

can be made by migrating birds, without leading them out of view of their destination. With shorter journeys it is evident the error of flight may be largely increased without endangering the safety of the migrants.

Migratory birds that are strictly nocturnal cannot cross any very great expanse of barren ocean, hence, unless their error of flight is large, and the land they wing their way to small, there is not much fear of their losing themselves. Moreover, if they do go wrong, dawn must assuredly bring back their powers of vision.

E. H. PRINGLE

Beckenham, April 27

#### An Observatory of Newton's?

THERE is a tradition associated with a domed building, now covered with ivy, situate on Stamford Hill, that it was once employed as an observatory by Sir Isaac Newton. Can any of your readers give any information upon the subject? Immediately beneath the revolving dome there is a well-shaped excavation (now partially filled with water) in which is an extinguisher-shaped stand, supposed to be of iron; this may have formed part of the base of a telescope, but no information upon the subject can be obtained from the local inhabitants.

CHARLES COPPOCK

Grosvenor Road, Highbury New Park, N., April 23

#### Waterton's Wanderings—Goat-suckers

ONE would like further information respecting the "nocturnal flies" which settle on the udders of cows or goats, and may be seen on moonlight nights. Many lepidoptera and coleoptera and a few hymenoptera are nocturnal, but are not known to adopt the habit described. Of the true flies, diptera, are any nocturnal?

HENRY H. HIGGINS

#### A STATUE TO CAPTAIN COOK

THE Australians have found a hero worthy of their worship, and Capt. Cook has at length found an English-speaking people eager to take occasion to honour the memory and the work of one of the greatest of Englishmen. The mystery of the reticence of our wealthy but unwieldy Geographical Society on the occurrence of the centenary of Cook's death, still remains unsolved; they did not even send a representative to Paris, to the amazement of the enthusiastic French geographers; was the weather too rough for the gallant admiral who we believe volunteered to the indifferent Council to go to the Paris meeting? We are glad for the credit of the nation that it has not been left entirely to the foreigner to recognise the greatness of one of England's greatest navigators and discoverers. Our readers may remember that some time since a statue of Cook adorned Waterloo Place, near the Athenæum Club. The statue was admitted to have been exceedingly happy in conception, and successful in execution; it is supposed to represent the great navigator coming within the loom of the east Australian coast, which he first saw near Cape Howe, to the south of Sydney. It was for this city that the statue was designed, and it was to inaugurate the work of Mr. Woolner, that on February 25 last one of the greatest demonstrations took place that has been witnessed in Australia since the first shipload of convicts was landed at Botany Bay. When we said that Australia had found a hero, perhaps we spoke too widely, for only New South Wales as represented by Sydney, seems to have joined in the demonstration to commemorate the centenary of Cook's tragic end and the unveiling of his statue. It seems to us a great thing for a people to have a worthy national hero, and since the days when Abraham begat Isaac, and probably long before, every nation of any note has had its hero or demigod in whom all the national virtues have been embodied. The Australians have the making of a great people among them, and while they have a right to count our gods as theirs, still no doubt they would like to have a Hengist of their own to mark a new starting-point in their

history. Happily, as we have said, they have found a worthy one—one whose character is in every respect worthy of their admiration, and the principles of whose conduct, if adopted and acted upon, will help to make of them a really great people. However desirable we may think the federation of our Australian colonies to be, any advocacy of it in these pages would be out of place. Still we cannot but think that it would have been a good thing in many ways—a good thing for the colonies themselves, and conducive to cordiality among them—had they all united to do honour to one so worthy of honour in all respects, and to whom, in a sense, they are indebted for their very existence.

Nothing could have been more successful than the gathering in Sydney on February 25, to assist at the unveiling of the statue by Sir Hercules Robinson. It was a universal holiday. Probably there were not much less than 100,000 people gathered in and around Hyde Park at the time of the opening ceremony—people of all classes who had voluntarily given up their work or business for the day, apparently, to a large extent, from genuine enthusiasm towards the man who first landed near the site of what in a few years has become one of the finest cities in the world. The statue seems to have given universal satisfaction, and the enthusiasm reached its height when Sir Hercules Robinson unveiled it at the conclusion of a solid and suitable speech. In his address the Governor traced in a sympathetic manner the career of the hero whom they had gathered to honour, from his birth as a peasant's son, till his unfortunate murder at Hawaii. Sir Hercules does not, however, seem to be well up in the latest evidence with regard to Cook's death, and seems, as of old, to have attributed it to mere savagery, whereas it seems pretty clearly ascertained that it was a blunder on the part of the poor natives. We have so recently written on the character and work of Cook, that it is unnecessary again to go over the same ground. Sir Hercules very happily, we think, read the moral of Cook's life to the people of Sydney. He was a man who eagerly pursued knowledge as his scanty opportunities afforded: who valued science, and endeavoured to do all his work by its light and guidance; who treated those under his command with the greatest consideration, and exercised the utmost tenderness and humanity towards the natives of the various islands with which he had any dealings. "Such a statue is creditable to ourselves," Sir Hercules justly concluded, "as marking our admiration of the character and services of the man, and our gratitude for the benefits which his discoveries have conferred, not only on Australia, but also on the world at large. . . . There is scarcely a lad born in this country who has not within his reach educational advantages superior to those which were available to the poor Yorkshire peasant boy, and I hope that the history of his early life may not be thrown away upon the young, but that many a child in the future will learn at the foot of this statue how a faithful, patient, cheerful attention to the details of daily duty, however monotonous and commonplace, will bring its own reward, and may perchance, as in the case of James Cook, leave behind a noble and imperishable memory."

While we regard it as right and proper that this fine statue should have been erected in Sydney to Cook, we think, moreover, the people of New South Wales would only be carrying out the work of Cook if they took some step to obtain a more thorough knowledge of these Pacific islands and seas, for a knowledge of which Cook did so much. We recently referred to the lecture given them by Dr. Miclucho Maclay on the want of a zoological station at Sydney; and we would suggest that the people of Sydney, helped by the other Australian cities, should carry out the work they have so well begun, by founding an institution, that under proper guidance would add immensely to our knowledge of the life of these interesting