no evidence, past or present, that the green woodpecker has been a native of Scotland.

In naming the brown trout *Salmo trutta*, I followed the considered opinion of such an expert in fish nomenclature as Mr. C. T. Regan, of the British Museum (Natural History); my statement regarding the success of the introduction of Loch Leven trout to New Zealand did not pretend to record any first achieved success, and as it stands is correct; and the two "caricatures, and poor at that," specified by your reviewer happen to be reproduced from photographs of specimens mounted by skilled taxidermists, and now exhibited in the Royal Scottish Museum.

JAMES RITCHIE.

I SHOULD be sorry indeed if, in reviewing his book, I had given Dr. Ritchie the impression that I undervalued it as a contribution to prehistoric research. I did no more than express difficulty in accompanying Dr. Ritchie to the full extent of his conclusions, and surprise that, from first to last, he takes no notice of the 25-ft. beach.

I admit that I expressed myself too positively in saying that it was "clear that the land ice was grinding over all after the elevation which formed the younger 25-ft. beach." But many years of personal examination of the features of the Scottish seaboard have left on my mind a strong impression that some agent more powerful than sub-aerial denudation has masked or obliterated by far the greater extent of the 50-ft. beach. Such an agent may have been subsidence, glacial action, or "trail" (earth thawing and flowing after prolonged freezing, as in the "earth-glaciers" of the Rockies).

Some support to this view may be found in the late Prof. James Geikie's Munro lectures, "Antiquity of Man in Europe," 1914: "At the head of Loch Torridon well-formed terminal moraines rest directly upon the 45-50-ft. beach" (p. 273).

Prof. Geikie considered (p. 279) that the formation of that beach was followed by "partial subsidence," and continued:

"We cannot actually demonstrate that snowfields and glaciers reappeared at this stage. . . . Nevertheless, we are not without evidence suggestive of the appearance at this time of inconsiderable glaciers amongst our highest mountains. These glaciers undoubtedly existed at a later date than the glaciers that dropped their moraines on the 45-50-ft. beach. It is therefore only reasonable to infer that the high-level corrie glaciers in question were probably contemporaneous with the formation of the 25-ft. to 30-ft. beach."

The occurrence of kitchen-middens on the 50-ft. beach can scarcely be taken to prove the presence of man when the sea stood at that level. On the summit of the Fell of Barhullion in Wigtownshire, 450 ft. above the present sea-level and $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles distant from the nearest beach, are the remains of a fortified enclosure. The refuse-heap of this encampment contains a large quantity of limpet-shells. Loch Spouts, in Ayrshire, is on high ground two or three miles from the sea. Dr. Munro has recorded that when the crannog in that swamp was explored, in the midden were found "large quantities of the shells of whelks, limpets, and hazel-nuts" ("Lake-dwellings of Europe," p. 420).

Prof. Geikie cited the discovery of a canoe near Perth as evidence that Neolithic man was in occupation when the sea washed the 50-ft. beach. I have been unable to find any detailed record of the finding of this canoe, and if, as Prof. Geikie says, it was made of pine, I should hold that to be incompatible with very high antiquity. Having taken part in the excavation of many crannogs, I have never seen any

submerged timber, except oak and yew, that retained a firmer consistency than cheese.

Dr. Ritchie expresses the opinion that "there seems to be . . . no evidence, past or present, that the green woodpecker has been a native of Scotland." In Wallis's "History of Northumberland," 1769, vol. i., p. 319, it is stated that this species "has been observed in some of our vale-woods, but is not common. It was frequent in Dilston Park before the wood was cut down." Two instances of its occurrence in the valley of the Tweed are recorded in Mr. Evans's "Fauna of the Tweed Area," p. 109. Dr. Ritchie seems to be in error in attributing to Newton and Yarrell the use of the name "woodwall" as a generic term for all three British species of woodpecker. Yarrell strictly confines it to the green woodpecker, though he admits that Willughby and Ray use the term in a looser sense ("British Birds," third edition, vol. ii., p. 149), while Newton merely mentions it among the popular names for woodpeckers in general. The great and lesser spotted woodpeckers do not utter any song or bell-like note, and it seems fairly clear that it is the green woodpecker that figures in the ballad of Robin Hood (*cura Ritson*):

The Woodwale sang and would not cease,
Sitting upon a spay,
So loud he wakened Robin Hood
In the Greenwood where he lay.

It is probable that the green woodpecker, yaffle, or woodwale disappeared from Scotland with the forest that sheltered it. THE REVIEWER.

Literature for Men of Letters and Science in Russia.

At the beginning of this year an appeal was issued for funds to enable a certain number of scientific and literary publications to be sent to the House of Science and the House of Literature in Petersburg, where the remnant of the intellectual life of Russia is mostly congregated. The British Committee for Aiding Men of Letters and Science in that country has assured itself that such publications will reach their destination, and has made arrangements for their transmission. There are probably many authors who would be willing to send copies of their works in the form of excerpts or otherwise to Russian workers who have been cut off from the outside world since the revolution. The British Committee will be glad to receive any such books or papers of a non-political type and to send them to Petersburg. It cannot guarantee delivery to individuals, but it can ensure that publications will reach the Houses of Literature and Science. Parcels for transmission should be addressed to the above Committee, care of Messrs. Wm. Dawson and Sons, Ltd., Continental Department, Rolls Buildings, Fetter Lane, E.C.4.

L. F. SCHUSTER.

British Science Guild Offices, 6 John Street,
Adelphi, London, W.C.2, January 26.

The Mild Weather.

APROPOS of Mr. Charles Harding's letter (NATURE, January 20), one result of the extraordinary weather in the south of England since the third week of December was that on January 24 I saw forty or fifty plants in flower of the minute Crucifer (*Hutchinsia petraea*) on limestone screes close to Bristol. Some of the seedlings were 2 in. high, with five or six flowering heads and with seed-pods already developed. Last year a few were in flower on February 12, but even this is remarkably early, for March-April is the usual time in the district for this rare plant, and most of the books give March-May. On January 5 I saw a hazel in full blossom between Gunnersbury and Kew.

H. STUART THOMPSON.

5 Westbourne Place, Clifton, January 30.