

which the young birds are reared; in the case of the shrike the diet is of a mixed nature, but is fairly uniform in the case of the wren. To secure a foundation for this theory it is assumed that cuckoos, when about to deposit their eggs, intuitively select the nests of the species by which they themselves were reared. Thus it has come about that each particular species of host rears the young of a particular race of cuckoo, the eggs of which, like those of the host, exhibit great variability when the food during the nesting period is mixed, and great uniformity when the food is uniform.

These papers are based upon a great number of observations, which are exhaustively analysed and tabulated for the benefit of those who may be fond of statistics.

THE YORKSHIRE GYPSEY-SPRINGS.

TEN miles to westward of Bridlington Quay, in Yorkshire, is the much-neglected village of Wold Newton, situated, as the name indicates, among the Wolds. It is noted as being the place where the great Yorkshire aerolite—exhibited in the British Museum—fell on December 13, 1795, but more chiefly as being the birth-place of several phenomenal springs known as gypsies (the initial letter "g" pronounced hard). The gypsies of Yorkshire resemble the nailbournes of Kent.

They are variable and intermittent springs of very clear and cold water, and appear on the surface of the chalk valleys. So freely do the calcareous wolds absorb rain, that they will allow it to pass underground as far as the blue gault on which the chalk rests. Consequently, there is scarcely a permanent surface-stream in any of the numerous hollows that lacerate the chalk-hills. The gypsies simply make their appearance in winter, or early spring, or at other periods after heavy rains, when the chalk is saturated. They will sometimes flow for two or three months, then suddenly cease, leaving scarcely a mark upon their birthplaces. They have been known to have been quite inactive for three consecutive years. The emission is often so copious as to constitute a very considerable stream, filling a drain twelve feet wide and three feet deep. This is called the gypsey-race, and it conveys the flushed tide through the villages of Burton Fleming, Rudstone, Boynton, and finally disembogues it through Bridlington harbour into the sea.

The principal gypsey-head is in a field on the left side of the road between Wold Newton and Foxholes. Another gypsey rises to the light at Kilham, seven miles away. It happened fortunate that a native of Wold Newton and I caught the springs all open last Eastertide. We trod over a deal of spongy grass-land to pursue inquiries at the gypsey-head, and were rewarded by finding water issuing through the grass where the ground was not broken, and elsewhere rushing with considerable force over the surface to the height of our boot-tops. Every one of these little eruptions contributes to the race, and by it gets eventually to the sea.

At the western extremity of the great west to east valley of the Wolds—through which ran the old Bridlington and Malton high-road—there is a spring in a bank about a furlong or two east of Wharram-le-Street. This is the fountain-head of the Wold Beck—once known locally as "Lord Carlisle's River"—which travels for some nine miles past the doors of Duggleby, Kirby Grindalythe, West and East Luton, Helpertorpe, and Weaverthorpe (a street of valley villages). This beck gradually sinks, and finally disappears below the surface before it reaches Butterwick, its sub-surface course being lengthened or shortened as wetness or drought prevails. Some say this beck next reappears at Rudstone; but, in any case, it no doubt feeds the gypsey-head near Wold Newton when the surrounding chalk is all well saturated with rain.

The race has been known dry for three consecutive years, while once or twice it has carried two or three feet of water in mid-August. On Christmas Day, about twenty years ago, it caused the village of Burton Fleming to be flooded, and a farmer I spoke to there said he went about wet-shod for a couple of months owing to this inundation. The gypsies originally shaped a channel for themselves. An attempt to divert this at Burton Fleming proved a failure, so a broad and deep drain of the dimensions already given was cut right away to the sea, and called the gypsey-race. When in flood, it looks like a pellucid trout-stream—twelve-pound trout have been killed on its banks; but there are no fish in it now, and the bed is for miles covered with long emeraldine grass, rippling like tangles of naiads' hair along the swift current. The grass hides the chalk and every pebble; there is no babbling sound; all Yorkshire besides has no stream purer.

Only a century or two ago there were still surviving, from the days of monasteries, many silly superstitions and traditions then attached to the mysterious conduct of the gypsies. In an old tour, said to be written by Defoe, we read that "whenever those gypsies—or, as some call them, vipsies—break out, there will certainly ensue famine or plague." In fact, as the overflowing of the Nile was to the ancients long an enigma, so was the rising of the gypsies, and may be yet so, even to some of the learned.

HARWOOD BRIERLEY.

NOTES.

PROF. SYLVESTER has been elected an Associate of the Brussels Academy of Sciences.

SIR WILLIAM H. FLOWER has been elected a Foreign Member of the Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences, in the place of the late Prof. Huxley.

PROF. RAY LANKESTER has been elected a Corresponding Member of the St. Petersburg Academy of Sciences.

PROF. G. F. FITZGERALD, F.R.S., will deliver the Helmholtz Memorial Lecture at an extra meeting of the Chemical Society, to be held on January 23, 1896.

THE Valz prize of the Paris Academy of Sciences has been awarded to Mr. W. F. Denning for his observations of shooting stars, discoveries of comets, and other astronomical work.

THE Albert Lévy prize, of the value of £2000 sterling, has, says the *British Medical Journal*, been awarded by the Academy of Medicine to Drs. Behring, of Berlin, and Roux, Sub-Director of the Pasteur Institute in Paris, for their discovery of the means of curing diphtheria.

ONE of the special features of the exhibition to be held at Berlin next year is to be an interesting and instructive Department of Horticulture. This portion of the exhibition is being carried out under the direction of Herr L. Spath, an acknowledged authority on horticulture.

A CORRESPONDENT writes that on December 12, at about 6.10 p.m., he was walking towards Brownhills Station near Walsall, when he heard a loud hissing sound, and, on looking round, saw a meteor falling, of a blue colour, and dropping sparks in its course. It was travelling S. 20° W. and apparently at an angle of about 20° with the horizon.

A DESCRIPTION of another meteor has come to us through the Meteorological Office. Writing from Oakford, Bampton, North Devon, Lieut. Wolfe Murray says:—"Last night [December 17], at about 6.30 p.m., I observed a very brilliant meteor. The