret feathers, both American and Asiatic; 6880 Birds-of-paradise; and 6850 Kingfishers.

Among the quills were 266 bundles described as "Albatross." The House of Lords Committee were informed that "Albatross" is the trade name for the quills of the Jabiru Stork; and coincidentally with this statement a strong protest appeared in the *Field* against the extent to which the Jabiru is being shot down.

## Bird and Tree (Arbor) Day.

### COUNTY CHALLENGE SHIELD COMPETITIONS.

The Essays from Schools competing in the R.S.P.B. Inter-County and County Competitions should reach the Society's office not later than Monday, October 5th.

### NATURE STUDY IN THE SCHOOL.

"Every encouragement should be given to the institution of school field-clubs, 'Bird and Tree' teams, scouting parties, naturalist societies, and other developments of a like nature among the pupils."

Now that the Bird and Tree Competition has received this official approval in the Memorandum on Nature Study and the teaching of Science in Scottish Schools (Scotch Education Department, 1908), it may be hoped that some progressive Scottish county—and Scotland is usually progressive in the matter of education—will introduce the scheme into its educational programme. The whole Memorandum is entirely in accord with the Bird and Tree work of the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, and some paragraphs might have been written to set forth its aims and methods. For example:—

"From the beginning the pupil should learn, as far as possible, to rely upon his own observation for his facts, and to endeavour to frame his conclusions independently. . . . The main endeavour should be not simply to impart information, but to quicken the interest of the children in the world around them, to train them to observe accurately, to reason intelligently from their observations, to state and illustrate their conclusions clearly, and generally to form habits of acquiring and sifting out information for themselves. . . .

"Good text-books, or, better still, the writings of great naturalists and explorers, will often prove helpful in suggesting lines of work and methods of carrying them out. But the formal intrusion of a text-book, or the dependence upon it for information which ought to be gleaned directly from actual observation, is altogether foreign to the spirit of Nature Study. . . .

"The continuous study of a living plant or animal in its natural environment, accompanied by careful dated records of its growth, development and

changes throughout the successive seasons of the year, forms an exceptionally interesting and valuable exercise.

"The collecting instinct will be brought out strongly in all this work, and must be carefully guided. Any tendency towards the indiscriminate robbing of birds' nests, the ruthless killing of living creatures, or the thoughtless uprooting of rare botanical specimens, merely for the sake of increasing a collection, should be strongly discouraged. Nature Study should lead children to have a deepened respect for the rights and feelings of all their fellow-creatures, and should teach them to regard with abhorrence the wanton destruction of what is rare and beautiful.

"In no case should the keeping of animals in captivity, either in school or elsewhere, be permitted, unless their well-being and comfort can be provided for in a thoroughly satisfactory manner. . . . Wherever captivity is, from the nature of the case, irksome or cruel, it should be absolutely forbidden. A skylark kept imprisoned in a cage is neither a fitting subject for Nature Study nor a desirable object-lesson in the treatment of animals.

"Under suitable conditions, the provision of convenient nesting places for the song-birds of the district permits of their habits, especially at nesting time, being studied. With a little ingenuity, an empty box of suitable size can be readily enough adapted for this purpose, and fixed to a convenient wall or tree, or erected on a pole in a favourable situation. Schools in which Manual Instruction courses have been established might include the design and construction of such bird-houses or nesting-boxes, in their schemes of work. Endeavours to modify the forms of these to suit the habits of different birds would lend much interest to their construction, and their erection would lead to more intimate study of local bird-life and a growing desire to protect it. The design and construction of feeding tables and perches, suitable for the smaller birds, would further encourage this desirable development."

In an appendix of suggestions to teachers, Professor J. A. Thomson, of Aberdeen University, sums up pithily: "In Nature Study we aim at seeing, understanding, enjoying, and practically learning from the natural world round about us. It need hardly be said that Nature Study has gone wrong when it becomes bookish or too much of a 'lesson.'"



## Bird Protection Orders.

THE following Bird Protection Orders have been issued since June 24th, 1908:—

**DURHAM (COUNTY).** June 25th. BCEFS. Scheduled birds as in Order of 1896, comprising the Bearded Tit, Swallows, Swift, Wren, Wryneck, Buzzards, Falcons and Osprey. Eggs as in last Order. Goldfinch, Kingfisher, and Swallows protected all the year. All birds protected on Sundays, Christmas Day, Good Friday, and Bank Holidays throughout county, except in certain named parishes.

**CARDIFF (COUNTY BOROUGH).** September 9th. EF. Additions to long list of species protected all the year. New list of eggs protected.

**MERTHYR TYDVIL.** September 9th. BEFS. New Order. Buzzard, Golden Eagle, Peregrine, Kestrel, Kite, House Martin, Nuthatch, Raven, Redstart, Siskin and Wren added to the Schedule. Some twenty-six species protected all the year, and the eggs of these and some other species protected. All Sunday shooting and taking of birds prohibited.

## In the Courts.

**THE BIRDCATCHER'S BIRDS.**—At Soham (Cambridgeshire) County Court, on August 14th, Judge Mulligan, K.C., allowed a professional birdcatcher, George Fenn, £1 10s. damages and costs in an action against the R.S.P.C.A., to recover the value of three Goldfinches and a Yellowhammer which the Society's inspector had seized and set free. Fenn sent the birds in a box to the station on May 1st, addressed to a man at Elswick; defendant seized it, and subsequently, with a constable, set the birds free. Fenn was summoned for an offence under the Wild Birds Protection Acts, but declared that the birds had been caught in January in West Suffolk (where they are not protected at that time), and the case was dismissed, but without costs. The judge said it might be very desirable for the Society if it could, to obtain an Act of Parliament declaring that Goldfinches, Skylarks, and some other British singing birds were to be deemed the property of the Crown, and making it a misdemeanour to capture or injure or sell them without a licence, but at present singing birds, like bees, belonged to the *ferre nature*. In the present case, although the defendant's action was well meant he (His Honour) must, as the law stood, hold that it was wrongful; that it deprived the plaintiff of property, and that the plaintiff was entitled to damages.

**"A DEMORALISING BUSINESS."**—In fining Edward Sherring, of South Tottenham, for using birdlime to take five Chaffinches at Chessington, on June 11th, the Chairman of the Kingston-on-Thames Bench said it was disgraceful that such men should take these beautiful birds, and he wished the Bench had power to send him to prison. It was a demoralising business. The birds were in a small cage and four died from exhaustion.

**ILLEGAL POSSESSION.**—A disgusting case of cruelty to an Owl was heard before the Southend Magistrates on August 15th, when Joseph Pudney, mail driver, was summoned for unlawful possession of the bird, and a man named Fowler for cruelty. Pudney said that when driving the motor mail from Southend to Chelmsford he saw a pretty bird near the hedge and took it home, but found it such a trouble that he gave it to Fowler. He described it as a "White Eagle." Fowler was afterwards found in the centre of a crowd by a public-house with the bird on a bundle of newspapers, poking at the gasping creature with a bamboo stick till the blood came, and crying out "Come and see the greatest freak in creation." Parker said he was only exhibiting it to get a few pence, and denied the poking. The Magistrates discharged Pudney on the ground that although his action was illegal, they did not think it contravened the law, and refused costs to the R.S.P.C.A., who prosecuted. They fined Fowler 14s. only, for "gross cruelty," because he probably acted in ignorance, and was not cognisant of the Owl's habits.

[The Southend Magistrates evidently consider that breaking the law is not contravening it, and that to torture an Owl is excusable in anyone not acquainted with the Owl's habits. As Miss Clifton, Hon. Sec. to the R.S.P.B., writes to the *Essex Standard*, "it would scarcely need an ornithological expert to determine that the endurance of torturing is not consonant with the habits of any bird whatever."]

**ILLEGAL POSSESSION.**—At Thrapston, on July 7th. William Atkins, shoe operative, was fined 10s. each and 6s. costs for possession of four Nightingales. —At Llandaff, on September 7th, two Cardiff lads

were fined 2s. 6d. and costs for possession of two young Kestrels. They were found bicycling with the birds in their pockets, and said they picked them up. There was a Kestrel's nest not far away.—At Falkirk, on August 7th, Alex. Anderson, miner, was charged with possession of a Teal. It was urged that Anderson was taking the bird to be stuffed for his brother, who had found it shot on the moor, and was therefore only a messenger, but the Sheriff held that he undoubtedly had it in his control and possession, and fined him 2s. 6d.—The first case under the Barrow Bird Protection Order was heard on June 25th, when John Taylor was fined for possession of four young Thrushes.—As Boston, on July 16th, James Partridge was fined for possession of a Barn Owl. He said he took four Owls from a tree; two escaped, one died, and this one he meant to have stuffed. The Chairman said Owls were very valuable birds, and it was a loss to the country to have them taken, but as he did not seem to have done it for amusement or decoration the Bench would fine him only 1s.

**THE POLE TRAP.**—At the Braunton (Devonshire) Bench, on July 8th, John Symons, head keeper on the Frémington Estate, was charged with permitting a pole trap. An inspector of the R.S.P.C.A. proved finding the trap, with a Blackbird caught by the legs, and in a bush near an Owl, which had apparently been caught in the same trap. Symons said the trap had been there for years, but denied having set it, and suggested that the Blackbird had been put in the trap for spite. Fined 1s. and costs.—A similar case, occurring at Meare, Somerset, was heard on June 29th, when Fred Sweet, keeper, was charged with placing a pole trap in a wood known as Honeygar Covert, and Stephen Laver, farmer, with permitting it. A Nightjar (a scheduled bird) was found caught by the legs, and a Hawk, an Owl, and a Blackbird lay at the foot of the trap. Laver said he did it like the rest of the gentlemen about, and could find plenty of traps set in the same way. Sweet was fined 5s. and 6s. costs, Laver 20s. and 6s. costs, the trap to be forfeited.

**The Fête of the Nests.**—To make a pendant to the Fête of the Trees, Mlle. Perlès and M. Hoolants, directors of the Communal School of the Rue du Canal, had the charming idea to organize the Fête of the Nests. It is known that the Department of the Waters and Forests is anxious to multiply and preserve certain birds, such as the Starling and the Tits, which are active and powerful destroyers of insects. To that end, little habitations had been suspended to the trees. Then, to interest the children, often destroyers of nests, a fête was organized. During the year, the scholars of the higher classes have made artificial nests, after patterns given by the Department. This was entirely successful. The forest-keepers sounded joyful fanfares, to which the children responded with shouts and cries, and they listened attentively to very interesting addresses given by M. C. Van de Caveije and M. Anselme Delogne, wardens of Waters and Forests. The idea of Mlle. Perlès and M. Hoolants is very happy, and deserves to be warmly encouraged.—*L'Independance Belge* (Brussels), August 8th, 1908.

## BOOKS RECEIVED.

CATALOGOS DA FAUNA BRAZILEIRA, editados pelo Museu Paulista S. Paulo, Brazil. Vol. 1. As Aves do Brazil, pelo Prof. Dr. Hermann von Ihering, director do Museu Paulista, e Rudolpho von Ihering, custos do Museu Paulista. With an introduction, systematic and general indices, and maps showing the zoogeographical zones of Brazil and the distribution of pampas and forests in South America.

NOTAS PRELIMINARES, editadas pela redacção da "Revista do Museu Paulista." Vol. 1, No. 1. Intended as a speedy means of communicating notes and observations pending the issue of the principal publication.

JAHRESBERICHT für das zweite Jahr ihres Bestehens (Schweizerische Naturschutzkommission. 1907-8).

HOW TO ATTRACT AND PROTECT WILD BIRDS.—Translated from the German of Martin Hiesemann. Describing the methods pursued by the Freiherr von Berlepsch. (London: Witherby & Co., 1908.)

JOURNAL OF THE BOARD OF AGRICULTURE.—Published Monthly.

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Challenge Shield Competitions.

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## THE IMPORTATION OF PLUMAGE PROHIBITION BILL.



THE Autumn Session of Parliament being entirely occupied by Government business, no further progress has been made with the Plumage Bill since its first reading in the House of Commons on July 22nd. Meanwhile the trade, through the Textile Section of the London Chamber of Commerce, have memorialised the Chambers of Commerce throughout the country to oppose the Bill, and have sent to the Members of the House a circular statement of their "objections," which have been answered by the R.S.P.B. with a "Reply to Objections."\* Some correspondence has also appeared in the *Times*, from representatives of the trade on one hand, and from Lord Avebury, Mr. Buckland, and the Hon. Secretary of the R.S.P.B. on the other.

The interval has been further utilised for a revival of the old story of "moulted plumes." A good many years ago the buyers of "ospreys" were asked to believe that these were cast feathers, picked up in China and elsewhere after the moulting of the birds. But a more effective apology for the sale of the plumes was found in the "artificial osprey" legend, which has enjoyed a long run despite the exposure of the falsehood by men of science, and the fact that no "artificial" osprey, so-called, has ever passed the test of examination by experts at the British Museum (Natural History). As none was presented to the Select Committee of the House of Lords this story has now perhaps had its day. It is interesting therefore at the present juncture to find the "moulted plume" turning up again. It is reported from two or three

vaguely indicated regions, and a letter dated from Buenos Ayres is being circulated among milliners and drapers describing more circumstantially the existence of estates in Venezuela, where the birds are declared to be protected, and their moulted feathers picked up for the plume-market. The writer of this letter recounts how he visited the region of the Upper Orinoco in 1898-1900, and found it difficult to procure specimens of the Great White Heron even for museums, so religiously were they guarded by an armed native police employed by the landowners; the impression conveyed being that these vast *llanos*, covered by the floodwaters of the great river, resemble English shooting preserves, where patrolling keepers warn off the village poacher. Readers of the letter are informed that the natives paddle their canoes under the trees and pick the feathers out of the water when they drop from the moulting Herons; while other plumes, and these the best, are taken at the end of the breeding time from the nests, the birds having, it appears, developed a convenient practice of plucking these long bridal trains from their own backs to work into the lining of their nests. Another writer, also professing personal knowledge on the same subject, with equally well-intentioned natural history describes the plumes as growing on the bird's breast.

There are two curious little facts that do not weave very well into this narrative. Ten years ago the *Times* published an article dealing with the destruction of heronries in America, and in reply, one "K. Thomson," contended that the plumes came from "Egret farms"—Egret farms presumably resembling the preserves alluded to in

\* Copies can be had from the Society's office.

Venezuela. The tale was (to quote the R.S.P.B. Report for the year) "completely refuted by well-known and reliable ornithologists," and the *Auk*, the organ of the American Ornithologists' Union, published this comment:

"It is pretty safe to assume, though hard to prove, that such statements as these emanate from an interested source, and are put forth to dull the sense of the public to the real facts of the case. . . . The various reports of Egret farms located in such improbable places as Arizona, New Mexico, Venezuela, etc., have in each case proved upon investigation to be wholly mythical, as any ornithologist would expect; and, as ornithologists also know, the reported gathering of shed plumes as a source of millinery supply must in the nature of things be equally imaginary."

The year 1900, it will be noticed, is one of the years during which the latest exponent of the theory was visiting Venezuela.

Secondly, in the Blue Book on the Trade of Venezuela for 1898, published in 1899, Mr. Haggard, H.B.M. Minister in that country, draws attention to the figures given by the Vice-Consul at the port of Ciudad Bolivar, as to "the destruction of birds for the supply of 'Aigrettes' for ladies' hats," and characterises them as "really appalling."

"Mr. de Lemos says that the export reaches this year the total of 2,839 kilos; that 870 birds have to be killed to produce one kilo of the smaller feathers, and about 215 for one kilo. of the larger. If, therefore, we take the average, the number of birds killed last year was 1,538,738."

There is no reference to protected areas or moulted plumes; and though the extract was widely published at the time, no such explanation was offered.

Even if it were proved—and at present there is no proof—that a small proportion of plumes dropped from the living birds find their way to the millinery market, this would, of course, have no effect on the general question. The way in which the great majority of these plumes are obtained is perfectly well-known; and anyone acquainted with the nesting-grounds and habits of the birds, and the past records of plume-hunters, will not doubt how they are likely to be obtained in the future.

Mr. H. E. Dresser (author of *The Birds*

of Europe, and an ornithologist of world-wide repute) in commenting on November 16th on the letter emanating from Buenos Ayres, says:—

"All I can say is, that I do not believe the statements in it. When in America many years ago I visited large breeding colonies of Egrets, where at least 500 to 1000 pairs were breeding, and certainly when the young were hatched I could not have picked up any cast plumes, and I do not believe that the birds moult till after they have left their breeding haunts. Not very long ago, I visited a breeding colony of about 200 pairs of Lesser Egrets in the Herzegovina, in company with Mr. Othmar Reiser, the chief of the Museum at Sarajevo, and we certainly found no cast plumes, and I was there told that I could not get any plumes except by shooting the old birds, which I would not do. Out of hundreds of Egrets' nests which I have examined I have never found one in which were feathers of the birds themselves amongst the lining, certainly never a single one of the so-called 'osprey' plumes.

"I never heard of any trade being done in moulted plumes, and do not believe the tale about the Egret colonies being farmed out for cast plumes."

The subjoined letter has been received by Mr. W. R. Ogilvie-Grant, from Mr. J. Quelch, B.Sc. (Lond.), formerly Curator British Guiana Museum, Adviser to the Government for the granting of licences to kill Wild Birds, and examiner of all collections thus made; late C.M.Z.S., South America:—

"My experience, directly as an eye-witness, of the conditions under which osprey plumes are obtained in Tropical America for export, is so different from that of Mr. Laglaize, that it is difficult to know what to think of his statements.

"During a residence of seventeen years in British Guiana, and with an experience of travel ranging from the Eastern Orinoco to the borders of Surinam, and inland into Brazil and Venezuela, along the eastern upper waters of the Amazon and the Orinoco, I have never known nor heard of any such method of collection as that described by Mr. Laglaize.

"Until the Government in Demarara put into force the stringent provisions of the Wild Birds Ordinance, a brisk trade was carried on by many people in the export of birds' skins, and largely of osprey plumes. These feathers were obtained by killing the Egrets in the breeding season, and cutting off the skin of the back on which the plumes were borne. These sections, in fact, are those sold in the trade at home, and they are so scarce just at present as to be worth as much as from 3s. 10d. to 4s. each.

"There can be little or no doubt that all prized osprey plumes are thus obtained, whether the birds are shot with a gun, or with the much more effective small poisoned arrows of the natives, by which the remaining members of the heronry are not scared away by noise: for even if shed or fallen plumes are

really collected from the nests, or from the ground or water beneath the heronry, since these birds always breed in the swamps where the water is either dirty or strongly coloured with vegetable matter, the feathers—even if undamaged—are likely to be so soiled and discoloured, as to be only fit for inferior purposes, or for dyeing.

“Certainly after the Government in Demarara had enforced the Ordinance for the Protection of Wild Birds, forbidding their slaughter under a penalty of 24 dollars for each bird or part of a bird, no trader found it worth his while to collect plumes in the harmless manner described by Mr. Laglaize, even in the various convenient localities where large heronries were situated

“Is it not possible that Mr. Laglaize was led into witnessing a collection of comparatively worthless plumes as a blind to the real process of judiciously planned slaughter?”

It may be added that Egrets and Herons are not the only birds which the Bill seeks to protect; its aim is also to preserve countless other species which are being ruthlessly slain, and some of which are on the borderland of extermination.

## Bird and Tree Challenge Shield Competitions.

### INTER-COUNTY SHIELD.

NINE Teams were eligible for the Inter-County Competition this year, comprising the winners of the seven County Challenge Shields; Yatton, ruled out of the Somerset Competition in 1907 on account of having won its County Shield two years in succession; and Buckland, the champion Berkshire school. The task of deciding the respective merits of so many excellent sets of Essays was not a light one; and when the selection was finally narrowed down to three, these had to be most critically read by several judges before the decision was arrived at. All, however, agreed in giving the INTER-COUNTY SHIELD to LONG ASHTON SCHOOL, SOMERSET, while YATTON and BUCKLAND were placed equal Seconds, and will each receive a Bronze Medal and a handsome Book for the School Library. The papers by the Long Ashton children on the Shrike, Blackcap, and Wagtail show them to be observant, accurate, and painstaking observers and recorders. The Tree papers were not quite so good. The Yatton Team have equally good Bird subjects in the Reed-Warbler, Moorhen, and Peewit, and display close and intelligent knowledge not only of these birds but of birdlife in general. The Tree Essays are also sound and graceful pieces of work. The Buckland Team distinguish themselves, as Buckland Teams have invariably done, by their lively and attractive style of writing; they send charming Essays on Nightingale, Bullfinch, and Redstart, and on Black Poplar, Chestnut, and Catalpa.

All these Schools have illustrated their Essays admirably, some in colour, some with pen, and some with pencil.

HAVANT COUNCIL SCHOOL (Hampshire) and STONY STRATFORD NATIONAL SCHOOL (Buckinghamshire) are Highly Commended.

The Judges for the whole Competition were: Mr. Montagu Sharpe, Chairman of the Council; Mr. W. H. Hudson, F.Z.S., Mr. W. R. Ogilvie-Grant, F.Z.S., Mr. Ernest Bell, Mr. G. A. Freeman, B.Sc., Mr. Hugh F. Spender, Mrs. F. E. Lemon, F.Z.S., Miss Pollock, and Miss Gardiner.

### COUNTY CHALLENGE SHIELDS.

SEVEN silver County Challenge Shields have been competed for, competitions in Norfolk and Warwickshire being organized by the County Education Authorities. The north, south, west, and east of England are, therefore, represented in the lists, and it may be hoped that before long one or more competitors may come in from Scotland, a country not wont to be behindhand in educational matters. The spirit of the contest is naturally much better understood now than when the first trial of the scheme was made in 1902; there is more outdoor study, more watching, more note-taking; less dependence on facts drawn from books, from lessons, and from hearsay. Observation, which is now a strong feature of the great majority of the papers, is still devoted too exclusively to nests and eggs. Constant visits to nests have to be very warily made if the birds are not to suffer from the intrusion, and if tracks and traces are not to be left which reveal the place to less friendly eyes. Moreover, the whole interest of a bird does not lie in the colour of its eggs and the nakedness and hungriness of nestlings; and the song and call-notes at least should come in for a closer share of study. A country girl or boy ought to be able to identify a bird's note quite as well as its nest; but there appear to be about fifty children who can describe a Chaffinch's eggs to one who even

knows that it has a song. Yet there is not a song in the bird-world easier to know than the Chaffinch's. The judges are glad to see that several schools pay particular attention to this neglected part of the subject. One or two—Greystoke, for example—make valiant efforts to reproduce call-notes in musical notation; and in other instances the young writers have tried hard to listen and to describe in some way or other what they hear, even though occasionally reduced to confess that they "couldn't make much of it." The Special Prize offered for the best description of a bird's song is won by Herbert Neville, of Buckland School, who is only ten years old, but who shows good knowledge of the characteristic phrases of the Nightingale's melody, and also its alarm-note.

The most popular birds this year are the Thrush, Blackbird, and Robin, but no fewer than 59 species are included. Last year there were 45. In the number of Trees observed there is also a marked increase, from 46 to 54, although the Oak and Horse Chestnut maintain the lead. Among the birds are the Whitethroats, Blackcap, Flycatcher, Wheatear, Stonechat, Sandpiper, Snipe, Heron, and Reed Warbler; and among trees the alder, hornbeam, stone pine, euonymus, and catalpa find a place. Cumberland again shows the greatest variety of subjects proportionately to the number of essays.

Not a few of the essays, and those not only in the winning sets, are charming papers, showing enthusiasm, keen observation, patient study, a wonderful facility in composition, and an astonishing amount of information.

#### BEDFORDSHIRE.

CHALLENGE SHIELD: Clophill School. *Certificates of Excellence*: Muggerhanger; Potton. *Highly Commended*: Keysoe Council; Northill C.E. *Commended*: Eaton Socon; Woburn Boys.

The improvement in the essays from this county, especially in personal observation, continues markedly from year to year. Clophill School takes first place with papers displaying much intelligence, genuine observation, and a pleasant feeling for nature; but Potton, a newcomer, runs it hard owing to the delightful freshness and grace of the papers. Muggerhanger (or Morhanger) again shows careful note-taking, and does especially well in descriptions of trees. Northill, though outstripped in the race for the shield, is again conspicuous for the painstaking study and even merit that carried off the trophy last year. Keysoe makes a distinct advance, showing considerable outdoor study as well as neat and intelligent compilation of facts. The Eaton Socon papers are

terse and to the point, though without much originality; while those from the Woburn Boys' School are full of character and originality, but very unequal. The average age of Bedfordshire competitors is younger than in some other counties, but the quality of the essays does not necessarily suffer on this account. Nature Study is much better understood in the county than was the case three or four years ago.

#### BUCKINGHAMSHIRE

CHALLENGE SHIELD: Stony Stratford National School. *Certificates of Excellence*: Ellesborough Council School; Princes Risborough C.E. School. *Highly Commended*: Quainton National School; Cheddington. *Commended*: Coleshill; Chetwode; Cuddington.

The number of competing schools here does not increase as was hoped and expected in a county so rich in birds and trees, but the two new entrants, Cuddington and Chetwode, have promising material in their teams. The lack of stronger competition, numerically, is especially regrettable this year, as it prevents the judges from giving a Second Prize, although two schools are so nearly equal in merit that the award of the shield was hard to decide. Stony Stratford National School wins by a narrow margin, with essays that show close, accurate and painstaking observation, and tree papers particularly good. The chief charm of the essays from Ellesborough is the bright enthusiasm which gives picturesqueness to a careful presentation of carefully gleaned facts; and the Bird essays display an intimacy with birdlife that is wonderfully pleasing. Princes Risborough is also well in the running for the shield; its work is all well done, and the tree papers, more interesting than those on birds, are marked by botanical knowledge and appreciation. Quainton and Coleshill have likewise made a distinct advance. Quainton's familiarity with the economic utility of birds is a strong point, and Coleshill must be especially commended for careful note-taking. Cheddington has gone back a little from its promising position last year, owing to its disproportionate amount of general matter which cumbered the nicely-written essays. Hambleton, which came very near the top in 1907, does not compete.

#### CUMBERLAND.

CHALLENGE SHIELD: Greystoke Council School. *Certificates of Excellence*: Kirkoswald; Morland and Newby. *Highly Commended*: St. John's Keswick (two teams). *Commended*: Cargo (two teams).



It was difficult to decide to which of the three schools first-named the Shield should be awarded, but the high level of excellence reached by Grey-stoke's careful and accurate essays won the day. Greystoke also won the Shield in 1906. Last year's winner, Kirkoswold, sends in some notably good work; and the Morland and Newby School (geographically in Westmoreland) came very near to carrying the Shield out of its own county, by reason of the naturalness and spontaneity of the papers. The Essays from both the Keswick teams are full of promise; with a continuance of the observant work which makes this year's papers so much better than last year's, the St. John's Girls should appropriately secure the Shield designed by Mrs. Rawnsley and fashioned at Keswick. Good work comes also from two Cargo teams, who owe much, even too much, to the careful and kindly teaching evidently given here.

#### HAMPSHIRE.

CHALLENGE SHIELD: Havant Council School.  
*Second Prize*: Sandown Boys' National School.  
*Third Prize*: St. Peter's Girls' School, Bournemouth.  
*Certificates of Excellence*: Privett; Bitterne Park Girls; Western School, Southampton (Boys); Sandown Girls' National; Boldre; the Holme School, Headley; Laverstoke C.E. *Highly Commended*; Hayling Boys; Ridge, Romsey; Burghfield (Berks); Newchurch, I.W.; Pennington; Copythorne; Romsey C.E. (Girls); Romsey C.E. (Boys). *Commended*: Barton Stacey; Hinton Ampner; Kingsley; Meonstoke; Abridge; Wickham.

In Hampshire the competition is closer than ever. The general level reached is undoubtedly higher than used to be the case, and some half-dozen or more teams have made a long step forward.

Havant, always a good team, wins the Shield with a workmanlike set of papers, showing most diligent study. The Sandown Boys follow up past successes mainly through the excellence of their Tree papers. The Bournemouth Girls' essays are rather thin, but sincere and appreciative, and show a power to describe as well as to enumerate the characteristics of their Birds and Trees. The Bitterne Girls are almost on a par with their Bournemouth sisters, and one paper is better than those of the prizewinners; they are younger, however, and have not quite found themselves, and their writing is rather laboured. The Sandown Girls drop from their former place because, while the Tree papers are admirable, those on Birds derive too much from books. The Privett Team, holders of the Inter-County Shield for 1907, also drop behind a pace for want of the thoroughness that charac-

terized their previous efforts. They have poked about industriously, but without sufficient method or sympathy; the Tree papers are still first-rate.

It is scarcely possible to indicate the exact position taken by the remaining schools. In some cases there are capital individual essays, such as the careful study of the Lesser Whitethroat sent in from Boldre; the Swallow and Skylark, written of so prettily by Ridge essayists that six essays as good would have given this little school a very high place; the capital paper on the Sandpiper from Headley; the graphic description of the Lapwing from Copythorne. In others an amazing amount of information has been got together from many sources, as is conspicuously the case with the lengthy papers from the Western (Southampton) School. In others again, the whole team reaches a high standard, with genuine observation well expressed, as in those of Headley and Laverstoke, of Hayling, Romsey (Boys and Girls), Burghfield, Pennington, and Newchurch.

#### NORFOLK.

CHALLENGE SHIELD: Bracon Ash and Hethel School. *Certificates of Excellence*: Mileham; Downham; Fakenham; Postwick; Sporle; Bressingham; Coltishall; Wimbotsham; Wrostead; Attleboro' Girls'; Wroxham.

That the Competition in Norfolk was well organized by the Education Committee is proved by the keen competition among 49 Schools for the Shield, and the fact that no fewer than 66 took up the work. That the invitation was well responded to is further proved by the excellent character of the essays sent in. The Society gives the Shield, together with Certificates to eleven schools, and Medals to eighteen essayists in various schools who gained the highest marks for their essays. All other awards are given by the County authorities, great interest in the new departure being taken by the Education Secretary and Assistant Secretary, by the Rev. E. H. Daubeny, and by Mr. Lee-Warner, who gave special prizes for good descriptions of bird-song. It is evident that teachers and children also took up the idea with zest. The papers generally are well done, and in a very large majority of cases there are indications of personal observation and out-of-door note-taking. They are not so full and complete as a good deal of the work which comes from counties with three or four years' experience; but for a first year they reach a high standard. The essays from Bracon Ash are full of bright intelligence, and written in a pleasant natural manner. There are other teams that show more knowledge, ornithological and botanical, but are without the same indications of originality in

mind and matter. Much keen observation is displayed in the essays from the schools mentioned as winning Certificates, and several are well illustrated. Ditchingham, Southery, Hickling, Burgh Apton, Reedham, West Winch, Wretham, West Lynne, and Wymondham, must likewise have special commendation. The subjects selected by the young writers are not specially typical of East Anglia, unless the presence of a Wild Duck or two and a solitary Snipe and Reed-Warbler may be so considered. The first Norfolk Bird and Tree Festival was held at Norwich on November 27th, when Sir W. Ffolkes, Chairman of the County Council, presided, and the Shield and Prizes were presented by Lady Ffolkes.

#### SOMERSET.

CHALLENGE SHIELD: Long Ashton Parochia School (second year). *Second Prize*: Castle Cary Girls' School. *Certificates of Excellence*: Clutton; Exford; Castle Cary Boys; Yatton (second team); Frome Boys' National. *Highly Commended*: Bagborough; Combe Hay; Dyehe, Bridgwater; Wembdon; Whitestaunton. *Commended*: Catecot; Cleve, Bristol; Bruton; Barrow Gurney; Southend (Chard) Girls; Southend Boys.

There is a substantial increase in the number of competitors from Somerset this year, and several of the newcomers send in excellent work, notably Bagborough, Combe Hay, and Whitestaunton—work that must put the older students on their mettle. Long Ashton again takes the Shield; all the essays from this team, but particularly those on birds, are full of keen and accurate information, enthusiastically written, and interesting to read. The Castle Cary Girls take the second place with a charming set of papers, fresh and sympathetic. The work of Clutton is noticeable for even excellence. Yatton, besides entering for the Inter-County Shield, furnishes a second team, which takes high place for careful study. The Frome Boys, if not quite so near the top as last year, still stand first in the county for drawing, their studies of plant life being wonderfully good. Individual essays in the sets from Exford and the Castle Cary Boys rank with the best in the whole competition. All these teams have learned to use their eyes and their intelligence when out in the fields and lanes, and to record their observations in a pleasant manner. There is observation also, and more or less originality, in the work from the schools that are Highly Commended and Commended; but closer and fuller detail, going beyond the obvious features of the subjects chosen, is needed.

Somerset may be congratulated not only on a high standard of work, but as the only county able

to send in two Teams for the Inter-County Competition, and as the winner of the Shield.

#### WARWICKSHIRE.

CHALLENGE SHIELD: Henley-in-Arden Council School. *Second Prize*: Elborow School, Rugby. *Third Prize*: Middleton School, Tamworth. *Certificates of Excellence*: Atherstone Girls' School; Forshaw; Kineton. *Highly Commended*: Baddesley Clinton; Brailey; Murray Boys, Rugby; Temple Balsall; Westwood. *Commended*: Bearley; Beausale; Bilton; Birdingbury; Meriden; New Bilton; Stratford-on-Avon; Tamworth; Ullenhall; Coleshill; Coleshill R.C.; Dunchurch Girls; Harbury; Haselor; Wroxall; St. Marie's R.C., Rugby.

The general impression made by the first Bird and Tree essays from Warwickshire is a pleasant one; much real interest appears to have been awakened, and many of the young essayists write in a fresh and natural style that is agreeable to read, while the amount and accuracy of the information acquired is very satisfactory. Evidence of personal observation is to be found in an unusually large proportion of the papers, and though many of these are slight in substance they take a higher place than more learned essays got up from books. The three sets which secure the prizes are all noticeable for enthusiasm and keen bird and tree watching. Henley-in-Arden wins the Shield through the accuracy and neatness of its records; Elborow's papers are sympathetic in tone and show careful note-taking; Middleton sends full notes, but misses important points. In the second class come the painstaking essays from the Atherstone Girls; graceful and original little papers from Forshaw; and a pleasantly-written set from Kineton. From the long list of those Highly Commended and Commended it will be seen that the contest was a strong one in quantity as in quality. Among the schools sending in good sets of papers may be named Baddesley Clinton R.C., Bilton, Coleshill R.C., Dunchurch Girls, Temple Balsall, and Ullenhall, all of whom have done good work but need to depend less on the aid of teacher and book; the Murray Boys, Rugby; Stratford-on-Avon, Haselor, and Westwood, whose papers are much too slight and short, but show a pleasing simplicity and originality. There are also individual essays of special merit from several schools, such as that on the Wren from Bearley, and the Long-tailed Tit, from Kineton; and some of the papers have good illustrations, notably the tree sketches from Elborow. Warwickshire does not show any originality in choice of subjects, being chiefly responsible for the preponderance of papers on Robin and Oak,

# The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds.

## COUNCIL MEETING.

THE Council of the Society met on October 2nd, 1908, Mr. Montagu Sharpe (Chairman) presiding. Present: Mr. Bell, Hon. A. Dobson, Hon. Mrs. Drewitt, Dr. Drewitt, Sir George Kekewich, Mr. King, Mr. Hastings Lees, Mrs. F. E. Lemon, Mr. Meade-Waldo, Captain Tailby, Mr. Trevor-Battye, Mr. F. E. Lemon (Hon. Sec.), and Miss Gardiner (Secretary).

