

GEOGRAPHY.

WHY BIRDS GO TO THE ARCTIC REGIONS:—The number of birds which go to the Arctic regions to breed is "vast beyond conception." They go not by thousands, but by millions, to rear their young on the tundra. The cause which attracts them is because nowhere in the world does Nature provide, at the same time and in the same place, "such a lavish prodigality of food." That the barren swamp of the tundra should yield a food supply so great as to tempt birds to make journeys of thousands of miles to rear their young in a land of plenty only to be found beyond the Arctic Circle seems incredible. The vegetation largely consists of cranberry, cloudberry, and crowberry bushes. Forced by the perpetual sunshine of the Arctic summer, these bear enormous crops of fruit. But the crop is not ripe until the middle and end of the Arctic summer, and if the fruit-eating birds had to wait until it was ripe they would starve, for they arrive on the very day of the melting of the snow. But each year the snow descends on this immense crop of ripe fruit before the birds have time to gather it. It is then preserved beneath the snow, perfectly fresh and pure, and the melting of the snow discloses the bushes with the unconsumed last year's crop hanging on them, or lying, ready to be eaten, on the ground. The frozen meal stretches across the breadth of Asia. It never decays, and is accessible the moment the snow melts. Ages have taught the birds that they have only to fly to the Arctic Circle to find such a store of "crystallized fruits" as will last them till the bushes are once more forced into bearing by the perpetual sunlight. The same heats which free the fruits bring into being the most prolific in-

sect life in the world; the mosquito swarms on the tundra. No European can live there without a veil after the snow melts, the gun barrels are black with them, and the cloud often obscures the sight. Thus the insect-eating birds have only to open their mouths to fill them with mosquitoes, and the presence of swarms of tender little warblers, cliffs, pipits, and wag-tails in this Arctic region is accounted for.—*Spectator*.

A MOVING MOUNTAIN.—The object of greatest interest in continental Europe at this minute is a walking mountain in Gard, France, which is moving toward the river of the same name at the rate of fifteen feet a day. The advance has destroyed the machinery in the pits of the Grand Combe colliery and nearly a mile of the Alais railway. The great thing now is to prepare new channels for the Gard and Gardon rivers, which are sure, when the landslide comes, to be completely choked up. Six hundred persons have been obliged to leave their homes. The lower strata of the mountain, which rises sheer from the valley, are grit and green marl. Both have given way owing to filtration of rain. Recently 5,000 persons went from Nîmes to see the moving mountain. The noise it makes is frightful and there are wide cracks in all directions. Nobody is allowed to go on the mountain or into the valley on which it advances.—*School Journal*

DEATH OF NIAGARA FALLS.—Fifteen hundred years ago the terrestrial movements raised the Johnson barrier to the Erie basin so high that the waters of that lake reached not merely the level of Lake Michigan, but the point of turning all the water of the upper lakes into the Mississ-