

PEAS A SUBSTITUTE FOR POTATOES.—Professor Huxman, of the Royal Agricultural College at Cirencester, in a report on the agriculture on the south coast, remarks that the vast extent of peas cultivated there strikes a stranger as somewhat curious, until he finds out that to a great extent they take the place of beans as a leading crop; and besides, that peas are even now used as an article of food amongst the poor to a greater extent than at present prevails in most parts of England. "Go where one will," says, "the hucksters' shops will be found to exhibit a large pan of fried peas, in the centre of which is a half-pint measure indicative of the manner in which it is retailed to the poor; and good and serviceable food it is. This is a matter of no small importance when we consider their value in a muscle-making point of view; did it be known that 1lb of peas is equal to out 20lbs of potatoes in real feeding and strength-giving properties, no country need regret the loss of the latter fickle plant, if it has a good store of peas to fall back upon." If this calculation be correct, a coomb of peas, weighing perhaps 16 stone, at 23s., which is more than their present price, would be equal in point of nourishment to 80 bushels of potatoes, costing, 5s. per bushel, £20. But, according to the tale of Prof. Johnston, which is more nearly in agreement with the report of the members of the French Institute, the proportion of nourishment in potatoes, as compared with peas, is out 1 to 5. But even at this rate, potatoes at a bushel are four times as dear as peas, considering their relative nutriment. Our guardians of the poor should remember this. *Mary and Norwich Post.*

A CALUMNIATED BIRD.—There are many well-known proverbs relating to the power of calumny, and the readiness with which evil report is received and retained, notwithstanding it has been repeatedly proved to be false and libellous. The common goat-sucker is a good instance of the truth of this remark, for it was called *aiçotheles* goat-sucker by Aristotle, in the days of old, and has been religiously supposed to have sucked its prey afterwards. The Latin word *capri-gus* bears the same signification. It was long supposed that after the bird had succeeded in sucking some unfortunate goat, the fount of pure was immediately dried up, and the poor goat also lost its sight. Starting from this root all kinds of strange rumours flew about the world, and the poor goat-sucker, or night-jar, as might more rightly be called, has been invariably hated as a bird of ill-omen to man and beast. As usual, man reviles his best benefactor, there are very few creatures which do such service to mankind as the night-jar. Arriving in a country in the month of May or June, it chases our shores just in time to catch cock-chaffers, as they fly about during the night in search of their food, and does not leave us until it has done its best to eat every chaffer that comes across its path. The damage which is done by these brown-backed, white-ribbed, hooked beetles is almost incredible, for they are only extremely destructive in their larvæ

states, but are scarcely less voracious when they have assumed their perfect form. Passing a life of three years or so below the level of the ground, the larvæ of the cock-chaffer shears away the grass-roots and other subterranean vegetation with their scissor-like jaws, and are constantly busy in satiating the hunger of their huge stomachs, which occupy nearly the whole of the body of the grub. When they have passed through their earlier changes of form, the cock-chaffers rise from the ground, and, taking to flight, settle upon the trees, and devour the foliage just as they had previously fed upon the roots. Sometimes a whole series of trees may be seen which have been entirely stripped of their leaves by the chaffers. I well remember seeing a row of trees that extended along a country road near Dieppe, that had been totally despoiled of their foliage, and which stretched their naked branches abroad as if they had been blasted by the destroying breath of the Simoom.—*Routledge's Illustrated Natural History.*

CANADIAN MAMMOTH TREES.—Few people have heard of the mammoth walnut tree that grows in the township of Metcalfe, and that one of extraordinary growth that stood, until Saturday last upon Captain Beer's farm. This giant of the forest attracted the attention of the firm of Smith, Williams & Co., of 442 Washington Street, New York, and, having purchased it of Captain B., preparations were made to lay it low. A number of people were invited to see this, the largest tree of Western Canada, fall, which at last took place with a tremendous crash. At one foot above the roots it measured thirty-six feet, where the branches commenced with four great limbs that appeared as large in their girth as some of the surrounding trees. As it lay, the butt measured twelve feet of its length. The wood is beautifully marked and variegated with knots and veins, and will work up into an immense number of gun and pistol stocks, and ornamental cabinet work.—*London (C. W.) Free Press.*

CENTRAL HEAT OF THE EARTH.—The rate of increase of heat is equal to one degree of Fahrenheit for every forty-five feet of descent. Looking to the result of such a rate of increase, it is seen that at seven thousand two hundred and ninety feet from the surface the heat will reach two hundred and twelve degrees, the boiling point of water. At twenty-five thousand five hundred feet it will melt lead; at twenty-one miles melt gold; at seventy-four miles cast iron; at ninety-seven miles soft iron; and at one hundred miles from the surface all will be fluid as water, a mass of seething and boiling rock in a perpetually molten state, doomed possibly never to be cooled or crystallized. The heat will exceed any with which man is acquainted; it will exceed the heat of the electric spark, or the effect of a continued voltaic current. The heat which melts platina as if it were wax, is as ice to it. Could we visually observe its effects, our intellect would afford no means of measuring its intensity. Here is the region of perpetual fire, the source of earthquake and volcanic power.—*Recreative Science.*