**Hon. Secretary's Report**—The Hon. Secretary reported the issue of Bird Protection Orders for Cardiff and Merthyr Tydvil. The former, an amended Order, gives protection all the year to a large number of species and their eggs (dated September 9th, 1908). The latter, a new Order, adds 11 species to the Schedule, protects 26 species all the year round, protects certain eggs, and prohibits Sunday shooting and snaring (dated September 9th, 1908). Arrangements for the judging of Bird and Tree essays were also reported.

**Finance and General Purposes Committee.**—A legacy to the Society of £500 under the will of the late Mr. Josiah John Morgan, of Gower Lodge, Bexley, was reported, and the accounts for the quarter were passed. The following Hon. Local Secretaries were appointed:—Letchworth (Garden City), Mr. W. Percival Westell; Invernesshire, Mr. H. B. Macpherson; Argyleshire, Mr. R. H. Stenhouse. Four new Fellows were elected: Lord Ninian Crichton-Stuart, House of Falkland, N.B.; Sir Frederick Howard, Abbey Close, Bedford; J. W. Field, Southsea House, Dorking; Mrs. E. E. Hewson, Ovington Park, Alresford. The following were elected Members, the two first-named as Life Members:—

Miss A. S. Lemon (Worthing), Sir Charles E. Adam (Lincoln's Inn), John Brigg, M.P. (Keightley).

Verney Carter (Fulham), Colonel Colomb (Junior United Service Club), Miss E. Derry (Ramsgate), W. H. Doubleday (Streatham), Alex. Forsyth (Buxton), Mrs. Hutt (Erith), W. T. Lye (Leagrave Hall), Mrs. Palmer (Hythe), Miss Robinson (Mirfield), Dr. Philip Moysey Toms (Ashford), the Misses Vallentin (Croydon), Sir Harry Vernon, Bart. (Hanbury Hall).

The suggestion that some eminent friends of the cause should be elected as Honorary Fellows was referred back to Committee. The position of the Plumage Bill and various other subjects were considered.

The report of the **Publication Committee** were also received.

**General Business**—Discussion took place on the need for further legislation to deal with the catching and selling of wild birds; on the attitude towards Sparrows of the National Society for the Destruction of Vermin; and on several matters reported to the Society by correspondents. Miss Clifton, H.L.S. for Romford, was nominated to serve on the Council in place of the Rev. J. E. Kelsall, resigned.

## OBITUARY.

A valued Member has been lost to the Council in the sad death of the Hon. Alfred Dobson, C.M.G., Agent-General in London for Tasmania, who was accidentally drowned in the Channel on December 5th, through falling overboard the steamship on which he was returning to England from Paris. Mr. Dobson, who was formerly Attorney-General and Solicitor-General of Tasmania, joined the Council of the Society in 1905; he was a constant attendant at its meetings and gave close attention to the details of its work.

The Society has also deeply to regret the loss of the Hon. Mary Elizabeth Powys, who died on October 10th. A sister of the late Lord Lilford, Miss Powys was a constant friend of the R.S.P.B., and has left a legacy of £300 to the work. Another Fellow of the Society and sincere friend to the cause was Sir Henry Bergne, who died after a short illness on November 15th.

### AUTUMN CONFERENCE.

A CONFERENCE of Local Hon. Secretaries and others interested in the work of the Society was held on October 28th, 1908, at the Rooms of the Royal Horticultural Society, Vincent Square, S.W., and was largely attended. The Chairman of the Council, Mr. Montagu Sharpe, presided, and among those who accepted the Council's invitation were: The Ranee of Sarawak (Lady Brooke), Countess Feodora Gleichen, representing the Princess Victor of Hohenlohe-Langenburg (who had intimated her intention of being present, but was unfortunately prevented by illness); the Dowager Countess of Lindsey, the Hon. Mrs. Arthur Henniker, Hon. Dorothy Brett, Lady Hooker, Lady Low, Sir John Cockburn, Sir George Kekewich, M.P., Lady Roe, Hon. A. and Mrs. Dobson, Hon. F. S. O'Grady, Colonel Colomb, Captain Scott, Rev. A. L. Hussey, Rev. H. S. Gladstone, Rev. A. Ellison, Mr. Harold Hodge, Mr. Meade-Waldo, Mr. Trevor-Battye, Mr. Ernest Bell, Mr. J. L. Bonhote, Mr. W. P. D. Stebbing, Mr. F. King, Mr. and Mrs. A. H. H. Matthews, Mr. A. W. Craig, Mr. Percival Westell, Mr. Scherren, Mrs. Luther Holden, Mrs. Tailby, Miss Clifton, Mr. R. Morley, Mrs. Dixon Davies, Mr. W. P. D. Stebbing, Miss Cadbury, Mrs. Trist, Miss Barron, Miss Beeching, Miss Mace, Mr. G. W. Chitty, and many others.

### THE PLUMAGE BILL.

In addition to many subjects of interest relating to the working of the Society, three principal topics were on the programme, and these occupied so much time that there was little left for discussion. The Chairman spoke on the Plumage Bill, explained its history and present position, and dealt with several points raised by the trade, particularly the labour question. The Council of the Society would, he said, do its utmost to bring about an International agreement, so that a common basis might be found for staying the traffic in the skins and plumes

of rare and beautiful wild birds. Sir George Kekewich added a few words as to the prospects of the Bill; and Mr. Lemon read a letter received from Mr. Dutcher, Chairman of the Audubon Association of the United States, wishing success to the Bill as one that would greatly forward legislation in America. Sir John Cockburn eloquently pleaded that England, the land of beauty, should appropriately be the country to lead the way. The men who went out to kill these lovely birds were the hired assassins, but the real murderers were the fashionable ladies who wore on their heads ornaments more repulsive to the thinking man or woman than the serpents that twined round the head of Medusa. Not only were some of the choicest gems that came from the Creator's hand in danger of actual extinction, but they were killed when their young were helpless in the nest. And the hand responsible for this was that of woman, whose function was to succour life, not to destroy.

### SPARROW CLUBS.

Mr. Harold Hodge (Editor of the *Saturday Review*) dealt with Sparrow Clubs and the attitude towards them of the Society for the Destruction of Vermin, which, he observed, in most unscientific fashion classified "Sparrows" among "noxious vermin," between mice and fleas. He referred to the correspondence started by Mr. Rider Haggard in the *Times*, and strongly urged that if Sparrow Clubs were established great care should be taken that no child contributed to the tale of birds; otherwise all the good already done in the teaching of school and Band of Mercy would be undone, and the child, with this beginning, would go on slaying birds to the end of its days. There were at present three kinds of Sparrow Clubs: those which made some effort to confine destruction to House-Sparrows; those which openly included other birds; and the utterly nefarious, which made war on all small birds. Even those first-named did

not make their rules sufficiently strong. In order to avoid the great danger, or certainty, of other birds being killed and their heads brought in to make a good total, every such head should neutralise, say, twelve sparrow-heads. The most serious allegation made against the Sparrow was the carrying of infection; if this theory were established a campaign of repression might be justified; but at present he did not admit the proposition. With regard to other charges, one of the Council of the Anti-Vermin Society had himself stated in the *Times* that he considered them "not proven."

Opinion among members of the Society as to the character and depredations of the Sparrow was not canvassed. It is known to be very divergent. As to the methods and results of the Sparrow Club as at present conducted, there appear to be no two opinions. The danger to other species, through intentional or ignorant destruction by such clubs, was emphasised by the Rev. A. Ellison (Herts); by Colonel Creaghe-Haward, who wrote:—

"I should be in favour of such clubs provided that great care was exercised that other birds, such as Greenfinches, Chaffinches, Hedge-Accentors, and other small and comparatively (some entirely) harmless birds were not slaughtered. Failing such assurance I would oppose these clubs. The Sparrow does little good; indeed, my experience goes to show that even when most hard-billed birds are feeding their young on insects, he often takes green milky wheat ears. But as things are, I fear Sparrow Clubs would do more harm than good:"

by Mr. W. H. Allen (Bramber), who wrote:—

"Sparrow Clubs in my opinion cannot be too strongly condemned. Consisting as they do largely of uneducated, ignorant lads, to whom cruelty is a pastime, they should be discountenanced by every lover of the country. The case against the Sparrow is not well supported by fact. After many years' observation I am convinced that the damage attributed to the little birds arises incidentally in the course of their endeavours to get insects parasitic on the plants;"

by Miss Dismore (Wirral) and others, who bore testimony to the manner in which the raid against Sparrows is undermining the humane teaching given to children.

#### BIRD-CATCHING AND CAGING.

Sir George Kekewich urged the desirability of legislation on the subject of bird-catching and caging. If there were no caging there would be no catching, and therefore he was of opinion that it should be made illegal to cage any British-breeding wild bird. He spoke strongly on the cruelty of small cages for such birds as Skylarks, Blackbirds, and Nightingales, and of the condition of wild birds generally in captivity; and asked the Society to consider the question of legislation on the lines which he had indicated.—Mr. Sharpe promised consideration of the subject, which has already been many times before the Council, but thought they must distinguish between birds kept in proper and improper conditions, and have recourse to the R.S.P.C.A. in direct cases of cruelty.

#### EDUCATIONAL METHODS.

Under the general head of "The Work of Local Hon. Secretaries" a large number of useful propositions were brought forward. Miss Simms (Charmouth) pressed the need of a touring lecturer for rousing interest in villages and village schools; an excellent suggestion for adoption when funds are forthcoming.—Mr. Frisby (Loughborough) in a similar appeal for a lecturer to visit the towns, showed what earnest workers can themselves do, by his interesting account of his classes for Nature Study for boys, which, beginning with an attendance of 30 increased to 200. Mrs. Price (Wye Valley) suggested that local members of the Society might often give addresses in schools or offer prizes for essays by the children; and might see to it that the local Bird Protection Order was hung in the school and was understood.—Mrs. Williamson (Didsbury), and Miss Sibly (Taunton) also urged the necessity for educating the young, and for Nature Study in the schools, the latter observing that the desire of children to throw a stone or poke a stick at something alive seemed

unconquerable, while their ignorance of the law was blissful.—Mrs. Paterson (Mid-Calder) wished some plan could be suggested to prevent the wholesale destruction of eggs and young birds during the nesting season by boys and young men. In some neighbourhoods not a single nest escaped, and the schoolmasters and police seemed powerless.—Local adoption of Bird and Tree Day offers a ready method for carrying out some of this much-needed work, and the provision of nesting boxes and food-tables in school grounds and public parks, as recommended by the Hon. Gladys Graham-Murray (Perthshire), would create interest on the part of the public, young and old, and suggest to them the regular feeding of birds in hard weather, as urged by Mr. Carey (Perth).

Miss Thornely (Liverpool) and Mrs. Meredyth-Baker (Chichester) thought that information as to the habits and food of birds might be profitably supplied by H.L.S. to local farmers, keepers, and gardeners, and Mrs. Dixon-Davies (South Bucks) would like to see co-operation with local horticultural societies for lectures, etc.

#### BIRD PROTECTION ORDERS.

The need for specific amendment in the Orders for various counties was brought forward by Mr. H. C. Cooke (Aldborough), Miss Gaskoin (Cambridge), and Dr. Toms (Kent).—Mrs. Douglas (Forfar) urged further protection of Plovers' eggs; in Scotland at any rate the bird was becoming scarcer every year. The complexity of the Orders and the extreme unattractiveness of the placards also fell in for comment, though this is a matter in which the Society can do little, the posters being prepared and issued by the County Councils. It has been suggested that a simple leaflet pointing out the general close-time protection of birds might be usefully inserted in parish magazines; the Secretary would be pleased to hear from H.L.S. and others as to whether they could undertake the insertion of such a paper in local publications.

#### BIRD SANCTUARIES.

Mr. W. Percival Westell (Garden City), speaking on Bird Sanctuaries, ascribed the abundance of birdlife which delighted him at Letchworth, not only to the good spirit which generally prevailed there, but also to the paradise provided for birds on Norton Common, a beautiful bit of wild country seventy-eight acres in extent, where a keeper guarded wild life.




Mention was made of several private Bird Sanctuaries, of which it is hoped to give an account in future numbers of BIRD NOTES AND NEWS. Miss Graham-Murray asked "Could not the Society raise funds for the establishment of sanctuaries in suitable localities?" The creation of Sanctuaries was also strongly urged by Mr. Philip Oyler.

#### PROPAGANDIST WORK.




The need for making the Society better-known is a subject dwelt upon by many Members, and Mrs. Care (Cardiff) emphasised this point, writing: "The one topic I should like discussed is the necessity for bringing the Society before the public. So few people in populous centres realise the great need for such a union."—Miss Tate (Northumberland) asked the Conference to find some way of interesting women in birdlife so that they might perceive the barbarity of wearing "osprey" plumes and sea-birds' wings.—Miss Allanson-Wimm and others considered that a small badge for H.L.S. and Members would be useful.

The Conference had to be hurried to a close to permit of an adjournment for tea, after which a most interesting and entertaining exhibition of living pictures of birdlife, shown by the cinematograph, was generously given by Mr. Oliver Pike, and greatly appreciated.

In an adjoining room were shown the Society's publications and nesting-boxes, and also a useful and attractive collection of recent works on natural history, lent by Messrs. Cassell, Longman, Macmillan, Hutchinson, J. C. & E. C. Jack, Partridge & Co., A. & C. Black, G. Bell & Sons, the S.P.C.K., Religious Tract Society, Fisher Unwin, Dent & Co., Seeley & Co.

## Notes.




**STEEL TRAPS.**

The abolition by law of the pole-trap has not, as keepers are aware, put an end to the catching of birds in steel traps, for these engines of torture are not all set on poles and mounds. The *Illustrated Sporting and Dramatic News* for November 7th, 1908, gives two photographs, one of a Carrion Crow, caught by the leg in a trap submerged in shallow water and baited with eggs; the other "a pitiable example of the trapper's craft," a Heron fast in the steel jaws of a hidden trap.

"The steel trap" [comments Mr. H. Knight Horsfield], "properly worked, is a most effective engine for the destruction of the smaller four-footed vermin, but when it comes to the trapping of birds the case is different. By reason of the greater length of leg the cruel fangs rarely reach the body, and the bird may flutter for hours or even days before the keeper's return visit sets it free of its misery. Although certain inveterate poachers, such as the Magpie and Carrion Crow, must be kept within bounds, the use of the steel trap is to be deplored, while the destruction of Herons in any fashion is regrettable."

**ECONOMIC ORNITHOLOGY.**

An Economic Ornithological Committee of the British Association has been formed "to investigate the feeding habits of British birds, with a view to obtaining a precise knowledge of their economic status." A beginning is to be made with the Rook, Starling, and Chaffinch; and a body of correspondents is being organized to provide specimens of the birds at regular intervals of time from different parts of the country. Professor Gordon Hewitt, of Manchester University, is the hon. secretary.

**RAPTORIAL BIRDS IN SOUTH AFRICA.**

The value of birds of prey in South Africa is maintained by Mr. Alwin Haagner in a pamphlet published by the Bird Protection Committee of the South African Ornithologists' Union. The Boer farmers are not

friendly towards Eagles and Kites, and recently the Transvaal Game Protection Association offered a reward for the destruction of Hawks of all kinds. Mr. Haagner accordingly shows that with one possible exception, all the night-flying birds of prey, and most of the diurnal ones, are wholly beneficial to man; the Owl and Kestrel particularly so in keeping down rats, mice, reptiles, and insects.

**THE SPRING MIGRATIONS.**

The third Migration Bulletin of the British Ornithologists' Union has just been published and deals with the coming of our summer birds in the spring of 1907. It is fully illustrated, as usual, with maps showing the arrival and course of the various migration waves, and gives numerous records from observers in many parts of the country. The season was remarkable for a fine March, a wintry April, and a cold and wet May, but the effect of these conditions is stated to be doubtful. The main body of birds came later than usual; but early parties and stragglers of some species were earlier than ordinary, the Cuckoo and Swallow both being noted during the last week of March. Chiffchaffs, it is interesting to learn, were seen throughout the winter in the Penzance district, where their abundance in so curiously unsuitable a region as that of West Cornwall, is commented on by Mr. Hudson in *The Land's End*. The growing scarcity of the Corncrake is indicated by the fact that in seven English counties (Hants, Sussex, Middlesex, Essex, Bucks, Herts, Suffolk) the bird was not seen or heard in 1907 by a single observer, while in four other counties only two or three records were forthcoming. The Bulletin is edited by Mr. Ogilvie-Grant, and published by Messrs. Witherby & Co.

## IN THE COURTS.

**BIRD-CATCHING.**—The birdcatchers, as usual, have been busy during the autumn months, and some of the sentences passed can hardly be regarded as affording much support to County Council Protection Orders. Men who are let off with a fine of 5s. and costs after catching 23 Goldfinches, and left in possession of their nets and the surviving birds, are likely to find their trade worth the risk.—At Tavistock, on October 14th. John Thompson, a bird dealer, of Plymouth, and William Hillson, were fined 5s. each and 4s. 6d. costs for being in possession of a number of Goldfinches. They were found working a bird net, and had with them several call-birds in cages, and two boxes with false bottoms, in one of which were seven Goldfinches. All the birds died the same day.—At Barnstaple, on October 14th, Alfred Richards and Harry Guillaume were each fined 5s. and costs for taking Goldfinches. They had nets and call-birds, and 23 birds, 18 of which died. It appeared that a former case in which Richards was concerned was dismissed by the Bench on the ground that there was no local publication of the Order; on an appeal by the R.S.P.C.A. the case was sent back, the High Court judges stating that there was nothing to show that publication was a necessary precedent to conviction. No further proceedings, however, were taken, and it was now contended that Richards consequently thought he was not acting illegally.—At Llandudno, on October 19th, John Hudson was let off with a nominal fine of 1s. and costs for using birdlime to take Goldfinches.—At Devizes, Henry Woodruff, birdcatcher, was fined £1 and 7s. costs for taking Goldfinches on September 12th. He had a trap, which was set near a brook, four decoy birds, and 15 or 16 Goldfinches in a cage. The police took possession of the birds and set them at liberty on a magistrate's order.—At Winchester County Bench, on November 7th, Robert Biggs, Edmund Harris, and Thomas Olding were convicted of catching Goldfinches at Otterbourne. The police found on them two nets, lime, and three small cages containing Goldfinches covered with water-cress; two of these were trapped decoys, and died before the court day. Ordered to pay the costs, 18s., among them.—At Aylesbury, on September 19th, Mark Carter, a Londoner, was convicted of taking Linnets at Great Missenden. In his possession were five cages, nets, ropes, a call-bird's cage, and a braced bird. When spoken to by the policeman he offered the constable 2s. and a drink to say nothing about it. Fined £1 8s. 8d., the appliances to be destroyed.

**CRUELTY TO DECOYS.**—Henry Whiddett, of Fulham, was fined 20s. and his nets ordered to be confiscated, by the Acton Bench on October 21st. He had nets laid at Grove Farm, Chiswick, with a decoy Linnet, which had to be killed on account of its injured and suffering state.

Two labourers were fined 21s. each by the Nottingham Magistrates on November 4th for cruelty to a decoy Starling. It was stated that the practice of catching Starlings in this way was very prevalent, and the Chairman said it was brutal and ought to be stopped. [The *Notts Evening Post*, commenting on the case says:—"The law should prohibit absolutely the taking of wild birds."]

**GROSS CRUELTY.** At Cardiff, Charles Benson Inson was fined 40s. on November 26th for cruelty. He was shooting Starlings, and in his son's pocket were found eleven birds, four of which were alive but shockingly mutilated.

**THE USE OF THE "LANDWATCH."**—Two Lincolnshire men were summoned at Bourne, on November 19th, by the R.S.P.C.A. for cruelty to Plovers by the use of an instrument known as the "landwatch," in which decoy birds are placed. Persons engaged in the trade denied the cruelty, and said Plover-catching was an important industry, large quantities of the birds being sent from the Fen districts to London and provincial markets. Whether the size of the business proved the humanity of its methods or not the case was dismissed, on the ground that no unnecessary suffering was caused. The magistrates have been asked to state a case.

## NESTING-BOXES FOR BIRDS.

**Nesting-Boxes** of various patterns, and of both English and German make, are supplied by the Society.

The **German Boxes** are those recommended by the Freiherr von Berlepsch. A full description of them and of their use will be found in the book *How to Attract and Protect Wild Birds*, recently translated into English; to be obtained of the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, price 1s. 6d., by post 1s. 9d.

The **English Boxes**, made under the superintendence of Mr. Masefield, have been found equally successful, and additional patterns can be made to order.

Price-lists can be had from the Society's Office, where specimen Boxes may be seen.

## CHRISTMAS CARD.

The Society's Christmas and New Year Card has been specially painted by Mr. ROBERT MORLEY, the well-known animal painter, and is a charming example of his work. It is entitled

"IN THE BELFRY,"

and reproduced in colour, with Calendar for 1909.

Price:—One card, 3d., by post, 3½d.; one dozen cards, 2s. 6d., by post, 2s. 7d.

Copies can still be had of

"THE ARAB OF THE AIR,"

from the picture by Mr. G. E. LODGE. With (or without) Calendar for 1909. One card, 2d.; one dozen, 1s. 6d., by post, 1s. 7d.

A few ASSORTED PACKETS (four varieties) 2s. each.

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

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





# BIRD AND TREE (ARBOR) DAY.

INTER-COUNTY CHALLENGE SHIELD COMPETITION, 1908.



**LONG ASHTON**, Winner of the Inter-County and Somerset County Shields  
(SCHOOL TEAM, HEAD MASTER, HEAD MISTRESS, MEMBERS OF LOCAL COMMITTEE).



**BUCKLAND**, Winner of Bronze Medal and of Berkshire County Shield (four years)  
(SCHOOL TEAM, VICAR (REV. W. BULMER), MISS BULMER, HEAD MASTER, HEAD MISTRESS).

# BIRD NOTES AND NEWS.

Issued Quarterly by the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds.

Vol. III.—No. 5.]

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[MARCH 25, 1909.]

## “VERMIN.”



THE Incorporated Society for the Destruction of Vermin, which is, no doubt, both well-intentioned and scientific, continues to pursue a policy that appears alike mischievous and unscientific with regard to the destruction of birds. While the economic aspect of the question of bird protection is being carefully and seriously considered by ornithologists and agriculturists of this and other countries; while practical investigators like Mr. Newstead, of Liverpool University, Mr. Gordon Hewitt, of Manchester, and Mr. Archibald, of Leeds, are finding their way to conclusions slowly and laboriously through years of study; while the British Association propose to carry on researches into the status of two or three species by means of a long series of investigations,—the I.S.D.V. incontinently rushes in with its list of “rats, mice, sparrows, ticks, fleas, mosquitoes, and flies,” and with bribes, or prizes, for the formation of “Rat (and Sparrow) Clubs” in any and every part of the Kingdom.

This is not a matter that concerns the destruction of the House-Sparrow only. Upon that point, indeed, the new Society is seemingly without conviction. It has been curiously obvious from the first that the I.S.D.V. speaks with two voices; the published issues of its “Journal” further illustrate the ambiguity of its position; but unfortunately action is on the one side, while the other side confines itself to the expression of vague opinions and the use of apologetic brackets when the (Sparrow) is mentioned.

In the first number of the “Journal,” Mr. Moore, the Society’s secretary, has an article on “Rat (and Sparrow) Clubs,” in

which he says that nothing is “further from our minds than the encouragement of indiscriminate slaughter,” and that he is glad to have an opportunity to explain “our scheme.” He proceeds to comment on the ordinary village Sparrow Club “generally promoted by the squire or a few tenant farmers,” and drawing a good share of its funds from “the village triarchy, the squire, the parson, and the publican.” He continues:—

“Where economic biologists fear to tread when it comes to a definition of ‘vermin’ the farmer and fruit-grower rushes in and proclaims any bird that may at any time have been detected in tasting forbidden fruit; hence Jackdaws, Magpies, Hedge-Sparrows, Flycatchers, Tits, and other birds are put on the condemned list and killed ‘for points.’

“It is clear that under such a system—or absence of system—of defining vermin much harm is unwittingly done by these clubs, nor is it possible to say that this evil is to some extent atoned for by the ‘good work done by the clubs in killing rats.’ From this Society’s point of view, all the efforts of the clubs in rat-killing are so much waste of time, effort and money. . . . Judging them on their total results the Rat (and Sparrow) Clubs are a failure in the campaign against rats, and are doing distinct harm by the unreasonable slaughter of all kinds of birds.”

(The italics are ours.) And, further:—

“As regards the Sparrow, it will have been observed that throughout this article it has appeared in brackets; though “Rat and Sparrow Club” is merely a title, we do not wish it to be understood that we place the Sparrow in the same category as the rat—at any rate, not on the evidence we possess against it so far. At present we regard the Sparrow merely as a local pest. In some districts where it had increased to enormous numbers, this bird does great injury to man’s produce. The little good it does in feeding its young on caterpillars is not sufficient to atone for the harm it does; where, therefore, it is proved to the satisfaction of the Society that the Sparrow has become vermin, the Society will encourage its destruction. Where, however, this bird has not been proved to be a pest, the Society will endeavour to protect it by refusing to admit to membership under the National Scheme all Rat and Sparrow Clubs operating in such districts.”

What then are the conditions and methods of the Society which is to supersede the

indiscriminating and distinctly harmful Sparrow Club, with its tale of Hedge-Sparrows and Tits and Flycatchers and Thrushes and Larks killed to meet the prejudices of farmer and fruit-grower, Magpies and Jays and Hawks killed to please the squire and his gamekeeper, and miscellaneous assortments of birds and eggs included under the country definition of "spadger"? The answer to this (if answer it can be called) is contained in an article which appears in both numbers of the "Journal" on the organisation and affiliation of Rat (and Sparrow) Clubs (by all means let us have the apologetic brackets), and rules for their working. These rules certainly contain the words "Rats and House-Sparrows only to be decreased." There is nothing new in that. But it is hardly credible that the I.S.D.V., with an experience which leads it to denounce the past work of the clubs in no doubtful terms, proposes no safeguard whatever for the maintenance of the rule, and adds nothing whatever to it, not so much as a suggestion that the receiver should be a person with some knowledge of birds, who can tell a Sparrow or a Sparrow's egg when he sees it, or a warning that "distinct harm" has been done for want of strong insistence on such a rule. Still less is there any condition that the taking of other birds and eggs should be the subject of fines, with expulsion from the Club in the case of useful and protected species. There is in fact no single feature to differentiate the Society's "scheme" from the old Sparrow Clubs except—and the exceptions are telling enough—that the immediate burning of all heads is advised (whereby subsequent inquiry or identification would become impossible), and that, over and beyond each club's prizes to individual members, substantial prizes from the Society are now to reward the Clubs showing the greatest number of points for birds destroyed. Truly a remarkable way of ensuring that no other species than House-Sparrows shall be allowed to run up the totals.

"Sparrow Club," says Mr. Moore, is "merely a title." And merely a title it is likely to remain, of clubs for the destruction of all small birds.

Again, farmers and fruit-growers have, we are told, no system in defining vermin. What is the definition given by the I.S.D.V.? "In particular, without prejudice to others included in the general term vermin, rats, mice, sparrows, ticks, fleas, mosquitoes, and flies." That is to say, anything the vague term "vermin" can be supposed to comprehend. And this while it is elsewhere stated that in the eyes of this same Society the Sparrow itself is "merely a local pest" to be warred against where it is proved to be a pest. How proved, and by whom? Not a ghost of a hint is given from cover to cover of either number of the "Journal"; nor is the smallest condition laid down in the prize scheme. The whole argument is that clubs to be of any use must exist all over the country.

This brings us to another point. Alluding to the rat plague, one I.S.D.V. voice speaks as follows:—

"The ruthless shooting down of weasels, Kestrels, and Owls has been one of the main conditions operating in favour of the unchecked multiplication of the rat."

The second voice, dealing with the Rat (and Sparrow) Club, observes:—

"Rats and Sparrows being the chief pests, were always included, but in game-rearing districts, stoats, weasels, Magpies, Jays, Hawks were also included. For the present the Society is confining its energy and funds to rats but is at the same time collecting all the information available regarding other pests, as the information will be needed some day as much as the information regarding rats now."

The Society, then, is already contemplating the time when its elastic phraseology will include "Hawks," Magpies, and the rest of the gamekeeper's "vermin." Where it proposes to stop is pleasingly uncertain, for who can say what may be "proved to the satisfaction of the Society" where no proof is asked for? Dr. Louis Sambon, in a lecture before the Society on "Vermin as Disease-

carriers," pointed out that Woodpigeons suffer from a diphtheria which may or may not be communicable to man; and in Pheasants suffering from pneumonia he has found a bacillus exactly similar to "that now regarded as the most frequent, if not the sole, cause of genuine acute lobar pneumonia in man." The pigeon, remarks Dr. Sambon, is already considered vermin. Are we to read in the next revision of the Society's catalogue that "noxious vermin" comprise rats, mice, sparrows, fleas, flies, and pheasants?

One word more. Correspondents protesting against the ways of the new Society drew, says its Secretary, "a heartrending picture of the time when our present boys and girls would have developed into beings without

any feelings, when they would take life—the life of small animals and birds—as readily as they now take the life of a fly." The average village boy needs perhaps little encouragement in this respect; but what he does need there seems some reason to fear the I.S.D.V. may supply. In one parish at least communications with the executive led to a proposition for prizes to be offered to the school children bringing in the largest number of smashed birds and stolen eggs—"spadgers," of course. This particular parish happened to be one where the "Bird and Tree" scheme has been for years developed by a distinguished resident. But in how many other districts will children be recruited to bring up Sparrow Club "points" and win I.S.D.V. prizes?

## Economic Ornithology.

THE investigation into "The Food of some British Birds," by Mr. R. Newstead, of Liverpool University, which forms a supplement to the December number of the *Journal* of the Board of Agriculture, constitutes a more useful contribution to this much-discussed question than do most of the compilations and statements that are put forth. Mr. Newstead gives the results of *post-mortem* examination of 871 birds of 128 species, and adds to these careful notes of field observations. The material was mostly obtained in Cheshire, chiefly in the autumn and winter months. What food was available is not stated, and it is always necessary to remember in the case of *post-mortems* that soft insect food disappears and leaves little trace where seeds and other hard matter remain distinct for a long period. "Taken in the aggregate, however," says the writer, "these records clearly show what an important part the majority of our British birds play in checking the increase and lessening the ravages of many

of the pests of the garden and field." Moreover, if it were possible to give a complete record from observation of the food of nestlings, the balance in favour of the birds would undoubtedly be heavier; for most observers will agree with Mr. Newstead that "with more extended observation we shall find that not only are the young of the various species of insectivorous birds fed upon soft-bodied insects, especially caterpillars, but that the same kind of food is carried to the young of many of the Finches and other hard-billed birds which, in their adult stages, subsist very largely on a seed and grain diet." Even the House-Sparrow has something placed to his credit by the bird-watcher at this stage of its career.


It is impossible to tabulate here the conclusions of Mr. Newstead or the classes in which he groups the birds according to their degree of utility; but one or two points may be noted. His investigations strongly emphasize the value of the Rook and of the Black-headed Gull in destroying the

“leather-jacket” grub, and of the Starling in feeding its young with many injurious insects. Two of the Starlings examined had been shot “in the act of damaging a young wheat plant.” No trace of plant was found in the birds, which were probably hunting for maggots or fly larvæ at the root. Two Blue Tits were shot “red-handed at the peas.” No trace of vegetable food was in the birds, but they had been regaling abundantly on American blight. Eight Bullfinches were shot “while in the act of destroying fruit-buds.” Dissection proved them to have eaten only seeds of the sycamore; they may have been destroying

the fruit-buds wantonly, but the two previous instances at any rate suggest that mistakes are sometimes made. Of the twenty-three *post-mortems* on Bullfinches, only one yielded remains of fruit-buds; eleven gave seeds of the dock. The Bullfinch is, however, classed as a bird of very doubtful utility. The Linnet is among those with a balance very largely in their favour; it is an inveterate feeder on charlock; yet it is this useful and charming little bird which the average farmer allows the hulking bird-catcher to sweep off his land by the hundred. No doubt he subsequently feels aggrieved that providence sends him such troublesome weeds.




**Notes.**

#### BUSTARDS IN ENGLAND.

At a meeting of the Norfolk and Norwich Naturalists' Society in January, Mr. E. J. Eldred gave an interesting account of his attempt to domesticate three Great Bustards, brought from Spain. In spite of Mr. Eldred's enthusiasm and care, his report was not altogether hopeful, the restlessness of the birds, and lack of fixed roosting-place indicating that they must be either pinioned or kept entirely in an aviary. From the R.S.P.B. point of view the important question is the bearing of the experiment on the possible re-introduction of the wild bird in a free state. Mr. Eldred's verdict was that it would be useless to turn out even young birds without first enclosing them for a considerable time on the ground where they are to be released; and unfortunately this is but the introduction to the real problem. In the winter of 1870-1, when about a dozen appeared in this country, they “were as a matter of course shot”; and the result of subsequent efforts to establish them in Norfolk is well known. All that remains of the experiment is the mention of the Bustard in the County Bird Protection Order.

#### YORKSHIRE RECORDS.

The report for 1908 of the Wild Birds Committee of the Yorkshire Naturalists' Union furnishes some useful notes on the migrants and other birds, the principal record being the occurrence of the Sandgrouse in the Wold district. The Great Crested Grebes on Hornsea Mere are stated to have dwindled down to three birds. “Undoubtedly this bird is being harried to death by egg-collectors, and as certainly the visits of parties of naturalists to the Mere, however good for the naturalists, have a contrary effect upon the birds, the publicity given to these expeditions, verbally and in the Press, attracting other parties, whose attentions are not confined to observations only.” An extra watcher will have to be put on in consequence. It is here, as elsewhere: if an area is to be protected for the sake of preserving the birds, visitors must be sternly discouraged. Those most in earnest as bird protectors will be first to acknowledge the childish folly of turning a breeding area into a show. It is regrettable to learn that the Goldfinch shows no signs of increase in Yorkshire, remaining one of the scarcest birds.

