cultivation has again extended. Of the total area 1353 square miles are now cultivated and 1548 square miles are cultivable. The staple product is bajra, which in 1882-83 occupied 546,905 acres ; the other principal crops are joar, barley, and wheat. The district has little trade except in agricultural produce, which goes chiefly to Bikaner ; and the only manufacture of any importance is that of *sajji,* an impure carbonate of soda, used in washing and dyeing cloth. Sírsa was officially included in the territory conquered from the Mahrattas in 1803, when it was almost entirely uninhabited. It required re­conquering from the Bhattis in 1818 ; but it did not come under British administration until 1837. During the mutiny of 1857 Sírsa was for a time wholly lost to British rule. On the restoration of order the district was administered by Punjab officials, and in the following year, with the remainder of the Delhi territory, it was formally annexed to that province.

SISKIN (Dan. *Sidsken*; Germ. *Zeisig* and *Zeising),* long known in England as a cage-bird, since, in 1544, Turner mentioned it in that character under this name,@@1 and said that he had only once met with it at large—the *Fringilla spinus* of Linnæus, and *Carduelis* or *Chrysomitris spinus* of modern writers. In some of its structural characters it is most nearly allied to the Goldfinch (vol. X. p. 758), and both are often placed in the same genus by systematists ; but in its style of coloration, and still more in its habits, it resembles the Redpolls (*cf*. Linnet, vol. xiv. p. 675), though without their slender figure, being indeed rather short and stout of build. Yet it hardly yields to them in activity or in the grace of its actions, as it seeks its food from the catkins of the alder or birch, regardless of the attitude it assumes while so doing. Of an olive-green above, deeply tinted in some parts with black and in others lightened by yellow, and beneath of a yellowish-white again marked with black, the male of this species has at least a becoming if not a brilliant garb, and possesses a song that is not unmelodious, though the resemblance of some of its notes to the run­ning-down of a piece of clockwork is more remarkable than pleasing. The hen is still more soberly attired ; but it is perhaps the Siskin’s disposition to familiarity that makes it so favourite a captive, and, though as a cage-bird it is not ordinarily long-lived, it readily adapts itself to the loss of liberty. Moreover, if anything like the need­ful accommodation be afforded, it will build a nest and therein lay its eggs, but it rarely succeeds in bringing up its young in confinement. As a wild bird it breeds con­stantly, though locally, throughout the greater part of Scotland, and has frequently done so in England, but more rarely in Ireland. The greater portion, however, of the numerous bands which visit the British Islands in autumn and winter doubtless come from the Continent— perhaps even from far to the eastward, since its range stretches across Asia to Japan, in which country it is as favourite a cage-bird as with us. The nest of the Siskin is very like that of the Goldfinch, but seldom so neatly built ; the eggs, except in their smaller size, much resemble those of the Greenfinch (vol. xi. p. 165).

A larger and more brightly coloured species, *C. spinoides,* inhabits the Himalayas, but the Siskin has many other relatives belonging to the New World, and in them serious modifications of structure, especially in the form of the bill, occur. Some of these relatives lead almost insensibly to the Greenfinch *(ut supra)* and its allies, others to the Goldfinch *(ut supra),* the Redpolls, and so on. Thus the Siskin perhaps may be regarded as one of the less modified descendants of a stock whence such forms as those just mentioned have sprung. Its striated plumage also favours this view, as an evidence of permanent immaturity or generalization of form, since striped feathers are so often the earliest clothing of many of these birds, which only get rid of them at their first moult. On this theory the Yellowbird or North-American “Goldfinch,” *C. tristis,* would seem, with its immediate allies, to rank among the highest forms of the group, and the Pine-Goldfinch, *C. pinus,* of the same country, to be one of the lowest,—the cock of the former being generally of a bright jonquil hue, with black crown, tail, and wings—the last conspicuously barred with white, while

neither hens nor young exhibit any striations. On the other hand, neither sex of the latter at any age puts off its striped garb—the mark, it may be pretty safely asserted, of an inferior stage of development. The remaining species of the group, mostly South- American, do not seem here to need particular notice. (A. N. )

SISMONDI, Jean Charles Leonard de (1773- 1842), whose real name was Simonde, was born at Geneva on May 9, 1773. His father and all his ancestors seem to have borne the name Simonde, at least from the time when they migrated from Dauphiné to Switzerland at the revocation of the edict of Nantes. It was not till after Sismondi had become an author that, observing the identity of his family arms with those of the once flourish­ing Italian house of the Sismondi, and finding that some members of that house had migrated to France, he assumed the connexion without further proof and called himself De Sismondi. The Simondes, however, were themselves citizens of Geneva of the upper class, and possessed both rank and property, though the father was also a village pastor. The future historian was well educated, but his family wished him to devote himself to commerce rather than literature, and he became a banker’s clerk at Lyons. Then the Revolution broke out, and as it affected Geneva the Simonde family took refuge in England, where they stayed for eighteen months. Disliking, it is said, the climate, they returned to Geneva, but found the state of affairs still unfavourable ; there is even a legend that the head of the family was reduced to sell milk himself in the town. The greater part of the family property was sold, and with the proceeds they emigrated to Italy, bought a small farm at Pescia near Lucca, and set to work to cul­tivate it themselves. Sismondi worked hard here, both with his hands and his mind, and his experiences gave him the material of his first book, *Tableau de l'Agriculture Toscane,* which, after returning to Geneva, he published there in 1801. Two years later he published his *Traité de la Richesse Commerciale,* his first work on the subject of political economy, which, with some differences of view, continued to interest him to the end of his life (for his position and work in this respect the reader is referred to the article Political Economy, vol. xix. p. 383). Mean­while he began his great *History of the Italian Republics,* and was introduced to Madame de Stael. With her he became very intimate, and after being regularly enrolled in the society of Coppet he was invited or commanded (for Madame de Stael's invitations had something of command) to form one of the suite with which the future Corinne made the journey into Italy, resulting in *Corinne* itself during the years 1804-5. Sismondi was not altogether at his ease here, and he particularly disliked Schlegel, who was also of the company. But during this journey he made the acquaintance of the countess of Albany, Louisa of Stolberg, widow of Charles Edward, and all her life long gifted with a singular faculty of attracting the affection (Platonic and other) of men of letters. She was now an old woman, and Sismondi’s relations with her were of the strictly friendly character, but they were close and lasted long, and they produced much valuable and interesting correspondence. In 1807 appeared the first volumes of the above mentioned book on the Italian republics, which (though his essay in political economy had brought him some reputation and the offer of a Russian professorship) first made Sismondi prominent among European men of letters. The com­pletion of this book, which extended to sixteen volumes, occupied him, though by no means entirely, for the next eleven years. He lived at first at Geneva, and delivered there some interesting lectures on the literature of the south of Europe, which were continued from time to time and finally published ; and he held an official post,—that of secretary of the chamber of commerce for the then

@@@1 It is also called by bird-fanciers “Abadavine” or “ Aberdevine ”— names of which the etymology is wholly unknown.