

NOTES AND QUERIES ON NATURAL HISTORY.

WILD SWANS IN EAST YORKSHIRE.—On Saturday, Nov. 12, a herd of fifteen wild swans came circling round Hornsea Mere uttering their loud cries, and finally pitched on the water, where they remained. In some years whoopers have found a quiet home on this famous sheet of water, and have stayed all the winter.—F. BOYES (Beverley).

A WHITE LARK.—One day last week I shot a lark; it is quite white. Is not this very uncommon?—JOHN G. EVES (North Orkendon, Romford). [Colour varieties of the lark are not common. A white lark was recorded in the *Field* of Dec. 3, 1898, from Great Yarmouth. At a meeting of the British Ornithologists' Club on April 25, 1900, the Hon. Walter Rothschild exhibited four mounted specimens and thirteen skins having more or less white in the plumage. We are obliged for your offer of the specimen, but in our opinion the museum of the Essex Field Club at Stratford would be the right place for it.—ED.]

SPOTTED OX HORNS.—My note in the *Field* of last week has resulted in a letter from an old friend, who states that, although he cannot recall the reference, he has seen an account of the process by which the spots are produced, and believes that it is practised in North Africa. According to his recollection of the account, the horns are trained by means of bandages from a very early stage of growth, and are annually burned with a hot iron. Such treatment would account exactly for the marks, alike as regards colour, the marginal rings, and the fact that those near the tip are much fainter than those at the base. The horns are scraped at frequent intervals, in the same manner as those of a showyard beast.—R. L.

A REMARKABLE RHINOCEROS HORN FROM CAPE COLONY.—With reference to R. L.'s remarks under this heading in your issue of Sept. 21, it may interest some of your readers to know that in 1903 I shot a rhinoceros in East Africa with an abnormally long second horn, 30in. in length. So far as I can remember, the front horn measured 37in. and the second 39in. The length of the latter was not the only remarkable point about it, for instead of being quite straight, as is usually the case with second horns, this one curved forwards, thus forming with the posterior curvature of the front horn a lozenge-shaped space. I regret that I have not a photograph of this head by me, having sent the last I possessed to Mr Oldfield Thomas at the Natural History Museum.—R. E. D-BROCKMAN (Somaliland).

PUFFIN TAKEN IN BUCKS.—A puffin was caught at Langley, Bucks, on Tuesday, Nov. 15.—H. HOWARD-VYSE (Stoke Place, Slough).

— **IN HEREFORDSHIRE.**—A young puffin was picked up on this property on Nov. 4. It did not seem able to fly far, and was

FENCING.

THE SENTIMENT OF THE SWORD.

A Country House Dialogue by the late Capt. Sir Richard P. Burton, K.C.M.G., F.R.G.S.

THE NINTH EVENING (continued from page 923).

V.

WHAT, then, is the sole lesson, the only salutary advice, which, according to me, a fencing master can give to the man who fights? "In two hours or to-morrow, as the case may be, we fight!"

A short digression, before I reply to myself. The *maitre d'armes* can hardly be expected to be outside and beyond the general run of his profession, but an exceptional man, who is somewhat a physiognomist and—excuse the dreadful word!—an anthropologist—it has nothing to do with anthropophagy—may dive into the secrets of his client's organisation with results which enable him wonderfully to condense instruction; such a compendium, a *multum in parvo*, will take the place of a dozen lessons given by an average, or what the United citizens better call ap "or'nary," man.

I once went through a course of lectures in phrenology, my deceased friend Dr D. being the instructor, an able follower of Gall, Spurzheim, and Co.

"Excuse me if I interrupt you," said Shughtie. "I was never satisfied with that full-fledged invention of the German *Geist*, and lately, turning over old *houquins*, I hit upon the *Margarita Philosophica*, Fribourg, 1503; it contained a skull marked and mapped much as those were by Mr de Veal—who called himself Mr de Weel. A curious question whether it was known to Gall!"

Possibly, but to continue. My friend's sharp Celtic wits, he was born a Galway "buckeen," had been prodigiously sharpened by the *res angusta*, and by a fine young family with fine young appetites. He was a perfect study in his professional studio, garnished with the usual lines of banal plaster busts, Michael Angelo and Mr Rush, Mr William Palmer and the Vertical Section of the Brain, Rev. Thos. Binney and Mr Greenacre. Mrs Manning and the Idiot Girl of Cork, Professor Owen and the Skull of the Black Monkey. He received tributaries seated before his table, where lay the compasses and callipers, the list of prices (see 5s.) for disclosing to you the inner secrets of your soul, and the skeleton printed papers to be filled up with your passions, your sentiments, your perceptions, and your reflections.

mezza-carazione, and a disengagement—absolutely nothing more able to threaten and control the only four lines known to the attack and to the defence.

There was a movement of impatience, especially amongst the pipes, as if the instruction appeared too elementary.

Allow me to remark that I am simplifying my demonstration perhaps to puerility. I am detailing and analysing each movement, and especially I am avoiding technical terms, for my lecture is mostly addressed to those whose lessons are still to come. On the other hand, even the practised swordman will find some advantage in thus taking to pieces the mechanism of his art and in assigning to each item its relative value and significance.

VI.

"With permission of my future pupils," Seaton said, "I'd ask why you now avoid mentioning the lunge to the rear, *se fender in arriere*?"

Slightly because, according to me, this system, useful in exceptional cases, may become very dangerous to one applying it by chance or at inopportune times. It would most probably compromise his defence and throw him into the hands of the adversary.

The tactic which I advocate—that is to say, the step backwards, the simultaneous extension of the arm, either in the same line or by disengagement, followed by recovering guard and shortening the arm—is far preferable to this hazardous movement. Whether you win or lose depends upon the skill and prudence of the adversary. But, at any rate, you are always firm in the defence, solid upon your legs, and in perfect equilibrium, ready to repeat the same movement whenever the opposed advances; and after wearying him out and inducing him to attempt some dangerous attack which thoroughly fails, this identical out-stretching of the point will direct it to his arm, to his shoulder, or to his breast.

But if you lunge backwards—that is to say, retire the left foot some 15in., whilst the right continues in position, and your body is thrown back—what benefit do you expect?

You are unskilful in arms. What secret instinct points out to you the very moment of action? For after this movement you must recover yourself, and rapidly too; you must return to guard without a moment's loss, and this will be found by no means easy. Meanwhile the opponent, taking advantage of your inexperience and the disunion which cannot but arise in the use of your limbs, presses you with vivacity, and perhaps recovers your sword.

You escape, we will suppose, this first danger; and take warning not to repeat it, however sorely you are tempted by the attacks and the half attacks of your adversary. You resolve to reserve the lunge backwards for an opportunity