

Held at the home of Mr. R. B. Whyte, Saturday, April 3rd, 1909. Present: Prof. John Macoun, Messrs. Whyte, Attwood, Clarke, Bond, Cameron, Campbell, W. T. Macoun, Groh, and Newman. As per previous arrangement, Mr. L. H. Newman acted as Chairman and opened the discussion on the following subject: "Certain Biological Principles and their Relation to Plant Improvement." The speaker outlined some of the principle theories respecting the methods of organic evolution and made some deduction from the behavior of plants in Nature which he considered to be suggestive of how plants growing under domestication might be improved. A most interesting discussion followed the presentation of this subject and many important observations were submitted as contributions to our knowledge of the various factors and circumstances which have a bearing upon the development and improvement of our domestic plants.

At the request of the Associate Editor of the Club in Botany the Chairman agreed to prepare his remarks in the form of a special article to appear in THE OTTAWA NATURALIST at an early date.

L. H. N.

#### OUR FIRST EXCURSION OF THE SEASON OF 1909.

The excursion of the Ottawa Field-Naturalist's Club, on the afternoon of the 24th of April, was not much favored by the weather. Although there was no rain, the sun even shining overhead in all its brightness, yet the thermometer hovered between 35 and 40°, which, together with a cold, fitful wind, made people shiver. In spite of that, about forty members and friends of the Club assembled at the Experimental Farm at 2.30 in the afternoon. This is not only one of the main show and beauty spots of the Capital, but also a ready source of interest and information to nature lovers.

Under the leadership of Dr. W. Saunders, Mr. F. T. Shutt, and Mr. W. T. Macoun, the big barn with its up-to-date machinery and agricultural implements was first inspected, and then the different breeds of fine cattle in the basement. The arrangement here is, as is to be expected, a model one. The different kinds of farm animals are certainly well worth seeing.

Next, the beds of fine crocuses in bloom near Dr. Saunders' residence were admired. Thence we wended our way into the Arboretum, where Mr. Macoun gave much instruction on native and exotic species of trees, especially conifers and shrubs, and pointed out differences between closely allied species. A tinge of sadness was also interspersed in his remarks, when he pointed