

British Cleanings.

The Destruction of Birds.

A CORRESPONDENT of *The Farmers' Magazine* writes the following remonstrance on this cruel and unwise practice to that journal. Many of its observations are as applicable to this country as to Britain. We, therefore, lay it before our readers:—"As the spring advances, I wish you would urge upon your readers the policy of protecting, as far as practicable, the nests of our song birds. It is indeed painful to notice how very much our birds have decreased in number of late years, and not the song-birds only, but with these rare and always interesting specimens. The gun alone has done fearful havoc; the net of the birdcatcher, the use of poisoned grain, and as the last, if the least enemy, the school-boy, have all done much in this way. Are we to sit silent until our isle has lost one of its sweetest charms? How strangely does this neglect to preserve our song-birds contrast itself with our countrymen in our antipodes, where the Englishman in the land of his adoption loves to watch the increase of English birds, and feel a kind of enchantment while he listens to their melody. It is with feelings of pity and regret that we witness day by day in our game shops long strings of larks and other small birds for sale. Surely the appetite of even the epicure will turn from these tiny morsels when he reflects that he himself is accountable for the destruction of one of the sweetest of England's warblers. I have often read with disgust how such and such a lover of the trigger has shot some *rare* *arcis*, as it is truly melancholy to find any man of mind who can rejoice at having destroyed one of the few specimens of some beautiful bird, and, I ask, have we as Englishmen any just right to go on to the end, annihilating every known specimen? I feel it will be said by very many, more particularly those who are game preservers, that they must treat many of these birds as vermin, but let us pause for a moment and ask ourselves if it is not barbarous to go on killing such illustrations of the great Creator's handiwork? as are we not rather bound to hand them down as His heirlooms to future generations?"

Provincialisms.

JUDGING from an article in a late number of the *Cornhill Magazine*, the English peasants still speak a language pregnant with meaning. Living out of doors, their words breathe an out-of-door air. Their images are picturesque and full of life. Thus in the northern districts a starving man is said to be "hunger-poisoned," and people are "bone-tired." Crops, when spoiled by rain are said, in the eastern counties, to be "water-slain," and in Westmorland, when they ripen well are said to "adde well," as if a notion of working and earning were implied. In Leicestershire a peasant will talk of a bee "kicking" him, instead of stinging him. In Derbyshire he will say he "tells a smell," just as in Exodus the Israelites "saw the thunderings" at Mount Sinai. The English peasant likewise christens his flowers after their habits. In the Midland counties the common goat's beard is his "nap-at noon," and his "go-to-bed-at-noon," and the star of Bethlehem is his "six-o'clock-flower," from their closing their flowers at those times. The scarlet pimpernel, from its susceptibility to the changes of the weather, is his "shepherd's dial." The orchis is his "cuckoo flower," because it blossoms when the cuckoo is first heard, and the arum, whose leaf is seen still earlier, is his wake-robin. Like Hesiod, he knows the seasons by these signs. He has, too, like his fellow in Germany, jealously preserved all the old religious names of flowers. We cannot any longer appreciate their beauty and their meaning when the maiden's garland is no longer hung in churches, and the marigold strewed on her bier. The saint no longer protects his flower. Yet some faint echo of a religion forever past lingers in such words as lady's thistle, and "lady's fingers," and "lady smocks," "all silver white," as Shakespeare sings. He has preserved also, the old names by which Shakespeare, and Johnson, and Beaumont and Fletcher, knew the flowers. Such quaint old names as "Love lies a bleeding," "Three faces under a hood," "Dead men's fingers," "Stops in wine," live only in the pages of Elizabethan dramatists and in the mouths of rustics.

HOW TO PURIFY BAD WATER.—Says *The Medical Times and Gazette*:—"We wonder that travellers do not carry with them a little bottle of permanganate of potash, a few drops of which would speedily purify any water. A friend of ours, who has just returned from India, tells us that he has derived the greatest benefit from its employment. In cases where the water was turbid, and tasting and smelling of de-

caying organic matter, the addition of a few drops of the solution of the permanganate made it in a few minutes as clear and sweet as spring water.

