

the rate of admission of oxygen or air, too large a quantity, as well as too small a quantity, checking the oxidising action. He throws but little light upon the part played by the pyrites in the coal, a problem that has not yet been fully solved, but considers that the oxygen is mainly absorbed by the resins and the humus bodies present in the coal.

With respect to the storing of coal, he finds that any coal can safely be stored under water; lump bituminous coal, from which slack and dust have been screened out, can usually be stored with little or no danger; coal stored in the winter is less likely to give trouble than if stored in the summer, and in the latter case it is best if cool or cloudy days are selected; shallow piles are less likely to give trouble than deep ones; some coals, particularly those high in sulphur, undoubtedly heat more readily when damp; the ventilation of coal piles by means of perforated pipes or otherwise is very advisable; and, finally, a coal storage pile should be carefully watched, particularly for the first few weeks after it has been built.

The report is worthy of careful study, and forms a notable contribution to a subject of the greatest importance to coal producers and coal users alike, and at least as much so in this country as elsewhere.

It is significant of the British attitude towards the scientific investigation of such economic problems of great national importance that in Canada they are attacked by State institutions subsidised and supported by the State authorities, whilst in this country the work is left to private individuals and to private resources. Is it too much to hope that the attention of the Committee of the Privy Council for Scientific and Industrial Research may be directed to the admirable work done in Canada, and that it may decide that the time has at last arrived to initiate something of the kind in this country?

REV. O. PICKARD-CAMBRIDGE, F.R.S.

FEW, whatever their nationality, who have been especially interested in spiders during the last forty years have failed to make the pilgrimage to Bloxworth, where the Rev. O. Pickard-Cambridge, who died on March 9, had been rector since 1868, and to enjoy the delightfully informal hospitality of the Rectory. The famous "den" was no doubt their first objective, but those who were privileged to walk with their host in the surrounding country must have realised that they were in the company of a born naturalist of the widest sympathies, keenly observant, and on the friendliest terms with every living thing—beast, bird, insect, or plant—encountered by the way. There can have been few naturalists of equal calibre less revealed by their published work. This in his case was almost exclusively systematic, and was concerned for the most part with a single Arachnid order, the Araneina. It is true that he was selected to write the article "Arachnida" for the ninth edition of the "Encyclopædia Britannica" (1875); that he published useful little monographs

on the British Phalangids and Pseudoscorpions (1890 and 1892); and that he occasionally described a tick or a Tartarid; but these were excursions, and through a long series of years his leisure was devoted mainly to the identification and description of spiders.

This most useful and necessary work does not stand very high in the estimation of some zoologists, though it is noticeable that a worker in some other field—a morphologist, for example—forced by stress of circumstances to try his own hand at identification, soon acquires an added respect for the necessary qualifications. In any case, it is on his work as a systematist that the reputation of Pickard-Cambridge is solidly based. His natural *flair* for minute points of difference, his facility as a draughtsman, his tireless patience, and his unflagging enthusiasm through a long series of years were his equipment for his self-imposed task. The mantle of John Blackwall fell upon him. He set himself to continue Blackwall's work, and to him he dedicated, in 1881, his most important book, "The Spiders of Dorset," "as a small token of long friendship and respect, as well as of gratitude for constant and ready assistance in the study of spiders during the last twenty-five years." This book (its title is altogether too modest) still remains essential to the student of British spiders, supplemented by the papers since annually published by its author in the Proceedings of the Dorset Field Club, and by his "List of British and Irish Spiders" (1900).

As regards exotic species, Mr. Pickard-Cambridge published brochures on spiders collected by himself in Palestine and Egypt (Proc. Zool. Soc., 1872-4-6), and on collections by members of his family, private friends, or scientific expeditions from various regions; but his chief work in this field was in connection with the "Biologia Centrali Americana." The task of dealing with the mass of material involved proved eventually beyond his powers, and failing health obliged him to hand it over to his nephew, the late Frederic O. Pickard-Cambridge, but he continued his work on the native Arachnid fauna until the end.

Many will miss the help he was always eager to give to those who applied to him for information or advice, and not a few will mourn the loss of a picturesque and interesting personality.

NOTES.

THE annual meeting of the British Association, arranged to be held at Bournemouth in September next, has been cancelled; and there will be no meeting, therefore, this year. The two main considerations which have led to this decision are the restriction of railway communication and difficulties of accommodation on account of buildings being required for various national purposes. There will probably be a meeting of the General Committee of the association in London to receive reports and transact other business.

It is refreshing to note that some of the museums of this country, by making themselves of immediate use, are justifying the authorities who have kept