

JOURNAL
OF THE
NORTHAMPTONSHIRE
NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY & FIELD CLUB.

AUGUST, 1880.

Editorial Committee :

REV. S. J. W. SANDERS.
MR. R. G. SCRIVEN.
MR. B. THOMPSON, F.C.S.

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that state of plumage, we have not hitherto been able to secure one of them.

The female Scoter, (*Oidemia nigra*.) was shot near Woodford Mill, above Thrapston, about August 18th, 1879, and sent to me in an almost putrid state, which accounts for the bad condition of the specimen. This of course is only a straggler, and not a common one to our inland district. Full particulars of this specimen will be found in "Zoologist" for September, 1879.

The Green Cormorant or Shag, (*Halieus graculus*.) immature, was caught on the towers of Arthingworth Church, on August 31st, 1879, brought to Lilford alive on September 2nd, and lived for several months in my aviary. The Shag, of course, is another accidental visitor to our county, but the above is only one of several occurrences of the species therein, and is fully recorded in the "Zoologist" for October, 1879.

Exactly the same remarks as the above apply to the specimen of Manx Shearwater, (*Puffinus anglorum*.) exhibited at Northampton by me, which was shot on the Nene by Mr. G. Hunt, September 4th, 1879, and which I retain in my own collection. This species has occurred several times to my knowledge in Northamptonshire. Mr. J. Hensman informs me that the specimen of this bird now in the Northampton Museum was caught feeding amongst domestic fowls in that town in September, 1866. For particulars concerning the present specimen *vide* "Zoologist" for October, 1879.

ENCOURAGEMENT OF ORIGINAL RESEARCH :

THE DARWIN PRIZE.

It affords us unfeigned pleasure to have the privilege of submitting to our readers the details of a valuable plan for the encouragement and reward of original research by local Geologists, Naturalists, and Archæologists. The scheme, it will be seen, has grown out of a suggestion warmly received at the Northampton meeting of the Midland Union by the members, and by them referred to the Committee of Management to consider and if approved to carry out. The "Darwin Prize" will, we feel assured, act as an incentive to much real and useful work, and we trust no year will pass without that enviable reward being worthily won. The following extract from the letter in which Mr. Darwin gave his permission for the prize to be named after him was in answer to the unanimously expressed desire of the Committee:—

"I request that you will be so good as to inform the members of the Committee that their wish to name the Medal after me is a very great honour, which I gladly accept. It is particularly pleasing to me to have my name connected, in however indirect a manner, with a scheme for advancing Science—the study of which has been my chief source of happiness throughout life."

This plan for encouraging original work affords the utmost liberty, within given limits each year, for the contributions to deal with subjects deliberately chosen by the writers, If, as we hope will always be

the case, the communications to be rewarded by the Darwin Prize are the result of much careful investigation, the pages of this journal will be enriched by them, and they will add to the stores of scientific knowledge. Thus next year the whole range of Geology is open to select from, including palæontology, mineralogy, petrology, and the application of chemistry, the spectroscope, and the polariscope, to the study of rocks and minerals. The following is the scheme adopted by the Committee:—

THE MIDLAND UNION OF NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETIES.

ENCOURAGEMENT OF ORIGINAL RESEARCH.

THE DARWIN PRIZE.

The Council, at the last Annual Meeting at Northampton, submitted for consideration, with their hearty approval, a proposal made by one of their body, Mr. W. Jerome Harrison, F.G.S., to the effect that an Annual Prize should be provided for the purpose of recognising and encouraging original research by Members of the Societies in the Union. The proposal was favourably received by the Meeting, and referred to the Committee of Management, who were empowered to carry it into effect if they saw fit.

After careful consideration by the Committee, at a Meeting held at Birmingham, on Thursday, July 15th, 1880, the President-Elect (Dr. T. Wright, F.R.S.) in the chair, the following scheme was adopted:—

1st.—That a Prize, (to be called, by permission of Mr. Charles Darwin, F.R.S., "The Darwin Prize,") of the value of £10, to include a Gold or Bronze "Darwin Medal," at the option of the successful candidate, be given annually for a paper indicating original research upon a subject within the scope of the Societies in the Union, contributed by a member for publication in the Journal of the Union.

2nd.—That the subjects for "The Darwin Prize," for the three years ensuing, be limited as under—

In 1881 to Geology,
In 1882 to Biology,
In 1883 to Archæology.

3rd.—That a Committee of five, annually elected for the purpose by the Committee of Management, adjudicate the prize to such paper, of sufficient merit, on the subject of the year, contributed as aforesaid to the Journal of the Union, (the "Midland Naturalist,") either actually published, or sent in for publication during the twelve months preceding the 31st of March of that year, and declare the adjudication at the Annual Meeting.

4th. That right be reserved for the adjudicators to withhold the prize, if in their opinion no contribution has been sent in of sufficient merit.

Contributions for "The Darwin Prize" next year must be forwarded to the Editors of the "Midland Naturalist," Midland Counties Herald Office, Birmingham, on or before the 31st March, 1881.

HEREWALD WAKE, President.

T. WRIGHT, F.R.S., Chairman of the Committee.

EDWARD W. BADGER,
HENRY BASEVI, } Hon. Secs.

Birmingham, July 20th, 1880.