**LONDON'S BIRDS.**

Two noteworthy incidents are reported by a North London correspondent who has a keen eye for birds. One is that during the winter a large flock of Teal, said to number about 500, spent several weeks on a large reservoir, which is at all times a popular resort of wild birds. A better provision of islands, and of reedy cover, would undoubtedly attract many more birds to other reservoirs and ponds. The second is the nesting of a pair of Woodpigeons last summer in so absolutely business a region as Seven Sisters Road. In the forecourt of Messrs. Gale and Hunter's premises there is a fine plane tree which the firm have declined to disfigure in the customary fashion by topping and lopping, and it is in this tree that the doves made their home. A good many trees of sorts are planted in London, but unfortunately in many parks and streets they are so pruned and lopped that no birds can build in them.

**WINTER GUESTS.**

Members of the R.S.P.B. and many other friends of birds have had imperative work during much severe weather this winter in providing food for "frozen-out labourers." While economic students are studying the natural food of birds, it would be interesting to know what "provided" food succeeds the best with various species of birds according to the experience of those who supply it in different parts of Britain. There appears to be some evidence that even in stress of weather avian tastes differ. One difficulty met with is the pertinacity of the House-Sparrows in clearing the board. As to this Miss Flora Russell writes:—

"I was lately told of a means of keeping sparrows off the food table. Some upright sticks, six to eight inches high, should be fixed in the middle of the table and several black threads stretched from the top of them to all sides of the table. The food should be put under the threads. Tits, Great. Cole, Blue and Marsh, Hedge-Sparrows, Nuthatches, Robins, and occasionally Thrushes and Blackbirds slip in and out between the threads and feed without

fear. But although the threads have been up for a couple of months, and numerous sparrows watch for crumbs under the table, I have not yet seen one venture under the threads."

**EARLY BREAKFASTS.**

Miss E. C. M. Boodle writes:—

"We throw out great platefuls of crumbs, bits of meat, etc., twice a day. And every night for some years I have put out along my bedroom window sill a long thick bank of breadcrumbs, ready for early breakfast at sunrise. First arrive Jackdaws, then Starlings and Sparrows. When the sun rises about 4 o'clock and one happens to be awake, it gives a comfortable feeling of company and fellowship to be able to count on the arrivals on one's window sill."

**A CAGED KESTREL.**

While lecturing recently before the Rugby School Natural History Society, the Rev. J. E. Kelsall pleaded for the release of a captive Kestrel confined in the School aviary. The bird had been caged about five years, but was still very wild. It formerly had a mate, but this bird escaped some eighteen months ago, and the lonely prisoner left behind was never happy, nor ever reconciled to captivity. Accordingly the present president of the Natural History Society consulted Mr. Kelsall, whose plea in the course of his lecture was applauded by his hearers. The bird was therefore set free—"driven out would be the better expression," writes the president, Mr. Henderson, "for it was terribly frightened, and did not realise our good intentions in the least." After a long rest it flew northward, and about fifteen minutes later a large bird was descried high up in the air. It is, of course, impossible to know further of its history; but the Rugby Society must be congratulated on having done their best for the welfare of the unhappy Hawk, irrespective of a natural desire to see so fine a bird in their aviary.

The Société d'Acclimatation de France has awarded its gold medal to Mr. W. Percival Westell in recognition of the services which his books have rendered to the study of natural history.

## The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds.

### ANNUAL MEETING.

THE Duchess of Portland, President, presided over the Annual Meeting of the Society held at the Westminster Palace Hotel on February 16th, 1909, when the annual report was adopted, and the Council and Officers were elected. A full report of the proceedings, which is sent to all the Fellows, Members, and Associates of the Society, can be had from the Society's office.

### COUNCIL MEETING.

The quarterly meeting of the Council was held at No. 3, Hanover Square, on January 29th, 1909. There were present: Mr. Meade-Waldo (in the Chair), Mr. Ernest Bell, Miss Clifton, Mr. H. E. Dresser, Miss Hall, Hon. Mrs. Arthur Henniker, Mr. W. H. Hudson, Mr. Ogilvie-Grant, Miss Pollock, Captain Tailby, Mr. F. E. Lemon (Hon. Secretary), and Miss Gardiner (Secretary).

**The Hon. Secretary's Report** gave the following list of lectures for the month:—

Jan. 14th	—Rev. C. Thomas	.. Betteshanger.
Jan. 19th	—Rev. G. E. Startup..	Southampton.
Jan. 21st	—Rev. C. Thomas	.. Eastry.
Jan. 22nd	—Mr. Parkinson Curtis..	Aysgarth.
Jan. 25th	—Rev. G. E. Startup	.. Southampton.

and stated that a new Bird Protection Order had been issued for Dorset; that the difficulty in obtaining Orders for the Scottish Burghs had been overcome by Section 28 of the Local Government of Scotland Act, 1908, which received the Royal Assent on December 21st; and that some twenty Bird and Tree Festivals had been held since the Council's last meeting.

**The Finance and General Purposes Committee** reported that the accounts for the year 1908 had been duly audited, and recommended certain investments of moneys from legacies and life payments. They reported that the Hon. Secretary of the South

Australian Branch of the Society, Mrs. John Playford, had resigned, and that her successor was Miss Ware, of Adelaide; and it was agreed that Mrs. Playford be elected a Life Member of the Society, and that the Council's appreciation of her long and valuable services to the cause as Hon. Secretary of the Branch since its formation in 1894, be recorded in the minutes.

The following were elected as Members:—

Miss Benson (Penn, Bucks), C. Howard Bentham (Oxtd), Mrs. Burdon (Royston), R. Burrowes (Catheart, Glasgow), Mrs. Cazalet (Malvern), Miss Chaplin (London, W.), R. Jackson Coombe (Beauchief, Yorks), Hon. M. Douglas Pennant (London, S.W.), G. Eaton (London, S.W.), S. M. Grant (Lincoln), C. Hanbury (Little Berkhamsted), F. J. Hanbury (East Grinstead), Miss Lakin (Malvern), Mrs. McVitie (Berkhamsted), H. W. Miles (London, N.), Miss E. Spender (Rome), Mrs. Stockwell (Lucknow), Mrs. Sturge (Mildenhall), Colonel Williams-Freeman (Hove), Percy Wright (Quorn).

**The Publication Committee** reported that the judges appointed by the Council had examined the essays on "International Legislation for Bird Protection," and the seals of the envelopes having been broken, it appeared that the Gold Medal and twenty guineas had been awarded to Mr. A. Holte Macpherson (London), and the second prize of ten guineas to Colonel Momber (San Remo). The question of the protection of the Bird-of-Paradise was further considered, and the draft of the annual report passed.

**General Business.**—Mr. W. H. St. Quintin, F.Z.S., was nominated for election as a Member of the Council of the Society, in succession to the late Hon. Alfred Dobson. The arrangements in connexion with the work of the Society's inspector during the close season were discussed, and other matters were dealt with.

Meetings of the Watchers' Committee and the Publication Committee were held on February 19th.



### THE WORK OF THE INSPECTOR.

The Society's inspector, who did excellent work, it will be remembered, among the birdcatchers and bird-shops during the spring of 1908, resumed work on March 1st, with the special object of visiting districts where bird-catching is rife, working with the police, the R.S.P.C.A. inspectors, and the County Councils for the observance of the law, which is often not fully understood; and generally of investigating the traffic carried on in wild birds. Information or complaints sent to the Society's office will have all possible consideration, though it is of course impossible at present to touch districts far distant from London, unless in exceptional cases.

### SONG RECITAL AT KINNOULL.

Through the kindness of the Rev. J. W. Henderson, president, and Miss Alice Henderson, secretary, the Kinnoull League of Merciful

Children gave a song recital in aid of the R.S.P.B., at the Kinnoull Parish Church Hall, Perth, on February 22nd and February 24th. The League originated in a desire to make the children's singing-class attached to the church a means of interesting the young people in humanitarian work. In this instance the programme was devoted to birds, the attractive solos, part-songs, and choruses selected all having reference to bird-life. They were illustrated with slides, lent by the Society and shown by Mr. Henderson, who presided and gave eloquent and sympathetic comments. The children had been admirably trained by Miss Anderson, organizer of the entertainment, assisted by Miss Leslie. "The Legend of the Crossbill" was sung by Miss Anderson herself. The recital was a great success. The League numbers between fifty and sixty children, a large proportion of whom are also enrolled Associates of the R.S.P.B.

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It is significant that since the revelations made before the House of Lords Select Committee on the Plumage Importation Bill, as to the numbers of birds brought into the London plume mart (see BIRD NOTES AND NEWS, Autumn Number, 1908), the detailed advertisements of the plume sales have been withdrawn, and the publication of reports in the official journal has been stopped. Some of the features of the year's six sales, in addition to the immense quantities of "osprey" feathers marketed, have been the numbers of Sooty Terns (some 50,000) and of Crowned Pigeons. The latter, all from New Guinea, their one habitat, were represented by considerably over 20,000 skins, one firm alone cataloguing 4640 at the December sale. The total number of Birds of Paradise catalogued was about double the number in 1907, amounting to over 50,000.

Since the issue of the R.S.P.B. Leaflets 60 and 61, a further letter on the subject of

"Moulted Plumes" has been received by the Society, from H.B.M. Vice-Consul at Cordoba. The writer says that he has been in communication with Dr. Albarracin, President of the Argentine Society for the Protection of Animals, whose letter he encloses, and whose statements "fully coincide with what I have always understood was and is the custom in Argentine territories, of killing these birds (Herons and Egrets) at nesting time for their plumes. This cruel procedure will in a short time cause the extermination of two of the handsomest and most inoffensive of all our native birds. It is to be sincerely regretted that up to the present the draft of Law presented to the Argentine Congress by the S.P.A. has not yet been sanctioned, and I consider that an effort should be made when the Congress opens in May next to have the project brought forward again." The draft of Law referred to prohibits the export of plumes.

## Bird and Tree (Arbor) Day.

### INTER-COUNTY COMPETITION.

THE Bird and Tree Festivals of 1908-9 have been spread over an unusually long space of time, owing to the unfavourable weather of both winter and early spring, which discouraged not only every form of outdoor ceremony, but also village gatherings of any kind. The celebration by Long Ashton School of the winning of the Inter-County Shield has not yet (March 20th) taken place; and a considerable number of schools of various degrees of merit, in the seven counties concerned, have still to apply for the awards to which they are entitled when Arbor Day is fixed. The second Somerset school, YATTON, winner of one of the two bronze medals, has had no celebration, but the school which shared with them the second place in the Inter-County Competition, and has so long a record of honours to its name—BUCKLAND SCHOOL, Berkshire—held practically a double Festival. On January 9th the presentation of medals and prizes formed part of a very successful entertainment, arranged by the Rev. Father Arthur, which drew a crowded audience to the schoolroom. Mr. Fletcher (head master) referred briefly to the success of the Team, and said he felt convinced they would have beaten Long Ashton but for two unfortunate occurrences out of their control. Sir William Anson, D.C.L., M.P., who has given great encouragement to this Nature Study work, distributed the awards, and gave special prizes, the school managers also adding to the prize fund. On January 14th a fine double-pink flowering thorn was planted in the school garden, and later in the day parents and friends met in the schoolroom to hear the report and three of the prize essays read. The vicar, Rev. W. Bulmer, an enthusiastic supporter of the scheme, presided, and in a short address remarked that the work of the children was not only a recreation but valuable education of a practical character, for it trained them to be observant, thoughtful, and kind; they were led to appreciate the beauty of their woods, and to become the friends and protectors of the beautiful feathered songsters.

### COUNTY COMPETITIONS.

**BEDFORDSHIRE.**—*Clophill* Bird and Tree Festival was held on December 21st, 1908, when the Shield, which has been won by this school twice in five years, was, together with the book prizes

and medals, presented by Mr. F. Spooner, B.A., Director of Education for the County. Mr. Spooner, who takes great interest in the work, spoke to the youngsters on the delights of Nature Study, and urged them to try and learn all they could of the beautiful sights and sounds around them. The presentation was preceded by Nature songs and recitations, in which the children of both departments took part; the reading of two essays, and the Society's report, by Mr. Cunningham, head master; and the performance, in capital style, of Mrs. Suckling's play *The New Law Courts*, the parts being taken by the elder children. The schoolroom, gaily decorated through the kindness of the teaching staff, was packed. On December 23rd all the children were entertained at tea, and a tree-planting is contemplated when the old elms in the church avenue are replaced by evergreens.

Bird and Tree Day was held at the Council School, *Keysoe*, on January 15th. A programme of songs and recitations was well rendered by the children, the awards were distributed, and an ash tree was planted by some of the elder boys.

*Morhanger* School held festival on Dec. 23rd, when an entertainment of songs and recitations was given and the prizes and medals were presented by Mrs. H. Thornton. The Vicar presided and read the report.

**BUCKINGHAMSHIRE.**—*Stony Stratford* National School welcomed back the County Shield, which they held in 1906-7, with much rejoicing, on January 29th. A pretty procession of 300 children, with the vicar (Rev. H. Last) and school staff, marched to Vicarage Road in the morning, and planted, near a horse-chestnut which commemorates the former victory, a young lime tree, given by Mr. W. Paterson, of Wakefield Lodge. In the evening a capital entertainment, comprising songs, acting, and recitations, was rendered by the children under the head master and mistress (Mr. Baldock and Miss Fryer); and the Challenge Shield, medals, and prizes were presented by Mr. C. G. Watkins, secretary of the Bucks Education Committee. Eulogising the enthusiasm and skill of the teachers, and the interest shown by the school managers, Mr. Watkins said some people thought that only the three R's should be taught in schools; but, great as knowledge was, the power of observation was an even more important thing to acquire, and nothing developed this better than the watching of birds and trees.

*Ellesborough School*, which won the Shield in 1907 and stands second this time, celebrated Arbor Day on December 21st, when the Team planted a horse-chestnut tree, given by Miss May Couper, in the grounds of the Parish Hall. An appropriate programme of Bird and Tree songs and recitations was gone through in the Hall by the scholars, under the head master, Mr. Arnold; the prizes were presented by Mrs. R. C. Clarke, the Society's report and some of the essays were read, and encouraging addresses given by the chairman of managers (Rev. R. C. Clarke) and Dr. L. H. West.

The feature of the Festival at *Princes Risborough* on December 8th, was an admirable performance by the children of Mrs. Suckling's interesting play *The New Law Courts*. The rector (Rev. Josiah Mander) presided, and the Bird and Tree prizes were handed to the winners by Mrs. Coningsby Disraeli. Mr. Disraeli, who warmly complimented the head master (Mr. Dyer) on the work of the children in essay writing, acting, and gardening, afterwards planted in the churchyard a lime tree, given by Mrs. Floyd, the children marching thither with flying flags.

At *Coleshill* Festival, held on February 8th, an excellent address was given by Mrs. Dixon Davies, of Beaconsfield, who presented the prizes. Owing to bad weather the tree-planting was postponed to a later date, when twelve apple-stocks were planted in the school-garden in order that the boys may learn to graft.

**CUMBERLAND.**—*Greystoke School*, winners of the Shield for the second time in four years, did not allow even the heavy rain of their Festival Day, November 21st, to damp the ardour of the proceedings. Oak, plum, and rose trees were planted in the school playground, and the subsequent meeting in the reading-room was largely attended. Mr. H. C. Howard, of Greystoke Castle, presided. A charming address, full of suggestion and encouragement, was given by Mr. F. Marshall, of Keswick, who observed humorously that he was the one person present who could offer congratulations, for everyone else, Mr. Howard included, no doubt felt that he or she had some share in winning the Shield. Songs and recitations were contributed by the scholars, and cheers given for the head master, Mr. Titterton.

At *Kirkoswald* a bright and happy gathering took place on December 23rd, when the scholars were entertained in the gaily decorated schoolroom, the awards were distributed by Mrs. Fetherstonhaugh, and two ivy trees were planted. The vicar (Rev. R. Duncan) spoke of the value of a real knowledge of birds as ensuring their protection, and of the

destruction of many most interesting species through thoughtlessness and ignorance.

The girls of *St. John's School*, Keswick, who were represented in the competition by two teams (thanks to the enthusiasm of the mistress, Miss Hayes), had a gala day on December 12th. Tea was provided by Mrs. R. D. Marshall, of Castlerigg Manor, whose little grand-daughter, Miss Eileen Lawther, a small maiden of five summers, performed with conscious dignity the ceremony of planting the commemorative beech tree in the Fitz Park. The vicar presided at the ensuing meeting, when Mrs. H. M. Jenkins presented the prizes. Mr. Cowley, of Brigham School, commenting on the harm done by the nest-robbing proclivities of boys, remarked that twelve or fourteen years ago the Dipper was a common bird of the waterside, but had now become so rare that it was difficult to find one. He thought if boys went in for Bird and Tree work this sort of thing would not happen.

**HAMPSHIRE.**—A large company gathered at the *Havant Council School* on December 23rd to congratulate the head master, Mr. Beeston, and the scholars on winning the Hampshire Shield, the presentation of which, and of the book prizes and medals, was made by Lady Fitzwygram. Canon Scott (rector) presided, and the speeches were interspersed with readings and songs, including some recitations written by the children. Mr. D. T. Cowan, Director of Education for the county, said that success in this competition did a school special credit, because it was not one that could be won by faked accomplishments, it necessitated real, solid, individual effort. It also demonstrated the fact that the master could only guide a child's mind, the real work must be the outcome of personal endeavour. He wished that more counties would take up the Bird and Tree Competition, which he regarded as one of the greatest educational efforts in Hampshire to stimulate the child's ideas and powers.

The *Sandown Boys' National School*, winners of the second prize, celebrated Arbor Day on December 23rd, in conjunction with the Girls' School, which was adjudged "Excellent." In the afternoon a meeting was held in Christ Church Parish Hall, the Rev. W. T. Storrs, B.D., presiding, some of the essays were read, songs sung, and addresses given by the chairman and by Mr. T. A. Wright, C.C., who congratulated Mr. Prickett, head master, and Miss Watson, mistress, on the continued success of the teams. Nine trees were afterwards planted.

The Festival in connection with *St. Peter's Girls' School*, *Bournemouth* (winners of the third prize) was divided into two parts. On January 19th

there was a tea, followed by games; and on February 9th a public meeting at St. Peter's Hall, when the Rev. W. Edgumbe Leachman, who presided, explained the scheme, and Mr. W. Parkinson Curtis, F.E.S., lectured on "The Birds of Poole Harbour," with lantern illustrations. The prizes given by the Society, and by Miss Firbank (head mistress) and Miss Rooper, were distributed by Miss D. Vipan, a Member of the Education Committee.

A particularly happy Festival was held at *Ridge*, on December 22nd, when in spite of rain, Mrs. Suckling drove to this isolated little village to share in and increase the festivities, bringing with her a birch tree for planting, extra prizes, and buns. She also gave an encouraging address. At *Awbridge*, also, Mrs. Suckling gave prizes and a lantern address; and a catalpa tree, presented by Mr. E. H. Thurston, was planted. At *Barton Stacey*, a damson tree was planted in the garden of the mistress, Miss Lutton, who has done so much to stimulate the Competition and help the Team. At *Hayling* additional prizes were provided by Colonel Collins, C.B., and by Admiral Startin, and Miss Sandeman, and a tree was duly planted.

**NORFOLK.**—The success which attended the first Bird and Tree Competition in Norfolk characterised also the public meeting for the presentation of the Shield and prizes, held at the Thatched Assembly Rooms, Norwich, on November 27th. Sir William folkes, Chairman of the County Council, presided over a large and influential attendance, and Lady folkes presented the Shield to *Bracon Ash* Team, and the prizes and certificates to their various winners. Sir William made reference to the rich avifauna of the county; and Mrs. James Stuart said they were proud to know that Norfolk was the first county to work this scheme through its own Education Committee. Mr. H. Lee Warner traced the progress of bird-study from the first growth in boy and girl of the humanising self-denial which led a boy not to take eggs, and the girl not to pry too far into the secrecy of the nest. That was the first lesson the Gilbert Whites and Bosworth Smiths aspired to teach. From humanity in its widest sense they passed to observation, and through that door to knowledge, if not to science. With this power of observation came also the practical gain of distinguishing between friends and foes to agriculture; and in these days it would be no little gain if the small holders and their families earned to recognise what the Prussian Board of Agriculture were spending thousands of pounds to teach, viz., that no power on earth could make up for the loss of our bird population in keeping the land free from pests. Mr. T. A. Cox, secretary to the Education Committee, said that out of 500

schools in Norfolk 95 were invited to compete, and of these 66 sent in papers. Next year he would invite all the schools to join.

**SOMERSETSHIRE.**—The reception of the County Shield for the second year in succession was celebrated by *Long Ashton* on February 15th, the tree-planting having been accomplished before Christmas. The ceremony took place at Ashton Court, where the children were entertained by Lady Smyth, for whom hearty cheers were given. After tea in the Church House, there was a large gathering of parents and friends, and a musical programme was gone through, under the direction of Mr. Gunston, the head master. Mr. Bothamley, County Education Secretary, gave a most instructive and helpful address.

The *Castle Cary* Girls' School, winners of the second prize, celebrated Arbor Day in conjunction with the Boys' School, on December 22nd. Mr. Macmillan presented the prizes, and Miss Naish, head mistress, entertained the girls to tea. The children of *Exford* School gave a capital entertainment to a crowded audience on December 4th, including songs, dialogues, and a Maypole dance. Between the two parts the Bird and Tree report and two of the essays were read by the Chairman (Rev. W. New), who heartily congratulated the Team and Mr. and Mrs. Brambley, and the prizes were distributed by Mrs. New. Previous to these proceedings a tea was given to the children by the vicar and Mrs. New. At *Clutton* trees and shrubs were planted in front of the school. *Whitestaunton's* first Festival was the occasion of a happy holiday, when after a programme of songs and recitations the medals and books were presented by the Rev. H. A. Cartwright (rector), and a pretty fir tree, given by Captain Elton, was planted amid much excitement in the churchyard. The boys' and girls' Teams of *Southend* School, Chard, joined in a celebration on December 23rd, when Mrs. Houghton James gave the prizes and medals with encouraging words.

*Dytche* School, Bridgwater, held their festival on February 26th. A happy half-holiday began with the planting of two plane-trees in the playground, and closed with a delightful lantern lecture from Mr. Henry Corder, and with the presentation of the awards. The Rev. W. R. Pearson, rector of Holford, presided.

**WARWICKSHIRE.**—The Director of Education for the county (Mr. Bolton King) who has taken great interest in promoting the scheme, was present at the function at *Henley-in-Arden* in December last, and presented the Warwickshire Shield to its first winners. Mr. King said that no subject was more

valuable to the children than this study, which roused their interest and their powers of observation ; and in congratulating the Team he still more cordially congratulated the master, Mr. Cooper, who set them on the road to success. The Rev. J. S. Turner, chairman of managers, who presided, also spoke highly of the value of the Competition, and of the objects of the R.S.P.B. About 180 children sat down to tea, which was followed by the appearance of Father Christmas with presents, etc.

*Baddesley Clinton* R.C. School held their *fete* day on January 22nd, the enthusiastic proceedings including the planting of a damson tree (the gift

of Mr. Dering, of Baddesley Hall), a short programme of songs, a lecture on the "Beauties of Nature," by the Rev. B. Grafton, chairman of managers, and distribution of prizes, and also of sweets and cake given by Mr. Grafton and Mr. Charles Ash. At the Murray Boys' School, *Rugby*, Mr. George Over gave an instructive address and some hints on "How to Observe" were imparted by Mr. E. Hollowell, winner of the Warwickshire Natural History Society's prize for essays in 1907 and 1908. *Elborow* (second prize), *Middleton* (third prize), the *Atherston Girls' School* and others have also had first celebrations of Arbor Day.

## A Story of Two Thrushes.

The following little sketch from life appeared in the *Evening Standard* of October 22nd, 1908, under the heading "Birds of the Air":—

"Walking back from Chambers, I looked in at a bird-fancier's, having promised to get some seed for my wife's lark. Birds of all sorts around me ; poor little prisoners, recently incarcerated, hopping their tiny course in infinitesimal cages in an agony of restraint, and solemn *habitués* meekly accepting the grim fact that they are in for 'a lifer.' I had time to take stock of these matters, for there was already a customer in the shop, a young lady in a white frock, a country-bred one, as one could see at a glance, with a wind-swept, clear complexion and wistful blue eyes hovering from cage to cage in a way that spoke of quick sympathy with bird-life. Just now she was in treaty for two Thrushes, with which she presently retired in a hansom.

"That's the sort o' customer as we doesn't often 'ave, sir," said the bird-fancier. "Them two birds is to get their liberty, they is, down Hampshire ways somewheres. Young lady can't abide to see a bird in a cage—says it ain't nat'ral. "Crude, I calls it," says she, and so now and agin she comes to our place just to buy a bit o' freedom as might be for a bird or two. No, sir, it don't make no difference to our trade, it don't ; all's one whether folks takes 'em to cage or to free 'em. Say truth, sir, I 'as a goodish bit o' love for birds myself, I 'as, though you mightn't to think it, looking to my trade. I 'as my bread to earn, but I often wish as I could take and give the game up, I does. Let alone my feelin's, it ain't all beer and skittles, bird-fancying ain't, not nowadays. What with close time for this 'ere bird in one county and for that in another, there's a deal of risk in the catchings of 'em, there is. There's your seed, sir. Threepence, and thank you, sir."

"As I walked homewards I thought much of the young lady and her birds, feeling how I should enjoy seeing them set free. I stepped out with a sense of liberated wing and a gasp of freshened air, and when

I took the bird-seed into Agatha's room I was moved with pity for her lark, with its quasi-pinioned wings and its great liquid black eye reproaching me for being accessory to its imprisonment.

"Would Agatha care to set it free ? She says, 'No, she certainly would not—that it would not be really kind, that it has got accustomed to the cage, and loves it.'

"I rather seem to have heard a similar tale before from so-called bird-lovers."

By a coincidence the second chapter of the story has reached BIRD NOTES AND NEWS from the "young lady" concerned. It is unhappily true that "it don't make no difference to our trade whether folks buys 'em to cage or to free 'em," but it makes a good deal of difference to the individual bird.

The two Thrushes were placed for ten days or so in a large aviary, roughly constructed of wire netting, in a shrubbery, in order to accustom them to a freer life, and to picking up their own living before they were released entirely. For these birds were about two years old, and had been in captivity for a year and five months. One of them died, and a *post-mortem* examination revealed diseased lungs and liver, the result, as may be reasonably supposed, of cramped unnatural life in a small cage and a birdshop atmosphere. The other bird was not seen for some little time after liberation. It was June, and no doubt he hid among the leaves. But he happened to be a pied bird, and therefore easily recognisable, and after a while was not only seen, but appeared at once to notice the whistle of the lady who had purchased his freedom, and who had made a

point of whistling to her Thrushes, especially at feeding-time, when they were in the aviary. The little fellow was evidently in the best of health, though in the most miserable condition when purchased, and thoroughly enjoying his little wild outdoor life. It was June when he was freed, and through the autumn he constantly frequented the garden, becoming quite tame. Occasionally he would take a glance at his old "home" (a box about ten inches by six), but manifested no inclination whatever to share the "happy" state of Agatha's lark!

### IN THE COURTS.

**CATCHING BIRDS WITH HOOKS.**—At the *Lerwick* Sheriff Court, on December 19th, 1908, four young men were convicted of attempting to catch sea-birds by means of baited hooks. The Fiscal said that many complaints had been made of the cruel practice, and it was necessary that an example should be made. As this was the first prosecution under the Act of 1908, defendants were let off with small fines, the Sheriff adding that they ought to have had the sense to see the cruelty of the thing.—At *St. Ives*, Cornwall, on March 10th, four fishermen were summoned for catching birds with hooks. The defence was that the birds were wanted as food. One man was fined and the others ordered to pay costs.

**SHOOTING ON THE FORESHORE.**—At *Woolton* Sessions, on February 1st, 1909, Thomas Allen was fined for shooting a Gull on the Mersey foreshore, a protected area. The action was taken by the Liverpool S.P.C.A. with a view to putting a check on the desultory shooting which was said to be on the increase. Defendant pleaded that he was "trying a new gun."

**BIRDCATCHING.**—At *East Ham* on January 16th, George Fairweather, of Manor Park, was convicted of illegal birdcatching and of cruelty to decoy birds. A Chaffinch and a Linnet, braced with string which cut into the flesh, were in an exhausted condition, and eleven newly-caught birds were in a cage close by. Defendant made the usual excuse that he "had to do something to earn a living." Fined £1 15s., and an order made for the liberation of the birds and destruction of the apparatus.—At *Coventry* on January 15th, Alfred Chattaway was fined 20s. and costs for birdcatching. He had cages, birdlime, decoy birds, and three Bullfinches recently-caught in his possession, and evidently made his living at the business. The police said there were many such cases, although 300 Bird Protection Notices had been posted in the district.—At *Long Ashton*, on February 26th, James Tapscott, of Bristol, was summoned for cruelty to a decoy Goldfinch and Linnet, and for taking a Goldfinch. The decoys were braced in the usual way, and completely exhausted. Defendant, who gave a false name and address, pleaded that he was not a professional catcher, and had seven children. On promising "not to be cruel" he was let off with a small fine and allowed to retain his nets.

### BIRD PROTECTION ORDERS.

THE following County Council Orders have been issued since January 1st, 1909:—

**ESSEX.** January 14th. B C D E F S. As previous Order, with addition of clause exempting House-Sparrow from operation of the Act.

**OXFORD.** February 19th. E F. Owl (all species) protected all the year, and Owls' eggs protected.

**EAST SUSSEX.** February 17th. A (e), B C E F S. Same as Order of 1905, with addition of the full protection throughout the year for the Heron and its eggs.

**GLAMORGAN.** January 28th. A (b) B C E F S. As previous Order, but close time for Woodcock to be between last day of January and first day of August.

**IRELAND.**—March 1st. C. Close time for Woodcock and Snipe to be from March 1st to October 1st in following counties: Carlow, Cavan, Clare, Cork, Galway, Kerry, Kilkenny, Limerick, Londonderry, Louth, Mayo, Queen's County, Roscommon, Wexford, Wicklow.

### NEW LEAFLETS.

No. 60.—**MOULTED PLUMES.** Letters from H.B.M. Ministers in *Venezuela* and *Argentina*, and others. With illustrations of Egrets and "osprey" plume. Price 1d.; 9d. per doz.

No. 61.—**HOW OSPREY FEATHERS ARE PROCURED.** A condensed edition of No. 60. With illustration. Threepence per doz.; 1s. 9d. per 100.

No. 62.—**WILD BIRD PROTECTION ORDERS** in Great Britain. Showing the nature of Orders in force under the Wild Bird Protection Acts, 1880 to 1906. With form of Order and suggestions as to birds specially needing protection, and how to protect them.

### ANNUAL REPORT.

The *Annual Report* of the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, with proceedings at the *Annual Meeting*, 1909, is now ready, and may be obtained from the Society's office; free to subscribers.

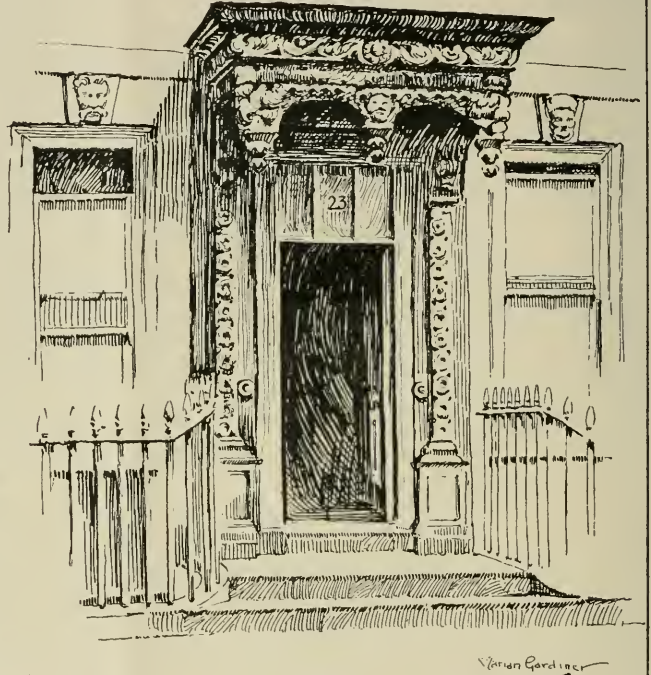
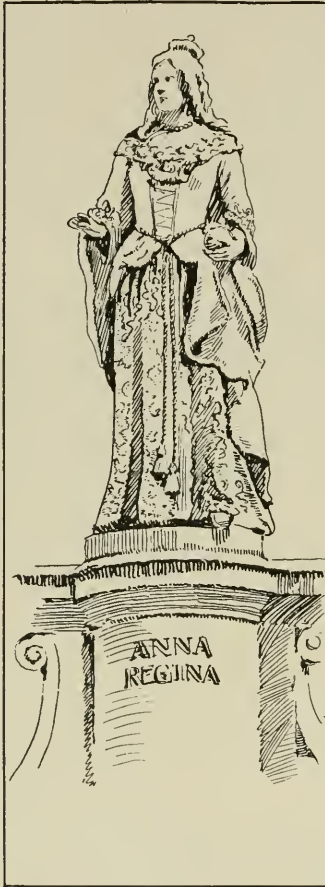
BIRD NOTES AND NEWS (issued quarterly) will be sent post free to any address for 1s. per annum, payable in advance; single numbers, 3d.

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



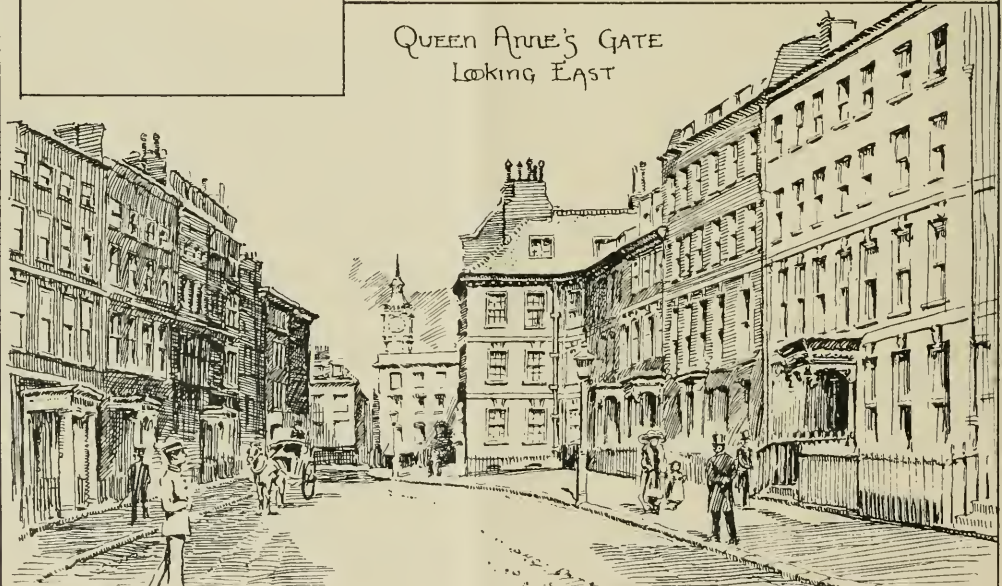
The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds.

