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killed in the parish of Blackawton. The greatest number seen in one day was thirty-six, this was on Sept. 15. In a shooting experience of fifty years I never remember to have seen so many landrails in one season.—D. DARELL (Hillfield House, near Dartmouth).

BUTTERFLIES AND WAGTAILS.—I was interested to read in your issue of Aug. 19 that, in a certain part of England, white butterflies had been evident in enormous numbers. These have been very scarce here this summer, and other sorts have seemingly disappeared. Against this there has been an abnormal invasion of wagtails. One or two pairs always remain throughout the year, but since July 5 they have been almost as numerous as sparrows. In no previous year has this occurred, and I should much like to



LAY OF THE CAPERCAILLIE.

have some reason assigned. They are most welcome and cheery guests.—NORTHANTS.

FLANKS OF THE AFRICAN RHINOCEROS.

SIR,—In reply to the question of Mr R. I. Pocock in the *Field* of Aug. 5, about the grooves on the flanks of the African rhino at the Zoological Gardens, allow me to say that it is partly answered by the photos of wild rhinos published in many books lately, and especially in the book of Mr A. Radclyffe Dugmore. These grooves are very noticeable in some of the animals. I noticed them myself several times on rhinos seen in British East Africa and in Somaliland. In fact, in the course of shooting, one hardly

fore legs, and at the shoulder, as well as at the joint between flanks and hind legs, there is in every rhino a deep polished fold. Along the ribs there are always some more grooves, which are fairly distinct along the ribs. They are caused, I think, by the movement of the shoulder and along the flanks by the movement of the hind legs. The photo published in the *Field* shows very distinctly what I mean. These grooves meet at an acute angle low down on the flanks, being almost exactly parallel with the extreme angle made by the leg which causes them when the animal is walking. Those near the shoulder have a tendency to come forward under the chest; then along the ribs they are oblique, just as the foreleg is at the end of the stride, while along the flank they are vertical, or have a slight tendency to come forward when the hind legs are advanced. When a rhino is walking, the skin appears to be perfectly stiff, because all the elasticity necessary is furnished by these grooves—they open and close only slightly. I dare say these grooves are more distinct on the rhino at the Zoological Gardens than on many wild ones, not only because it has not got the ordinary thick coating of mud of the wild one, but possibly because an animal living in a very small inclosure for its size is bound to bend and turn more often than in the open. Hence the folds are more marked. In the wild a rhino holds himself very stiff and straight, so the grooves on the skin are less distinct, being due only to the movement of the legs; but in an inclosure the frequent turning of the animal and the bending of its body in a curve, the grooves become more accentuated. I did not keep a record of it, but so far as I can remember the grooves are very often more distinct on one side of the body than on the other, as if each rhino, when rolling in the mud, was always inclined to come again to a stand by a move on the same side. I remember a Somali saying to me one day after looking at a dead rhino, "That brute was sleeping on that side," pointing to the side where the grooves were almost non-existent. As rhino generally lie down perfectly straight, "on a very even keel," it struck me that it was rather curious to see a native, who knew the ways of wild animals as they generally do, making such a mistake as to believe that a rhino would lie down on its side; but there was surely some truth in it, and the man probably meant what I have said about them after rolling in the mud.

France.

VICOMTE DE PONCINS.

THE LONDON ZOOLOGICAL GARDENS.

Schmidt's Spot-nosed Monkey.

WHEN DESCRIBING recently in the *Field* the rare red-eared monkey (*Cercopithecus erythrotis*) of the Cameroons, I alluded to the eccentric coloration of the face of many of the African forest monkeys. The Society has just received an example of another very curious species, namely, Schmidt's spot-nosed monkey (*Cercopithecus schmidtii*), which is an inhabitant of Uganda. It is a fine adult specimen, and was presented by Major E. C. Hamilton. The red-eared monkey, it may be recalled, has a diamond-shaped patch of red hair upon the nose. In Schmidt's monkey the corresponding patch is heart shaped and much more conspicuous, on account of its snowy whiteness. It stands out boldly against the slate-coloured skin of the face, which is set off on each side by a mass of long greyish-white hair covering the cheeks, and this is emphasised below by a narrow black band running from the corner of the mouth to the bottom of the ear, and above by a black bar, passing backwards from the brows. The hairs of the head, body, and limbs are for the most part heavily speckled with black and olive yellow; but the tail is a fine coppery red almost throughout its length.

There are several species and sub-species of spot-nosed monkeys belonging to the same group as the one above described, the most familiar being the so-called lesser white-nosed monkey (*petraea*) of the Gola (Congo) basin. The group is restricted to the forest region of Western Africa, from Liberia and Angola in the west to Uganda in the east.

With regard to the function of the face markings above described, my own opinion is that they are for the purpose of concealment. They are what Thayer called "disruptive," and serve to break up the continuity of outline and surface;