

was happening before the last century closed, but the new, resolute policy of nursing the forests and making of them an important export industry is one which has only taken shape since the War. The prophecies of those who thought that, with the greater use of steel and concrete in building, timber would largely become unnecessary have not been fulfilled. The demand is greater than ever, and the trade in timber between New Zealand and Great Britain is one which chiefly waits on marketing skill to grow.

### The Rhinoceros as Medicine

There is a rough justice about Nature, the hag, and those animals which are the least ornamental are commonly the most useful. No need to think only of the foolish sheep. The rhinoceros is not one for looks, but he is most potent physic. When wise statistical men inquire why he is so scarce, those who know their jungle reply that he is much sought after by the natives. Hardy tribesmen with sick aunts will go to almost any length to kill a rhinoceros, such is the value of his powdered horn, of his blood, of the other ingredients in his redoubtable composition. In India, says SIR HUGH WATSON, he is worth as much as £200 to a native hunter, and this is without there being as yet much European demand for pieces of him done up in white paper with red sealing wax by dispensing chemists. It is probably yet one more case of reflected glory. Every one knows of the magic virtue of the unicorn's horn, which purifies at a stirring the most poisonous and fetid waters, and is, when it can be obtained, a sovereign remedy. The rhinoceros is not the unicorn, but he has been confused with him, and is at any rate roughly the same idea, and must be made to serve now that our ancestors have used up what unicorns there were.

The healing art depends largely upon faith, and the medical profession rightly says that histories of medicine are rather a mistake. Treatment has varied a great deal and no doubt will again. What matters is that people still trust their physicians as at any rate knowing rather more than they do themselves. The vendors of patent medicines have a just answer to those who say that most of their costs are advertising costs, that by unremitting advertising faith is built up and sustained, so that the proprietary article enters the ailing body attended by the shades of past advertisements and to the echoes of repeated public praises which make faith easy in the desperate hour. If this is so, why, we may ask, has not more use been made of the great reputations for health and vigour of the larger and stronger animals? It requires little imagination for the anaemic man to think that the blood of lions and tigers is bound to do him good, or that elephant extract must be good alike for wasting and for neurasthenic complaints. The Indians who rub in rhinoceros ointment, or eat, slowly and painfully, some ultimately digestible portion of the hide, have all the time before their minds the image of a strong character with strength enough for two. The makers of pills and tonics have handicapped themselves by relying so much upon the vegetable and mineral kingdoms, which do not enjoy at all the same prestige as jungle animals. There are many firm legal decisions which show that to call a preparation by a certain name does not mean that it must not consist of anything else; there can be blends. What is needed is to capitalize for the healing art the names which everybody learns so young and respects so much. If only the cod had made more of a name for himself as someone to look up to, so that the intimacy was seen as a privilege, children would not shrink as they do from his excellent liver oil.

owners, small and great, to regard the putting in of hardwood trees, singly or in plantations, as a high public service, an act of patriotism done for posterity. The idea of this form of generosity already appeals to many persons and would appeal to more if it were more often urged in the Press and in private conversation.

Yours faithfully,

G. M. TREVELYAN.

Cambridge, Nov. 17.

### TO THE EDITOR OF THE TIMES

Sir,—I should be grateful if you would allow me space to express the pleasure with which I read in your issue of November 14 the protest raised by your correspondent against the very small percentage of hardwood trees included in the Forestry Commission's afforestation schemes.

The federation I represent has on very many occasions since the Commission was first created raised similar protests, but on business and economic grounds. To these protests the answer has always been that the funds at the disposal of the Commission are inadequate and insufficient to allow them to purchase land of the value necessary for the satisfactory growth of hardwood trees. In addition, owing to the fact that manufactured foreign and imperial hardwoods are allowed to enter this country in unlimited quantities and largely at uneconomic prices the sawmills of our land are working at only 50 per cent. capacity, and the landowner receives for his standing timber prices which offer no inducement to him to replant his woodlands.

Far more quickly than your correspondent imagines will this country become entirely dependent on countries overseas for its supply of hardwoods, and not only will our land "have lost its principal charm by the disappearance of the old English forest trees—oak, beech, ash, elm, and sycamore"—but with them will have passed the foresters, woodmen, woodfellers, wood-leaders, and large numbers of sawyers, and land capable of producing the finest hardwood, and very little if anything else, will have passed out of cultivation.

Yours faithfully,

HERBERT E. NEWSUM (President).

Federated Home Grown Timber Merchants' Associations, 69, Cannon Street, E.C.4, Nov. 16.

### BLOOD-SUCKING FLIES

#### TO THE EDITOR OF THE TIMES

Sir,—In view of the widespread interest evoked by Captain Guy Dollman's letter in your issue of November 5 perhaps you will kindly permit me to make a few remarks on the subject, and incidentally to correct certain misconceptions on the part of other correspondents.