# 23 QUEEN ANNE'S GATE



Walter Gardner

QUEEN ANNE'S GATE  
LOOKING EAST





# BIRD NOTES AND NEWS.

Issued Quarterly by the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds.

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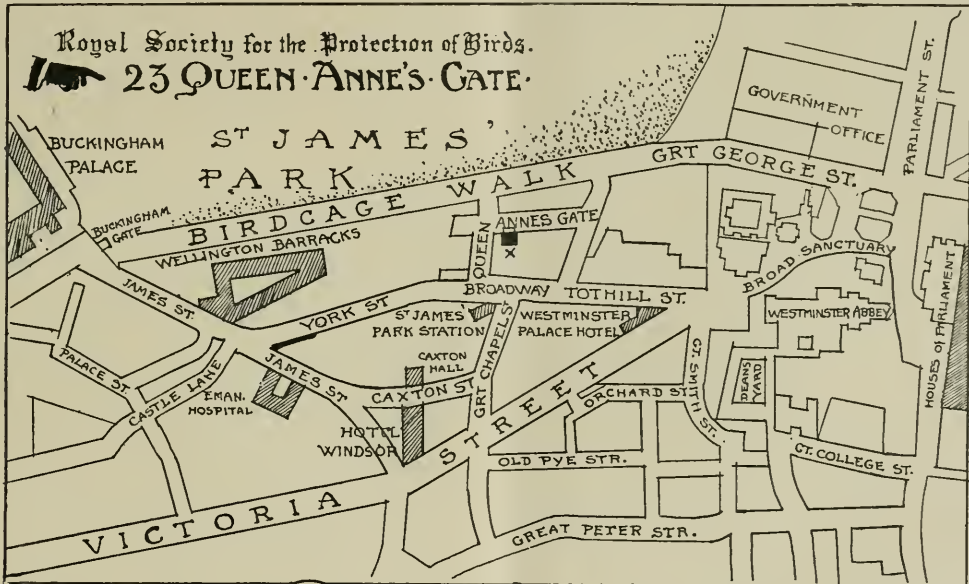
[JUNE 25, 1909.

## THE SOCIETY'S NEW OFFICES.



N and after July 1st, the headquarters of the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds will be at 23, Queen Anne's Gate, Westminster, S.W. (Telephone 2412 Victoria.) The Zoological Society of London, who own the premises at No. 3, Hanover Square, have decided to sell the place on account of its growing insecurity, and to build new Offices at the Zoological Gardens; hence their tenants necessarily received notice to quit. The change is in

The new Offices of the Society, at No. 23, Queen Anne's Gate, will be no doubt in some respects more convenient for many members and friends, on account of their central and accessible situation. Close to St. James's Park and Westminster, they are within easy reach of Victoria, Waterloo, and Charing Cross Stations, and about two minutes from St. James's Park Station on the District Railway. At the same time, the quiet of the thoroughfare itself, lying between Victoria Street and Birdcage Walk, is a benefit to



many ways regretted. The R.S.P.B. had been at No. 3 almost the whole time it has rented a London Office, migrating thither after a few months in temporary rooms in Holborn, in June, 1898; and over and above the fact that a change of address is obviously disadvantageous in the case of Societies with an extensive correspondence, and doing public work, regret is felt at severing the link with the Zoological Society, whose council and officers have been the most courteous and friendly of landlords and neighbours.

workers; and it is known to all lovers of old London as one of the most charming streets left in the Westminster district, with solid Queen Anne houses adorned in some cases, as in No. 23, with finely carved oak porticos. About half-way down on the south side, against a niche in the wall, stands a statue of the Queen after whom Queen Anne's Gate was named in the first instance, Queen's Square; it represents Her Majesty in state robes, bearing the orb, and like the more imposing statue in front of St. Paul's, was erected during her reign.

## Birdcatching in Close Time.

CONVINCED of the good results achieved last spring by the employment of an inspector to work among the birdcatchers and bird-dealers in close time, the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds again retained his services for the spring of 1909. The summary of his experiences in 1908, reprinted from *BIRD NOTES AND NEWS*, under the title "The Birdcatcher at Work," is suggestive reading to those who know little of the extent of the trade, even though touching on only a few districts. This year the area of operations was again necessarily limited, and lay chiefly in Middlesex, Herts, Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire, and Sussex. The Inspector's general report indicates that much less catching goes on in the close season than was formerly the case, especially during the early part of the time; the notices then are newly out, the police are on the watch, and, moreover, dealers take care to have plenty of birds in hand to meet the demands of the first few weeks.

Bird protection notices were found well displayed in the beginning of March in most of the districts round London and in Sussex, but in certain neighbourhoods not one was to be seen, and ignorance of the Acts prevailed. There was a general willingness on the part of the police to display the Society's placards, even in preference to the county notices, because being of small size they take less room on a notice-board. Warning notices as to possession and sale of birds were left at bird-shops and other places, and the Inspector considers that the number of these shops in London has decreased; several which were specially complained of and cautioned last year have since put up their shutters.

Most of the birdcatching for the London market goes on in Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire, and Sussex. In the Isle of Ely there are

hundreds of acres of marsh land where common rights exist and no permission has to be obtained from land occupiers. In North Cambridgeshire, which is largely devoted to market gardening, catching takes place on a large scale pretty well all the year round, permission being easily obtained. At Bedford the Inspector was granted an interview with Mr. Marks, Clerk to the County Council, who takes an active interest in the matter, and thanks to him the catching of Larks in close time is believed to be practically stopped. In Sussex useful information was obtained relative to the taking both of small birds and of rare species. In some parts a certain amount of terrorism exists, and if a farmer or landowner refuses permission to the catchers "something happens" to the live or dead stock of that unlucky individual. In one little town there are about a dozen men who live by their raids on the bird-life of the countryside; in past days at least it was a profitable trade, for one of them is said to own a row of houses built out of the proceeds and called "Linnet Terrace." In another centre a well-known gang, whose send-off had averaged 500 birds a week, were discovered "working honestly for their living for the first time on record." The local police had given them three days to clear their stock, together with the information that the R.S.P.B. inspector was coming round again.

The Inspector had information of the taking of birds in a Hertfordshire village by means of a rope baited with maize on fish-hooks, but he was not able to prove this offence against the Act of 1908.

The Inspector's report again emphasizes two of the chief difficulties met with. Many professional birdcatchers have, or assume to have, "aviaries" in which they stock a supply of birds at the latter end of the open

season. The aviary is a room or shed in which the caged birds are stored. The supply can be replenished again and again throughout the close time, but there is practically no chance of proving this, and the men will always swear that birds on sale or sent to dealers are part of the old stock, or bred in captivity, and will bring numerous relations and friends to back them up. The magistrates, not being experts, and not viewing birdcatching as they view poaching, give "the benefit of the doubt"; and the police, discouraged in what is always a difficult task, decide to leave the matter alone in future. So as long as it rests with the prosecution to prove the recent taking of the birds, it seems impossible to deal satisfactorily with bird-shops and stalls. Birds absolutely wild, and in breeding plumage, may be seen in shops or on barrows, but they are all sworn to as "old stock" from the "aviary" in Isleham or in Bethnal Green.

The second point relates to the trouble experienced by the police in proving the taking of scheduled birds. Police officers are all agreed that they should have a right of search in the case of birdcatchers as in that of poachers. One experienced superintendent is of opinion that breaches of the close-time law must inevitably continue until all birdcatching is absolutely prohibited, and all transit of live birds by rail stopped, during close time.

The amendments required to render the Close Time Act effectual are, therefore:—

1. The deleting of the words "recently taken" from the Act of 1880 and the absolute prohibition of the sale or transport of live wild birds during that period.
2. The granting to the police of a right to search suspected individuals.
3. The restriction of the right of birdcatching in close time to owners and occupiers and persons *bona fide* in their regular employ.

## ❧ ❧ ❧ ❧

THERE appears little prospect of any progress being made with Plumage Prohibition legislation in Parliament this session. A Bill, on somewhat different lines from that of Lord Avebury which passed through the House of Lords last year, has been introduced into the House of Commons by Sir William Anson. In place of prohibiting the importation of all feathers, with certain named exceptions, it proposes to prohibit the possession for sale or exchange of the plumage or skins of birds named in a schedule to the Bill; the list comprising Birds-of-Paradise, Herons, Owls, Ibises and Spoonbills, Storks, Chatterers, Crowned Pigeons, Argus and Impeyan Pheasants, Trogons, Lyre Birds, Terns, and Rheas, and any bird protected by legislation in India or any British dominion or in foreign countries. The Bill is being actively opposed by the trade on the lines of their opposition to Lord Avebury's Bill.

Mr. A. H. E. Mattingley, Secretary of the Australasian Ornithologists' Union, writes from Melbourne, April 1st, 1909:—

"The last twelve months have been momentous in Australasia as regards the protection of our avifauna. Stirred by the sight of enlarged photos depicting the destruction of the Egrets in Australia, which were exhibited in shop windows in leading thoroughfares of our large cities, as well as by lantern slides shown at public lectures, the Australian Press nobly advocated the necessity for Federal action.

"Backed by the influential Press, the Ornithologists' Union arranged the most powerful deputation ever organised for any purpose in Australia, having the support of nearly all the scientific societies of the different States of the Commonwealth. This deputation waited on the Prime Minister, and requested Federal legislation which would prevent inter-State traffic in skins and plumes of birds protected in any one State. The Prime Minister promised to have the minor power of prohibiting the importation of plumes immediately enforced throughout the Commonwealth and Papua. He also promised to bring in a Bill to give him power to prevent exportation also. Congratulating the Ornithologists' Union on having arranged so powerful a deputation, he remarked that at the present time a person who said that plumes found in his possession had been obtained in a neighbouring State was exempt from State laws. This meant

that there was no means of preventing the destruction of plume birds, since one State was played off against another.

"Following this deputation, a conference was held under the auspices of the A.O.U. and attended by delegates of the Federal States, who, in the result, agreed to advise their respective Governments of the need of unification of the Game Laws of the Commonwealth.

"From the foregoing you will perceive that the cause of bird protection has been strenuously upheld here, and that we are in accord with the high aims and noble principles of your Society in the Mother Country."

The Administrator of Papua (British New Guinea) has enacted an Ordinance, dated December 9th, 1908, which prohibits the capture or destruction of Birds-of-Paradise and Goura Pigeons at any time; the buying or selling of the birds or their skin or plumage; the export of the birds, skin, or plumage without written consent from the officer of customs. It empowers officers of constabulary or customs to search a suspected house, vessel, or place, and to open any suspected box or parcel; and it authorizes a fine of £100 or six months' imprisonment for a first offence, and twelve

months, without the option of a fine, for subsequent offences. Certain permits may be granted, and other birds may be added to the schedule.

The Plumage Bill of the Audubon Society of New York State, whereby no wild birds or their skin or plumage may be taken or possessed, except under authority of a certificate, *irrespective of whether the bird was captured or killed within or without the State*, has failed to pass the Assembly, owing to trade opposition. Such a Bill has been passed in a number of States with excellent results, and comes into operation in the State of California on June 17th, 1909.

The Chairman of the National Association of Audubon Societies has addressed a letter to the Secretary of State of the United States, in which he says:—

"The object of this letter is to ask whether it would not be feasible and proper for this Government to co-operate with Great Britain in its efforts to regulate the traffic in the plumage of wild birds. As this matter at the present time is taking such hold of the public throughout the world, we think the time is ripe for such action, at least to the extent of calling for an International Conference on the subject."

## Notes.

### PLUME BIRDS OF NEW SOUTH WALES.

Mr. J. W. R. Clarke, of Sydney, sends the following:

"On Sunday morning, 28th February 1909, preaching at Mosman, a well-known watering-place suburb near Sydney, the Rev. James Green, M.A., of Ballina, said that he came from a region famous for the beauty of its scenery. In the 'Big Scrub' of the Richmond River District were to be seen masses of stag-horns, elk-horns and ferns. Among the branches of the giant fig-trees festoons of vine trail from tree to tree, and orchids which in London would be almost priceless are fairly common. In the past this magnificent foliage was lit up with the flashing plumage of native birds, such as the Regent Bird in its gold and black, the Satin Bower Bird, green Pigeons, and innumerable bright-hued Finches and Wrens. But now it was a rare thing to see these birds, and in three years he had seen the Regent Bird only about half-a-dozen times. When he came down to Sydney he could see them; but they were dead; they were on women's hats. The visitor from the north coast would see more of this

beautiful plumage in King Street and Pitt Street in milliners' shops than might be seen in days of travel through the scrub. The ladies present, remarked the speaker, would understand that there were times when words failed the preacher and he could only think."

It is a suggestive picture: a comment on the trade figment that dealers have "no use" for rare birds. They only desire to make them rare, to tear away the flashing wings from scrub and forest and mere until it will no longer "pay" to hunt them. For the living glory of the earth, gone for ever, men shall see for a season a repulsive jumble of stiffened and distorted feathers bedizening women's hats; while a miserable remnant of the hunted birds that no longer "pay" hide in the thickest jungle and the uttermost morass.

**THE BRUSH TURKEY.**

Another Australian bird which is disappearing, but for other reasons, is the well-known Brush Turkey, which is unhappily being exterminated by the use of poisoned pollard, introduced for the destruction of rabbits. As these birds are also killed in numbers by the timber-fellers in the forests, they have altogether fallen on evil days; and their decrease is held at least partially responsible for the prevalence of the blow-fly pest which is working havoc among Australian sheep. The most curious characteristic of the Brush Turkey is its method of nest building. With their big strong feet they rake together large mounds of earth and vegetable stuff, and within this the eggs are laid. This natural hot-bed acts as an incubator, and the hens do not return to the place until the time for hatching. The mounds being used by several pairs, and piled up with fresh material each season, grow to an immense size, the largest recorded being 14 feet high. If the Gould Bird Protection Society, which is being formed for New South Wales, is able to do anything for the protection and preservation of such birds as these it will deserve well of posterity.

**RARE BIRDS IN BRITAIN.**

England is in no position to exhibit herself as a model to New South Wales while her own "ornithological" records are a perpetual record of the destruction of rare species. The watchers of the R.S.P.B. do good work, it is true, but what are a half-a-dozen or so watchers (and the income has to be stretched to its utmost to employ these) throughout the length and breadth of Great Britain? In one small county one bird-stuffer had in his possession at one time during the present breeding-season a Harrier, two Ravens, and a Bee-eater. In Cornwall, where the County Council pays no attention to Bird Protection, the *Cornish Post*, commenting on the shooting of a Spoonbill, mentions as recent events the shooting of a pair of Crested Grebe at Camborne, a Common Buzzard at Gwithian, two

Kingfishers (one at Camborne and one at Lelant), and a Bittern at Mullion. In no county can Peregrines breed if it is possible to reach and rob the nest.

**252 PENNIES.**

The following eloquent little letter needs no explanation, save that it was sent to the R.S.P.B., together with a donation of one guinea, through the Hon. Local Secretary for Loughborough, Mr. Frisby:

"We want to do something for the birds, and we thought we could save up some money to buy caged larks and other birds and then set them free. We have saved up our pennies for about a year, and some friends have kindly helped us, but now we are afraid it will not be much good, because we could not buy many birds, and then the dealers would only go and catch some more. So now we think it will be better to give the money to the R.S.P.B. to help the Inspectors to try to stop bird catching. Will you please send the money to the Society.

"From NANCY ALLOCOCK, aged 9; ALTHEA COOK, aged 12; BARBARA COOK, aged 11; ALICE OAKES, aged 14; DOREEN OAKES, aged 12."

The Inspector's report (page 70) shows to some extent what has been done with this and other subscriptions for the same purpose.

**THE BUILDER AND THE BIRDS.**

A novel idea in providing dwellings at once for men and birds has been carried out by Mr. R. H. Watt, the Society's Hon. Local Secretary at Knutsford, and may serve as a hint to architects and builders among the readers of BIRD NOTES AND NEWS. A correspondent of the *Manchester Guardian* tells how he was delighted to find in some new houses in that quaint old Cheshire town, carefully contrived nesting places for birds. "Instead of filling up the holes left by the scaffolding, the architect had closed them with a thin covering of stucco, pierced with a round hole. The birds enter and build inside. Sometimes you may see a tiny step just below for the bird to alight on, and a little cornice over the gap to keep out the rain." These are Mr. Watt's houses, and he has also purposely left other holes in the brickwork for nests, completing the arrangements when the stucco is added. The birds understand it all perfectly.

## The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds.

### COUNCIL MEETING.

THE Council of the Society held their quarterly meeting at No. 3, Hanover Square, W., on April 30th, when there were present : Sir John Cockburn (in the chair), Mr. Bell, Mr. J. L. Bonhote, Miss Clifton, Mr. Dresser, Dr. Drewitt, Miss Hall, Mrs. F. E. Lemon, Mr. Meade-Waldo, Mr. Ogilvie-Grant, Miss Pollock, Captain Tailby, Mrs. Owen Visger, the Hon. Secretary (Mr. F. E. Lemon), and the Secretary (Miss Gardiner).

**The Hon. Secretary's Report** recorded the death of Mr. Francis King, Member of Council, and it was agreed that the Council's sense of his services to the cause and of the loss sustained by the Society should be noted on the minutes. It was reported that the Earl of Crewe and Earl Cawdor had become Vice-Presidents of the Society, and that the following had accepted appointment as Hon. Life Fellows : Mr. William Dutcher, Mr. Frank Chapman, Mr. A. H. Mattingley, Freiherr von Berlepsch, Herr Otto Herman, and Herr F. E. Blauuw. It was also reported that the petition respecting the protection of the Bird of Paradise in New Guinea had been transmitted to the Government of Australia by the Colonial Office, but that while this was on its way a copy had been received of an Ordinance on the subject, issued by the Administrator of the Territory on December 9th, 1908. The Jersey Wild Birds Protection Bill was lost on the third reading, in a small House, by five votes, the second reading having been passed by a large majority, but it is proposed to bring in another Bill next year. Twelve new Bird Protection Orders had been issued since January 1st, 1909. A satisfactory increase was shown generally in the entries in the Bird and Tree Competitions in Bedfordshire, Bucks, Cumberland, Hampshire, Norfolk, Somerset, and Warwick, and a competition

was also being arranged by the Northamptonshire Education Committee, the winning school to be eligible for the Society's Inter-County Shield. The following Lectures had been given since January 29th :—

Jan. 29—	Mr. E. C. Cooper—	Henley - in - Arden School.	
„ 29		Hoylelake ; Seaforth ;	
„ 30		Manchester Grammar School ; Welsh Church, Liverpool ;	
Feb. 1	Mr. Lewis Jones	Corporation Baths, Garston ; Bluecoat School and Balfour Institute, Liverpool ; Preston ; Cheshire.	
„ 2			
„ 9			
„ 15			
„ 16			
„ 17			
„ 18			
„ 19			
„ 5—		Miss Rintoul ..	Largo, Fife.
„ 6—		Mr. S. Heaton ..	Oxford.
„ 8—	Mr. H. C. Metcalfe	Waterfoot, Manchester	
„ 9—	Mr. Parkinson		
	Curtis, F.E.S.	Bournemouth.	
„ 11—	Canon Scott ..	Havant.	
„ 22—	Rev. J. Henderson	Perth.	
Mar. 2—	Mrs. Suckling ..	Romsey (Song Slides).	
„ 4—	Miss Rintoul ..	Fife.	
„ 5—	Mr. G. Eaton ..	Tulse Hill.	
„ 9—	Mr. H. C. Playne	Buckhurst Hill.	
„ 18—	Miss Stanley ..	Buckenham, Norfolk.	
„ 29—	Mr. H. C. Playne	Bristol.	
„ 29—	Mr. Hastings Lees	Harrow	

The increasing popularity of nesting-boxes for birds was shown by the fact that over 3,300 had been sold since September ; the sales leaving a small profit to the Society after defraying expenses of depot, clerking, printing, etc.

**The Finance and General Purposes Committee** reported that, as the Zoological Society of London were selling the premises No. 3, Hanover Square, the R.S.P.B. had received notice to quit. After some discussion on various offices inspected, a sub-committee was appointed to deal with the matter. The quarterly statement of accounts was passed, and it was agreed to make a small grant towards the formation of a Bird Sanctuary at Letchworth. The following appointments of Hon. Local Secretaries were ratified : *Costock*, Miss H. Rothera ; *Hexham*, Miss Kathleen Richardson ; *Radnorshire*,

Miss E. R. Griffiths, Newbridge-on-Wye; *South Molton*, Miss Ida Kingdon.

Eleven new Fellows were elected, namely: Earl Cawdor, Mrs. Ashton Allen (Blackheath), Mrs. Allport (London, W.), J. H. Buxton (Hunsdon Bury), Captain Christy (Conington, Cambridge), Mrs. Davidson (London, W.), Mrs. Massey (Manchester), Mrs. Edith Scott (Bournemouth), D. Seth-Smith (Addiscombe), Miss Shadwell (London, W.), Miss Eva Walsh (Brighton).

Thirty-three Members were elected, namely:—

D. F. Alderson (Worksop), Miss Alford (Royston), Dr. and Mrs. Barclay-Smith (Royston), J. C. O. Beuttler (Guernsey), Mrs. Blake (Bexhill), Miss Booth (Hove), A. F. C. Borrett (Guernsey), the Lady Francis Cecil (Alford House, Somerset), Miss R. M. Cork (Norton, Baldock), Miss F. M. Fordham (Ashwell, Baldock), Mrs. Foot (Berkhamsted), Mlle. Geigy (Rudford), Miss M. Hampton (Reading), L. E. Halsey (Worplesdon), P. Hewitt (Bridlington), R. Heywood (Swaffham), Miss Clara Johnson (Winchester), Mrs. W. T. Lye (Leagrave Hall), A. H. Macdonald (London, N.W.), Mrs. W. A. Milner (Totley Hall), Roland H. Nelson (Shenley), Mrs. Pearsall Smith (Iffley), John M. Robertson (Perth), Miss M. L. Simpson (Kents Bank), W. E. Steinschen (Guernsey), Mrs. W. G. Stone (London, S.E.), Arthur B. Sykes (Formby Manor House), Mrs. S. W. Taplin (Thirsk), Horace W. Vander Pant (Wimbledon), Mrs. Albert Wilson (Hampstead), George Waud (Baildon), Mrs. Woodriddle (Oxford).

As Life Member:—Dr. E. P. Haviland (St. Leonards). As Hon. Life Members:—Mrs. Donkin and Miss Ethel Dunn (Reigate).

**The Publication Committee** reported the issue of Leaflets Nos. 60, "Moulted Plumes"; 61, "How Osprey Feathers are Procured"; and 62, "Wild Bird Protection Orders in Great Britain"; and that instructions had been given for the issue of the Prize Essay, by Mr. Holte Macpherson, on Comparative Legislation on Bird Protection, together with extracts from the Second Prize Essay by Colonel Momber.

**The Watchers Committee** presented details of the arrangements made for Watchers during the present season, and reported on the conditions prevailing with regard to the Cough in England and in Ireland.

**General Business.**—Some discussion took

place on the subject of proposed legislation on the plumage question, and it was unanimously agreed that the continued support of the Society should be given to the Importation of Plumage Prohibition Bill, which passed through the House of Lords and was read a first time in the Commons last year, as being a practical and workable measure. Letters were read from the National Association of Audubon Societies of the United States, the Ornithologists' Union of Australasia, and from ornithologists in other countries and colonies, showing how warmly bird-protectors of other lands welcome the proposals made in Lord Avebury's Bill, and expressing hopes that every endeavour will be made to promote the passing of the measure. The report of the work of the Society's Inspector since March 1st was submitted (see p. 70). Among other subjects before the Council were the statements published in the Press, and complaints received, as to the continued importation into this country of live Quails taken in Egypt during close-time in contravention of the ordinance issued by Lord Cromer in 1903. It was decided to enquire further into the matter and to communicate with the Egyptian Government; and also to endeavour to discourage the eating of Quail taken out of season.

**Standing Committees** were appointed as follows:—*Finance and General Purposes Committee*: Mr. Ernest Bell, Miss Clifton, Sir John Cockburn, Mrs. Lemon, Mr. Hastings Lees, Mr. Meade-Waldo, Miss Pollock, Captain Tailby. *Publication Committee*: Mr. Bell, Mr. Bonhote, Mr. Dresser, Mr. Hudson, Mrs. Lemon, Miss Pollock, Mrs. Owen Visger. *Watchers Committee*: Mr. Meade-Waldo, Mr. Bonhote, Dr. Drewitt, Mrs. Lemon, Mr. Hudson, Mr. Ogilvie-Grant, Mr. St. Quintin, Captain Tailby, Mr. Trevor-Battye. The Chairman and Hon. Secretary, *ex officio* on all Committees; the Hon. Treasurer, *ex officio* on the Finance Committee.

A protracted meeting of the Council was followed by a meeting of the Watchers Committee, who had before them, *inter alia*, reports as to watching in Dungeness, the Isle of Wight, the Shetlands, and Aberdeenshire; the preservation of the Choughs, Terns, Bearded Tit, and Kite; the report of the Farne Islands Bird Protection Association; and communications respecting the destruction of the raptorial birds of Norway.

#### DEATH OF MR. FRANCIS KING.

The Council of the Society has again to deplore the loss of one of its members, and one who had for many years been associated with the work of Bird Protection. Mr. Francis King joined the Society in its early days and had been Hon. Local Secretary for Chelsea since 1894. In 1895 he was elected

to a seat on the Committee (now the Council), and was a constant attendant at the meetings. For some time he had not been in good health and he spent the winter of 1908 abroad, but returning to England in March died almost immediately after his arrival. His kindly co-operation will be much missed.

#### ANIMAL PROTECTION CONGRESS.

The Society is among the supporters of the Congress to be held at Caxton Hall, July 6th—10th, 1909. The Bird Protection section will include papers on the work of the Danish Society "Svalen" and the Education of Children, by Oberstlieutenant Mehrn (Copenhagen); the Importance of Bird Protection in northern countries, by Madame Ullner (Helsingfors); the Caging of Birds, by Mr. Ernest Bell; and the Ownership of Birds, by the Secretary of the R.S.P.B.

## Economic Ornithology.

#### THE FARMERS AND THE LAPWING.

The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds having written to the Home Office with reference to the refusal of the Home Secretary to grant the request of the Dorset farmers, made through the County Council, that the eggs of the Lapwing should be completely protected, received on May 13th, 1909, the following reply from the Right Hon. Herbert Samuel, M.P., Under Secretary:

"The Home Secretary is well aware of the utility of the Plover to agriculture, and he is in full sympathy with the desire of the Dorset County Council to give it and its eggs adequate protection. The existing Order for Dorset falls short of what the County Council proposed in not protecting the eggs earlier than the 15th April in each year.

"In regard to Plovers' eggs, certain considerations have to be taken into account which do not apply in the case of other birds. These eggs are a recognised article of diet, and it would be a serious interference with trade to make it a criminal offence to take them at all. It seems, indeed, probable that among the first to complain would be the farmers themselves, who can now draw a substantial profit from this trade, and who do not realise that to protect the eggs would do more than to make it an offence for *unauthorised persons* to take them.

"Prominent bird-lovers have publicly expressed the opinion that it is unnecessary to protect the Plover's first brood, if the parent birds are not destroyed. And Sir Herbert Maxwell has said, 'By all means let these eggs be collected,' provided that the parents are protected; though he considers that protection of the second brood is commendable.

"If the County Council is anxious to give further protection to the Plover, I think that they should apply in the first instance for it to be included in Clause V. of the Order. This would protect the bird itself during the year against all comers.

"If, with such an Order in force, they find after a reasonable interval that the bird is seriously diminishing in numbers, or that still further protection is needed, then would be the time to make out a case for the protection of the first brood as well as the second."

Clause V. of the Order gives all-the-year protection, and the inclusion of the Lapwing therein would, therefore, make it illegal to kill or take the bird itself at any time. With regard to the eggs, the Hon. Secretary of the Milborne St. Andrew Farmers' Club (Dorset) writes:

"I have never known any farmer yet who has ever sold an egg, and I can speak for a hundred farmers, as we fully realise the splendid qualities of the bird."



**"BIRDS USEFUL AND HARMFUL."**

In an age so essentially utilitarian, when wild birds are being everywhere called up for judgment according to the value of their contribution to man's pocket, it is surprising that none of the abundant books about birds that have issued from the press of late years has been written from the economic point of view. It is also fortunate, since the knowledge of the subject existing in this country is wholly insufficient and prejudices are boundless; and it is doubly fortunate that the work on the subject which now appears, "Birds Useful and Birds Harmful" (Messrs. Sharratt & Hughes, Manchester University Press), bears the names of two such authorities as Mrs. Owen Visger, a life-long student and observer of birds in the open, and M. Otto Herman, the head of the Royal Ornithological Bureau of Hungary, a country which has done more than any other in Europe in the definite study of economic ornithology. The book in its original form was prepared by M. Herman by direction of the Hungarian Minister of Agriculture, embodying the result of observations made by correspondents of the department in all parts of the country, and of dissections. To the translation Mrs. Visger has added full notes on the position of the various birds in Great Britain, necessarily qualifying in some cases the verdict of the Hungarian naturalist.

A few extracts will best explain the line taken by the authors:—

"In the abstract there are no useful and harmful birds, as such. The bird exists as a product of nature, to fulfil, like everything else, the tasks allotted to it by nature and in nature, which no other creature can perform. . . . Therefore for the good of the birds—and also of man—we must carefully reflect what it is our duty to do and how we can best do it. . . .

"After all, the birds' worst enemy is man, with his ignorance or, still worse, his cupidity. He has plundered the nest and destroyed the brood; he grudges every grain of corn which the bird has richly deserved by its work throughout the year. Steamers and railroads make it possible for birds, which are caught by millions, to be sent alive into the great cities as delicacies of the table. So from year to year they are becoming rarer.

"So much the more are we bound—for the good of heart and soul as well as for the blessing of the

land and its workers—to protect the useful birds as much as we conscientiously can.

"The conceptions of 'useful' and 'noxious' are merely human ones; and man can, by cultivation or the contrary, alter the normal conditions; and may, consequently, modify the character and habits of birds also. Agriculture on a large scale, modern forestry, the draining of territory—all these things alter the fundamental conditions of animal life; and if these modifications in respect of birds are injurious to man, it is in the interests of man to adapt them artificially for the benefit of birds; and if by cultivation man deprives useful birds of their natural nesting facilities, he ought to provide them with artificial ones."

The economic classification of birds being purely arbitrary and unsettled, as there is something to be said for and against most species, some exception may be taken to the label "useful" and "harmful" on the drawings of birds, by M. Titus Czörgey, which illustrate the volume. In this country at any rate it is hardly necessary to black-list species like the Raven, Bittern, Harrier, and Goshawk, the rare sight of which marks an epoch in a bird-lover's life, or others like the Grebe and Wild Duck and Kingfisher whose increase is welcomed by all observers of nature. The verdict is, however, professedly from one standpoint only, and Mrs. Visger's interesting portions of the text form a sufficient commentary. With her judicious and sympathetic annotations the book provides for English readers, as it has done for Hungarian, a most helpful and trustworthy handbook which should be of great service to farmers, gardeners, and students. The illustrations are in black-and-white, but in many cases they express the bird and its markings very happily. A copy of the work has been graciously accepted by H.M. the King.

**THE VALUE OF THE ROOK.**

The first number (May, 1909) of the *Revue Française d'Ornithologie, Scientifique et Pratique* (14, Rue Antoine-Roucher, Paris), contains a valuable and interesting article on the Rook, from the point of view of his utility, by M. Xavier Raspail. The following is one of the facts M. Raspail narrates:

"In the year 1902 I received a letter from a large manufacturer who had had for some years

an important factory and sugar-refinery at Rupiceni, in Roumania, a country whose soil yields beet-root of a saccharine richness unknown in France. The prosperity of the business was ever increasing, until there appeared a veritable plague which threatened to put an end to the culture of beet in that region, and, in consequence, the total ruin of the industry in which some millions of capital were invested. An insect ravaged the plantations, and an appeal was made to my knowledge as a naturalist to determine the species, and to indicate, if possible, an effectual means of combatting it. The manager had already applied to well-known naturalists in Germany, especially Berlin, and had tried several methods of destruction that were very expensive, and almost impossible to put in practice over an extent of more than a thousand *hectares*. That which gave the best results was to roll the plantations, crushing the caterpillars, but this destroyed a great part of the plants at the same time.

"The description of the moth given me was enough to show that it was the *Plusia gamma*, known already to have destroyed in certain parts of France entire fields of beet. I suggested two

methods to prevent the increase of the insect—dragging nets on the soil at the moment of the escape of the moth, and sprinkling the infected plants with soapsuds mixed with petrol. But how difficult to do this on such a stretch of land, and how expensive! All then seemed to fail, when one fine day, just when the plague had reached its height, there appeared on the scene swarms—"clouds," to use the word of my correspondent—of Rooks, who dropped down on the plains and set themselves to devour the caterpillars, under whose mandibles the plants were disappearing, so to speak, from hour to hour, threatening soon to leave the earth completely bare. For eight hours they pursued their beneficent work, and when at the end of that time they disappeared whence they had come, to the steppes of Russia, it would have been difficult to find a single caterpillar surviving.

"Thus, when man had been once more defeated by an insignificant insect, the Rook saved the situation at its most desperate need, and the words of Michelet were justified: 'The bird can live without man, man cannot live without the bird.'"

## Bird Protection Orders.

The following County Council Orders have been issued since March 15th, 1909 :

**CHESHIRE.** March 13th. A (b), A (e), B C E F. This Order is identical with the previous one, except that in the prescribed area within the Hundred of Wirral, in which all birds and eggs are protected, such protection is not to apply to market-garden lands.

**SOMERSETSHIRE.** March 22nd. A (b), A (e), B C F. Renews the Order of 1904 for five years.

**ISLE OF WIGHT.** April 6th. A (e) B C D E F S. No change. Renews the protection of eggs on the Red Cliff, Culver Cliff, and the cliffs in the parishes of Freshwater and Totland for 5 years.

**NORWICH.** April 6th. B C E F S. Adds to the list of birds protected all the year, the Bearded Tit, Goldfinch, Kingfisher, and Owls.

**ANGLESEY.** March 15th. C E F. Extends close time for all birds in the Schedule to October 1st. (By the previous Order it was extended for all but certain named species). Protects the Goldfinch all the year, and the eggs of Goldfinch and (after April 15th) Lapwing.

**CARMARTHEN.** March 20th. B E F. Adds Golden Eagle to the list of birds fully protected.

**DUNDEE.** April 2nd. E F. The first Order for the "County of a City" in Scotland. Prohibits the taking or killing of any wild bird throughout the year; prohibits the taking or destroying of the eggs of any wild bird.