CHINESE SHEEP.—*The Farmer* (Scottish) states that much attention has of late been given to the advantages that might accrue from the importation of Chinese sheep into Western Australia, and an encouraging report has been received, which may stir up those colonists who entertain a high opinion of the Chinese breed. These are pronounced to be admirably adapted to the Australian grasses. The people of Victoria have taken the matter in hand, as well as the farmers of New South Wales, and are likely to carry it out with spirit. The sheep are large, and yield a heavy clip. They are said not to be subject to foot rot, and their increase is very great."

THE HEAD OF A HIGHLAND BULLOCK.—The Earlston correspondent of the *Kelso Chronicle* has sent the following paragraph to that journal:—"Mr. Mills, Hyndsides Hill, lately slaughtered a very fine Highland bullock of a cream color, weighing 70 stones. The head of this animal, after having been subjected to the art of the taxidermist, we had an opportunity of seeing last week. The following are some of its dimensions, which are extraordinary enough to merit publication:—The horns at the root measured 11½ inches; a line stretched between the tips of the horns measured 4½ inches. When the line was laid along the horns resting on the top of the head, it measured 60½ inches, and the girth of the head below the horns was 4½ inches.

HOW BONE CAVERNS ARE FORMED.—We learn from *The Farmer* (Scottish) that "a remarkable accumulation of game and other animals was discovered a few days ago by the shepherd of Corriemuckloch, near the top of the Sma' Glen, Perthshire, in a recess of the rock, which apparently had been recently frequented by foxes. The hole or den contained upwards of 100 head of grouse, thirty-five mountain hares, some partridges, four lambs, a young kid, &c. The large store of game and lambs appeared perfectly fresh, and had only been lately captured. The district in which the discovery was made has for some time past been completely overrun by foxes, and the ravages they have committed among both sheep flocks and game are beyond calculation."

THE PRICE OF LABOUR.—*The Builder* says that there have been at work two distinct and powerful causes affecting the rate of daily wages. One is the increased prosperity of the country, which has created a more steady demand for labour of all kinds, and thus has raised its price on the great principle of supply and demand. The other is the increased quantity of gold in the country, which has lowered the purchasing value of money, so that a pound will now no more purchase the same amount of labour that it would in 1849, than it will purchase the same weight of butcher's meat. The first cause tends to make the workmen better off, as compared with those who employ him; the second cause tends to raise his nominal wages, leaving him neither better nor worse off by the change.

THE STREETS OF LONDON.—We learn from the evidence recently given, before a parliamentary committee, by the Commissioners of the Metropolitan and the City Police, that there are in "the City" proper 440 streets, and in only 70 of them is there room for more than two lines of vehicles to pass at a time for the entire length, so that a vehicle may stand still in any part of the street, and not interfere with the progress of one line of traffic. In 111 of the streets only one line of vehicles can pass; 101 have no exit, and are not thoroughfares at all. In the year of 1865, 3938 summonses were taken out by the city police against drivers and conductors of vehicles and others for offences tending to impede the free passage of the public thoroughfares. In the metropolis outside "the city" 616 drivers of vehicles were convicted of furious driving, 140 persons were run over and killed and 1707 maimed or injured.

SUCCESSFUL TREATMENT OF HYDROPHOBIA.—*The Wolverhampton Chronicle* records the successful treatment last week of a case of hydrophobia, by Mr. Pope, surgeon, of that town. It seems that about a month ago a servant girl was tying up a dog which has since shown symptoms of rabies, when the animal bit her on the right thumb. She experienced no serious results until Tuesday week, when her thumb, arm, and chest became considerably swollen, accompanied with great heat, pain, redness, stiffness, and numbness, the arm being so stiff that she was almost unable to move it. Mr. Pope saw the girl on Thursday, and found her evidently suffering from hydrophobia, the result of the bite from the dog. On Friday night, she became very ill, biting and tearing at almost everything near her, and suffering much from convulsions. Mr. Pope determined to cause profuse salivation in the patient with the view of neutralizing the poisonous character

of the saliva of hydrophobia. This is a course of procedure not often pursued, but its beneficial effects were soon apparent. On Sunday, the convulsions and the spasms, from which the poor girl also suffered, had ceased, and there appears to be every prospect of her ultimate recovery.

