

I know practically nothing at first-hand of German school-boys. But I am sure that the natural history interest was more general in my time at Oxford than it was among the German students I met at Leipzig. On German walking tours I have often been astonished at the ignorance of natural objects shown by my German companions; while my experience in England has always been that some one in the party knew the birds, some one the insects, some one the plants, some one the fossils—and that the rest were thirsty for information.

So I have been accustomed to regard an interest in natural history as the birthright of the English child. If this is mere insular prejudice, I must give it up; if it has the basis in fact that I think it has, I hope that Professor Packard will retract his 'even.' We owe a great deal to Germany; but—natural history!

On the general subject of nature study I may, perhaps, be allowed to say that—so far as I have followed the rather voluminous literature—it seems to have three dangers. The first is that, in striving for sympathy with nature, we run into sentimentality. The second is that, in avoiding fairy tales, we run into something ten times worse—if indeed fairy tales are bad at all; I mean, a pseudo-psychology of the lower animals. And the third is that, in trying to be exceedingly simple, we become exceedingly inaccurate.

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#### TREE TRUNKS FOUND WITH MASTODON REMAINS.

WHILE excavating the bones of a mastodon near Newburgh, N. Y., as mentioned in *SCIENCE*, October 10, 1902, there were found large numbers of tree trunks both in the muck and in the marl lying beneath it. In many instances the mastodon bones were found resting on these trees. While most of the trees were so rotten that it was possible to obtain only small fragments, several were recovered in lengths of two feet and over; and one in particular possesses curious interest, and some idea of its probable species would be welcomed by the writer. The tree was lying three feet

below the surface, in muck, and was very soft and spongy; and not only on the surface, but clear through, was of a dark brown color, almost that of the muck, and perhaps colored by the muck. Its scientific interest rests upon the fact that in section it is polygonal, while the flat faces of the trunk that make up the polygon vary in number from fourteen to sixteen, some of the faces merging into one another at various points along the trunk. This piece of the tree is about three feet long, and when first dug out, about two months ago, was nearly nine inches thick at one end and six at the other; but it has shrunk on drying out, until now it measures five and three inches, respectively. No other pieces of this tree were found, although the adjoining layers of muck were carefully dug over and examined, in hopes of obtaining more of it.

With one exception, all the other tree trunks found were smaller than this one, few measuring more than five inches at the butt. Some were easily recognized as spruce and red cedar, and were in a fair state of preservation, except that when dry the large amount of shrinkage caused them to crumble unless carefully handled. Several trees showed while still wet the marks of the teeth of animals, and it has been surmised that this was the work of beavers. When dried, however, the tooth marks are much less distinct, and their study is thus rendered more difficult.

REGINALD GORDON.

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- 1st. To moralize scientific men.
- 2d. To protect investigators settled in countries where proper means be wanting.
- 3d. To depurate science. How to facilitate that.
- 4th. To advance science by a selection of studies.

1st. *To moralize scientific men.*

Secure priority of several important researches. Depurate the habits of both institutions and societies. Protect real scientists against upstarts, meddlers, courtiers and