

Notes on "Bird Life."

No. 3. THE CENSOR.

This is generally considered a detestable bird, but in general condemnation the Regimental Censor must not be included.

Although both belong to the same species their habits vary considerably. Our observer has always found the latter a kindly fowl and comparatively harmless unless roused. These two sorts of Censors must not be confused with one another, although in appearance there is but little by which they may be distinguished.

Both have the same dull drab plumage with spots or stars near the extremity of the wings. In the case of Regimental Censors, these stars are usually three in number, while Base Censors have one, two or three, and sometimes the stars are united into a Crown-like shape.

Our observer had the greatest difficulty in obtaining correct information about the Base Censors, as they are extremely retiring and seldom show themselves.

After great trouble and difficulty, and by the use of extreme caution, he at last obtained a good view of some of them, and is now able to furnish our readers with some exclusive observations on these pestilential birds. Small colonies inhabit a series of nests, and it is here that they spend their time, fearing to appear in the open owing to the hatred in which they are held. One peculiar characteristic is their fondness for the colour green, all the nests to which the writer had access being full of squares of green paper resembling envelopes. They take a fiendish delight in tearing the squares or envelopes into shreds for no apparent reason. As I have said, their plumage is a dull drab relieved on the wings by stars. Their faces and beaks are usually very red, and they have on their beaks spectacles resembling those to be found on the hood of the Cobra, which evil reptile they closely resemble, being spiteful and dangerous to cross. They have no note or song. Indeed the only sound they are known to make is a grunt which appears to indicate strong disapproval, though what they can find of which to disapprove in the green squares it is hard to say. Their one pleasure seems to be destruction, and no one who has not seen them can understand how thoroughly their work is performed. Base and degenerate birds indeed!

The Regimental Censor has his nest in what is known to the naturalist as the "Orderly Room." Several individuals of this variety nest in the immediate locality, but as their habits are open and they may be observed by all, we may safely leave it to our Readers both to observe their peculiarities and criticise their habits.

(Next issue: "The Woodpecker.")

A Hunt in Burmah.

As you approach the Port of Mulmein, in Burmah, there comes

into view a beautiful piece of cleared ground and a green hill. On the hill is a white bungalow with outhouses, native compound and all the usual appendages of a Native and European residence of some mark. Also along the base of the hill are dotted the white bungalows of the Pilots, each in itself a picture of perfect beauty.

Our Pilot arrived on board, we duly started up the river. At dinner that night I was introduced to the Pilot, and I at once marked him for a "Brither" Scot, and a near by one at that. In course of conversation he looked pointedly at me and remarked that he came from Peterhead. Of course, the rest of the table laughed and started to "josh" us. However, the outcome was an invitation to spend a week at his farm. He called it a farm, but there are few estates in England as large. We had been sweltering in Basin and Akyab for months, both fever-ridden, rotten, pestilential ports in Burmah, with no shore leave for

anyone, so the Old Man condescended to include himself in the party.

The beautiful spot I so much admired at the entrance of the river, was our destination. It seemed our Host had married a rich native Burmese lady, sole heiress of a vast tract of land (canny Scot that he was). On our arrival at his place we were all made very comfortable, and our Hostess, who was well educated, and acted in all respects as an European hostess would, soon had us all at our ease. It was delightful lying at ease on deck chairs on the broad veranda facing the cool sea breezes, and for two days you could not have shifted us with iron crow bars. Then our host proposed a deer hunt.

As the report of the deer given by the Headman was favourable, we all started the following morning at daybreak. I suppose we went about five miles, then left our mounts and entered the iron wood jungle by different trails; my post was about



Lance-Corporal H s of the R.A.M.C., kindly applies a Plaster to a wounded Mule. The Lance-Corporal and the Mule, we understand, differed as to the exact location of the wound. The Veterinary Officer's decision is to be taken as final. Meanwhile our Artist has given the generally accepted version of the incident.