

labelled as poisonous, and bear the name and address of the seller; but the latter need not be a registered chemist, as in the case of the scheduled poisons.

On the other hand, greater facilities are given for obtaining certain toxic substances used in agriculture and horticulture. In country places there has often been difficulty in obtaining poisonous insecticides, fungicides, and bactericides, as also sheep-dips and weed-killers containing arsenic or nicotine; it has consequently been enacted that these articles may henceforth be sold by any persons duly licensed for the purpose by the local authority. No doubt this provision will be a convenience in rural districts, and will to this extent assist the farmer in dealing with the pests which encumber agriculture.

C. SIMMONDS.

#### RAINFALL IN ITALY.<sup>1</sup>

THE Italian Meteorological Department has issued an important work on the rainfall of Italy. The tabular matter contains the total precipitation and the number of rain-days for each month of the twenty-six years 1880 to 1905 for 215 of the 700 rainfall stations in connection with the Italian office. The records are not complete in all cases, but fifteen years is the shortest period dealt with. The largest annual total is 90 inches, at Gemona, near the Austrian frontier, the smallest 18.6 inches, at Foggia. On looking through the tables we are struck by the fact that no attempt seems to be made to secure uniformity of exposure for the gauges. The heights above the ground vary between 60 metres and half a metre. A set of excellent coloured plates shows the average rainfall conditions for each month, each season, and for the whole year.

The seasonal variation of rainfall differs widely in different regions. In the extreme north we have a single very pronounced maximum at midsummer, while in Sicily there is an equally pronounced mid-winter maximum. The one curve is almost exactly the reverse of the other. Over the northern plains and in the northern half of the peninsula there are two maxima, one in May, the other in October or November, the latter being the more pronounced. Over the southern half of the peninsula the winter rains make themselves felt, and we find a principal maximum in October and secondary maxima in January and April. The preparation of the work has been in charge of Dr. Filippo Erodia.

#### SIMPLE STUDIES IN NATURAL HISTORY.<sup>2</sup>

THE subject of forest trees is such an attractive one and is just now so much to the fore that the little book at the head of our list ought to have a warm reception. It is well illustrated by thirty-two coloured drawings of trees, their leaves, flowers, and fruits, and the text is simply and well written. For children such a work is invaluable, and will enable them to identify trees with great ease. At the present time, when so much ruthless destruction is being effected in country districts by the wholesale felling of young and old timber, it is urgently necessary to emphasise the value of trees. This little book should

<sup>1</sup> "Le precipitazioni atmosferiche in Italia dal 1880 al 1905." Annali dell'Ufficio Centrale Meteorologico e Geodinamico Italiano, vol. xxv., parte i.

<sup>2</sup> "Trees shown to the Children." By Janet Harvey Kelman, and described by C. E. Smith. Pp. xiv+131; with 32 coloured plates. (Edinburgh and London: T. C. and E. C. Jack.) Price 2s. 6d. net.

"Animals at Home." By W. P. Westell. Pp. 240; 24 plates. (London: Dent and Co., 1908.) Price 3s. 6d.

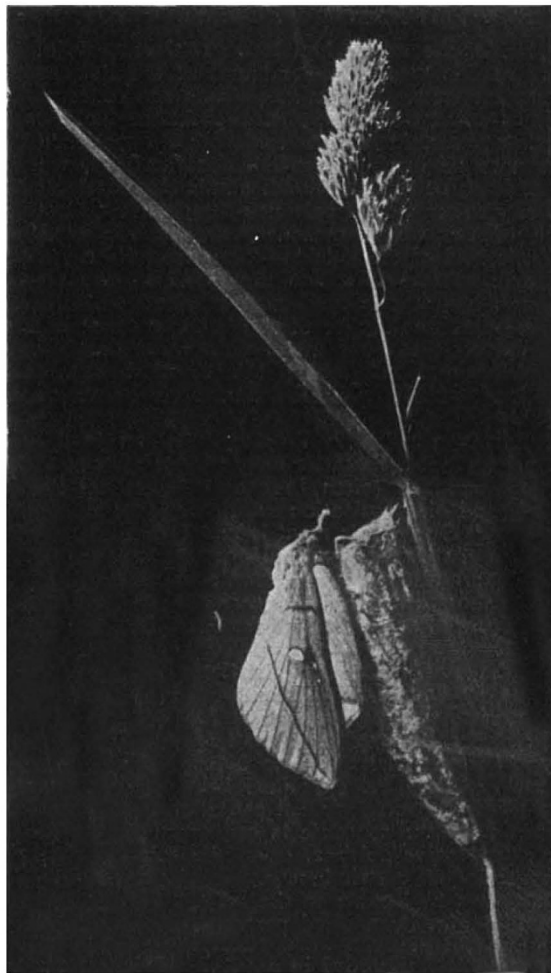
"Nature Study." By J. R. Ainsworth Davis, M.A. Pp. xii+274. (London: Dent and Co., 1908.) Price 2s. 6d.

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be especially useful, not only in teaching the different kinds and their uses, but also in nurturing that affection for the noblest of plants which must be more widely entertained if the policy of devastation is to be checked.

Mr. Westell's stories form a complete contrast to this unassuming work on trees. They consist of reprints from publications of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, and contain a series of sketches of animal life that is disjointed, unorganised, and sententious. There are so many good books on this subject suitable for children that it is difficult to see on what grounds this series has been resuscitated. The affection of the author for flies is



Drinker moth (*Oaonestis potatoria*) just emerged from Cocoon.  
From Prof. Ainsworth Davis's "Nature Study."

not a very discriminating one. The pupal stage of the house-fly does not last "some weeks," nor is the blue-bottle fly a desirable acquaintance. The style of the author may be judged from the following reference to the feet of the house-fly:—"The adhesive power of our little feet is not impaired when atmospheric pressure is removed," a sentence that is followed by the naive remark, "I have tried to make (this explanation) as simple as possible, and trust I have succeeded"; or, again, *à propos* of the lapwing, "Notice the lapping movement carried out, after which we have been accorded one of our English names," a sentence that is as cryptic as it is ungainly.