

**HEDGEHOGS.**—As in the August and September numbers, you have published an account of hedgehogs apparently carrying away pears and crabs sticking on their spines, you may think the following statement worth insertion as a further corroboration. I have received this account in a letter dated August 5, 1867, from Mr. Swinhoe at Amoy:—“Mr. Gisbert, the Spanish Consul at Amoy, informs me that when he was an engineer on the roads in Spain some years ago, he was fond of shooting and roaming about the country. He states that in the Sierra Morena, a strawberry-tree (*Arbutus unedo*?) was very abundant, and bore large quantities of red, fruit-like, fine, large, red strawberries. These gave quite a glow to the woods. The district in the mountain chain he refers to, is on the divisional line between the provinces of Seville and Badajos. Under these trees hedgehogs occurred innumerable, and fed on the fruit, which the Spaniards call *Madrône*. Mr. Gisbert has often seen an *Erizo* (hedgehog) trotting along with at least a dozen of these strawberries sticking on its spines. He supposes that the hedgehogs were carrying the fruit to their holes to eat in quiet and security, and that to procure them they must have rolled themselves on the fruit which was scattered in great abundance all over the ground beneath the trees.”—*Charles Darwin*.

**THE VIPER.**—I found a viper out on an open piece of ground the other day, and as his home was evidently at some distance, I detained him a short time for the purpose of “making observations.” He did not move about much faster than I walked, and when I put my stick on him to hold him back he never darted at it, but hissed violently and tried to escape. Finding his efforts fruitless, he lay still, and even when I removed the stick, he only coiled himself round and drew back his head, following the point of the stick, but never aimed a blow at it. He then climbed to the top of a thistle about two feet high, and lying amongst its prickly leaves, treated me to another hissing performance. The climbing was done in a way that showed it to be perfectly natural to him, and frequently performed; he did not coil round the stems at all, but lay *across* the leaves and branches, lifting himself from one to another. I teased him from this post, and he hurried into a thick tuft of herbage, where I left him. Arent the reptile's bite, your correspondents evidently believe it sometimes deadly, but fail to cite a case; the one given at length by Mr. Hall proves my own views to have some truth in them. He says if the victim had been a child instead of a man, death would have been certain, but how can he tell that the constitution of a child would have been similarly affected? I still adhere to my former statement, that we are as yet without any well-authenticated case of a viper's bite proving fatal from its own simple nature. If any instance can be brought forward, I hope to see it in the pages of *SCIENCE-GOSSIP*.—*Henry Ulyett, Folkestone*.

**FAILURE OF EGG-HATCHING.**—Many settings of fowl, turkey, and duck eggs have failed with me this summer. Some were valuable sorts. From settings of thirteen eggs, rarely more than five chickens have been hatched. Similar failure has been common with my neighbours, creating surprise as to the cause, such ill-success not having been observed before.—*S. B. M.*

**SNAILS.**—Can any of your readers recommend an effectual remedy for snails in a garden; I mean one that they have tested and found successful? The employment of gulls or ducks has been suggested; but they are objected to by some on the ground that they tread down the flowers, and devour strawberries and other fruit. The ivy affords them concealment in dry weather, but on damp mornings they swarm, and of course can be destroyed in numbers, though with little appreciable effect. Forty have been taken in a few minutes out of three or four yards of hedge, and young plants are rapidly stripped of their leaves and killed. A row of hollyhocks are their last victims, and ferns are terribly riddled. No doubt they are ably assisted by their shell-less cousins, the slugs, and also by the woodlice which are likewise more numerous than welcome. The garden being surrounded by stone walls, it is somewhat protected from outsiders, if the enemy within could be destroyed.—*G. Guyon, Ventnor, Isle of Wight*.

**IS THE POISON OF THE VIPER FATAL?**—It is a difficult thing to prove a negative; and, unquestionably, such a circumstance as is related by your correspondent, *may* have occurred at Poundbury, near Dorchester, within the last two or three years without my being acquainted with it. But, as one fond of Natural History, and being all my life in the immediate neighbourhood, I think I may say that it is passing strange if such should have been the case. I should be very glad if “the young relative” mentioned in the note, could afford any information whereby the matter may be elucidated. Poundbury is hardly to be called a wild kind of spot, a sort of waste. It is a bright open down, within half a mile of the county-town, with hardly a shrub or a stone, and certainly without any heath, which could have furnished a viper's lair, and constantly exposed to public observation. Assuredly no very extraordinary death could have happened there, without its being universally known throughout the county.—*C. W. Bingham*.

**MY BLACKBIRD.**—Two or three years ago I reared a blackbird from the nest, and he proved a first-rate songster, having beside his own natural song many variations which I had taught him; and his round, flute-like notes were the admiration of all who heard them. This season he has been quite unable to sing, though always attempting to do so, the cause of his silence being, I believe, some disease in his throat, which is sometimes very much swollen. A kind of blister rises, and breaks at the root of his beak frequently, and he often seems to have something in his throat which he tries to dislodge. His plumage has not that neat appearance it used to have, although the bird itself seems to be as lively and cheerful as ever. Can any reader of *SCIENCE-GOSSIP* kindly inform me how to treat my bird?—*G. B. C., Ringwood*.

**COCKROACHES BEWARE.**—I should recommend “J. G.” to try the following remedy against cockroaches. Put two teaspoons of treacle in a soup-plate, and then fill it up with hot water. Then place several pieces of fire-wood up against the plate, to serve as ladders for the cockroaches to climb up. Some time ago our kitchen was swarming with these creatures, but we set three or four of these traps at a time (placing them by the holes from where the cockroaches came out), and in a week or two we were almost entirely free of them.—*E. F. B.*