hands, had been cast on one side, reduced to fragments, and finally buried in the concrete foundation of the new sewer, no one supposing that the discovery represented anything more than some modern interment.

My friend had, however, seen one of the skeletons complete and *in situ*, extended at full length, face downwards, in the clay, while I succeeded in gathering a basketful of bones, including fragments of four left-hand femora, thus, probably, attesting the presence of more individuals than the number to which the workmen deposed.

Some of these bones I extracted from the clay itself, the remainder being found among the excavators' ejecta. Almost all of them are broken and have their cavities, even the spongy tissues and diploë of the cranium, completely filled with the clay in which they were discovered. They are easily broken into fragments by hand, have little organic matter remaining in them, and a few exhibit indications of having been gnawed by animals.

The clay-bed itself showed no signs of disturbance, such as would indicate a burial. On the contrary, it was evident that the bones had been quietly covered with river deposits as they lay, and, although near each other, the skeletons did not occupy a common resting-place.

The remains occurred at a depth of 5 feet 6 inches below the surface, 36 feet above Ordnance Datum, and 3 feet above the highest known modern flood-line, given on the authority of Mr. Martin, engineer to the Severn Navigation Commissioners.

It is clear, therefore, that the clay-bed in question must have been deposited at a time when the River Severn ran, and its flood-loams were laid down, at levels higher by many feet than those of the present day, or, in other words, at some time antecedent to the historic period, during which there is no reason to suppose that our rivers ever met the sea except at existing horizons. DANIEL PIDGEON

Holmwood, Putney Hill, November 22

Fly-Maggots Feeding on Caterpillars

AFTER Mr. McLachlan's remarks in NATURE for November 20 (p. 54), on Dr. Bonavia's note upon the above subject, it is hardly necessary to say that your correspondent, F. N. Pierce (November 27, p. 82) is undoubtedly mistaken in saying that he has bred the house-fly, *Musca domestica*, from Lepidopterous larvæ. If he has really bred *Musca domestica*, it is a new fact, and I should be very glad to see a specimen. I have had some considerable experience in breeding Lepidoptera, and have frequently bred out Dipterous parasites; these have invariably been *Tachinids*, mostly of the genus *Exorista*. To the ordinary observer they very closely resemble *Musca domestica*, but the same observer would very probably call all the various species of *Musca*, *Anthomyia*, *Homalomyia*, *Stomoxys*, &c., which frequently occur in houses, "house-flies." The general appearance of many of these genera is very much the same, and the term "house-fly" is such a vague one that I remember a good microscopist once showed me a slide labelled "upper and lower wing of house-fly"! some Hymenopteron caught on a window apparently furnishing the materials.

The Diptera are unfortunately much neglected in this country, and many groups are very little known. This is especially the case with the *Tachininæ*, and Lepidopterists who breed them would benefit science by pinning the specimens and sending them to one or other of the few students of this order of insects.

4, East Street, Lewes, November 29 J. H. A. JENNER

YOUR correspondent, Mr. F. N. Pierce, in NATURE for November 27 (p. 82) merely continues the error suggested by Dr. Bonavia's note on this subject. It is not the larvæ of the house-fly (*Musca domestica*) that he has found as parasites on his butterfly and moth caterpillars, but the larvæ of a *Tachina*, a Dipterous genus of the *Muscidæ*, too well known among even mere collectors, I should have thought, for such a mistake to be made. There is of course a superficial resemblance.

M. E. S.

The Forbes Memorial

MAY I make use of your widely circulated pages to say that I purpose in a few days to send to press a list of the subscribers to the Forbes Memorial, to be bound up with the issue of the zoological memoirs of our lamented friend; the Memorial Volume is now nearly ready, and I shall be glad to hear from any of the friends of Mr. W. A. Forbes who have not already communicated with me on the subject. May I add that it was agreed by the Committee that subscribers should receive a copy of the volume for every guinea subscribed.

F. JEFFREY BELL

5, Radnor Place, Gloucester Square, W.

THOMAS WRIGHT, M.D., F.R.S.

IT is perhaps hardly sufficiently recognised how much the progress of science has been helped by the leisure-hour occupations of busy professional men. No branch of science has profited more from this source than geology, and no calling has furnished so many helpful labourers as medicine. The career of Dr. Wright, whose recent death is so sincerely regretted, supplies one of the most notable examples of a life apparently absorbed in the laborious duties of a medical practitioner, yet wherein time was found for the pursuit of a long series of original and valuable researches in palæontology. To those who knew him only as a doctor, it might well seem that his whole time and thought were given to the duties of his medical practice. Those, on the other hand, who met him as a geologist and palæontologist could hardly realise that he had any other occupation than the study of the fossils which he treasured and described with such enthusiasm.

Dr. Wright was born in Paisley in 1809. Having a near relative engaged in the practice of medicine, he chose the same profession for himself, and received the earlier part of his education at Glasgow. Before he had completed his studies, he was induced to quit medicine and take part in the development of the manufacturing arts, then making rapid strides in Scotland. But finding the change unsuited for his temperament he turned back with a sense of relief to the profession he had abandoned, resumed his medical studies in Dublin, and finally graduated in 1846. Soon thereafter, circumstances led him to settle in Cheltenham, where he has since spent the whole of his long and honoured life. His devotion to the healing art, and his bent towards a scientific treatment of his subject, were soon recognised, and he became successively attached to the Dispensary and General Hospital, and finally Medical Officer of Health for Cheltenham and surrounding districts. He was twice married, and leaves a son and two daughters by the second marriage.

In the early days of his career Dr. Wright manifested his love for scientific investigation. While still a student in Dublin he devoted himself with ardour to the study of human anatomy, and especially to the application of microscopic research in that department of inquiry. His eyesight, however, not proving strong enough to bear the strain of microscopic work, he finally exchanged that pursuit for the cultivation of palæontology, which from the position of Cheltenham in the midst of richly fossiliferous rocks, lay temptingly open to him. Ranging over the abundant organic remains of the Lias and Oolites of his neighbourhood, he chose the Echinoderms as his special subject, and began to publish the results of his observations. His early papers gained for him the friendship and co-operation of Edward Forbes. It was arranged that the two naturalists should conjointly describe the Echinoderms of the British Secondary formations, Forbes taking the Cretaceous, and Wright the Jurassic forms. The former did not live to carry out his part of the programme, which was accordingly completed by his colleague. The monographs on the Secondary Echinoderms were published by the Palæontographical Society, and form an enduring monument of Dr. Wright's patient and minute research. But while engaged in these investigations, he did not neglect other departments of Jurassic palæontology. In particular, he devoted himself with