**KERRY.** March 23rd. E. Protects the eggs of the following species: Golden Eagle, Sea Eagle, Peregrine Falcon, Merlin, Kestrel, Harriers (all species), Raven, Kingfisher, Owls (all species), Siskin, Goldfinch, Terns (all species), Petrel (all species), Woodcock, Snipe, Hoopoe, Phalaropes (all species), between May 1 and August 1st, in 1909, and between March 1st and August 1st in the four following years.

**WATERFORD.** March 20th. E. Protects the eggs of the following species for the same period as above: Golden Eagle, White-tailed Eagle, Peregrine Falcon, Merlin, Kestrel, Harriers (all species), Owls (all species), Goldfinch, Crossbill, Siskin, Chough, Raven, Kingfisher, Nightjar, Turtledove, Heron, Woodcock, Water-rail, Sheldrake, Shoveller, Teal, Black Guillemot, Great Black-backed Gull, Tufted Duck.

## Bird-Life in Switzerland.

[The following notes, made during a recent visit to Switzerland by Miss E. G. Woodd, of Eastbourne, show how much is done by the Swiss, as by the Germans, to attract and protect wild birds.]

I had been discussing the value of wild birds in our Sussex garden with our irate gardener, who vows vengeance on all of them, except perhaps the Robin, and who in spring disfigures the fruit trees with tin pots and pans that clang hideously, and with rags and ribbons that flutter in the wind, to frighten away such Tits and other birds as still venture to the town of Eastbourne. A day and a night of travel took me to Switzerland, and even as we rushed by in the train I noticed the number of wooden nesting-boxes hung in the trees to encourage the very birds so often persecuted at home. We spent five days at Halterfingen, a delightful village on the shores of Thuner See. Here, and up the mountains everywhere, the orchard trees, poles and telegraph posts were furnished with nesting-boxes; and Tits of all kinds abounded. One could watch them, with the delicate Warblers, busily devouring countless insects, between their call-notes and hurried snatches of song. In private grounds, hotel grounds, in railway-station enclosures, around châteaux, hung the boxes; and not infrequently we came across feeding-houses of different artistic designs, set up for the use of the birds in winter time, and provided with natural branches so that the birds should not be shy of perching on

them. On the terrace of Hotel May, Oberhofen, there hung a food-bell after the pattern used by Baron von Berlepsch—a reversed bottle, out of which dropped grain or seed on to a tin tray receptacle, rather after the manner of water in an aviary drinking fountain. On the tray the birds could perch and eat. Under the wide-spreading chalet roofs were to be seen baskets of nuts, fat, and other dainties for Tits. In another Canton, boxes were placed against the wall under the eaves of each house. Altogether it was a revelation to see the determined effort of rich and poor to secure the presence of beings so fascinating and so useful, but so little valued by ourselves in England, as wild birds. May we not also take it as a sign of a less persecuted avifauna that Chaffinches and other birds came near us with much greater confidence than in the homeland. A Great Tit darted lightly on to the *table d'hôte* from an open window; huge Hawks swooped close over the steam-boats on the lakes; one noble bird—a Kite by his red colour, but with an unforked tail—coming regularly on his daily beat right up to the landing-stage opposite Hotel Schweizerhof, Lucerne. He and a Heron performed some beautiful evolutions on the water.

As a last word, however, to this sketch, why did I see not one Song Thrush or Missel-Thrush in Switzerland? Blackbirds abounded. There was no dearth of delectable snails; why, then, no Thrushes?

### BOOKS RECEIVED.

THE BIRD LIFE OF LONDON. By Charles Dixon. With illustrations in colour, and black and white. London: W. Heinemann. 6s. net.

BIRDS USEFUL AND HARMFUL. By Otto Herman and J. A. Owen. With 100 illustrations by T. Czörgey. London: Sherratt & Hughes. 6s. net.

THE MAKING OF SPECIES. By Douglas Dewar, I.C.S., F.Z.S., and Frank Finn, F.Z.S., M.B.O.U.

With 15 illustrations. London: John Lane. 7s. 6d. net.

PROCEEDINGS OF A CONFERENCE OF GOVERNORS IN THE WHITE HOUSE, WASHINGTON, MAY 13-15, 1908. Washington: Government Printing Press. 450 pp. A Conference of Governors of the United States held to consider the conservation of the country's natural resources.

## IN THE COURTS.

**TAKING PEREGRINES AT DOVER.**—A case of great interest to ornithologists and bird protectors was heard at Dover on June 18, when Frederick Chatwin, a well-known taxidermist and dealer, was summoned by the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds for possessing and offering for sale young Peregrine Falcons taken on the Kentish Cliffs. The young Peregrines on Dover Cliff have been systematically taken each spring for years, in defiance of the County Bird Protection Order, which gives full protection (on paper) to this bird, now excessively rare in the Home Counties. The Society sent down an Inspector, who, after considerable investigation, called at Chatwin's shop on June 3rd, as a possible purchaser. Defendant offered him for 20s. each three young Peregrines, kept in an upstairs room, which he said were taken by his men a few days previously at a certain point on the cliff. The Inspector asked him to keep the birds until Saturday, and communicated with the Society. On Saturday defendant said he had sold the birds, but his men were at work again that day with their ropes on the cliff and would probably have the other two young birds by Monday. On Monday the Inspector called again, with Inspector Burroughs and a detective, when defendant said he had only one bird and that had been a difficult job to get owing to the damp weather and slippery state of the rock ledges; the price was 20s. Asked if it was really a Kentish-caught bird, defendant said yes, it was caught between Dover and St. Margaret's.

Defendant now denied that any of the birds were Kentish, and put in receipts purporting to show that they were imported from abroad; he had said they were taken in Kent in order to sell them. The Mayor said that as he had no birds on the 5th the one must have been taken in England. This again defendant denied; he showed three at first as the others were not in proper condition.

The Bench dismissed the summons with regard to the three birds sold by defendant, and let him off with payment of costs, 10s. 6d., in respect of the bird seen on June 7th, which they considered was taken in England.

The bird was forfeited. Chatwin said it would starve if liberated on the cliffs, as it had never been there before. When let out it made at once in the direction of the nesting-place.

**BIRDCATCHING.**—At *Stratford*, on April 15th, Harry Marsh, of Goldsmith Row, Shoreditch, was fined 20s. and costs for assaulting one of the Epping Forest keepers, and 10s. and costs for birdcatching. Prisoner had a Chaffinch decoy, lime, and dummy bird, and the keeper took possession of the Chaffinch, whereupon prisoner came out of hiding and struck him on the face.—At *Leicester*, Joseph Hunt was convicted of taking two Linnets on April 15th and refusing his name and address. He said he had a cold and the policeman could not understand him. Fined 5s. and costs.—At *Dudley*, James Turner was fined 5s. and costs for using decoy and lime to take Larks on April 20th. He had a decoy bird in a cage, the top of which was covered with bird-lime, and round it were strings and wood also lined. The magistrate said it was a disgraceful practice.

**TAKING LAPWINGS' EGGS.**—At *Kilmarnock*, on May 24th, John Hood and John Graham were fined 8s. and 16s. respectively for taking Lapwings' eggs.—At *Kirriemuir*, on May 26th, two boys were fined 2s. 6d. each for a similar offence.—At *Aberdeen*, on April 21st, two Huntly apprentices were convicted of taking eight Lapwings' eggs. Sheriff Begg doubted whether the law was generally known among boys, but the Fiscal said bills were posted up in all prominent places, and if the accused did not know it was an offence they were the only boys who did not. Fined 1s. each. Before the same court on April 26th two more Huntly lads were fined 2s. and 1s. respectively for taking two eggs. On April 29th a third offence of the same character was heard, when Charles Thomson and Donald Stewart were convicted of taking four eggs at Huntly. Both men had absconded and Stewart had not been traced. The Fiscal said the men were out on Sunday searching for eggs, and probably made a trade of it. They had cost the county £1 16s. Sheriff Begg said he did not want to deal harshly with them, but had to inflict a fine equivalent to the expense.

### READY SHORTLY.

## Legislation for the Protection of Birds.

*A Comparative Review of the Laws in force in Great Britain and on the Continent, with the proposals of the International Convention of 1902 and the American Model Law.*

By A. HOLTE MACPHERSON, B.C.L., F.Z.S.,

— AND —

Lieut.-Colonel G. A. MOMBER, F.Z.S.

The Essay for which the GOLD MEDAL of the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds was awarded; with extracts from that which obtained the Second Prize.

With Preface by the

Right Hon. Sir HERBERT MAXWELL, Bart., F.R.S.

Price 1s., by post 1s. 2d.

¶ The attention of all Bird Protectors is specially directed to these Essays, as they deal in a most interesting and suggestive manner with the progress of the movement throughout Europe and with important phases of the question.

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## THE POLE-TRAP AGAIN.



ALTHOUGH the Act prohibiting the use of Pole-Traps has now been in existence five years, and every effort has been made by the R.S.P.B. to publish it as widely as possible, these barbarous instruments have not yet been wholly abolished. The Society has recently had information of their use in the north of England, in Wales, and in Scotland. The complaints of their use in the Principality necessitated the sending of an Inspector to investigate, not only for the purpose of obtaining convictions in special cases, but in order to impress the law upon landowners and keepers in the district. A short report of the prosecutions undertaken by the Society appears under the heading "In the Courts," on page 92; but the brief statement of facts, where both defendants pleaded guilty, gives little idea of the time and trouble essential to the proving of the offences. At all times it is difficult to discover breaches of the Pole-Trap Act. The traps are on private estates, in game preserves, where probably no one's business takes him save that of the keeper alone. The proprietor or tenant of the shooting has perhaps called the attention of his gamekeeper to the requirements of the law, of which he can hardly be in ignorance; but, as likely as not, he turns a blind-eye to the actual methods by which his good bag is to be secured. The keeper, obsessed with the one idea of Game *versus* Vermin, follows up his creed untiringly with gun and trap. The pole is erected, the spring-trap set upon it; some Owl, Kestrel, Cuckoo or Sparrowhawk alights, is gripped by the leg in the steel jaws, and hangs there, possibly for days, tortured and dying. If the trap is

noticed it is usually by some tenant or employé, who, if he knows the thing to be illegal, would certainly not find it to his interests to inform the police.

In Wales, on the grouse-moors among the hills, the difficulties of the case are multiplied a hundredfold. The Inspector soon had information enough to assure him that Pole-Traps were not unknown implements, at any rate in some parts of Montgomery and Carmarthenshire. But information and evidence are two different matters. There seems little doubt that in the spring-time his search would have been an easier one; when the shooting season arrives such traps are commonly put out of action for a while.

"I have a most difficult task here," wrote the Inspector in one of his reports:

"Very little English is spoken by the class from whom I want information. The hills are terrible, and the thick growth of foliage renders it most difficult to see to advantage at a distance. Yesterday I got within a short distance of a place where I have reason to believe there are traps set, when a heavy mist suddenly began to fall, and I was obliged to make a hasty retreat, as the mountains are full of ravines. One thing I have ascertained for a fact—Pole-Traps *are* used in the mountains."

Two or three days later he had reason to report:

"I should say that Pole-Traps are largely used in this country."

Following this came the discovery of poles without traps, and the information from a resident that the traps were put up in spring-time. Eventually proceedings were resolved upon in the two cases of which full proof was secured, and in which convictions were subsequently obtained.

It need hardly be said that the meagre expenses allowed in the one case, and the Court costs given in the other, form but a

trifling contribution to the sum incurred by the Society in thus employing an experienced and indefatigable Inspector to spend days among the rough Welsh hills, to get up the evidence, and to travel backwards and forwards from the sessions-town; and in engaging solicitors of standing to conduct the cases. Nor can it be said that the fines were in any sense adequate to the offence.

It is the business of employer and employed to know the law of the land on such matters; and the difficulties in the way of discovering breaches of that law suggests the wisdom of making the penalties for proved offences a warning to other offenders. The Council of the R.S.P.B. are, however, fully resolved that the Pole-Trap Act shall be known and as far as possible enforced.

## The Law of Bird-Protection.

It is no secret that the Home Office has for some time been contemplating the consolidation of the British Bird Protection Laws. There are now in operation eight separate Acts of Parliament devoted to the subject, which have to be read together for their ultimate interpretation; and the primary and fundamental Act of 1880 has become confused and perplexing, partly owing to original bad drafting and partly to the amendments and extensions piled upon it. In addition to these, there are the Game Laws; and also the Acts for the prevention of cruelty, which can be applied to wild birds to a slight and unsatisfactory extent, and the Poisoned Grain Act.

When the time arrives for consolidation, it is of the first importance that needed amendments should be introduced; that the crooked places, of which there are so many in the present Acts, should be made straight and the rough places plain; in order that the conundrums and imperfections of existing laws may not be crystallised in the Statute Book. With this end in view, the publication of the R.S.P.B. Gold Medal Essay on Comparative Legislation\* is well timed, since it affords legislators and bird-lovers an opportunity for the first time of considering

British legislation in relation to the views and action of other countries, thus enabling them not only to compare our aims and accomplishments with those of our neighbours, but also to consider the rising question of International legislation.

In accordance with the terms of the competition, the essayists give a synopsis of the laws of other European countries, and proceed to compare these with British law and with the Model Law of the United States of America and the proposals of the International Convention of 1902. The volume is rendered most interesting to the general reader by the lucid and sympathetic manner in which Mr. Holte Macpherson and Colonel Momber discuss the subject, and by their summaries, comments and suggestions. It forms a handbook which no bird protector should be without.

As we are in the habit of thinking that Britain is in advance of the world in the matter of animal protection, it may surprise many readers to discover how numerous are the protective laws of Europe, ranging from those of Switzerland, *facile princeps* in their thoroughness, to the poor and disregarded regulations of Turkey and Greece. In one respect Britain, perhaps, stands at the head. It appears to be the one country which enacts a general Close time for all and every bird. Germany, Norway, and one or two other countries have instituted a general Close

\* "Comparative Legislation for the Protection of Birds." By A. Holte Macpherson, B.C.L., F.Z.S., and Lt.-Col. G. A. Momber, F.Z.S. The essay for which the Gold Medal of the R.S.P.B. was given in 1908, with extracts from that which obtained the second Prize. 1/- net, by post 1/2.

time, but with exceptions. The more general ideal, favoured by the Convention proposals, is full protection for certain species, with their nests and eggs, the selection of species resting, as Mr. Macpherson points out, on utilitarian principles. In the present state of knowledge, there is not, and is indeed never likely to be, a wholly satisfactory definition of the "useful" or "noxious" bird. "The contradictory pronouncements for and against certain birds in different countries of Europe," remarks Colonel Momber, "are almost startling." Even if thousands of birds were shot for examination, the question would still not be conclusively settled, "because of the impossibility of weighing the profit against the loss, and because the adaptability of Nature defies a rigid category." With regard to nests and eggs, our neighbours' methods appear simpler and more rational. With us eggs are protected by species under Bird Protection Orders; but County Councils might easily see to it that, in the case of rare species at least, the scheduling of the bird and protection of the egg go together. Various rare species have been lost to us, Mr. Macpherson remarks, which might have been saved if the eggs had shared the protection given to the bird; and, conversely, it is not reasonable to penalise the taking of eggs where the parent-birds may be killed by any landlord or tenant, or may be caught by any strolling vagabond whom, owing to the loose terms

of the Act of 1880, landowner or tenant may "authorise" to take them.

One of the practical suggestions made by Mr. Macpherson is "the prohibition of any dealings for profit in birds which have been killed or taken by owners or occupiers of land or their agents during the close season."

Another suggestion is that existing Bird Protection Orders should be revised by a central authority, a subject on which something will be said in the Winter Number of BIRD NOTES AND NEWS.

The fact must not, however, be lost sight of, adds Mr. Macpherson, that the stricter enforcement of our existing laws is quite as important as their alteration or revision. Perhaps few persons realise what can be done by full and careful utilisation of our Acts and their permissive clauses. Alteration or revision of the laws, indeed, should to a great extent take the form of making them more easily understood and enforced. It does not by any means follow that this would entail any whittling down of the provisions. Rather the contrary. As Colonel Momber shows, it is in the countries where the law is most complete that it is best observed. It is in the nature of things that a people wise enough to make strong laws will be also wise enough to see them obeyed. In Great Britain statutes are allowed to remain to a great extent a dead letter; and the penalties for conviction are, compared with those of other nations, extraordinarily light.

## Bird Protection Orders.

The following County Council Orders have been issued since June 20th, 1909:

CAMBRIDGE (Isle of Ely). June 21st. C F. Renewal for five years of previous Order. Close Time, March 15th to August 31st.

LONDON. July 17th. B C E F S. Lists of birds added to schedule, birds protected all the year, and eggs protected, as in previous Order. Sunday protection throughout the county, instead of in named parishes.

NORFOLK. July 30th. A (e) B C E F S. Renews protection for all eggs in Broad areas and on foreshores until February, 1915. B F and E lists as before. Close Time extended to September 1st for birds in and added to Schedule, except for Woodcock (February 1st to August 13th), and for Snipe, Teal, and Wild Duck (March 1st to August 1st only).

WEST SUSSEX. August 30th. A (e) B C E F S. Renewal of the Order of 1904 with additions. Eggs protected in three areas for a further period of five years. Close Time extended to September 1st except

for certain species. Sunday protection in eight Poor Law Unions, Horsham being added. Dipper, Shrikes, Twite, Harriers (all), Golden and Sea Eagles, Heron and Crane placed on the list of additions to the schedule. Wrens (all), Treecreeper, Nutcracker, Spotted Flycatcher, Grosbeak, Waxwing, Roller, Bee-eater, Heron, and Stork, added to the 33 species protected all the year. Wren, Firecrest, Harriers (all), Peregrine, Sandgrouse, and Little Ringed Plover added to the list of protected eggs.

BRECON. June 24th. B. E. F. Birds added to schedule and eggs protected as in Order of 1907.

The following species protected all the year: Bittern, Goldfinch, Kingfisher, Kite, Owl (all species), Woodpecker (all species).

ANTRIM. August 20th. E. Renews protection of the following eggs between March 1st and August 1st, for five years from March 1st, 1910: Buzzard, Chough, Crossbill, Harrier (all), Kingfisher, Peregrine Falcon, Raven, Swan, Terns (all).

QUEEN'S COUNTY. August 18th. E. Protects the following eggs, between March 1st and August 1st, for five years from March 1st, 1910: Crossbill, Harriers (all), Kingfisher, Swan.

## Notes.

### THE END OF THE CLOSE TIME.

“At the end of the Close Season a wave of rural hooliganism is let loose on the long-suffering countryside, for the sluice-gates of the law have been opened, and the vile flood, issuing from the sinks and sewers of village purlieus, runs ingloriously free.” This is not the language of the R.S.P.B., but of the *Pall Mall Gazette* in an article on Bird Protection in 1906. The village purlieus, however, do not furnish all the bird-catchers. Those interested in the matter should procure one of the newspapers read by “the fancy” and read the columns of advertisements of nets and traps and cages, of bird-lime that will “hold anything, from a Wren to a Hawk,” traps used by the “largest Nightingale catcher in England,” Kingfisher nets “to hang over streams,” and so on. The attention of the several County Councils may also be directed (not for the first time) to the extensive offers of “warranted Worcestershire Goldfinches,” and of Linnets from Hertfordshire, Hampshire, Wiltshire, and Cambridge, by the twenty dozen. Bird Protectors are apt to relax their efforts in the open season. It would be an excellent thing if they would find out what birds are protected in their districts all the year, would draw attention to such protection by means of either the Press or the police, and would write to the R.S.P.B., and use their influence with County Councillors in cases

where no protection is afforded useful species like Goldfinches and Owls, or the social, liberty-loving Linnet—of all little birds least suited for the solitary cage.

### HOW TO DESTROY BIRDS.

What, it may be urged, avails the efforts of bird-lovers in the face of all this trading in wild birds? In the face of not only advertisement of bird-trap, lime, and net, but also of handbooks issued to give to all and sundry instructions for the trapping and netting of wild birds by the hundred? It is not only dealers who publish such details; a volume containing them has been lately issued even by a reputable firm of publishers. What is the use of an order solemnly declaring such-and-such a species protected, while every hobble-de-hoy is being taught how to lime it? Why strive to stay by our laws the slaughter of Owl and Kingfisher when a recognized writer, in the name of “Sport” brings out a book for the specific purpose of teaching how to trap and snare, with directions for the taking of both these birds and for the setting of spring-traps under water for destroying Herons? Such books are an incitement to break the law.

### CAGE-BIRDS IN AMERICA.

In the United States it is now illegal to catch and cage native species. As it is feared that this law may increase the number of im-



ported cage-birds, an effort is being made to check so undesired an effect either by prohibition of the import or by inducing the countries concerned to stop the export. The Audubon Societies, the Federation of American Humane Societies, and the American S.P.C.A. are said to be all favourable to the proposal; but the second course is thought the simpler and the more courteous method. Miss Marshall Saunde's writes from Halifax, Nova Scotia, to the R.S.P.B. :

"Do any of these little foreigners come from London? Can your Society do anything to stop exportation? Dr. Palmer says that the foreign birds brought into this country live on an average only one year. Nearly 43,000 come every year, but next year they are nearly all dead."

### THE TRAFFIC IN QUAILS.

In an article in the *Spectator* (August 21st, 1909) on "Bird Protection in Europe," based upon the Essays on "Comparative Legislation" published by the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, the writer observes:—

"Of the hundreds of thousands of birds which every spring cross the Mediterranean to try to find a nesting-home in Northern Europe, one of the weakest fliers, and one of the most easily caught, is the Quail. All along the coast of the Mediterranean where the Quails alight, too tired to fly further, they are netted by the hundred thousand for exportation alive as food. One of the chief markets is London. In bringing the Quails to London thousands of birds die on the voyage; the stench in the ships which carry the crowded crates is intolerable; and only a small proportion of the birds actually caught find their way to Leadenhall and other markets. The Quails which Englishmen eat in the spring and early summer months in England are actually the very birds who set out travelling north to seek the hospitality of British shores in the nesting season. How many London hostesses arranging dinner parties in the season think of that? Until we are rid of that reproach we cannot as a people ask our European neighbours to add a line to their statute-books in legislation for birds."

### BIRD SANCTUARIES.

The New York Zoological Society published last June a Bulletin dealing exclusively with the preservation of wild life, which is one of the three great objects for which the Society was founded. This shows clearly the rapid advance made in the matter recently in the United States, and the healthy feeling which

is being engendered. National and provincial parks and game preserves now cover no fewer than over seven million acres in the States, with ten million acres more in the Canadian Rockies. "Around the coast there is gradually being extended a chain of insular bird sanctuaries that means much to the avifauna of North America. Prior to January 1st, 1909, twenty-five national bird refuges had been created by executive order and proclamation, chiefly among our sea-coasts. They provide specially protected breeding grounds for the Brown Pelican, Gulls, Terns, Skimmers, shore birds of various species, Herons, Egrets, Ducks and numerous other species. It is impossible to over-estimate the zoological value of these sanctuaries, or to praise too highly the wisdom that brought them into existence." During the present year no fewer than twenty-six additions have been made to the list.

### ISLAND RESERVES.

Great Britain, where the number of bird sanctuaries is lamentably small, might well take a hint from the States. Why should not we, too, have a chain of island sanctuaries, starting from Lundy (which is, on paper at least, already a protected area for eggs) and proceeding *via* Skomer, Ramsey and Bardsey Islands to Holy Island, the Skerries and Walney; sweeping in the Isle of Man, if Man will; then by Arran and the islets of the Western Highlands to the Hebrides and the Orkneys and Shetlands; back down the east coast to the Bass Rock and other isles of the Firth of Forth, Holy Island, the Farne Isles, Coquet, St. Mary's Island, to Spurn Head, and then south for the Isle of Wight (though too late to save the Ravens'), and the Scillies. Many of these islands are the homes of peculiarly interesting birds and already have the anxious care of bird-lovers and Watchers. The County Councils and landowners concerned might advantageously consider making a considerable proportion into bird-reserves.

## The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds.

### COUNCIL MEETING.

Mr. Montagu Sharpe, Chairman, presided at the Quarterly Meeting of the Council held at No. 3, Hanover Square, on July 23rd, 1909, and there were also present: Mr. Ernest Bell, Mr. J. L. Bonhote, Dr. Drewitt, Miss Hall, Mr. Hastings Lees, Mrs. F. E. Lemon, Mr. Ogilvie-Grant, Captain Tailby, Mrs. Visger, Mr. Meade Waldo, Mr. F. E. Lemon (Hon. Secretary), and the Secretary (Miss Gardiner).

**The Hon. Secretary's Report** chronicled the conviction of a Dover dealer for taking a young Peregrine; an interview at the Home Office with regard to the interpretation of certain clauses in Bird Protection Acts and Orders; the issue of Bird Protection Orders for the Isle of Ely and Breconshire; and the giving of lectures at Bristol (Mr. H. V. Webb), Sprow-ton School (Mr. F. Balls), Castle Bytham (Rev. H. Cotton Smith), and Weybridge (Rev. J. E. Kelsall).

**The Finance and General Purposes Committee** presented the accounts for the quarter, showing a deficit on the Watchers' Fund and a balance on the general account, but against this several accounts for payment were passed. The appointment of Mr. H. B. Turney as Hon. Local Secretary for Ulverston was ratified. The following Fellows were elected:—David M. Bell (Belfast), Herbert W. Brett (Rochester), H. G. Buxton (Swaffham), D. Leighton Chapman (London, S.E.), Mrs. Graves Colles (Minchinhampton), Dr. Drewitt (London, W.), Mrs. Turnbull (Ashbourne, Derby), Mrs. Wilkin (Tenterden).

Twenty-two Members were elected, as under:—

The Lady Willoughby de Broke, Miss Winifred Austen (London, W.), Mrs. Cecil Beeching (Maidstone), Mrs. A. K. Bulley (Neston), Mrs. Cooke-Taylor (Chopstow), Charles W. Chitty (Dover), Edward Darvall (Barrow-on-Soar), W. B. Farr (Abingdon, Northants), Mrs. Hamilton Fletcher,

Garett Fletcher, Mervyn Fletcher (Sherborne), L. C. Gibbs (Flax Bourton), Mrs. Martin Gibbs (Flax Bourton), Miss J. Hamshar (Hassoeks), Mrs. Howard (Corby Castle), Mrs. H. Venables Kyrke (Nantyffrith, Wrexham), Patrick Murray (Edinburgh), Miss Lily Prince (South Brent), Miss Muriel Sands (Eastbourne), Mrs. Seward (Cambridge), Miss Marshall Saunders (Halifax, Nova Scotia), Mrs. Lily Tarleton (Kew).

The Committee reported that the Society was represented by two delegates on the Animal Protection Section of the International Animal Protection and Anti-Vivisection Congress, held in London July 6th to 10th. Papers contributed by Mr. Bell and by the Secretary of the R.S.P.B. were presented, and will appear in the Proceedings; a resolution was passed calling for international legislation for the protection of migrating birds and in regard to the importation of feathers for millinery. The Society also had a stall for literature, etc., which enabled its representatives to make the work better known to members of societies in Denmark, Sweden, Belgium, Finland, and other countries, as well as to English visitors. The Bird and Tree (Arbor Day) exhibit attracted much attention.

**The Publication Committee** reported that Miss Winifred Austen had kindly promised to paint a picture of bird-life for the Society's Christmas card; and a vote of thanks was passed to Miss M. Gardiner for her sketches of the Society's new offices in the summer number of BIRD NOTES AND NEWS.

**General Business.**—The Plumage Bill (No. 2), introduced into the House of Commons by Mr. J. R. Macdonald, and the Close Time (Snipe and Woodcock) Bill, introduced by Sir F. Banbury, were considered by the Council. Arrangements were made for the judging of the Bird and Tree Essays from schools. The lecture campaign for the winter season was discussed. Mr. C. L. Barrett, of Melbourne,

was elected an Hon. Member. A letter was read from Miss Marshall Saunders, of Halifax, N.S., on behalf of the Federation of American Humane Societies, urging legislation to stop the exportation of British Wild Birds; it was agreed that further enquiries should be made. A letter with regard to steps being taken in France to encourage the raising of ornamental-plumaged poultry for the use of their feathers in millinery was presented, and its consideration postponed. Various other questions were considered.

**Watchers' Committee.**—The Council meeting was followed by a meeting of the Watchers' Committee, when detailed reports of the season's Watching and of its results were received, and were regarded as generally satisfactory. An exception, however, was the case of the Ravens of Freshwater, probably the last pair in Hampshire or the Isle of Wight. Notwithstanding the vigilance of the Watcher, the eggs were stolen, and subsequently both the old birds were shot. They were stated to have been on sale at a local bird-stuffer's; but the enquiries made by the Society, and the offer of £5 reward for information, failed to produce sufficient evidence to justify a prosecution. Mr. Meade-Waldo reported his visit to the Shetlands, and the status and condition of the rarer birds on those islands. Thanks to the activity of the Watchers, it is believed that the collectors who were known to have visited the islands this season had been unable to secure any trophies.

Meetings of the Finance and General Purposes, Publication and Watchers' Committees were held at 23, Queen Anne's Gate, on September 17th.

#### OBITUARY.

Ornithological science has lost an old and valued worker in the death at Norwich, on September 5th, 1909, of Mr. Thomas Southwell, for many years Secretary and twice President of the Norfolk and Norwich Naturalists'

Society. Mr. Southwell was a leading authority on the birds of Norfolk, and edited and enlarged the third volume of Stevenson's work. He was a Fellow of the Zoological Society, a member of the British Ornithologists' Union, and a Life Associate of the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, in the work of which he took an active interest. He was seventy-eight years of age.

Professor D. J. Cunningham, F.R.S., who had been a Vice-President of the Society since 1899, died on June 23rd, in Edinburgh. A native of Crieff, where he was born in 1850, Dr. Cunningham took his M.D. at Edinburgh University, and from 1903 until his death was Professor of Anatomy at the same University; but for twenty-one years he was associated with Trinity College, Dublin, as Professor of Anatomy and Chirurgery. He wrote numerous medical papers, and was the recipient of many honours in the course of his distinguished career.

#### NESTING-BOXES.

Nesting-boxes for wild birds are again being stocked by the Society at their London depôt. This year a new English box, the "Walden," of plain hard wood, with leather hinge, has been added and forms a good pattern for home carpenters. The German boxes, on the other hand, cannot be imitated successfully by the amateur, as the holes are made by special methods in the thickness of the natural wood. Illustrated lists can be had from the Society's Office.

#### CHRISTMAS CARD.

"Jenny Wren," the Society's greeting card for Christmas and New Year, reproduced in colour from the painting by Miss Winifred Austen, will be ready October 25th. It can be had with or without calendar for 1910, price 3d., one dozen 2/6 (by post 2/7). Copies can also be had of "In the Belfry," by Mr. Robert Morley, with calendar for 1910, and of "The Arab of the Air," by Mr. G. E. Lodge.

## The Plume Trade.

FROM the details of the Plume Sale, held at the London Commercial Sale Rooms on August 4th, 1909, it is clear that the plume-hunters and dealers have no intention of slackening in their work of slaughter, in order to appease the public feeling which is threatening to overwhelm their hateful trade. Rather it would seem that they are making every effort to kill all they can while they may, and to force as much of their wares as possible on the existing market.

The total quantity of "osprey" feathers catalogued for this sale was over 4000 ounces, representing on the estimate accepted by the trade, the breeding-plumes of over 24,000 parent birds.

The new Ordinance in British New Guinea may be trusted to check the exploitation of the Bird-of-Paradise for the millinery market; but there has seldom been a larger and more brilliant show of skins than at this sale, for which 5173 were listed. Of Crowned Pigeons, also from New Guinea, there were 4864. Of Impeyan Pheasants, from East India, 467 bundles. Among other feathers and skins shown were 2400 "dominoes"—the black and white Sooty Tern of the Pacific—some 2000 White Terns, over 5000 Kingfishers, and 419 skins of the Emu. Another noticeable feature was some 60,000 wings of Wild Fowl.

### THE STORY OF THE EGRET.

The pictures forming the Supplement of the present number of BIRD NOTES AND NEWS, which tell "The Story of the Egret" with an eloquence that needs no words to enforce it, were taken by a scientific ornithologist under somewhat exceptional circumstances. Mr. A. H. E. Mattingley, Honorary Secretary of the Australasian Ornithologists' Union, visited the Heronries in the

heart of the Riverina district of New South Wales in order to study the bird-life of the swamps. Various species of Heron breed in this marshland, among them being about 150 White Egrets, "the remnant of a once larger colony, which, we were informed, must have totalled originally about 700 birds, but which, owing to the demand for their back plumes for the adornment of ladies' hats, had been decimated by plume-hunters." Mr. Mattingley and his companion secured photographs of nests and eggs. These show clearly that no feathers are used in the construction of the nest. It is sometimes alleged that the Egret plumes are obtained from the nest-lining. Six weeks later he revisited the place in order to obtain one picture only—that of an Egret, or "White Crane," feeding its young. The scenes he came upon and photographed he thus describes in the *Emu*, the Organ of the Australasian Ornithologists' Union:—

"When near the place we could see some large patches of white, either floating in the water or reclining on the fallen trees in the vicinity of the Egrets' rookery. This set me speculating as to the cause of this unusual sight. As we drew nearer, what a spectacle met our gaze!—a sight that made my blood fairly boil with indignation. There, strewn on the floating water-weed, and on adjacent logs, were at least fifty carcasses of large White and smaller Plumed Egrets—nearly one-third of the rookery, perhaps more—the birds having been shot off their nests, containing young. What a monument of human callousness! There were fifty birds ruthlessly destroyed, besides their young (about 200) left to die of starvation. This last fact was betokened by at least seventy carcasses of the nestlings, which had become so weak that their legs had refused to support them, and they had fallen from the nests into the water below and been miserably drowned. In the trees above, the remainder of the parentless young ones could be seen staggering in the nests, some of them falling with a splash into the water, while others simply stretched themselves out on the nest and so expired. Others, again, were seen trying in vain to attract the attention of passing Egrets, which were flying with food in their bills to feed their own young; and it was a pitiful sight to see these starvelings, with outstretched necks and gaping bills, imploring the passing birds to feed them. . . . In another large tree a photo was

taken of two young Plumed Egrets and one young Large Egret together in the same nest. These three birds were the sole survivors of several broods of both species which had nested together in the same tree. They had evidently sought one another's company because all the balance of the nestlings had expired through lack of nourishment, their parents having been shot by the plume-hunters—or, rather, plume-plunderers."

Such scenes have been described again and again by naturalists in various parts of the world, where the hapless Egret is found; and they are the scenes that have been, and are being, enacted wherever the plume-dealers send their hunters to obtain "ospreys" for women's wear.

