

stray visitors—which may or may not be of casual appearance, such as *Phoca barbata*, *P. annellata*, *P. grænlandica* and *Cystophora cristata*—we have, as constant residents in our waters, two species—the common *P. vitulina* and the larger and more local *Halichoerus griseus*—animals that differ as much in some of their habits as they do in conformation and appearance. Of the former species we need say little, but concerning the latter the several volumes of this series have given much information, making abundantly clear that it is a native of our seas and therefore a true member of our Fauna, a position that, through want of appreciation of recorded facts, had hitherto been doubtful. But our authors, in this volume at any rate, exhibit laudable caution in not advertising its haunts, leaving those who can “read between the lines” sufficient indication as to where they are, which we maintain to be a perfectly fair proceeding on the part of writers in regard to species subject to persecution. If the hairy coat of the Grey Seal approached in value that of his long-eared and furry cousins of the Southern Seas and North Pacific, the life of his race would not be worth a year’s purchase, despite the dangerous character of the waters he frequents. Fortunately it is only his oil that is coveted by his would-be murderers, and that is not a sufficient inducement to them to follow him to some of the asylums he has found. We could tell of one where he feels so secure, from absence of molestation, that he will let a boat come within oar’s length of him before he rolls off the rock on which he is basking—and then rather with the air of doing a courteous act in giving place to strangers who may want to land upon the shelf. All the same we fear that one of these days terrible return for his politeness will come upon him and his kindred even in the fortunate islands we have in mind, and we must not dwell longer on this subject lest we should reveal what ought to be a profound secret. But we are bound to admit that the Grey Seal is not the most intelligent animal in the world, though his long, grave face gives him an expression of wisdom far beyond that conveyed by the chubby countenance of his commoner relative.

Of course the most important members of the Scottish fauna are at present the Red Deer and the Red Grouse—looking only to the amount of money they are the means of bringing into the country, though equally of course it is declared that the greater part of this amount, that which is paid for shooting rents, is not spent in the country. But we suppose the same might be alleged almost everywhere of rent of any kind, and heaven forefend us from dabbling in the mysteries of the “dismal science.” Concerning Red Deer much more is to be told than people suppose. The statistics of Jura Forest compiled and privately printed by Mr. Henry Evans, of which an abstract is given by our authors in their Appendix (pp. 239–244) may well set any one thinking, especially as regards the death-rate, which if observed among human beings in any part of the world would set that district down as more unwholesome than any known elsewhere. The mortality is attributed chiefly to what is known as “Husk,” which appears due to a “hair-like lung worm” (of what kind we cannot say), and reaches 20 per cent. and upwards among the male calves before they complete

their first year, and when we consider that this is on an island with a comparatively mild climate, where every care is taken of the beasts, the result is indeed extraordinary. It is only when the zoologist is brought face to face with facts of this kind that he can realise what the Struggle for Life must be of which he has read so much, and the depth of his ignorance about it. No wonder then we cannot explain, what seems to be quite certain, the dwindling, that in many places has ended in the extinction, of the Ptarmigan. Our authors appear to attribute it to the moist influence of the Gulf Stream, but we are not conscious of any evidence that this is greater now than it was twenty, thirty or fifty years ago and surely the reason must be sought elsewhere.

We have allowed our notice of this very pleasant book to run to an excessive length, so that we must here surcease from commenting on many passages which really call for remark—most of them for praise and only a few for blame. We certainly should not care to involve ourselves in the mooted question of the alleged Pintail’s nest or nests on Hysgeir off Canna (pp. 129–131); but we must protest against our authors’ countenancing (p. 167, note) the often-exploded but ever reviving fallacy of Rooks’ eggs being served up in place of Plovers’. The curious so-called “Tailless” or “Docked” Trouts (“club-tailed” would be a better name) of certain lochs are treated of by Dr. Traquair. They may perhaps be compared with the somewhat analogous case of the “Crummy” Stags of Jura and Mull, concerning which we are disappointed to find little or no information, which is the greater pity since the introduction of new blood has already diminished and will probably put an end to these interesting local “sports.” A few words must, however, be added as to the illustrations, and especially to those from photographs by Mr. Norrie, which are not only well chosen, but for the most part extremely beautiful. The maps too are all effective if not always neat, and the little sketches “let in” to their margins are as pretty as they are accurate. Herein, as throughout the letterpress of the volume generally, the islands are most favoured, and there is only one of the plates which illustrates a scene on the Scottish mainland. So we part from Messrs. Buckley and Harvie-Brown, commending their assiduity, and wishing all success to their next venture, whether Moray or Shetland be its subject.

OUR BOOK SHELF.

Gun and Camera in Southern Africa. By H. Anderson Bryden. With numerous Illustrations and a Map. (London: Edward Stanford, 1893.)

IN this book Mr. Bryden records the incidents which happened in the course of a year of wanderings in Bechuanaland, the Kalahari Desert, and the Lake River Country, Ngamiland. The region is one in which much interest has been taken lately, and colonists and settlers will find in Mr. Bryden’s lively pages exactly the sort of information that is likely to be most useful to them. The volume also includes many passages that will be read with pleasure by ethnologists, naturalists, and sportsmen. The illustrations—which are offered as “faithful delineations of places, objects, and people hitherto not often accessible to the camera”—add greatly to the value of the narrative.