

NATURAL HISTORY NOTES

During the recent excavations at Chatham House grounds numbers of large feathers and bones were discovered. Careful study of these relics has proved that this portion of Ramsgate was at one period a Roman Ostrich Farm.—From Grey's *Poultry Review*.

The Hawkens, a specimen of which is in captivity at Chatham House is a small species of the splash hawk, and is known by its sandy feathers. It is usually found near running water, and while it generally lives by what it can catch, often preys on mag-pies.—From Southern's *Brooks and Birds*.

The savage was generally believed to be a very courageous and even dangerous being. We now know, however, that he is practically harmless. His sole object in life is to fill his stomach with solid foods and drink, then lie down and sleep off the effects.—From Prof. Graham's *Prehistoric Man*.

The Cate-mole is a curious and perfectly harmless little animal which lives on the banks of the Yarrow. It is valued mainly for its skin, which, however, is very thin. It is generally hunted with a spear, but is very skilful in evading attacks, and will sometimes even reply with a bite.—From Prof. Doak's *Little Rodents*.

The reed (erroneously spelt reid), is a long wiry growth which tapers upwards to a geometrical point. It is at best a mere weed. As a rule it is long and slender, but an isolated specimen has been known to assume tremendous proportions. This, however, is a pure freak of nature.—From Kenny's *Fungi and Other Growths*.

The Blue-bird is very prevalent in this country just now, and is particularly popular among the ladies. It is easily distinguished by its rich blue coat, with white bands round the feet. Some people call it "robin," on account of its highly coloured chest, which makes it easy to tell its back from its front.—From Clark's *Ramsgate Ramblings*.

The Lance-Jack is a specie of jack-ass, though somewhat of a mule by nature; his bray is very similar, but not so refined. There are several varieties of the L.-J., some—in rare cases—being almost human. Unlike the chicken, this curious animal wears his wish-bone on his right fore foot, just above the second joint. It feeds mostly on birdseed.—Prof. Taylor's *Beautiful Beasts*.

We have heard many describing the feathered inhabitants of the trees around Chatham House as crows. But the birds that sound reveille much earlier than Casey are not crows, but rooks. And we must not confound the rook with the crow; for while to rooks are generally attributed peculiar virtues, the crow is usually recognised as a bird of carrion and a feathered scavenger.—From Erith and Balfour's *Our Feathered Folk*.