Enlargements of Mr. Mattingley's photographs have been exhibited in shop windows in leading thoroughfares of Australia's great cities, with the result that a strong wave of public feeling has passed over the country, and (as stated in the Summer Number of BIRD NOTES AND NEWS) a powerful deputation of scientific bodies waited on the Prime Minister to press for Federal legislation on the subject. A Bill to prevent exportation was promised; and the importation of plumage from New Guinea has been prohibited by a Customs proclamation.

These photographs have now been sent to England by Mr. Mattingley, and it is hoped that they may, in a new and telling way, bring home to legislators, to the public, and to women, the truth about the "osprey" plume. The enlargements are each some 22 in. by 16 in., and are thus most effective for public exhibition. They are available for lending to any Hon. Local Secretary, or other Fellow or Member of the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, who can arrange to have them shown in a suitable place; and those able to undertake this are asked to communicate their willingness to do so to the Secretary of the Society, at 23, Queen Anne's Gate, London, S.W. One set has already been exhibited in a shop window commanding an excellent position in Redhill, and attracted crowds of interested spectators of all classes. It is much to be desired that similar arrange-

ments should be made for their conspicuous display in every large town in the kingdom.

"The Story of the Egret" can be had as a leaflet for threepence, or half-a-crown a dozen; and a special edition, with the plates on art-paper, mounted, for one shilling each.

Lantern slides are also being prepared from the seven pictures, for the use of lecturers.

It is necessary to say once more, that there are no such things as "artificial ospreys." The old story of horse-hair and whalebone plumes is still being told in the shops, and is still deluding perplexed ladies.

This autumn the special "rage" appears to be for wings, and many shop-windows are piled with these poor useless, stiffened "ornaments," in every colour and of the largest size that can be had. It would appear that women, not having as yet mastered the art of aviation, are determined to put an end to the soaring flight of as many other creatures as possible. Any and all of these wings, whether Kittiwake, Gull, Sea-swallow, or what-not, and all "made-up" feathers from the plumage of Kingfisher or Owl or tropical Finch, are sold as "poultry" or "chicken," if the buyer so desires it. Therefore the only course open to the woman who does not wish to be duped, is to refrain from doubtful feathers of every kind. Many ladies will most certainly do so. Others will allow themselves to be deceived again and again, and a certain number will not heed any appeal of angels or of men if they may by any means be "smart." A little time ago a member of the R.S.P.B., a lady well-known in society, addressed herself to an acquaintance who was wearing Bird-of-Paradise plumes. Her eloquent words on behalf of the birds were heard without comprehension for a while, and then the reply came, "Oh, you are talking about my feathers. Well, then, let me tell you I don't care one little — about the birds!"

## Economic Ornithology.

### SPARROWS AND SPARROW CLUBS.

THE question of Sparrows and Sparrow Clubs is discussed in the "Rural Notes" of the *Manchester Evening News* of July 24th, 1909, by Mr. James Cash. Admitting that there is in many districts a plague of House Sparrows, partly owing to the indiscriminate destruction of birds of prey, the writer proceeds :

"The Society for the Destruction of Vermin encourages Sparrow Clubs, which offer prizes for dead Sparrows, and the *Journal* mentions that in one place the total number destroyed during the past year was 1567. In another district, during four months, the numbers killed were 2099, and in a third, during a shorter space of time, 2140 Sparrows were accounted for and 692 eggs destroyed. This may appear very encouraging, but thoughtful persons ask themselves how many of these birds were not Sparrows at all, but a variety of other little feathered creatures more or less useful to man! This, in short, is the weakness of Sparrow Clubs, and it is a very great danger indeed. It really means a generous invitation to country lads to kill all such birds wholesale. Moreover, in these days of nature study, and the training of the youthful mind in gentleness and love towards all wild life, the work of the old-fashioned haphazard Sparrow Club is distinctly wrong. In fact it tends to directly undo the good taught elsewhere. From a merely practical standpoint, it is surely better to leave the Sparrows alone, than in destroying a few of them, to destroy also a host of other birds essentially useful. It is no wonder that the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds write indignantly in their quarterly organ, *BIRD NOTES AND NEWS*, pointing out, quite truly, that the Society for the Destruction of Vermin 'continues to pursue a policy that appears alike mischievous and unscientific with regard to the destruction of birds.' Sparrow Clubs in country villages are ancient institutions, and as their methods are essentially antiquated and dangerous, it would be well to abolish them altogether. The thinning down in numbers of any small bird is a matter for the greatest care and vigilance.

"Few people want the House Sparrow to be exterminated—if that were possible. It has its useful parts. Its young are fed upon grubs and insect life, and only the other day it was agreeable to watch some of the birds pecking green fly off a rose bush. At the annual meeting of the Destruction of Vermin Society—and this proves how much doubt exists—Sir James Crichton-Browne observed:—'I consulted my own gardener about the Sparrow, and he said, "Come and see," and then and there I saw Sparrows perching on cabbages and pecking vigorously; and when I examined the leaves on which they had perched and pecked, I found no trace of damage. They had evidently been dieting on insects infesting

the cabbage. My gardener summed up, "I do shoot a few Thrushes when they are very severe on the fruit, but for the most part I think it best to leave nature to balance herself." At the same meeting a Cheshire observer was mentioned who had found that Sparrows did a 'great work in preying on the cuckoo spit (frog hopper) and aphides,' destroying pints of them in his garden daily. Thus the maligned House Sparrow proves itself useful at times.

"Still, there is no doubt that the Sparrow is sadly too plentiful in many districts, and when this is the case with either bird, animal, or insect, mankind is the sufferer. The question therefore presents itself: How best can the Sparrow hosts be safely reduced? This question is one for the Incorporated Society for the Destruction of Vermin to solve, but by means better and safer than the encouragement of old-fashioned Sparrow Clubs. The wholesale encouragement of Owls and Hawks would certainly have a good effect; and after all, we cannot have a better motto than the words of the gardener mentioned above: 'For the most part I think it best to leave nature to balance herself.'"

### THE GROWER AND THE BIRDS.

"E.T.L." writes from Northampton to the *Journal of Horticulture* (July 1st, 1909) to make known a change of opinion "with regard to the economic value of birds, which I adversely criticised twelve months ago."

"The opinion I then held was that a large number of Birds, including the Blackbird, Thrush, Rook, Jackdaw, Pigeon, and many others were pests which should be exterminated, and I think I admitted that I showed them no quarter. As the result of two or three recent object lessons, however, I have quite altered my opinion, and now the Wood-Pigeon is about the only bird that will have to reckon with me as an enemy.

"My disillusionment came about in a very startling manner. I was making one of my periodical tours of the garden at an early hour, on the look-out for either Jackdaws or Pigeons. The Jackdaws had previously molested some seedling peas, and the Pigeons were devouring my newly planted-out cauliflower plants. I first shot a young Jackdaw in a neighbouring tree, and a moment later I shot one of the parents, and on picking the latter up I found that its mouth was full of grubs of one of the tree caterpillars in the cocoon state, and, being curious to know the exact number, I emptied its mouth, and found that it contained no less than 150. I therefore asked myself the question, 'If one bird can take 150 at one time, what would a pair of birds take in the course of a sixteen-hour day, and with probably four young ones to feed?' I have also kept a closer watch on the habits of the smaller birds since then, and have come to the conclusion that the damage they do to fruit is more

than compensated by the good they do; or, in other words, they are the friends of horticulturists and agriculturists, and are not enemies, and do no more harm than mischievous children, which harm can, to a very great extent, be avoided by preventive measures.

"I may mention that there appears to be a regular pest of caterpillars infesting the orchards and forest trees around here, and they have done inestimable damage. At the same time Jackdaws and Rooks, both young and old, have been vigorously hunted down and shot at sight. It seems to me that the question which landowners and others concerned should ask themselves is this: Whether it is not wiser to suffer the Rook and Jackdaw to exist, adopting the old-time methods of scaring, and thus secure their valuable services in the wholesale destruction of grubs, wireworms, and countless other insidious pests which the owners or occupiers of land are powerless to cope with?"

Mr. W. Shepherd Allen, an old member of this Society, and a farmer who has farmed his

own land, first in England and latterly in New Zealand, for fifty years, opposes the proposal of the Te Aroha Agricultural Society to offer prizes for the destruction of Thrushes' eggs. He writes to the *Aroha News* (May 29th, 1909):—

"There are birds and birds; and I admit that the Sparrow, for instance, does a certain amount of damage, and has to be kept down. With respect to the Thrush the case is different, as it is one of the most useful birds from a farmer's point of view. It lives almost entirely on grubs, snails, and caterpillars, of which it devours immense quantities. At the lowest estimate, each of these birds will take twenty of these creatures in a day, making a total of 7000 a year. On this place, in former years, the damage done annually by caterpillars was most serious. Since I have encouraged Thrushes, Starlings, and birds of similar habits, the damage is scarcely appreciable."

## Bird and Tree Day.

### ARBOR DAY PAGEANT.

Now that the season of entertainments is at hand, the question of "something for the children" has to be faced; for the children of to-day expect to perform rather than to look on, and delight in the singing and marching and dressing-up entailed; and the parents expect it, finding a simple performance by their own little folk more attractive than any achievements of the most talented outsiders. The pity of it is that long hours of learning and rehearsing should so frequently be spent on puerile nursery tales, with their often gruesome story and revengeful teaching, or on the inanity of the ordinary fairy operetta. When it is realized for how many years each child will probably remember the words of his part, so carefully conned and so many times repeated, and that his whole family will become almost equally familiar with them, the importance becomes obvious of supplying more worthy material, something which shall not only amuse and recreate as many young performers as possible, but also have some underlying thought that tends to

elevate the mind instead of filling it with mere rubbish in rhyme.

The school entertainment has been already recognized as an excellent opportunity for the furtherance of the humanitarian cause, and there is no lack of children's plays on humane lines, thanks to the leadership given by Mrs. Suckling, whose *Humane Educator* and *Humane Play-Book* are known to most workers. Mrs. Suckling has also written a musical play or pageant for children, on the subject of Birds and Trees, their associations and uses, which is especially intended for the celebration of Bird and Tree Day, but is also suitable for general performance. The book of words can be had from the R.S.P.B. (price 3d.), and the songs are mostly from the *Band of Mercy Melodies*, published by the R.S.P.C.A. A few copies of the complete play, words and music, prepared by Miss E. Minns, can be borrowed by teachers and organisers. No scenery is needed; full directions as to costumes are given. The *dramatis personæ* can be more or fewer in number as desired, and "cuts" are suggested to meet local needs. The "Pageant"

is complete in itself, but may appropriately lead up to a Tree-planting and prize-giving ceremony. One or two workers of ordinary leisure and musical ability may in this way provide an attractive and at the same time useful entertainment, calculated to encourage Bird Protection and the love of nature in the district where they live.

## FISH CULTURE AND THE BIRDS.

"I have just had the opportunity of paying a visit to the breeding grounds of a Midland Fish Culture Company, through the courtesy of one of its directors. . . . The fishery here consists of eleven fry ponds, eight yearling, and three very large ponds for store fish, these latter weighing from four to eight pounds.

"My own special interest in the company's grounds originated in the desire to learn how far certain birds—the Kingfisher, the Heron, and even the Coot, who is accused of working havoc in some districts—were regarded as injurious to the interests of fish breeding.

"I found that the Kingfisher was at one time regarded as detrimental, and Herons also, and it struck me as a very commendable feature of this particular fishery that now neither of these birds is destroyed within the limits of these breeding grounds.

"And yet a man carrying a gun is always on the spot? We saw him there beside the water. The 'noble sportsman' in this case is an iron automaton, life size, neatly dressed in a becoming suit of fresh paint. His machinery is wound up to go off by clockwork at certain intervals, say once an hour; he raises his gun to his shoulder and fires it with startling effect. I watched the process with great satisfaction. The birds are scared away from the breeding grounds, and can betake themselves to a large brook not far away, where fish have that desideratum of true sport, a fair field."—*J. A. Owen in Pall Mall Gazette (July 7th, 1909).*

## IN THE COURTS.

THE POLE-TRAP.—Two convictions for the use of the Pole-trap have been obtained in Wales by the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, who sent an Inspector to the Principality in consequence of complaints received of the infringement of the Act of 1904. In the first case, heard at *St. Clears* on August 10th, William Langdon, gamekeeper to Mr. Dempster, Laugharne, Carmarthenshire, admitted setting three traps, but pleaded ignorance of the law. Mr. James John, for the prosecution, pointed out that the Society had sent out thousands of circulars to bring the Act to the notice of game preservers and gamekeepers, and that a gamekeeper, of all persons, ought to be acquainted with the laws affecting birds. The Bench imposed a fine of 5s. and costs, but afterwards reduced it to

2s. 6d., with 15s. costs of the Inspector's journey from Montgomery. In the second case, heard at *Machynlleth* on September 1st, John Coakes, Llambrynnair, was charged with permitting Pole-traps to be set on a Grouse-moor, on property belonging to Sir Watkin Williams Wynn, but rented by Mr. W. E. Downing. The Society was represented by Mr. Ernest Gillart. Three traps were found on enclosed ground by the Inspector, who revisited the place in company with a policeman. Defendant first denied the existence of the traps, and demurred to admitting the Inspector and constable; but, on being advised that the matter would be reported to the Society and to Mr. Downing, eventually took down the instruments, complaining that he had lost many young birds and stating that recently an Owl had been caught in one of the traps. Fined £1. The Inspector's expenses were refused, one of the magistrates assuming that, being supported by voluntary contributions, the Society was "very wealthy."—At *Perth*, on September 28th, the keeper and underkeeper to Mr. K. S. Clark, of Kinnaird House, Perthshire, were charged with a breach of the Pole Trap Act. An officer of the Scottish S.P.C.A., from information received from the R.S.P.B., visited Killiechangie Hill, and found there two traps, one set and the other sprung and holding in its teeth the foot of a bird. The keeper was fined 10s.; the case against the underkeeper withdrawn.

THE ORME'S HEAD RAVENS.—At *Llandudno*, on June 21st, William and Jane Isabella Jones were summoned for being in possession of four young Ravens taken from the cliff; as they pleaded ignorance, and freed the birds at the place where they were taken, the case was dismissed on payment of costs.

BIRDCATCHING.—At *Slough*, on August 9th, Alfred William Smith, of Yiewsley, was summoned for taking wild birds at Iver and giving a false name and address. Defendant said he was doing nothing wrong, and did not see why he should give his right name. Fined 10s. and costs for each offence. At *Leicester*, on August 19th, William Wynes and John Deacon were convicted of taking birds at Ashby Magna and with cruelty to decoys. They were found in possession of net, cages, decoys, and six newly-caught Linnets, two of which died the same day. Fined 8s. 6d. each in the first case, with forfeiture of nets, birds, and cages, and 15s. each in the second case. At *Luton*, on September 6th, Arthur and Horace Cooote were fined £1 each for catching Linnets on the Warden Hills on August 17th. The police believed the men did no other work; they advertised, and sent birds all over the country. The nets were confiscated.

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## THE EGRET'S NEST.



READERS of BIRD NOTES AND NEWS will be aware that among the legends circulated as excuses for the trade in "osprey" feathers is one to the effect that these feathers are used by the bird to line its nest and are taken thence by the plume-hunter at the end of the nesting season. This ingenious notion is, of course, adopted from the history of eider-down, but considerably improved upon in the process. The Eider-duck plucks the soft down from her own breast in order to line the nest, and to envelop and keep warm the eggs during incubation; the down is collected forthwith by the fowlers of the district, whereupon the bird strips herself still further for the benefit of the precious eggs. This is not perhaps particularly pleasant for the bird, but the story is at least a credible one, even if it were not circumstantiated by familiar knowledge. The improved version of the Egret-hunter

must, however, form a considerable trial of faith even to the most credulous, since it sets forth that the Egret plucks the long train of feathers from its own *back* for the lining of the nest; and that these slender delicate plumes, after having been entangled for weeks amid rough sticks and trampled upon and soiled by a family of young birds, are extricated by the plume-hunter for the adornment of my lady's hat! Yet this is the statement made by that eminent apologist of the trade, Mr. Leon Laglaize, and the "nest-feather" has found its way into the worthy company of the "moulted plume" and the "artificial osprey."

"After the breeding season," says Mr. Laglaize,

"the abandoned nests are searched, and a valuable amount of feathers is collected there; the feathers have been skilfully rolled in to furnish and soften the interior of the nest. These nest feathers are of the best kind, for they have been pulled off by the bird itself before laying the eggs."

Mr. A. H. E. Mattingley, Hon. Sec. of the Australasian Ornithologists' Union, sends the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds a photograph taken by himself of an Egret's nest, showing plainly that no feathers are used, and that the structure consists entirely, like the nests of other members of the Heron family, of rough sticks and twigs. Mr. Mattingley, in Australia; Mr. Frank Chap-

man and Mr. T. Gilbert Pearson, of the National Association of Audubon Societies of the United States; and Mr. H. E. Dresser, who has examined hundreds of Egrets' nests in Europe and America, agree with every other known ornithological authority in stating that the Egret uses no feathers, most certainly none of the so-called "Osprey" feathers, in the making or lining of its nest.

## "The Story of the Egret."

THE seven photographs from life depicting "The Story of the Egret," which formed the special supplement to the Autumn Number of BIRD NOTES AND NEWS, have been reproduced, as was then announced, in the large size of the originals sent to the Society by Mr. Mattingley. Five sets of these were almost immediately placed on view in different towns, through the interest and help of members and friends of the Society, with the generous co-operation of the proprietors of shops in leading thoroughfares who have lent windows for the exhibition. The firms who have thus assisted are, to the present date:—

Barrow-in-Furness, Messrs. Ferguson & Rayner, Tailors and Outfitters; Bath and Bournemouth, Messrs. E. Price & Sons' Music Establishments; Bristol, Mr. Desprez, Jeweller; Cheltenham, Mr. H. C. Hill, Saxony House; Darlington, the School Furnishing Company; Oxford, Messrs. James Russell & Co., Music Sellers; Henley-on-Thames, Messrs. Dunlop & Son, Corn Factors; Malvern, Mr. Davis; Reading, Messrs. Bracher & Sydenham, Jewellers; Redhill, Messrs. H. P. Robinson & Son, Photographers and Art Dealers; Worthing, Messrs. R. Hubbard & Son, Linen Drapers and Milliners.

During the Christmas season it is not expected that shop windows can be placed at the disposal of the Society for this purpose; but with the New Year the campaign will be vigorously pursued, and it is hoped that all Hon. Local Secretaries, and others who are able to arrange for the display of the pictures for a few days, will communicate with the Society, so that arrangements may be made

for the transference of the photographs from place to place as conveniently as possible. The size of the mounted pictures is 17 in. by 22 in. They are sent by rail in specially made cases which involve no trouble in packing. Wherever shown they attract considerable crowds, and the local newspapers have been good enough to draw attention in their columns to the exhibition and to publish further information on the matter.

In addition to these enlargements and the issue of the BIRD NOTES AND NEWS Supplement as a separate leaflet (at 3d. and 1s. according to the edition), cards and sheets for display and for hanging in museums, schools, and elsewhere have been prepared by request. They show six of the photographs, together with the "white badge of cruelty," and with selected words in reference to the subject by Professor Newton, Sir William Thomson, Professor Ray Lankester, Mr. W. P. Pycraft, Mr. Gilbert Pearson. These effective sheets might well be exhibited in many windows, and other places where the size of the large pictures makes their display impossible.

They are supplied at 4d. each, on paper, post free; or mounted on stout cardboard ready for hanging, at 1s., carriage or post free.

The aim of the Society in publishing these photographs is not only to bring home the truth of the matter to those whom words may not have convinced, but also to stimulate public opinion to an active support of

the Importation of Plumage Prohibition Bill, as passed by the House of Lords and introduced into the House of Commons in 1908. The enactment of this measure would put an end to Great Britain's complicity in the cruel slaughter and disgraceful extermination of Egrets and other beautiful birds by plume-hunters all the world over.

It is gratifying to know that "The Story of the Egret," which began its work in Australia and continues it in England, is not told to English people only. A set of the large photographs and five hundred copies of the Supplement have been bought for exhibition and distribution in Paris; a large number have gone to the Sophia-Vereeniging Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals in Amsterdam, and orders for them have also been received from some of the Audubon Societies in the United States of America.

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#### APPEAL TO THE MAYORESSES OF ENGLAND AND WALES.

Shortly after the Municipal Elections of November 1st, a letter from the Society was addressed to the Mayoresses of the principal towns in England and Wales, asking that during the time they represent their borough as its First Citizeness they would give the weight of their influence on the side of humanity by refraining from wearing "osprey" plumes. Allusion was made in the letter to the wish expressed by the Lady Mayoress of London (Lady Truscott) in opening the Fair of Fashions last summer, that ladies would follow the example of Her Majesty Queen Alexandra by ceasing to decorate themselves with feathers obtained by the cruel destruction of beautiful birds.

About one hundred and fifty ladies at once responded by giving the promise appealed for, and many of them add their good wishes for the success of the Society's cause, and their assurance that they do not,

and will not, wear "ospreys" at any time. Among those responding are the Duchess of Devonshire (Mayoress of Eastbourne) whose secretary writes: "I am desired by the Duchess of Devonshire to assure you that she entirely concurs with your wishes regarding the protection of the Egret"; the Countess Fitzwilliam (Lady Mayoress of Sheffield); Lady George Hamilton (Mayoress of Deal), who adds that she has not worn these feathers for many years; Lady Forester (Mayoress of Wenlock) who has for some years been an active member of the Society; and Lady Phillimore (Mayoress of Kensington), who writes: "I am in cordial agreement with your letter, and have long refused to buy osprey plumes and certainly will continue to do so." The Lady Mayoress of Manchester (Mrs. C. Behrens) says: "She has much pleasure in complying with the request as she so fully sympathizes with the objects of the Society. For many years past she has never worn 'ospreys' and has done her best to discourage others from doing so." The Lady Mayoress of Newcastle (Lady Stephenson) "never wears 'ospreys' and would discourage the use of them by others as it is a most cruel fashion." The Mayoress of Westminster (Mrs. Hillersdon) writes: "I will certainly do as you ask and refrain from wearing osprey and other plumes obtained in such a cruel manner. I think your Society is an excellent one, and I sincerely hope the other Mayoresses will also support you." The Mayoress of Battersea (Mrs. Haythornthwaite): "The Society has my entire sympathy and support. I never miss a chance of bringing before my friends my abhorrence of the cruel practice of slaughtering lovely birds for the sake of their plumage." The Mayoress of Brighouse (Mrs. John Atkinson) expresses "her entire sympathy with the objects of the Society. For some years she has refrained from wearing 'ospreys' or wings of birds, and she will continue to discountenance the use of

them." The Mayoress of Colchester (Mrs. E. A. Blaxill) "has not worn 'ospreys' nor any birds since quite a girl, and is in entire sympathy with your efforts to stop this cruel practice." The Mayoress of Helston (Mrs. Hedley Thomas) "wishes to say she never wears the aigret or 'osprey'; and when fashion dictates the use of birds for the adornment (?) of ladies' hats she will do her best to influence others." The Mayoress of Glastonbury (Mrs. Morland) "never wears feathers of any sort and has always had great sympathy with the work of your Society in endeavouring to save beautiful birds from cruel destruction and extermination." The Mayoress of Honiton (Mrs. C. N. Tweed) promises her influence and help to the work by personally refusing to wear "ospreys," &c., as hitherto; by discussing the matter with ladies seen wearing them; and by showing and distributing copies of "The Story of the Egret," "which seems to me a very valuable addition to the cause." The Mayoress of Tiverton (Mrs. Thorne) also gives practical proof of her interest by subscribing to the funds of the Society. The Mayoress of Middleton (Mrs. Wolstenholme) "is in full sympathy with the movement; ever since Queen Alexandra set the example about the wearing of 'osprey' she has not worn any and has done her best to prevent others from doing so."

PLUMES AND PLUME-HUNTING.—Mr. James Buckland gave a striking lecture on the Plume-hunter and his work, before the Society of Arts, on December 8th, showing from official reports the devastation that is being committed in many parts of the world. An attempt to contradict the lecturer's statements was made by Mr. C. Downham (Sciama & Co.), but was unsupported by evidence, and probably only increased the effect made by Mr. Buckland's eloquent use of his facts.

THE PLUME MARKET.—Mr. Julius Dimock, the well-known explorer, writes to *Bird-Lore*, the organ of the Audubon Societies of the U.S.A.: "Better than most men I know the devastating results of plume-bird hunting in Florida, therefore I ask your aid for a law which can be opposed only by the selfish millinery interests. Every aigrette sold in New York State means not only the taking of a useful bird, but the starving to death of a little brood; for, every allegation to the contrary notwithstanding, the aigrette of commerce is obtained only by shooting the parent birds at the nesting

The reply of one Mayor, who is unsupported by a Mayoress, may also be quoted. "Unfortunately," he writes, "I am unmarried. Were this not the case you might have relied upon support, as I am much in favour of the objects of your Society."

The following ladies will not wear osprey plumes during at least their year of office:—

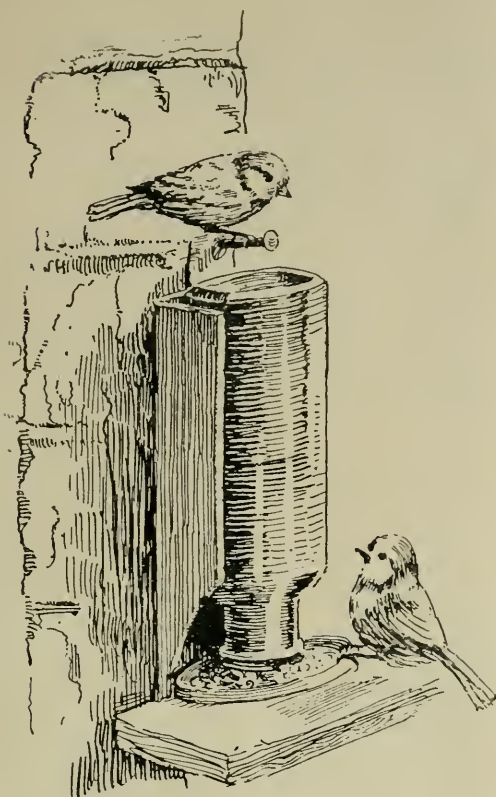
The Lady Mayoresses of London, Birmingham, Bradford, Bristol, Cardiff, Liverpool, Manchester, Newcastle-on-Tyne, Sheffield, and York.

The Mayoresses of the following boroughs: Aberystwyth, Accrington, Appleby, Ashton-under-Lyne, Banbury, Barnstable, Basingstoke, Batley, Battersea, Beverley, Bewdley, Bexhill, Birkenhead, Bodmin, Bolton, Boston, Brackley, Brecon, Bridgnorth, Brighouse, Bromley, Buckingham, Bury, Calne, Cambridge, Carmarthen, Carnarvon, Cheltenham, Chester, Christchurch, Colchester, Colne, Congleton, Darlington, Dartmouth, Darwen, Deal, Doncaster, Dorchester, Droitwich, Dudley, Kainfield, Durham, Eastbourne, Exeter, Eye, Falmouth, Faversham, Gillingham, Glastonbury, Gloucester, Godalming, Great Yarmouth, Guildford, Halifax, Hanley, Hastings, Haverfordwest, Hedon, Helston, Henley-on-Thames, Hereford, Hertford, Heywood, Honiton, Hornsey, Hove, Huddersfield, Huntingdon, Hythe, Keighley, Kidderminster, Kensington, King's Lynn, Leigh, Leominster, Lewes, Lincoln, Llandoverly, Louth, Lowestoft, Lymington, Maidstone, Maldon, Malmesbury, Middleton, Morley, Monmouth, Neath, Newbury, Newport (I.W.), Newport (Mon.), Norwich, Oxford, Pembroke, Peterborough, Poole, Ramsgate, Reigate, Richmond, (Surrey), Richmond (Yorks.), Ripon, Rotherham, Ryde, Salford, Salisbury, Scarborough, Shaftesbury, Shrewsbury, Smethwick, Southampton, Southport, South Shields, Stafford, Stratford-on-Avon, Sudbury, Sunderland, Swansea, Swindon, Taunton, Tewkesbury, Thornaby-on-Tees, Tiverton, Totnes, Truro, Tynemouth, Warwick, Warrington, Wednesbury, Wells (Somerset), Wenlock, West Ham, Westminster, Weymouth, Wimbledon, Worthing, Worcester, Wrexham, Denbigh, Newark, St. Albans.

season. Florida cannot stop this traffic: geographical conditions forbid; but you can close the chief market to her plume hunters." England can close a yet larger market.

#### DESTRUCTION OF AFRICAN BIRDS.

A correspondent of *The Times* (November 23rd, 1909), writes: "There seems to be urgent need for the protection of plumage birds in German East Africa. Herr Hermann Grote, who has spent some time in the Protectorate, has published an account of the slaughter of vast numbers of birds by a French planter at Lindi, who sends the wings and tails to a millinery firm at Paris. The specimens enumerated are Touracoes, or Plantain-eaters, bronzy-green Trogons, Kingfishers, Glossy Starlings, golden-backed Weaver-birds, and Whydah birds. Herr Grote points out that the Government might put a stop to the traffic by forbidding the export of the feathers, but he also pleads for a measure of protection in the breeding season, which is the plume-hunters' harvest time.



### FEEDING THE BIRDS.

In the new R.S.P.B. leaflet "Remember the Birds," Mrs. Fuller Maitland emphasises the duty of feeding the little feathered folk who suffer so severely in frost and snow. There is also another side to the matter. This is the time above all others in which to make the acquaintance of the birds, to see them closely, to study their ways and their tastes, to win their confidence. The sight of the little crowd of hungry guests, the shy quick movements, the fluttering wings, the bright eyes, the growing tameness, the sharp happy chirp, are surely in themselves worth a little expenditure of trouble or even of pence. In and near towns the guests may be limited as to species; but in the country a large and interesting variety of birds may gradually be attracted by provision of varied food—even rooks and jays. Much might be, and should be done, as Mrs. Maitland says, in public parks and pleasure grounds by the provision of food-boxes, such as are

provided in Germany and other countries. The illustration on this page shows an ingenious adaptation for a suburban window of the Berlepsch food-bell for the automatic supply of dry food. It is simply a small bottle with a wide neck, fitted rather tightly into a wooden framework which holds it quite securely and is nailed to the brickwork of the window. Underneath is the lid of a tobacco tin, and the bottle-neck is raised just sufficiently to allow the food to drop out as the birds feed. The food is hemp-seed, whole and crushed, and chopped cocoanut mixed well together. The Tits feed at it all day long. Other devices in "feeding-bottles," stands, and tables will suggest themselves to those interested.

The correspondent who sends us the photograph of this apparatus, and who himself lives in a suburb of one of our largest cities, writes:—

"I think your Society would do well to get all schools to go in for wild bird feeding. Very few people, old or young, can resist the fascination when once they find these birds getting to know them. A friend of mine has an aviary, and he strongly advised me to go in for one. However, he was here one day, and when he saw my tame wild birds he lost all interest in his aviary; said he would give me the whole structure, birds as well, if he could only get the wild birds coming to his garden as they do to mine. He has borrowed my book (Berlepsch).

"Just now I am giving the Blackbirds, Thrushes, and Tits a few meal-worms—rather an expensive item; but they do enjoy them. We have one Thrush who knows the meal-worm tin canister quite well. He comes to a branch, some three or four feet from the window, and as soon as we let him see the tin, commences opening and shutting his beak in evident anticipation of a treat. This bird almost talks to us, and I and my niece quite understand what he wants us to do. We are trying to get him to feed from our hands and to come into my room for tit-bits, and fully expect to succeed."

Bird and Tree competitors might do a good turn for both the birds and themselves by systematic bird-feeding in winter; and *a propos* of this it is interesting to hear from the Headmaster of Henley-in-Arden School that some of his boys (those of the Woodwork Class especially) have each made a nesting box and two bird-tables, and are catering for the birds during this wintry weather. It would be interesting to learn from correspondents in various districts what kind of food is most appreciated, and by what birds

## The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds.

### COUNCIL MEETINGS.

Meetings of the Council were held on October 8th and December 17th, 1909, at the Middlesex Guildhall, Broad Sanctuary, S.W., by kind permission of the Chairman of the County Council. On October 8th there were present: Mr. Montagu Sharpe, in the chair, Mr. Bell, Miss Clifton, Miss Hall, Mr. W. H. Hudson, Mr. Hastings Lees, Mrs. Lemon, Mr. Meade-Waldo, Miss Pollock, Mrs. Owen Visger, Mr. F. E. Lemon, Hon. Secretary, and the Secretary (Miss Gardiner).

**The Hon. Secretary's Report** recorded the issue of six Bird Protection Orders; the Pole-Trap prosecutions in Wales; arrangements in connection with Bird and Tree Competitions; and a protest made by the Society with respect to the sale at Stevens' Salerooms of eight lots of eggs which had been illegally taken.

**The Finance and General Purposes Committee** presented the accounts, which were approved, and detailed arrangements made for the exhibition of the large photographs of "The Story of the Egret" and for the sale of nesting-boxes. The recommendation of the Committee that "reference to the measures being taken in France for the encouragement of ornamental-plumaged poultry for the sake of the use in millinery of their feathers, should be inserted in BIRD NOTES AND NEWS without any expression of opinion on the merits of the scheme," was discussed, and it was carried by a majority that "an opinion be expressed that the Society does not approve of the proposal." The following were elected Fellows of the Society: Thomas Baring, Portman Square, W.; Harry Cox, Pine House, Stow-on-the-Wold; Alfred Alex. Clarke, The Hall, Wells; Colonel Creaghe-Haward, Glenellen, Milntown; Mrs. Forester, London, W.; Mrs. Montagu Sharpe, Brent Lodge, W.; H. Y. Stanger,

K.C., M.P.; Arthur Trower, Redhill; W. H. Upjohn, Lympe Cottage, Hythe.

The following were elected members:—

T. M. Brooks (Tarporely), G. L. Courthope, M.P., Rev. A. A. David (Clifton College), G. B. Eaton (Gorsey Hey, Cheshire), Miss L. H. Huie (Edinburgh), Miss Iago (Corfe Castle), Miss B. S. Nicol (Invercraig, N.B.), P. A. Stone (Neston), Mrs. Tennant (London, W.), T. W. Tetley (Liverpool), A. J. Gibson Thomson (Edinburgh).

Affiliated: The Pasadena Audubon Society, California.

**The Publication Committee** reported the preparation of special editions of "The Story of the Egret," the Christmas card from Miss Austen's design, leaflet for schoolboys, by Mr. H. Cox, and circular to Head Constables, by Mr. Hastings Lees.

**The Watcher's Committee** reported on the year's work, and it was agreed that a translation of the Pole-Trap Act in Welsh should be distributed in Wales, and that a letter should be sent to Head Constables of counties where there is any likelihood of this trap being used.

