

countless numbers is unappreciable. They are magnificent birds and their presence adds considerably to the interest of all the coast whilst the presence here of this great rookery makes a sight that should prove a constant asset in attracting visitors to the neighbourhood. The Gannets are looked upon by most of the local fishermen with favour. To the fish-wise ones their actions indicate when the squid and herring, much sought for for bait, come and where they are and about how deep they lie. In foggy weather the cries of the birds act as a natural fog horn warning mariners away from the dangerous rocks of the rookeries and many a shipwreck has been avoided by the hearing of their timely warnings. Yet in spite of the uselessness of the dead birds, their obvious beauty, and some slight practical usefulness, I regret to say that they are shamefully persecuted. I have seen a boat containing eight to ten guns with unlimited ammunition, repair to the ledges for a day's sport (?) The results were seen later when the rocky base was littered with dead and wounded birds and their sodden remains washed back and forth in the adjoining sea. At one point on the mainland beach some five miles from the scene of the slaughter, within a hundred yards a dozen or more birds were to be seen where they had been stranded by the tide, but the saddest sight of all, was up on one of the lower ledges where pot-shots had been taken of the crowded sitting birds. Here for some distance lay a trail of dead birds still on the nests where they had been shot with the young pinned beneath the cold bodies of their parents. Other young stood disconsolately about until a humane heel or blow of a gunstock put an end to their hunger and cold. Below on rocks just above the swirl of the sea where they had managed to clamber were numerous wounded adults patiently awaiting death that lingered in its coming.

There is a movement under way by the Conservation Commission to reserve this wonderful spot as a perpetual bird reserve under the control of Dominion or Provincial authorities, but such is the conservativeness, to call it by its mildest name, of the local population that considerable objections have had to be overcome and it is still doubtful after three years of effort, whether the plan will succeed or not. Some day the local population will realize that these rookeries are a source of attraction to strangers and too valuable a local asset to be wantonly destroyed. Until some such light breaks upon the community, and awakens public opinion and a spirit of protection, the senseless destruction will proceed. It is to be hoped either that the protective measures will be completed or this awakening will come before it is too late.

## NOTES.

It is reported\* that the fields over which the battle of the Somme raged during the late summer and autumn of 1916 were thickly carpeted with blooming plants less than a year later. July of 1917 saw vast stretches of scarlet poppies, interspersed with acres of chamomile (*Matricaria chamomilla*, L.) and large patches of yellow charlock, glorifying what had been but a dreary waste of mud and water throughout the preceding winter. Half-hidden within this luxuriant growth white crosses mark the graves of the dead. Where shells left yawning holes, water has gathered and formed ponds, which are rendered more or less permanent by the nature of the soil. In and around these flourish the annual rush (*Juncus bufonius*), the smartweed (*Polygonum persicaria*), and numerous water grasses. Dragon flies hover about the pools, which teem with water beetles and various other forms of pond life. The woods which once covered the uplands have been destroyed almost entirely by the heavy shelling. Only at Aveluy Wood a few badly broken trees still live, and these rise from a dense growth of rosebay willow-herb (*Epilobium angustifolium*). The extraordinary method of cultivation of the soil apparently has increased its productive power. The underlying chalk formation has been broken up, mixing with the subsoil and the old surface soil, thus forming a new and very fertile combination, from which the various seeds, many of them perhaps long buried deep in the ground, have sprung with great vigor. Patches of oats and barley and occasionally of wheat are to be seen. These may have been sown by the Germans, or they may have lain dormant in the ground since before the war when this land was all under cultivation. Along the roadsides are traces of the old permanent flora; while here and there remains of currant and other bushes show where a cottage stood with its garden.—*The American Museum Journal*, May, 1918.

*A Check List of North American Amphibians and Reptiles*, by Leonard Stejneger and Thomas Barbour, issued by the Harvard University Press, is a work for which there existed an urgent need. The list has been prepared generally upon the lines of the American Ornithologists Union Check List of Birds. As Dr. Stejneger and Dr. Barbour are the foremost herpetologists in North America, students of the subject will have the greatest confidence in the book.

\*Capt. A. W. Hill, Assistant Director Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, England, in the Kew Bulletin of Miscellaneous Information, Nos. 9 and 10, 1917.