RYE-GRASS FROM THE MAPLIN SANES.—Says the *Agricultural Gazette*:—"Among the many beautiful objects exhibited in the International Horticultural Show is one of more modest appearance, possessing some agricultural interest. There is a box of Italian Rye-grass, which when brought on Monday was in luxuriant and forward growth, having been sown last February on some of the Maplin sand, and since watered with the sewage as it runs into the Thames at Barking. In perfect health and growth, equal already to a cut of several tons per acre, and sown only three months ago, it is a sufficient testimony to the capability of sewage as a grass-grower upon sand. The experiment on a larger scale at the outfall, where an acre of the Maplin sand has been brought up, is in promising progress. The grass sown only a few weeks ago is coming satisfactorily, and, fed at intervals with dressings of the liquid manure, it will no doubt soon exhibit luxuriance equal to that in the specimen box at the International Show."

TO MAKE A CONCRETE FLOOR. The following recipe supplied by a famous English authority, is quoted by the *Agricultural Gazette*, and may be useful to some of our readers. Three parts coal ashes (those from the blacksmith's forge to be preferred) and two parts gas lime from gas-works, to be thoroughly mixed, and then made into a mortar with gas-tar. If the gas tar come from gas-works where the ammoniacal liquor is not separated, it will be sufficiently mixed for the purpose, but if the latter be separated and the tar be thick, it will set quicker if about one fourth part of water be mixed thoroughly with the tar when used. For the floors of cow-sheds, this should be laid about three inches thick in one layer, on an even surface of gravel, or stone broken very small with a sprinkling of gravel over, and rolled down. The mortar may be laid on with a common shovel, and merely patted down flat. In dry, warm weather, if the mortar has been carefully made, the floor will set firm in a few days. For any ordinary out-house, half the thickness will make a permanent floor."

MOST DEPLORABLE IGNORANCE.—A recent issue of the *British Quarterly Review* contains the following astounding—nay, almost incredible—revelations of the ignorance which exists among some sections of the British community:—"In Birmingham, 32 persons, averaging more than 12 years of age, including a young man of 20 and two young women, could not tell the Queen's name. The commonest and simplest objects of nature, such as flowers, birds, fishes, mountains, and the sea, were unknown. Some thought London was a county—one that it was in the Exhibition; a Violet was said to be a pretty bird, a Primrose a red rose, a Lilac also a bird; but whether a robin or an eagle were birds none could say; some knew not what a river meant, or where fishes live, or where snow comes from; and a cow in a picture was pronounced to be a lion. Multitudes of these poor children can never have seen a primrose by the river's brim, or heard the song of a lark."

NOTE BY ED. C. F.—During our British experience we have met with Cockney children who were perfectly astonished to see apples growing on trees; but we were quite unprepared for such a picture as the above.

HOW TO RETAIN THE COLOUR OF FLOWERS.—The following method has been given in a late number of the *Journal of the Society of Arts*. A vessel with a movable cover is provided, and having removed the cover from it, a piece of metallic gauze is fixed over it, and the cover replaced. A quantity of sand is then taken, sufficient to fill the vessel, and passed through a sieve into an iron pot, where it is heated, with the addition of a small quantity of stearine, carefully stirred, so as to thoroughly mix the ingredients. The quantity of stearine to be added is at the rate of half a pound to one hundred pounds of sand. Care must be taken not to add too much, as it would sink to the bottom and injure the flowers. The vessel, with its cover on, and the gauze beneath it, is then turned upside down, and the bottom being removed, the flowers to be operated upon are carefully placed on the gauze and the sand gently poured in, so as to cover the flowers entirely, the leaves being thus prevented from touching each other. The vessel is then put in a hot place, such, for instance, as the top of a baker's oven, where it is left for forty-eight hours. The flowers thus become dried, and they retain their natural colours. The vessel still remaining bottom upwards, the lid is taken off, and the sand runs away through the gauze, leaving the flowers uninjured.