London parks, as has been the case at Hampstead, where the small bog above the Leg of Mutton Pond, in which grew the Sun-Dew (Drosera) and the Bog-bean (I used to visit them there!) might well have been left as a bog for the delighted contemplation of London naturalists. There was plenty of dry ground on Hampstead Heath without destroying the bog. There is danger of all such open spaces being converted into a common-place garden or a football field or a golf course unless the new society can extend its protection to them.

The purpose of this article is to invite all lovers of the wilderness, all worshippers of uncontaminated nature, to enter into communication with the Society for the Promotion of Nature Reserves, and see how far they can help in promoting its most worthy national objects.

E. RAY LANKESTER.

P.S.—The following series of inquiries issued by the Society for the Promotion of Nature Reserves will enable the reader to appreciate its purposes and mode of going to work.

Answers will be treated as strictly confidential, and will be at the disposal of the executive committee only. Name of Place. District and county where area is situated. Name and address of society or person giving information. (A) Is the suggested area worthy of permanent preservation as:—(1) A piece of typical primeval country? (2) A breeding-place of one or more scarce creatures? (3) A locality for one or more scarce plants? (4) Showing some section or feature of special geological interest? (B) Is the place recommended primarily for birds, insects, or plants? (1) To whom does it belong? (2) Would the owner be willing to sell, or could the area be leased? (3) Could you get local financial aid should it be considered desirable to acquire the area? (4) Is the place or site locally popular as a pleasure resort? This form should be filled up and returned to the secretary, Society for Promotion of Nature Reserves, c/o Natural History Museum, Cromwell Road, London, S.W.

## GOVERNMENT LABORATORY REPORT.[1]

FROM the report of the Government Chemist,[1] issued a short time ago, it appears that the work of the Department increased considerably during the year 1912–13. The total number of samples examined was 209,502, as compared with 195,170 in the previous year.

It is noted that many questions of a consultative and advisory nature, apart from those connected with the examination of samples, are referred to the laboratory by various Government departments. Above 600 such references were dealt with during the year. They included such diverse matters as the causes of the deficiency in the non-fatty solids of milk; the relation between the citric acid solubility and the availability of the phosphates in slags; the selection of suitable denaturants for growing tobacco; stamps for National Health Insurance; and the supply of lime juice to the mercantile marine.

In connection with the attempts to cultivate tobacco and sugar in this country, it is interesting to note that 224 samples of home-grown leaf tobacco were examined, and also specimens of beet-juice, sugar, and molasses from the recently erected beet sugar factory at North Cantley.

Imported dairy produce was generally satisfactory as regards freedom from adulteration. Thus fresh (pasteurised) milk was not below the statutory regulations for quality, and contained no preservatives or artificial colouring substances. Imported butter, of which 1223 specimens were analysed, occasionally contained a small excess of water, but gave no evidence of the presence of fat other than butter fat.

In connection with the supervision of dangerous trades, a large number of lead glazes, dust, and other articles were analysed. From works where lead poisoning had occurred, fifty-eight specimens of lead glaze were taken; in most of these nearly the whole of the lead was in a soluble form, and therefore readily dissolved by the acids of the gastric juice. The principal chemist notes also that important investigations were conducted during the year for the Home Office Committees appointed to consider questions concerning (1) celluloid, and (2) the use of lead compounds in the painting of buildings and coaches.

A large part of the report is devoted to an account of the work done by the laboratory in exercising chemical control over the production and sale of dutiable articles. The account is accompanied by brief outlines of the reasons for this control, and shows how it is exercised. For example, it is explained that the duty on beer brewed in this country is charged on the wort or unfermented saccharine liquid from which the beer is brewed; that the basis of the charge is a statement made by the brewer as to the quantity of materials used and unfermented wort produced, and that the accuracy of this statement can be checked at any time subsequently by analysing the fermented wort. That there is some need for such control is shown by the fact that out of 11,641 samples examined, 1628 were found to have been "declared" at less than their true value. In this and numerous similar ways the laboratory has become an indispensable ancillary of the fiscal departments.

The report shows steady progress of the laboratory, and records a useful year's work.

[1] The Report of the Government Chemist upon the work of the Government Laboratory for the year ended March 31, 1913. (Cd. 7001). Price 3d.

## NOTES.

THE meeting of the Royal Society on March 19 will be a meeting for discussion, the subject being "The Constitution of the Atom." The discussion will be opened by Sir Ernest Rutherford.

MR. LAURENCE BINYON, assistant-keeper in the British Museum in charge of the sub-department of Oriental Prints and Drawings; Dr. R. M. Burrows, principal of King's College, London; and Mr. A. G. Lyster, president of the Institution of Civil Engineers, have been elected members of the Athenæum Club under the provisions of the rule which empowers the