The common cleg (*Haematopota pluvialis*) is generally distributed throughout the British Isles, and breeds in damp or marshy ground. As a result of two dry, hot summers in succession many such breeding-places have doubtless disappeared, thus causing the flies to concentrate in suitable spots which have escaped desiccation. On the other hand, high temperatures, by accelerating breeding, would increase the abnormal local abundance of the insect, which in its turn would be followed by dispersal in search of food. In addition to the cleg, many other species of horse-flies (Tabanidae), some of them of large size, are found in this country; but, as those who served with the Vologda Field Force in 1919 have good reason to know, perhaps nowhere are these bloodthirsty insects a greater pest than in the forests of North Russia. So excessively numerous and aggressive are these flies in the Gdov district of the Leningrad Government during July that agricultural operations have perforce to be carried on at night; and in parts of Siberia, for the same reason, settlers have been compelled to abandon the infested zone.

It may interest your readers to know that motor-cars, either in motion or at rest, have a peculiar attraction for certain species of horse-flies. I have seen this myself in Palestine, when a car travelling at 20 m.p.h. was pursued by two different kinds of *Tabanus*, and similar observations, with both moving and stationary cars, have been made by Dr. A. E. Cameron in Saskatchewan, Canada. Dr. Cameron tells me that, using a resting car as "bait," he has on more than one occasion caught as many as 300 *Tabanus* in an hour.

May I point out that the cleg, like all other kinds of blood-sucking flies, including mosquitoes, bites but does not "sting," and that the only insects capable of stinging are ants, bees, wasps, and hornets?

Lastly, your correspondent who wrote of the annoyance caused by blood-sucking flies in Cornwall indoors was most certainly not referring to the cleg or any other species of horse-fly, but to the so-called stable-fly (*Stomoxys calcitrans*). This troublesome insect, which behaves as stated, is, or was, appropriately known to "other ranks" in Malta as the "leg-puncher."

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

E. E. AUSTEN, late Keeper of Entomology,  
British Museum (Natural History), Cromwell Road,  
S.W.7.

competence to look after the interests of the people the King would probably have been content to allow it to conduct the development of Siam. He suffered personal attacks in silence. He allowed it to pass the violent and unjust denunciation of the Royal Family which accompanied the first revolution. He had the satisfaction of knowing that many members of his family had given long and able service to the State and that in time their merits would be recognized. He even put up with incidents such as happened last December, when the leader of a labour union was conducted to his presence honoured by the company of two leading members of the Government to explain why he had taken an action against the King's person in the Courts.

But when a Government turns from mere bad manners to folly and injustice, then the time for suffering in silence is gone. The folly of the Government is best exemplified by the economic plan of Luang Pradit, who was the leader of the first revolution and is now the outstanding member of the present Government. He has been compared to Stalin, but it is only just to say that it would have been a very infantile Stalin who would have put his name to Luang Pradit's famous plan. Briefly, it proposed to make every Siamese a salaried employee of the Government from his birth, and for the Government to provide comfortable salaries by taking over the land and by establishing industries. The Siamese peasant, usually a dweller in a rude bamboo structure, was to live in a few years' time in a stone house and wear a hat and shoes.

This plan was withdrawn, but another evolved by the Minister of Commerce took its place. This scheme, too, foreshadowed a magnificent entry of the Government into industry. That the second plan was eventually withdrawn was due not to the Government's doubts of its own ability to conduct industry on a large scale but to its distrust of a Minister whose favourite method of expounding his plan was by a series of geometrical designs. Though he has retired from the Government, it seems quite possible that his or a similar plan will be adopted in whole or in part by a Government some of whose members believe the stone-house age easily attainable, while the others, who are not possessed by any economic theories but feel that something new must be done to justify the revolution, will acquiesce.

### A COERCIVE POLICY

It is in its treatment of those who took part in or sympathized with the rebellion of last October that the Government has committed its gravest injustices. In meting out punishment it has been stupidly merciless. In every part of the land officials with impeccable records from the heads of departments to humble village magistrates have been removed for no other reason than that they have in some way expressed doubt of the wisdom or justice of the present Government.

When the King's refusal to give up his right to review death sentences is considered in the light of the fact that at least six men have been sentenced to death who sincerely believed that they were fighting for the King against a communistically inclined Government it is easy to see why the breach has been opened and why it will be difficult to close. The only surprising thing is that the King did not threaten to abdicate several months earlier. For the delay there have been two reasons. The first is that the King's ill-health and physical weakness have hitherto prevented him from making the firm stand that was warranted by the Government's folly. It would have been a very brave act to have made such a stand in Siam, but the King might have succeeded. For even the most enthusiastic Radicals in the Government cannot but be aware that to 90 per cent. of the Siamese the King means everything politically and the Assembly means nothing.

The second reason is that the King has been most conscientious in fulfilling his duties to his people. He would even now be loth to leave his