subsidiary maximum in April so neatly reproduced in the St. Helena wind has disappeared, owing principally, be it said, to an abnormally dry April in 1893.

Yet the evidence in favour of a connection can hardly be pure coincidence. The little rain maximum in April is not mere illusion. The fact that a seasonal variation of rainfall does show itself in the average of a few years has a meaning, and that its phases are closely similar to those of the arterial pulsations of the general atmospheric circulation accords too much with what may be called common sense to be altogether devoid of significance.

Sooner or later we shall catch the nimble imp that jeers at us to-day, and, if I mistake not, when he is caught we shall make him tell us something of the real secrets of these atmospheric relationships.

There are two considerations that may be mentioned. A disproportionately large fall of rain is sometimes regarded as an accident of little or no influence upon general meteorological conditions, but in view of the enormous quantities of energy involved that view can hardly be seriously maintained. It is true that on some days we get thunderstorms with heavy rain distributed in a most irregular manner, and for these at present no satisfactory explanation can be given, but it should be looked for seriously. Secondly, the rainy movements of the atmosphere in this part of the world are, as already mentioned, a south to north movement and a west to east movement. Perhaps we may in time be able to disentangle the effects of the various causes and find the regular sequence at present overlaid by the influence of secondary disturbing causes.

I have ventured to put forward these suggestions, which I frankly confess are deplorably bizarre, because my readers may have at their disposal methods, that I am ignorant of, by which a crucial test may be applied to the question whether there is any definite and, shall I say, useful connection between the pulsations of the south-east trade wind and the rainfall of north-western Europe.

W. N. SHAW.

TWO BOOKS ON ANIMAL BIOGRAPHY.¹

IN the second of these two works the author expresses the opinion that the first question which will be asked by the reader is whether the various anecdotes are strictly true. The question that presents itself to our mind is whether such books will be read at all, and if so by whom? The professional naturalist, we dare venture to say, will have nothing to do with them; they are not apparently intended for children, and for our own part we confess that to read them for either pleasure or instruction is about the last thing we should think of doing. They are what may be called "animal novels," and thereby differ to a considerable extent from the old-fashioned "animal biographies," under which head-

¹ "Beasties Courageous; Studies of Animal Life and Character." By D. English. Pp. viii+121; illustrated. (London: Bousfield and Co., Ltd., 1905.) Price 5s. net.

"Northern Trails; some Studies of Animal Life in the Far North." By W. J. Long. Pp. xxv+390; illustrated. (Boston, U.S.A., and London: Ginn and Co.) Price 7s. 6d.

ing we have, however, ventured to include them. In each instance the author takes a number of more or less well-known animals, and recounts their ordinary everyday life, so far as it can be interpreted, Mr. English giving this for the most part in what are supposed to be the creature's own words, while the American author mingles verbal with descriptive narrative. Both works are, no doubt, excellent in their own particular way; and, for the sake of authors and publishers alike, we trust that a sufficient number of readers exist to whom this style of writing appeals with infinitely greater force than it does to ourselves. To such we may commend each of the two works, for, in the respective subjects, we find little to choose between them.

Mr. English, very appropriately, confines himself to British animals (including mammals, birds, fishes, insects, &c.); and although we cannot congratulate him on the title he has selected for his volume, we are pleased to be able to record our high appreciation of his skill as a photographer, and of the excellent manner in which his pictures have been reproduced.

FIG. 1.—The Wood-mouse. From English's "Beasties Courageous."

The photograph of the wood-mouse herewith presented to our readers is absolutely exquisite, and cannot be surpassed. Moreover, it is by no means a solitary example of excellence, every picture in the book being of high quality, although some are, of course, better than others. As a picture-book of various types of British animal life the book would be hard indeed to beat.

Mr. Long, on the other hand, takes for his subject some of the more striking animals of the Arctic districts of North America, which he calls for the most part by their native Indian names, after the manner of "Hiawatha."

The first six chapters are, for instance, devoted to the white wolf, under the title of "wayeeses, the strong one"; but it is a little remarkable to note that in the glossary at the end of the volume this name is spelt "wayeesis." Other chapters follow on the wild goose ("waptouk"), the fisher-marten ("pequam"), the salmon, &c. All bear the impress of truth, and relate the experiences of one who has seen the animals in their native wilds. The most striking incident is perhaps the one depicted on the cover of the book, where the author had the good fortune

to see a wolf spring at night upon a jutting crag, where, silhouetted by the full moon behind, it gave vent to its "terrible howl." The illustrations in this volume are by that well-known artist Mr. C. Copeland, whose facile and truthful style stands in no need of any commendation of ours. These illustrations render Mr. Long's volume an attractive book for the drawing-room table at this season of the year.

SECONDARY SCHOOLS AND ENDOWMENTS.

AN INTERESTING TRANSFER SCHEME.

