

Daily the bird visited the garden till the bushes were cleared, and so the crop was saved. In Crowie this year these birds are numerous. I have a garden in a place in North Wales where this year there are few of these birds. The grub stripped the bushes of leaves, and the fruit died.

Worcester, June 23.

J. LLOYD-BOZWARD.

On the Diselectrification of Metals and other Bodies by Light.

REFERRING to a footnote on page 135 of NATURE, June 7, Messrs. Elster and Geitel have been good enough to call my attention to a great deal of work done by them in the same direction and published in recent numbers of Wiedemann's *Annalen*. The most important statement about it is that they had observed the photoelectric power of fluorescent minerals and the electrical activity of sunlight, and had worked for some time at the influence of these facts on atmospheric electrification; the idea that atmospheric electricity was thus caused (by the discharging action of sunlight) having been already mooted apparently by von Bezold and Arrhenius.

OLIVER J. LODGE.

Absence of Butterflies.

IT may be worth while to put on record what has happened this spring and summer, viz. the total absence of butterfly life. Beyond an occasional white butterfly, there are none to be seen. I have a large garden where there is usually abundance of them, but a coloured butterfly has not been seen this year yet.

Gravesend, July 2.

DELTA.

THE SETTLEMENT OF THE EPPING FOREST QUESTION.<sup>1</sup>

BY a happy coincidence the *Essex Naturalist*, containing the full official report of the discussion on the management of Epping Forest, which took place under the auspices of the Essex Field Club on April 28,<sup>2</sup> and the Report of the experts appointed by the Corporation of London, have been published almost simultaneously, the former having been issued a fortnight or so before the latter. As the proceedings of the Conservators had been subjected to a running fire of the most vehement criticism ever since last autumn, the question of the management of the forest may be considered to have excited an amount of popular interest such as had never before been raised since the public dedication by the Queen in 1882. The reason for the popular outburst of indignation on the present occasion is to be found in the circumstance that the thinning operations had been carried on in a district which is well known to contain the finest example of a beech wood that the forest offers, viz. Monk Wood, and the amassed heaps of felled trunks, drawn to the roadside for removal, naturally attracted the attention of every passer-by, and gave rise to a not altogether unnatural feeling of uneasiness as to the fate of the forest's show woodland. A fair and unbiassed examination of Monk Wood, however, soon sufficed to dispel any fears of unnecessary destruction or permanent injury, and those whose judgment in such matters is worthy of the most serious attention, did not hesitate to express their belief that the operations had on the whole been carried out judiciously, and for the future benefit of the forest. This conclusion was arrived at in many cases against the preconceived notions of some of the visitors who attended the meeting on April 28, and some speakers in the discussion with great candour admitted that the result of the visitation and the explanations given on the spot had been to cause them to modify their views. This

<sup>1</sup> *The Essex Naturalist*, being the Journal of the Essex Field Club, edited by William Cole, Hon. Sec. Nos. 1-5, vol. viii., published June 1894. <sup>2</sup> Epping Forest, Report of Experts as to Management, &c. Report, Epping Forest Committee, presented June 14, 1894.

<sup>3</sup> A brief report of the meeting appeared in NATURE, May 3, p. 12.

appears most distinctly from the speeches of such well-known friends of the forest as Sir Frederick Young, Prof. Boulger, and Mr. F. C. Gould, and it is only fair to add that many others who, without any special knowledge of forestal operations, attended the meeting, of which the proceedings are now reported, as lovers of the naturally picturesque, had their judgment materially aided by the opportunity given them for comparing portions of the forest which had been severely thinned in former years with other portions which had not yet been attacked. The arguments for and against the conservatorial doings are fully set forth in the *Essex Naturalist*, and will form an important chapter in the history of the forest management.

But the Essex Field Club has of course no official connection with the Epping Forest Committee, and although, as everybody knows, the chief executive verderer is Mr. Edward North Buxton, this gentleman gave his services as a conductor of the meeting because of his special knowledge on the one hand, and on the other as an officer of the Field Club. The decision at which the meeting arrived, as already reported in these columns, is in no sense an official utterance of the Club as a body corporate, but is simply to be regarded as an expression of individual opinions consequent upon a personal visitation and a discussion raised thereby. It seems desirable to make this statement in order to avoid future misunderstanding.

The Corporation of London, as the official Conservators of the forest, on April 12 appointed a special Committee of experts, in their own words, "to view the forest, and advise us forthwith as to the effect of the thinning, and our future policy with regard to the management of the forest." The names suggested were Viscount Powerscourt, Dr. Schlich (the Professor of Forestry at Cooper's Hill), Mr. James Anderson of Manchester, and Mr. William Robinson, the editor of the *Garden*. Sir Joseph Hooker was also asked to nominate two other members, and he suggested the names of Earl Ducie, Mr. A. B. Freeman-Mitford, M.P. (formerly Secretary to H.M. Commissioners of Works), and Mr. Angus D. Webster, formerly forester to the Duke of Bedford. Lords Ducie and Powerscourt were unable to join the Committee, but the five signatures attached to the Report may be considered as strongly representative of the art and science of forestry as the names of any committee of experts that has ever been or possibly could be brought together in this country.

Taking the Report as a whole, it will be seen that the Committee practically give their sanction to the policy which has been, and is being, pursued by the Conservators, and endorse the decision arrived at by the majority of those who took part in the meeting and discussion on April 28. Surely after this most weighty verdict there need be no further alarm as to the future of the forest. A detailed analysis of the Report would occupy too much space in these columns, but some of the most important recommendations may be considered. And first of all, with respect to the opening out of views and the making of clearings, there is no uncertainty about their statement:—

"As there is much beautiful landscape in and around the forest, the opening up of which would add much to its charms, we think that the best views should be carefully opened up by making judicious clearings. Such views would be in every way a gain. . . . The rides and drives are beautiful features of the forest, and those made in recent years are well designed. They should receive constant attention, lest the encroachments of vegetation should mar their picturesque effect. In this connection we would call attention to the beauty of the glades which already exist. These should be increased in number, where it can be done without sacrificing the finer trees, or interfering with the massive groups of the forest."