The General Business included a discussion as to the protection of Gulls and the action of the Southern Sea Fisheries Board. It was resolved that a letter be sent to members of certain County Councils on the subject, giving the reasons against the proposals to deprive Gulls of the protection afforded them by the Wild Birds Protection Acts.

At the meeting on December 17th, Mr. Montagu Sharpe again presided, others present being Mr. Bell, Miss Clifton, Miss Hall, Hon. Mrs. Henniker, Mr. Hudson, Mr. Hastings Lees, Mrs. F. E. Lemon, Mr. Meade-Waldo, Mr. Trevor-Battye, the Hon. Secretary, and the Secretary.

**The Hon. Secretary** reported that lantern slides had been lent for 27 lectures, &c., as follows:—

October, Miss L. H. Huie, Edinburgh; October 18th, Mr. Riley Fortune, Harrogate; October 22nd,

Mr. Kearton, Redhill (Egret slides); October 25th, Mrs. Suckling, Romsey; October 25th, Mr. Masfield, Leek; October 28th, Miss Clifton, Dagenham; October 29th, Mr. Frisby, Leicester; November 2nd, Mr. Bigg-Wither, Wells (Somerset); November 9th, Mrs. Suckling, Romsey, and November 10th, Southampton (songs); November 15th, Rev. J. E. Kelsall, Andover; November 19th and 22nd, Mr. E. J. Eldred, Coltishall and Horstead; November 6th and 20th, Mr. Hastings Lees, Winchester College and Brighton College; November 24th, Major Marriott, Chelmsford; November 29th, Rev. J. E. Kelsall, Milton; December 1st, Mr. H. B. Turney, Ulverston; December 2nd and 6th, Rev. J. E. Kelsall, Southampton College and Lymington (to Boy Scouts); December 6th, Mr. C. H. Marriott, Helensburgh; December 13th, Hon. Gladys Graham-Murray, Corstophine; December 15th, Mr. Hastings Lees, Charterhouse; December 16th and 17th, Miss Rintoul, Crail and Largo, N.B.

Four Bird Protection Orders had been issued. The awards made in the Bird and Tree Challenge Shield Competitions were reported, together with the arrangements made for a large number of Festivals, including Stony Stratford (Bucks Shield), December 15th; Sholing (Hants Shield), December 17th; and the Norfolk Festival, at Norwich and King's Lynn, December 21st and 22nd, with lecture by Mr. Kearton.

**The Finance and General Purposes Committee** submitted the accounts for October and November, and reported that a legacy of £50, payable in May next, had been left to the Society by the late Miss Catherine Gilmour, of Glasgow, a member of the Society; also that the Joseph Wolf Memorial Committee had handed over, through Mr. R. J. Howard, a balance of £4 10s. left after payment for memorials to that distinguished artist. The appointment of the following Hon. Local Secretaries was confirmed: Alloa, Mr. Archibald Arrol; Lanarkshire, Mr. G. W. Campbell, Coatbridge; Wolverhampton, Miss Grace Hawkins; Worthing, Miss A. S. Lemon. Miss Blathwayt, Secretary of the Lincoln Branch, had resigned on leaving the county, the Rev. F. L. Blathwayt consenting to retain the post until the end of the year. Five Fellows were elected: Hugh Turner, Bentley, Ipswich; W. H. Rider, Basford Hurst, Leek; Harold Russell, Beaufort Gardens, S.W.; James McL. Marshall, Bleaton Hallet, Blairgowrie; J. W. Rundell, Liver-

pool. Twenty-one members were elected as follows:—

Major B. K. W. Bacon (Hale, Surrey), Mrs. Gordon Bateson (Church Stretton), S. Walter Billings (Cheltenham), Miss Browne (Tunbridge Wells), Miss Estella Canziani (Kensington, W.), Mrs. Chambers (Derby), E. Eumorfopoulos (Pirbright), Mrs. Goodacre (Brighton), Arthur G. Hudson (Sawbridgeworth), Rev. H. N. Hutchinson (London, N.W.), Miss L. P. Kemp (Rochdale), Howard Kingham (Reading), C. Hobson Marriott (Glasgow), Colonel Charles Noble (Edinburgh), Miss H. Scott Parsons (Stopham, Pulboro'), Miss A. E. Sellon (London, S.W.), Mrs. F. Yorke Smith (London, S.W.), Miss S. B. Squier (Manchester), Miss Margaret Thompson (Hitchin), Mrs. Thorne (Mayoress of Tiverton), Miss F. Tyndale-Biscoe (London).

The exhibition of the "Story of the Egret" photographs and the preparation of further editions of the pictures were reported; also the Appeal to the Mayoresses of England and Wales. The Rules for the proposed Public Schools' Silver Medal Competition for the writing of Essays on Birds were submitted and approved, Mr. Hastings Lees stating that a cordial reception had been given by various schools to the scheme, which includes the presentation of Book prizes and Certificates as well as the Medal. The suggested new regulations for the Bird and Tree Competition were also discussed, and it was mentioned that so far the replies from education authorities and teachers were, with few exceptions, in favour of changing the date from September to July.

**The Publication Committee** reported the preparation of the Winter Number of BIRD NOTES AND NEWS, with Index to Vol. III., and the new leaflet, "Remember the Birds," by Mrs. Fuller Maitland.

The General Business included, in addition to preliminary arrangements for the Annual Meeting and Report and for the Council Meetings in 1910, the report of a further Pole-Trap case, and discussion of sundry legal points raised by correspondents in connexion with the working of Bird Protection Acts and Orders. It was noted with satisfaction that the Hampshire and Isle of Wight County Councils had refused to accede to the request of the Southern Fisheries Board that Gulls should be deprived of protection.

## Bird and Tree Day.

### INTER-COUNTY COMPETITION.

Ten excellent sets of essays required the most careful consideration this year before the Inter-County Shield could be awarded; but, good as are necessarily all those which carry off the county trophies, the best papers still come from the Berkshire School and the Somerset School, whose repeated successes had made them ineligible for county awards. BUCKLAND and LONG ASHTON are practically equal, and must have shared the honours, but that LONG ASHTON voluntarily discloses an infringement of one of the rules, and therefore honourably withdraws its claim. The Buckland team, who accordingly win the Shield, show their customary freshness, intelligence, and originality, and have good subjects in the Whinchat, Fly-catcher, and Nightjar, and in Quince, Norwegian Maple, and Tulip trees; but there is even closer and more painstaking work in the admirable papers on the Blackcap, Tit, and Wren, the Yew, Acacia, and Sycamore trees, that attest the thoroughness of the nature-study at Long Ashton, to whom the Second Prize and Bronze Medal are awarded.

Of the remaining essays those from FROME Boys' School, POTTON, RUSHDEN (Alfred Street Boys), and STONY STRATFORD are highly commended.

The Judges for the whole competition were: Mr. Montagu Sharpe, the Rev. Canon Rawnsley, Mr. Ernest Bell, Mr. Harry Cox, Mr. G. A. Freeman, B.Sc., Mr. W. H. Hudson, F.Z.S., Mr. T. Hastings Lees, F.Z.S., Mr. W. Percival Westell, F.L.S., M.B.O.U., Mrs. F. E. Lemon, F.Z.S., Miss L. Pollock, and Miss Gardiner. Their main difficulties arose from a reluctance to pass over much excellent work, showing earnest observation, perseverance, and enthusiasm on the part of boys and girls of all ages from nine to sixteen; and their task—no slight one—was lightened by the good handwriting and neatness that characterize the majority of the papers.

### COUNTY CHALLENGE SHIELDS.

Eight counties come into the competition this year, in addition to Berkshire and Westmorland, which, having lost their Shields for want of sufficient competition, continue to send in good work from two or three schools. The newcomer, Northampton-

shire, starts with a high standard of work and a notable variety of bird and tree subjects. Naturally enough, first-year essays commonly adhere pretty closely to familiar species, and only counties which have reached their fourth or fifth year can boast a repertoire numbering between 30 and 40 birds. With a strong partiality for Swallows and Martins, and—of course—Thrushes, Northants totals 29 different birds among 108 essays.

The competition in Somerset and Warwick is not so strong as last year, but there is no falling-off in the quality of the work, which is marked in both counties by much freshness and originality. Hampshire keeps well up to its high level. Cumberland improves and brings forward several fresh competitors. Buckingham is more satisfactory as to quality (which is admirable) than as to quantity. Bedfordshire manifests a remarkable advance in both respects, and for the first time produces a really strong competition. Norfolk exhibits an almost overwhelming zeal, showing that here at least there is none of the unworthy feeling that might prompt a school to say, "We shall not win the Shield, so what is the use of trying?" Shields and awards are but a means to an end, and it is hoped that the value of the work itself, both in promoting the fascinating study of nature and in developing the general intelligence of the children, offers reward and stimulus enough, of which prizes and certificates are but tokens and recognition.

In almost all cases where a school falls out of the competition the reason is found in the loss at the end of the summer term of leading scholars and members of teams. It is proposed therefore to alter the date for the writing of essays from September to July, and to start the year of study in autumn instead of spring. The opinions of teachers on this point, and also as to conditions and rules, will be welcomed.

The Council of the Society have this year to thank the Education Authorities of the several counties for sending out the notice-papers, and they are indebted to County Directors and Secretaries of Education for much helpful interest in the work.

### BEDFORDSHIRE.

CHALLENGE SHIELD: Potton Council School.  
*Second Prize*: Woburn Boys. *Third Prize*: Temps-



ford. *Certificates of Excellence* : Stevington ; Clophill ; Morhanger Girls ; Eggington. *Highly Commended* : Keysoe ; Northill ; Biggleswade (Girls) ; Thurleigh ; Hockliffe. *Commended* : Eaton Socon ; Totternhoe ; Toddington ; Little Staughton ; Lidlington ; Heath ; Melchbourne ; Kensworth.

There is this year for the first time a really strong competition in this county, strong not only in numbers but in the excellent quality of the work done. It is therefore no small achievement on the part of the Potton Council School to win the Shield. All the papers of this team are marked by spontaneity and enthusiasm and by habits of real observation, while the writing is fresh and simple. Woburn, improving wonderfully on previous work, runs Potton very close, sending excellent essays on such interesting subjects as the Little Owl and Great Crested Grebe ; and the drawings of birds seem, like Potton's tree sketches, to be drawn direct from nature. Tempsford takes third place by reason of careful and intimate observation, particularly of trees ; and had there been a fourth prize it would have gone to Stevington's businesslike papers, Clophill, Morhanger, and Eggington all show much brightness and intelligence in their Nature study, which is of a pleasantly real description. Keysoe and Northill are to the fore with excellent writing and composition. The Biggleswade Girls have over-weighted their tree essays with botanical detail, but, like Hockliffe and Thurleigh, they show painstaking study. Eaton Socon's young team sends two notably good papers ; Kensworth works on the right lines, and promising essays come from a number of new competitors, whose work deserves hearty encouragement. The county is to be congratulated on the conspicuous improvement that has taken place all round during the few years of the competition.

#### BERKSHIRE.

INTER-COUNTY SHIELD : Buckland. *Certificate of Excellence* : Burghfield.

Though the Berkshire Shield was lost through want of competition, several schools continue the good work. Buckland's essays are spoken of in relation to the Inter-County Competition. Burghfield C.E. School earns a Certificate of Excellence by the charming freshness and keenness shown in the essays, especially those on birds. Purley makes a start with tree papers only, so that it is ineligible for competition, but when the team can write equally well on birds, they will take a high place.

#### BUCKINGHAMSHIRE.

CHALLENGE SHIELD : Stony Stratford National School. *Certificates of Excellence* : Ellesborough

Council School ; Princes Risborough C.E. School ; Coleshill C.E. School. *Highly Commended* : Cuddington.

The stress laid upon Nature study in connexion with the Education Exhibition at Aylesbury this autumn, and the inclusion among the exhibits of the Bird and Tree Challenge Shield and some of the work sent in for this competition, should have the effect of stimulating the work and inciting a large number of schools to join in it. The number of competing teams at present cannot be said to represent the county worthily. In point of merit, however, the essays are exceedingly creditable. Dull and formal little compositions repeated from book or lesson are delightfully conspicuous by their absence. Personal observation, more or less, is indicated by all. More particularly is it to the fore in the intelligent and original papers from the winning school ; but though Stony Stratford has now won the Shield two years in succession, and there is no doubt as to its superiority this year, there seems no sufficient reason for cutting it off from the competition. One or two other schools come near enough in merit to stand a very good chance of winning another time. Ellesborough, a much younger team, sends in bright fresh papers, entirely from outdoor study, and the children take first place for knowledge and description of bird-song. Coleshill furnishes exceptionally clever watercolour sketches to supplement careful and accurate note-taking. Princes Risborough, though the place is less favourably situated than many others, has found the best bird subjects, and both this school and Cuddington are doing good work, the former team showing more originality and accuracy of information and the latter perhaps more appreciation of general effects.

#### CUMBERLAND.

CHALLENGE SHIELD : Kirkoswald School. *Certificates of Excellence* : Greystoke Council School Fellside Council School (Girls) ; Morland-and-Newby ; St. John's-in-the-Vale. *Commended* : St. John, Keswick ; Melmerby ; Scaleby (Carlisle) ; Skelton (Penrith) ; Fellside Boys.

The competition in Cumberland has resulted of late in a see-saw between Greystoke and Kirkoswald, now one and now the other leading by a few marks only. This year, however, there is promise of stronger contests in the future. Although Kirkoswald once more takes the Shield, the papers of a new competitor, Fellside School, Caldbeck, impress the judges most favourably by their freshness and originality. Morland-and-Newby also deserves a

high place for personal study, and the papers from St. John's-in-the-Vale show attentive individual work, though they are too short and slight as yet. The girls of St. John's, Keswick, always careful and painstaking, write well on trees, but might give more consideration to the characteristic traits of birds selected. Three newcomers make a promising start. The Melmerby and Scaleyby teams both write carefully, and show that they have been well taught; with fuller reliance on their own study and notes they should soon be in the running for the Shield; and the Skelton essays, though short, are fresh and genuine, and quite on the right line. With regard to the two leading schools, it may be said that the Kirkoswald papers are rendered more interesting than the writing of most children by the introduction of incidents noticed by the writers and simply described. The Greystoke essays, better written as to both style and penmanship, and pleasant to read, do not this year go much beyond the obvious in their observations. Generally speaking, the essays on trees sent from Cumberland are better than those on birds.

#### HAMPSHIRE.

CHALLENGE SHIELD: Sholing Girls' School. *Second Prize*: The Holme School, Headley. *Third Prize*: Sandown Boys' National. *Certificates of Excellence*: Havant Council School; Sandown Girls; Ridge, Romsey; Bitterne Park (Girls). *Highly Commended*: Awbridge; Boldre; Bramshaw; Copythorne; Laverstoke; Pennington; Romsey (Girls and Boys). *Commended*: Barton Stacey; Hayling; Hinton Ampner; Meonstoke; New Milton; Wickham.

Hampshire keeps up its reputation. There is not, as in some counties, a strong probability that certain schools which had led before will lead again, for the work is so uniformly good that it is impossible to predict results. A school commended one year may leap to the very front next year. On this occasion examination and re-examination was required to determine the position of the first dozen teams; but the painstaking and intimate observation which appears in all the essays from Sholing thoroughly merits the honour won. The essays also are written with much grace of style. The Holme School sends in excellent and well-written essays; and the Sandown boys, who regularly secure one of the highest places on the list, again distinguish themselves by good sound work, especially noticeable being the essays on the Rock Pipit (a bird that has not been discovered by any competitor before) and the oak. Of the remaining schools in the first class, Havant, which carried off the Shield last year, sends in admirable work, accurate, thorough, and

artistic; beautiful handwriting and careful observation characterize the compositions of the Sandown Girls; the Bitterne Girls write especially well about trees; and there is something particularly attractive about the frank and simple style and quick intelligence displayed by the Ridge team. The schools in the second division all contribute highly meritorious work. Had all the papers from Copythorne been equal to that on the Nightjar this school would have taken a high rank; and the Boldre and Awbridge teams describe their trees at first hand, and do it very well. There is again a narrow line between these essays and some of those in the next group, such as Barton Stacey, which has improved conspicuously since last year, and Hayling, which has chosen good but difficult bird subjects.

#### NORTHAMPTONSHIRE.

CHALLENGE SHIELD: Alfred Street Boys' School, Rushden. *Second Prize*: Northend School, Rushden. *Third Prize*: Victoria Council School, Wellingborough. *Certificates of Excellence*: Badby; Great Doddington; Croughton C.E. (Girls); Braunston C.E.; Rockingham C.E.; Weedon (Girls). *Commended*: Welton C.E.; Charwelton C.E.; Daventry Abbey; Rushden (Alfred Street Girls); Cottingham-cum-Middleton; Bugbrooke; Yelvertoft.

After some experimental work last year on the part of selected schools, Northants comes fully into the competition for 1909, the Shield being in this case presented by Mr. Allebone, Chairman of the Education Sub-Committee, and the prizes by the County Education Authority. Thirty-six teams compete, and the essays reach a standard remarkably high for first year's work. The essays which take, and well earn, the Shield would be impossible under the Society's rules, for want of a time-limit for writing papers. Of extraordinary length to be the work of boys under any conditions whatever, they contain an amount of accurate and original information and denote a keen and persevering devotion to the study, which are worthy of all praise. Few boys or girls, however, could stand such a strain as this; moreover, general effect is apt to be lost in the mass of detail. The papers from Northend are of much the same character; and while both sets of essays must take leading places, time-limit or word-limit is most desirable, if not essential. The Wellingborough papers afford excellent descriptions, neatly written and with many graphic touches, and with good drawings. They represent the class of work which the Society desires to foster. Badby's well-written papers show a good deal of original observation; Great Doddington sends clever little papers, largely derivative

Croughton, Braunston, Rockingham and Weedon all do good and promising work that indicates genuine interest and careful outdoor study; and a large number of other schools deserve commendation and hearty encouragement.

#### NORFOLK.

CHALLENGE SHIELD: Sprowston Council School, *Certificates of Excellence*: Saham Girls' School; Sporle; Hingham; Postwick; Mileham; Wroxham; Little Dunham; Shelton and Hardwick; Tittleshall; Wimbotsham (Girls); Worstead; Wymondham; Downham (Girls); Bracon Ash and Hethel; Coltishall; Guestwick; Fakenham (Girls); Hickling; Horning; Long Stratton; Surlingham; Little Fransham; Thetford; Old Buckenham; Attleborough (Boys); Yaxham.

Norfolk gave a hard task to the examiners, no fewer than 112 schools competing, thus furnishing 672 essays. This should be eminently satisfactory to the County Education Committee, by whom the competition is organised. In most cases the papers are well done, and indicate that real interest has been taken by the children, inspired and helped by the teachers. Generally speaking, there is a distinct endeavour to work direct from Nature, and many papers reveal enthusiastic and painstaking effort. Usually, also, they are well written and neatly arranged, and in not a few cases capital drawings are added. Oddly enough, while the three winning teams in Northants are composed of boys, the three leading schools in Norfolk are girls'. All these papers are remarkable for careful and accurate note-taking, the young damsels of Sporle evidencing also an unusual degree of thoughtfulness. The Hingham boys write in a particularly bright and interesting manner; the Postwick team papers are admirable for their intelligent appreciation and freshness; and those from Mileham are agreeably straightforward and boyish. In addition to the 27 teams placed by the judges in the first class, the work of 32 other schools is specially commended on account of the large totals of marks credited to them.

#### SOMERSET.

CHALLENGE SHIELD: Frome Boys' School. *Proxime accessit*: Long Ashton. *Second Prize*: Yatton. *Certificate of Excellence*: Exford. *Highly Commended*: Clutton; Catcott; Dytche; Bridgewater; Wembdon. *Commended*: Combe Hay; Oldfield Girls (Bath); Bruton; East Brent; Brent Knoll.

There is again close and keen competition in Somerset, but the number of competitors is not so large, several promising teams are absent, and owing partly to this and partly to the fact that the average age is less than usual, the general standard reached

is not so high as in previous years. The Shield is awarded to the Frome Boys, whose genuine and enthusiastic work reveals not only earnest study, but the observant and sympathetic spirit of the naturalist, which this competition was organised to promote. Their drawings are, as usual, admirable. Long Ashton, as the winner of the County Shield, 1907-08, and of the Inter-County Shield last year, is ruled out this year, but retains its name on the county list by sending in papers by a second team; though these can, in the nature of the case, obtain only an honorary award, they gain a high position owing to the excellence of the tree papers, and taking into consideration the youth of the writers. Yatton, ruled out for the last two years as the winner in 1905-06, comes again into the running, and scores very highly for accuracy and for the neatness and clearness of composition which always distinguish this school. Exford, another young team, sends in uniformly good and interesting essays. The Clutton team's faculty for accurate observation would have fuller scope if the epistolary style were not constantly adhered to, and thus a little more elasticity of style individualised the writers. Catcott makes a marked advance since last year. The young competitors from the Dytche School give considerable evidence of intelligent note-taking, though their work at present is too slight. Bruton, East Brent, and Brent Knoll (the last a new competitor) have benefited by careful teaching, with which they have mingled a certain amount of their own observations; while the Wembdon papers consist entirely of original notes, good in the case of the trees, but leaving much to be desired in the birds.

#### WARWICKSHIRE.

CHALLENGE SHIELD: Middleton School, Tamworth. *Second Prize*: Henley-in-Arden. *Certificates of Excellence*: Mancetter; Elborrow. *Highly Commended*: Bearley; Filloughby, Girls; Murray Boys, Rugby; Stratford-on-Avon, Girls; *Commended*: Coughton; Bilton; Curdworth; Harbury; Salford Priors.

There is a distinct improvement in the work from Warwickshire, the competitors evidently feeling more at home with their subject than was the case in the first year of their competition. Three schools compete very closely for the Shield, which Middleton wins by the close and careful observation shown and the high level of all the papers. The drawings are good, and include a remarkably clever sketch from nature of the Whitethroat. The Henley-in-Arden team, Shield-winners last year, write in a charming style, and their essays are pleasant reading, as they are concerned with what the writers have seen for themselves. Only just behind comes Mancetter,

with papers consisting entirely of original notes, industriously and sympathetically collected, if not always quite accurate. As the writers are all young, they should take front rank another year. With Mancetter may be mentioned Elborrow, remarkable for extreme neatness of style and penmanship and an intelligent appreciation of natural life and beauty that is far from common even where careful study is conspicuous. Special commendation must also be given to Bearley for pleasant and spontaneous work; to the Filloughby Girls for patient observation; to the Murray Boys, and the Stratford-on-Avon Girls. Coughton, too, which furnishes the youngest team in the county, sends genuine and promising papers, but needs, like the remaining schools named, to amplify information already gained by further study.

#### "AN EVENING WITH THE BIRDS."

Among winter entertainments for town, village, or parish, friends of the birds may well take the opportunity to introduce songs, plays, and recitations about bird life. It is not difficult to have "An Evening with the Birds" by means of a lecture or address, relieved or followed by songs and part songs, all illustrated with lantern slides; or, in the case of children, a short play or operetta, such as the "Bird and Tree Pageant" or "The Skylark's Release" (both by Mrs. Suckling), with songs and suitable recitations. Through Mrs. Suckling's help the list of Lantern Songs lent by the R.S.P.B. is being greatly extended and made to include songs and part songs for both adults and children; readings and recitations are also being added. The School, the Literary Society, or the Church Social are often in need of fresh ideas for winter evenings, and a word for the birds, sung or spoken in this way, may do the work of an appeal and in a more popular way. The Society will at any time be glad to hear of attractive songs of bird life, for lantern illustration. The new list of those supplied and recommended will be ready very shortly. Lists of slides and lectures can also be had.

#### PUBLIC SCHOOL ESSAY COMPETITION.

A Silver Medal Essay Competition for Public Schools has been arranged for 1910, by the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, the subject being either (a) personal observation of selected birds, with drawings or photographs, or (b) Bird Protection legislation, illustrated by its application in the case of a selected scheduled bird. Particulars may be had from the Secretary of the Society.

A new leaflet (No. 228), issued by the Board of Agriculture, asks the co-operation of the public in discouraging the use of cruel traps and snares.

#### DEATH OF DR. BOWDLER SHARPE.

Bird Protection has lost one of its staunchest friends, and the Society one of its earliest and most valued sympathisers by the death, on Christmas Day, of Dr. R. Bowdler Sharpe, of the British Museum (Natural History). Dr. Sharpe had been in ill-health for some time, and one of his last efforts in the cause was to support the Importation of Plumage Bill by his evidence before the House of Lords Committee.

#### BIRD PROTECTION ORDERS.

THE following County Council Orders have been issued since September 20th, 1909:—

MONMOUTHSHIRE. October 1st. E. F. Adds to list of birds protected all the year.

WICKLOW. October 1st. ROSCOMMON. December 15th. E. Protect certain eggs for five years.

Extension of Close-time for Woodcock has been obtained by East Suffolk (February 1st to August 13th); Montgomery (February 1st to August 12th); Donegal (to September 1st); Armagh, Kildare, Meath, Waterford, Westmeath (to October 1st).

#### NEW LEAFLETS.

No. 63. BIRD STUDY FOR SCHOOLBOYS. By HARRY COX. 3d. per dozen; 1s. 9d. per 100.

No. 64. REMEMBER THE BIRDS (A Plea for Bird-food in Winter). By Mrs. FULLER MAITLAND. 3d. per dozen; 1s. 9d. per 100.

#### NESTING-BOXES FOR BIRDS.

Nesting-Boxes of various patterns, and of both English and German make, are supplied by the Society.

The German Boxes are those recommended by the Freiherr von Berlepsch.

The English Boxes are patterns recommended by Mr. Masefield and Mr. Meade Waldo.

These Boxes are suitable for Tits, Nuthatch, Wryneck, Redstart, Robin, Flycatcher, Wagtail, Starling, Woodpecker, Treecreeper, Swift, etc., at prices from 1s. 6d.

Illustrated price-lists can be had from the Society's Office, where specimen Boxes can be seen.

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

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

# THE Story of the Egret

IN SEVEN SCENES  
PHOTOGRAPHED · FROM · LIFE



The White-Badge  
of Cruelty

- 1 Plumed Egret brooding
- 2 Egret seeking Food for Young
- 3 A Victim of the Plume-Hunter
- 4 Orphaned Nestlings
- 5 Crying for Food
- 6 Half Dead from Starvation
- 7 At the Last Gasp

*These Photographs were taken from life by Mr. A. H. E. Mattingley of the Australasian Ornithologists' Union. He visited an Egret rookery in the Riverina, N.S.W., in order to obtain a picture of an egret feeding her young. But the plume-hunters had been there just before him: the bodies of the parent birds lay strewn on the water or on floating logs; the young were dead and dying in the nests or falling helpless to the ground. These scenes are repeated wherever the egret or "osprey" plume is being obtained for women's headgear.*

L O N D O N

Royal Society for the Protection of Birds

23 QUEEN ANNE'S GATE S.W.

1909

THE STORY OF THE EGRET. No. 1.



Plumed Egret Brooding.

[R.S.P.B.]

THE STORY OF THE EGRET. No. 2.



Egret seeking Food for Young.

R.S.P.B.

THE STORY OF THE EGRET. No. 3.



[R.S.P.B.

A Victim of the Plume-Hunter.



THE STORY OF THE EGRET. No. 4.



Orphaned Nestlings.

[R.S.P.:B.]

THE STORY OF THE EGRET. No. 5.



Crying for Food.

[R.S.P.B.]

THE STORY OF THE EGRET. No. 6.



Half Dead from Starvation.

R.S.P.B.

THE STORY OF THE EGRET. No. 7.



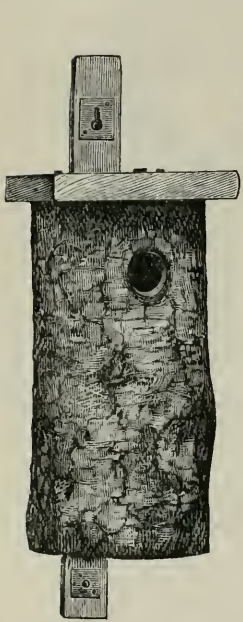
At the Last Gasp.

|R.S.P.'B

# NESTING-BOXES FOR BIRDS.

THE ROYAL SOCIETY FOR THE PROTECTION OF BIRDS, 23, Queen Anne's Gate, London, S.W., has made arrangements for the supply of Nesting-Boxes for Wild Birds. The object is to facilitate the provision in gardens, parks, and shrubberies of artificial nesting-places for certain species of birds, and to provide patterns for the local and home manufacture of these.

Figures A, B, E and F represent Boxes made on the plan recommended by Baron von BERLEPSCH, and adopted generally in Germany, Austria, and other countries. Full description of these Boxes and their use will be found in a book entitled "How to Attract and Protect Wild Birds," recently translated into English; to be obtained of THE ROYAL SOCIETY FOR THE PROTECTION OF BIRDS, price 1s. 6d. (Post free, 1s. 9d.)



\* Fig. A. 1/6  
With brass hinges, 2/-

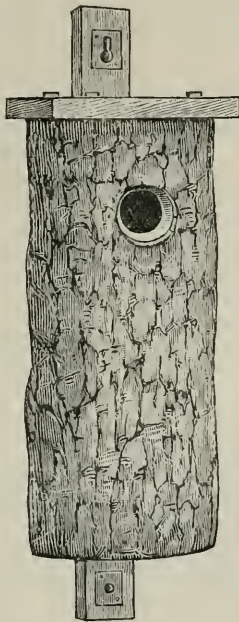


Fig B. 2/-

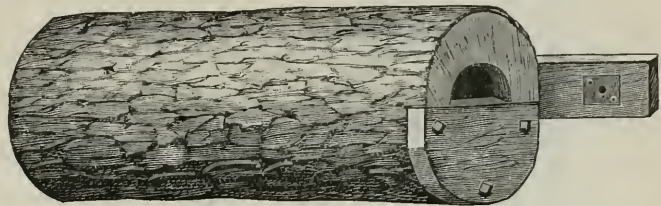


Fig. E. 2/-

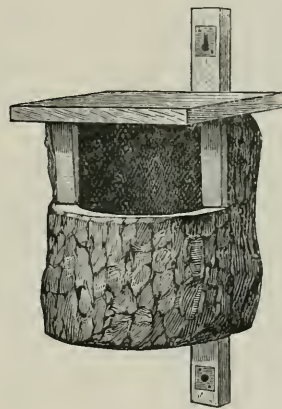


Fig. F. 1/6

**These Prices do not include Carriage.**

Box A is suitable for the Great Tit, Blue Tit, Marsh-Tit, Coal-Tit, Crested Tit, Nuthatch, Tree-Creeper, Wryneck, Pied Fly-catcher, Redstart, or Lesser Spotted Woodpecker.

Box B is for Starlings, Greater Spotted Woodpeckers, Wrynecks, Nuthatches, Pied Fly-catchers, Redstarts, Great Tits. The last five species settle in Box A as well as in B. The former suffices as a rule.

For the sake of completeness we have Box E for Swifts, with the boring of Box B, and a semi-circular opening.

The open Box F has a diameter of about  $4\frac{1}{4}$  inches, and a depth of about  $2\frac{1}{4}$  inches. It is made for such birds as Redstarts, Spotted Fly-catchers, and Pied Wagtails.

**All orders and other communications should be sent to the SOCIETY'S OFFICE, 23, Queen Anne's Gate, London, S.W., where Specimen Boxes may be seen.**

*\* A box somewhat similar to this pattern, English made, with swing-lid, can also be had. It is catalogued as A 4.*

**ENGLISH BOXES** can also be supplied, including those made by Mr. W. ALCOCK, Cheadle, Staffs, under the direction of Mr. J. R. B. MASEFIELD, Author of "Wild Bird Protection and Nesting-Boxes."

The designs for Figs. M and N are taken by permission from Mr. MASEFIELD's book :—

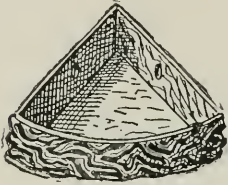


Fig. N. 6d.

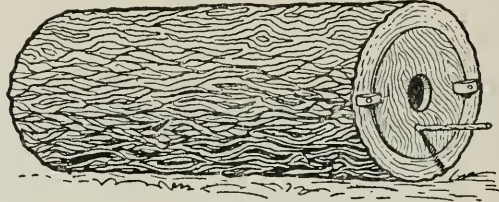


Fig. M. 2/-

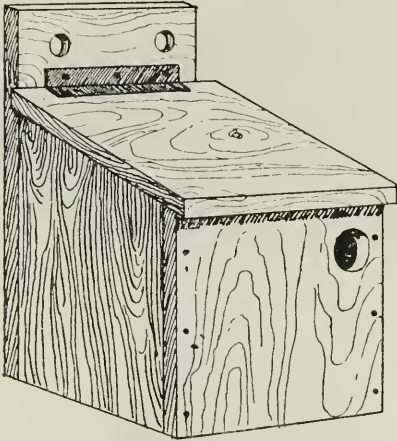


Fig. W., the "Walden," of plain hard wood, with square top and leather hinge, 2/-

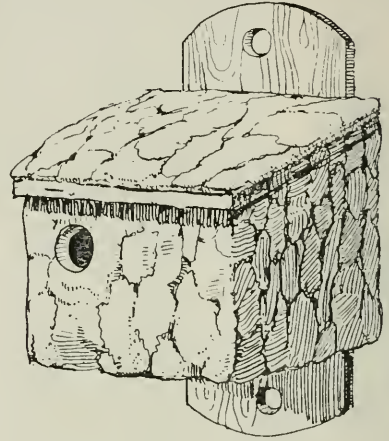


Fig. L, covered with bark, 2/-

These  
Prices  
do not  
include  
Carriage.

**NESTING-BOXES** are intended more especially for Wild Birds that build in holes, particularly those that usually select old trees and other decaying wood, and therefore find few suitable places in the modern garden and shrubbery. They will not attract such birds as the Blackbird and Thrush or the Finch tribe in general.

It is advisable to have the Boxes in position some weeks before nesting-time, so that the Birds may get accustomed to the sight of them. An east or south-east aspect is better than the unshaded due south.

The Boxes, whether nailed against a wall or tree-trunk, or fixed in the fork of a tree, should be perfectly steady when fixed, as Birds will not take up their abode in an unstable erection. The upper part of the Box should incline very slightly forward. Boxes should be at a sufficient height to be safely out of the reach of cats, and inaccessible from a branch that a cat can climb. Birds should be disturbed as little as possible while nesting; several Boxes for one species of Bird may be placed near together, but different species should not be expected to nest in immediate proximity.

Every kind of Nesting-Box cannot be supplied, but the Society will endeavour to execute as promptly as possible orders sent in on the form attached to this paper; delay in some cases may be inevitable, owing to the increased demand. The manufacturers are receiving orders from all parts of the world. Over 3400 Boxes were supplied last season through THE ROYAL SOCIETY FOR THE PROTECTION OF BIRDS.