A SOMEWHAT novel proposal has been formulated for the transfer of an endowed school, with its property and funds, to an "education authority" other than a Local Education Authority under the Education Acts of 1902-3. This proposal relates to the Subordinate School at Rugby.

It appears that, for some time, there has been a movement in the locality with a view to the establishment of a technical school so as to organise systematically the scattered forces already at work. The Warwickshire County Council offered a grant of 1000*l.* towards the erection of such a school, while the governing body of Rugby School offered 500*l.* and a site on the grounds of the Subordinate School for the same purpose. These offers, however, failed to secure adequate local agreement—hence the above-mentioned transfer proposal.

According to the notice in the *London Gazette*, the governing body of Rugby School will apply to Parliament for an enabling Act "for the establishment, constitution and incorporation of an 'education authority,'" to whom that governing body may transfer the Subordinate School with its property and funds, and to whom they may make annual or other payments or contributions. This "education authority" would contain representatives of the governing body of Rugby School and of other local bodies (e.g. the County Council of Warwickshire, the Urban District Council of Rugby); any doubts or questions which might arise between the various bodies represented would be determined by the Board of Education. The "education authority" is to conduct the school "as a school for higher or secondary education . . . shall afford a good commercial education for students . . . and shall maintain the teaching of English, Latin, at least one modern foreign language and Greek, unless and until the governing body" (i.e. the governing body of Rugby School) "shall consent to the discontinuance of Greek." Other conditions relate to (1) the maintenance, by the governing body of the Rugby School, for the benefit of the students of the Subordinate School, of the existing system of major foundationerships at Rugby School; (2) the continuance of the engagements of the existing staff of the Subordinate School; (3) the borrowing, upon the security of the trust property, by the "education authority" of such sums for additions, improvements, &c., as may be needed—these powers to be subject to the conditions imposed by the Board of Education; (4) the maintenance at the Subordinate School, by the "education authority," of the existing system of foundationerships and scholarships tenable at that school.

A good deal of misgiving has been manifested locally in regard to the foregoing proposal, but it seems to us to be a step in the right direction. We confess that, as to nomenclature, the words "education authority" do not commend themselves to us as a suitable description of the new body to whom it is proposed to make the transfer. But the objects which may be secured under the proposal now fore-

shadowed are great indeed. To have obtained a gift which, if capitalised, would amount to between 50,000*l.* and 70,000*l.*, and to be enabled to utilise such resources to promote the educational and industrial progress of the town and neighbourhood of Rugby, are matters for sincere congratulation. The representative character of the new "education authority" will ensure the quickening of an intelligent interest in, and zeal for, that technical and higher education which the townsfolk of Rugby are seeking—including the actual provision of a technical school.

It is rather difficult to appraise rightly the action of those who have been disposed to reject an arrangement which, as we hope, is now about to be consummated. Possibly, upon reflection, they will become conscious, as has been the case with other erstwhile opponents, of the opportunities that are within their grasp. For this transfer provides not only that ladder which educationists are so anxious to erect for all those who can climb it, and who may thus be equipped for their several callings, but it will provide also an excellent object-lesson in regard to educational endowments and their administration for the public welfare. With potential issues like these, it is to be hoped that the inhabitants of Rugby and the neighbourhood will brace themselves for an effort in educational administration which shall inspire other localities to grapple earnestly with more exacting conditions.

NOTES.

LIEUT.-COLONEL PRAIN, I.M.S., F.R.S., took up the duties of director of the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, on December 16. Sir W. Thiselton-Dyer will continue to take charge of Government advisory work until March 31 next.

At an Investiture held by the King on Monday, Prof. G. H. Darwin was invested with the insignia of a Knight Commander of the Order of the Bath (K.C.B.), and Sir Felix Semon with those of a Knight Commander of the Royal Victorian Order. His Majesty subsequently decorated the commander, officers, and several other members of the National Antarctic Expedition with the medal in commemoration of the expedition.

A SERIES of meetings for the informal discussion of important contributions to meteorological literature, particularly those by colonial or foreign meteorologists, has been arranged at the Meteorological Office by the director, Dr. W. N. Shaw, F.R.S. Two meetings have already been held, and seven others will be held from January to April of next year. The subjects suggested for discussion are of great interest to students and investigators of meteorological problems, and the director invites exchange of views upon them.

THE next meeting of the French Association for the Advancement of Science will be held at Lyons from August 2 to August 7, 1906, under the presidency of Prof. Lippmann.

WE regret to see the announcement that Mr. Lewis Wright, author of well known books on "Light" and "The Induction Coil in Practical Work," and of several works on the scientific breeding of poultry, was accidentally killed by a passing train at Saltford railway station, near Bristol, on Saturday, December 16.

A LARGE and influential committee of leading representatives of science in many parts of the world has been formed with the object of placing a monument to the