**The Boxes are not suitable for transmission by Parcel Post, being in most cases over the prescribed weight.**

FRANK E. LEMON, *Hon. Secretary,*

ROYAL SOCIETY FOR THE PROTECTION OF BIRDS,  
23, QUEEN ANNE'S GATE, S.W.

September, 1909.

To the

ROYAL SOCIETY FOR THE PROTECTION OF BIRDS,  
23, QUEEN ANNE'S GATE, LONDON, S.W.

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..... 19

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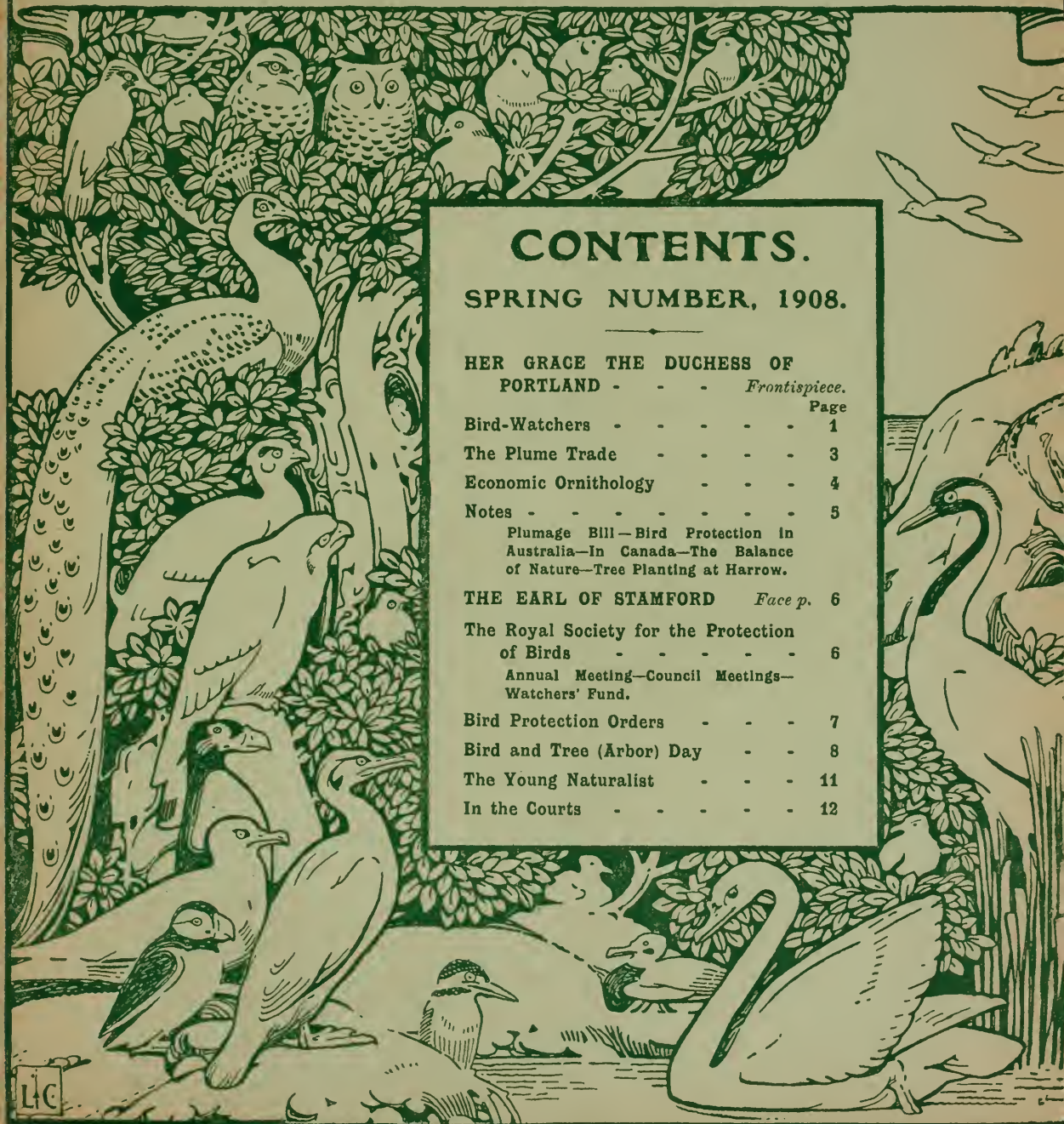
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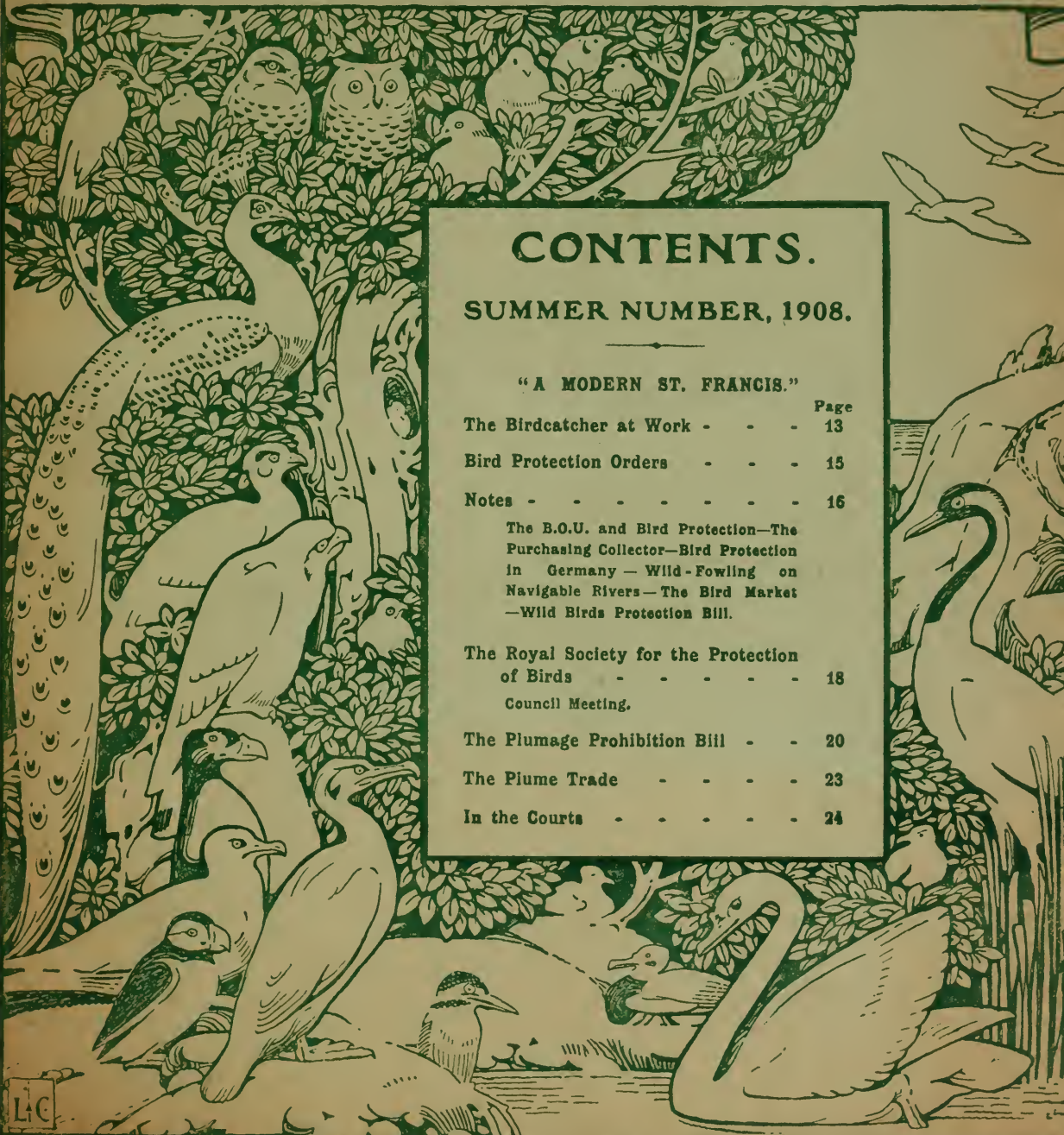
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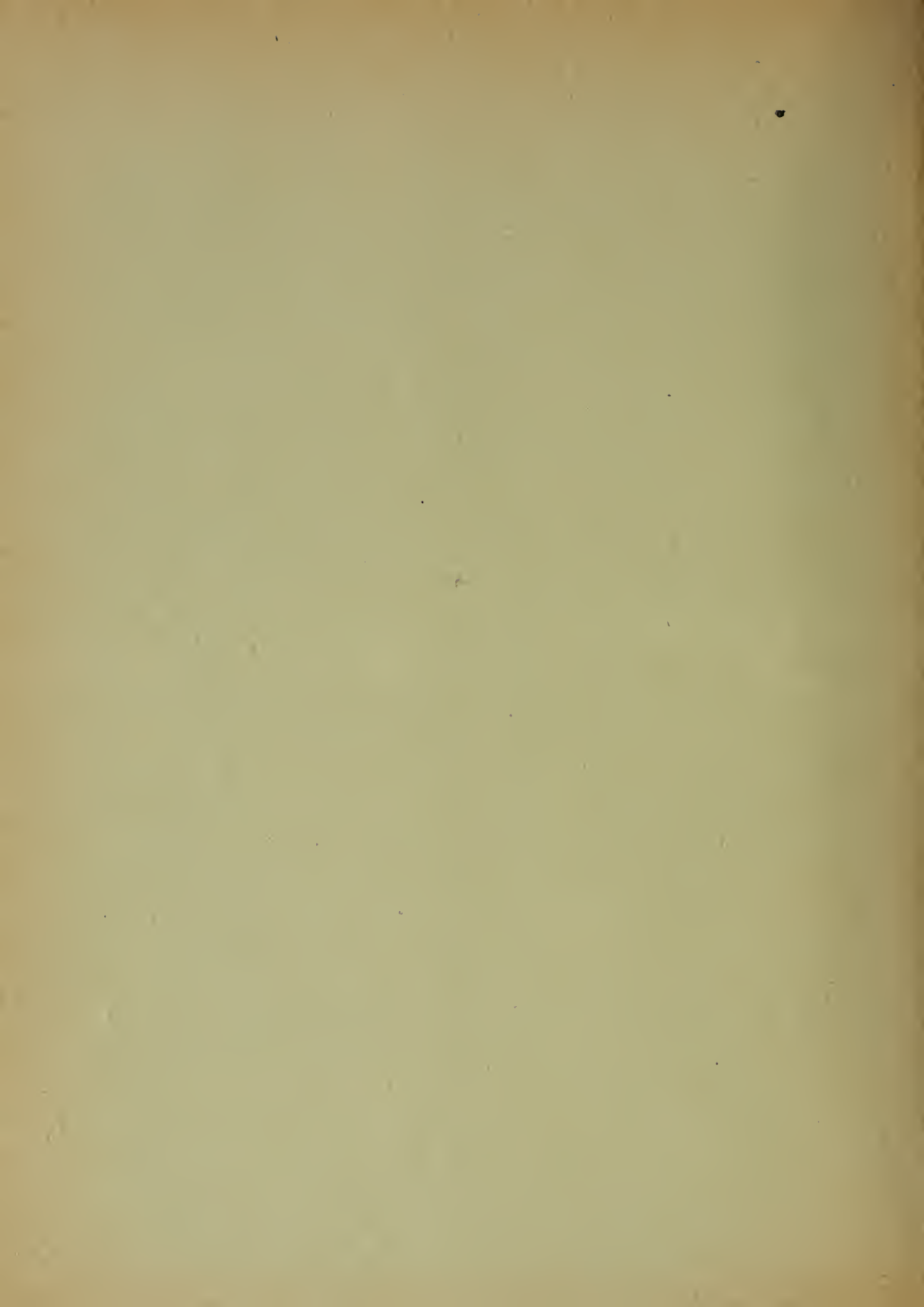
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The Royal Society for  
the Protection of Birds.

FOUNDED  
1889.

3, HANOVER SQUARE, LONDON, W.

*Incorporated under Royal Charter, 1904.*

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

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

**MEMBER**, by subscribing an annual sum of not less than Five shillings (5s.), or by compounding for life by a donation of Five guineas (£5 5s.)

Fellows and Members are, after election, entitled to receive a copy of every publication issued by the Society, and to attend and vote at all General Meetings of the Society.

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# BIRD NOTES & NEWS

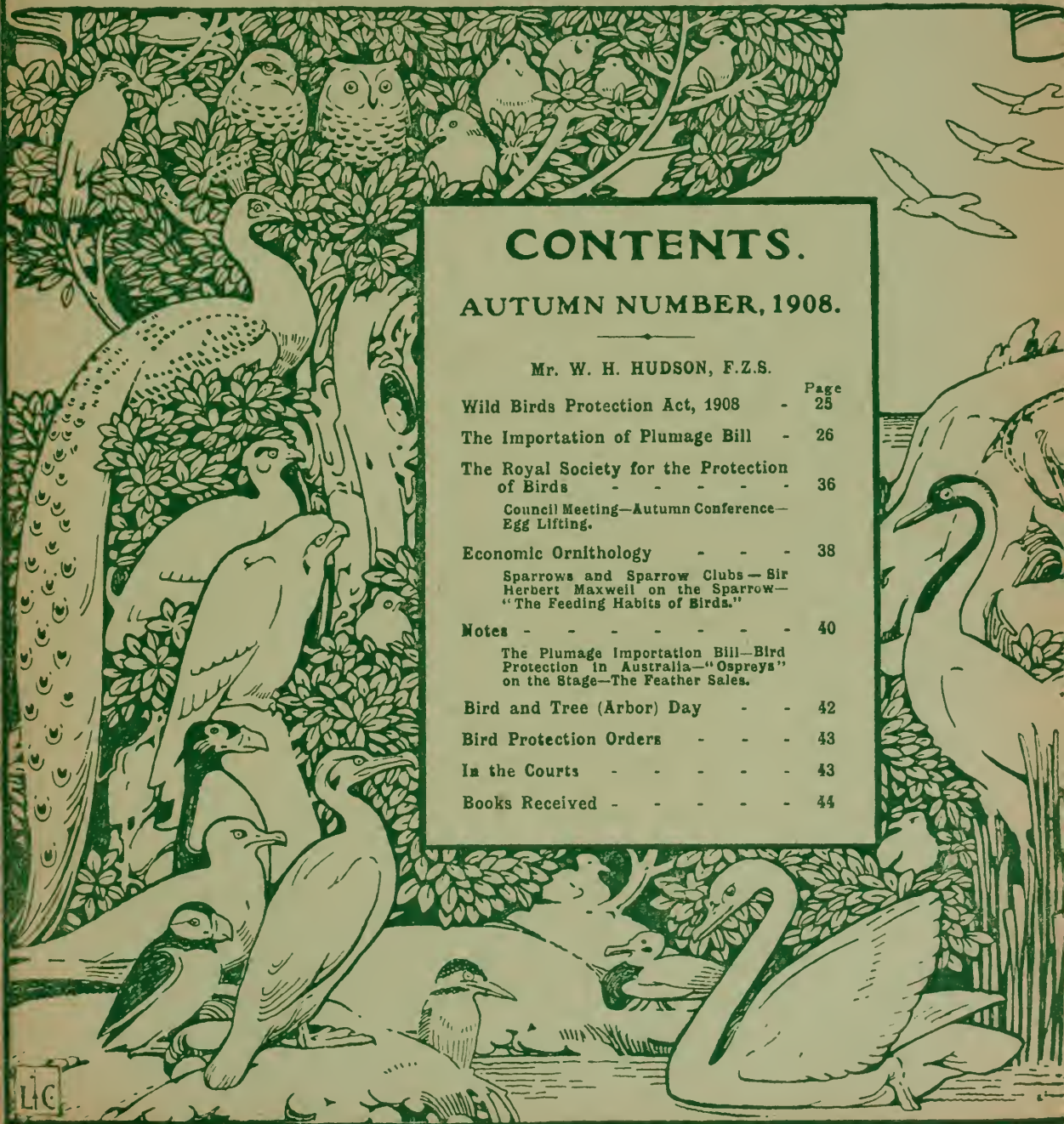
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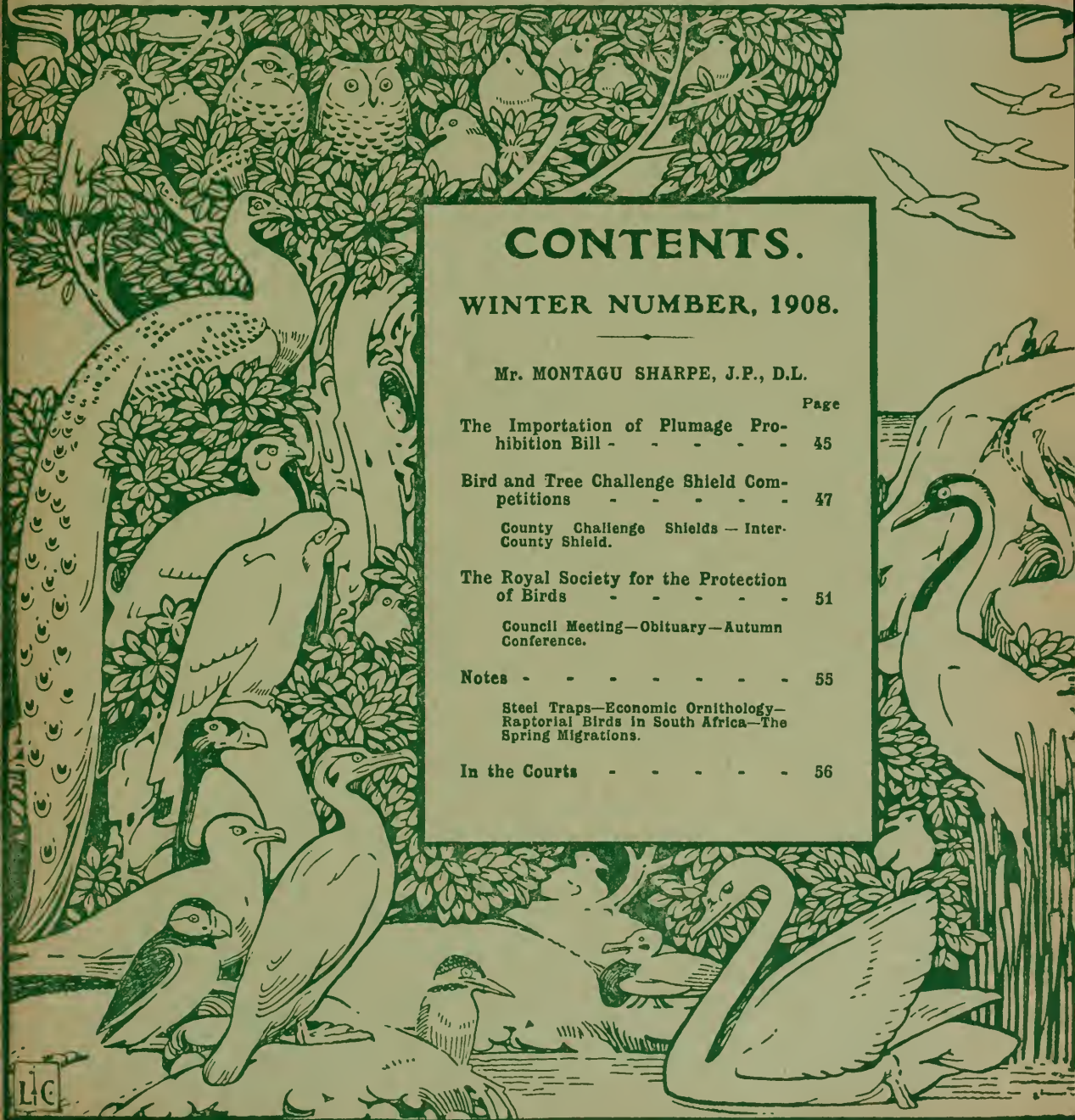
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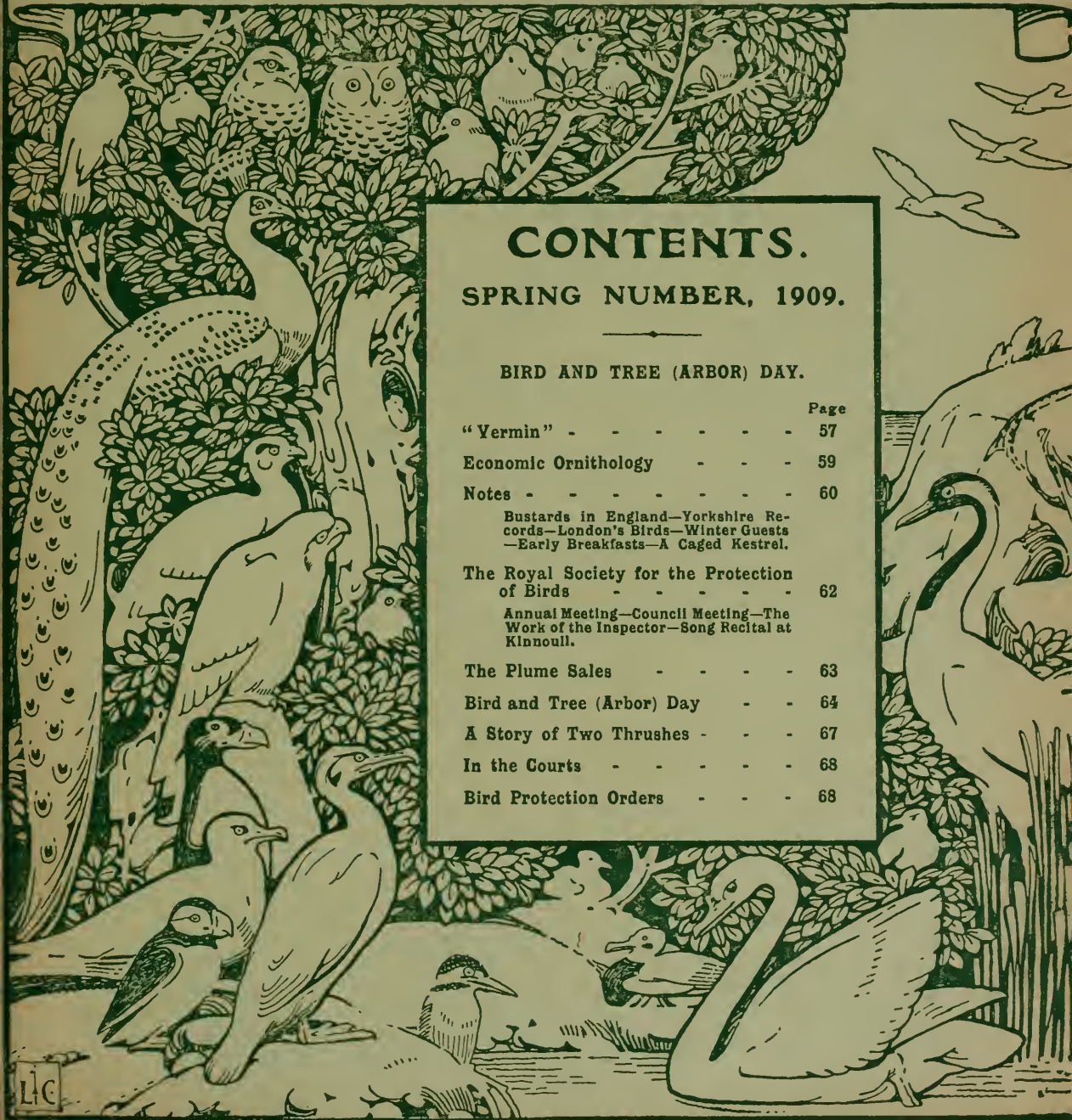
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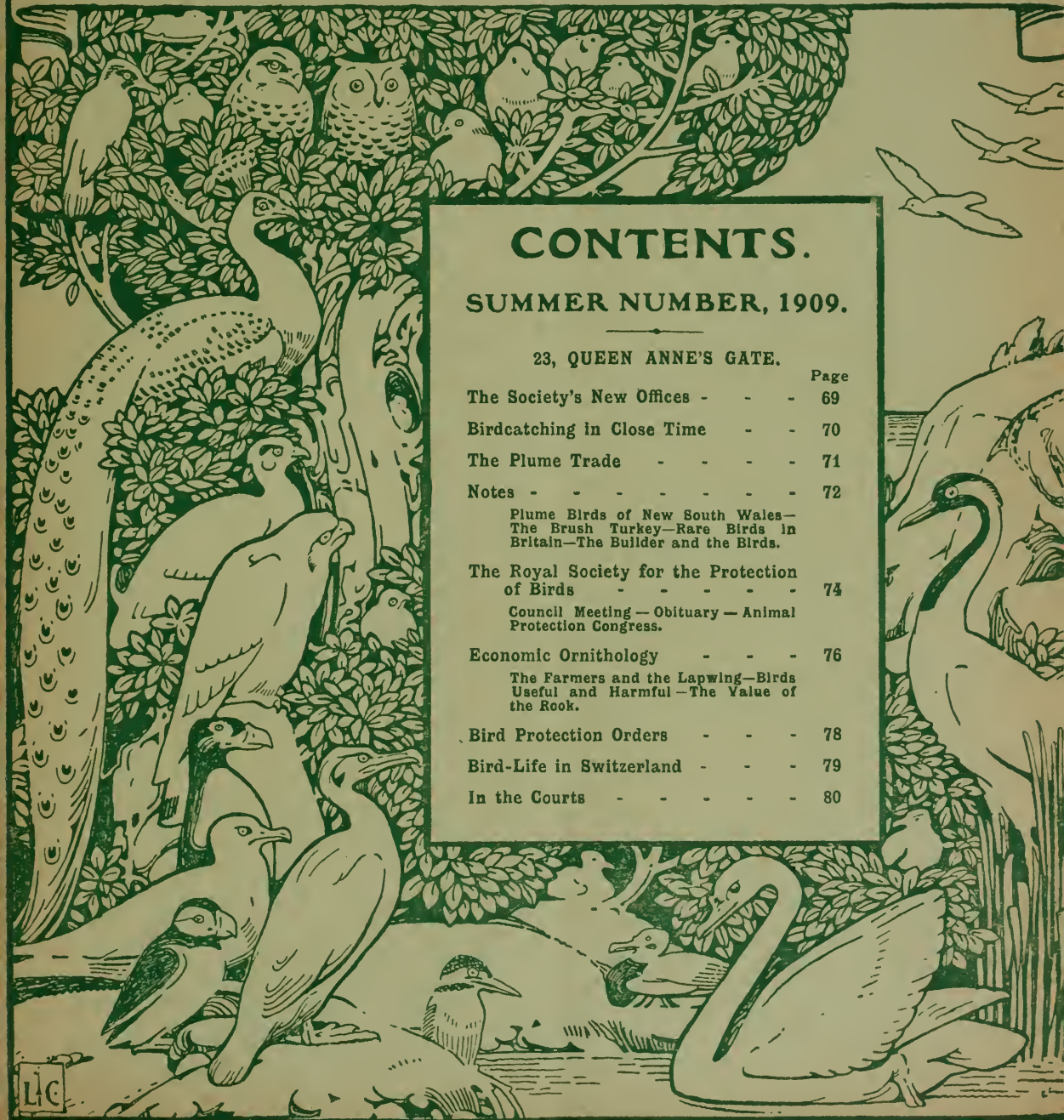
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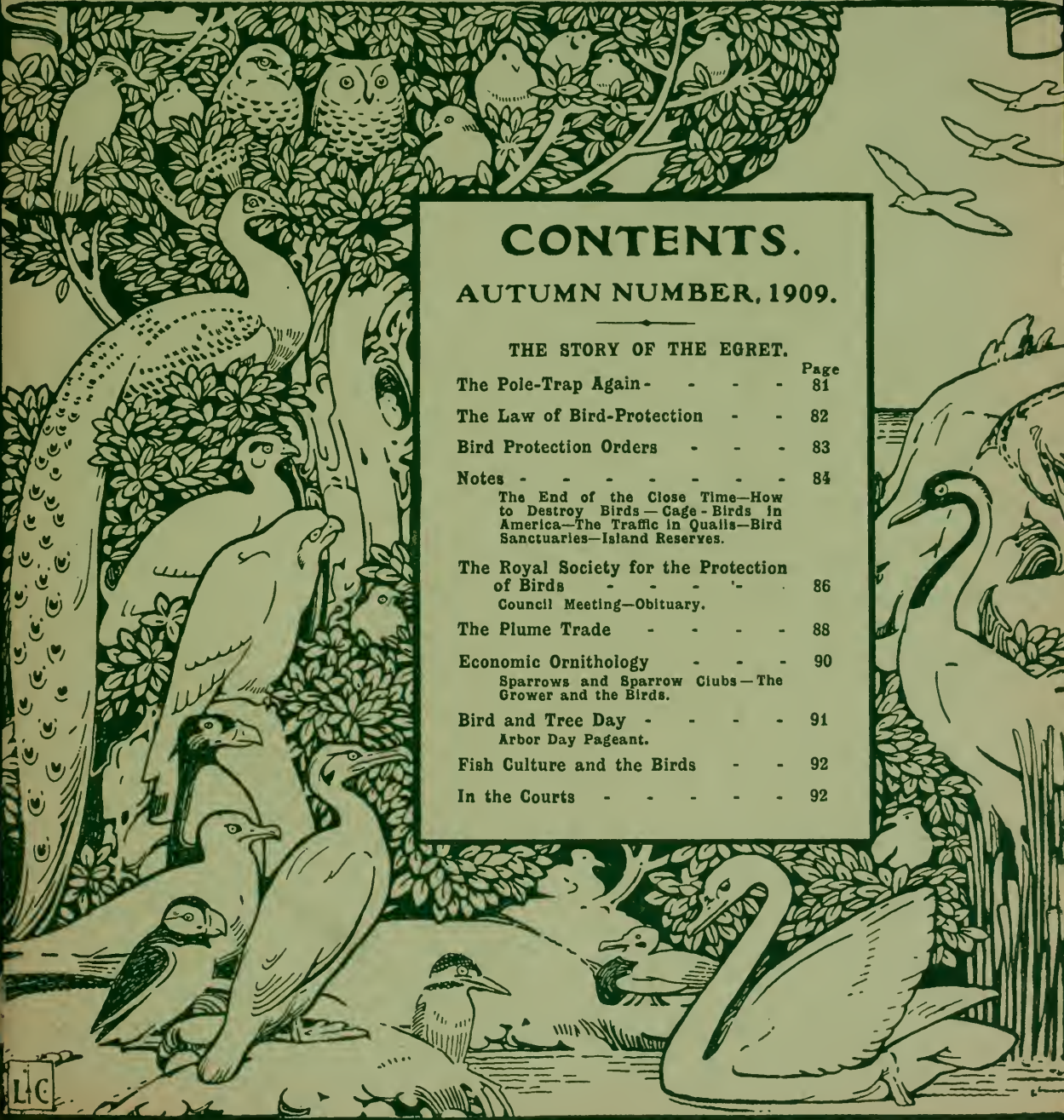
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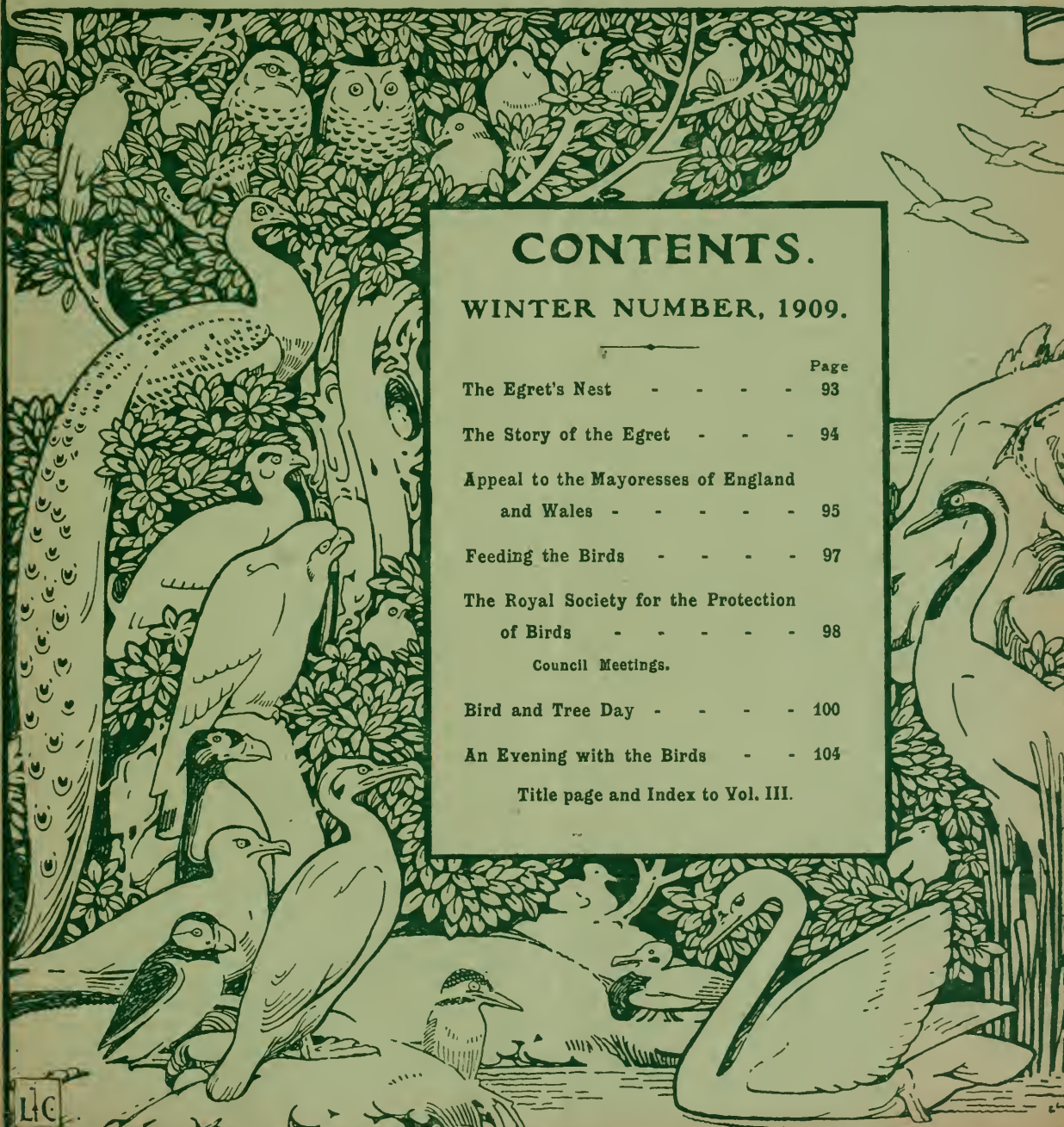
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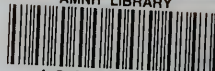








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