hailed by Erasmus (whether *ex officio* or *propter merita* is left to conjecture) as “unum literarum Britanniarum lumen et decus,” was proclaimed *poeta laureatus* by both universities, and frequently applied this title as well as that of *orator regius* to himself without challenge. At about the age of forty he took orders, and was appointed rector of Diss in Norfolk, where he seems to have spent the last twenty-five years of his life. Yet this eminent scholar and churchman is the author of the oldest and the best drinking song in the English language—the drinking song in *Gammer Gurton's Needle,* and of one of the coarsest poems in any language—*The Tunning of Elinor Rumming.* He is the author of a satire against the clergy of his time—*Colin Clout,—*unsurpassed in pre-Reforma­tion literature for direct and merciless ridicule, and of a satire against the great cardinal when at the height of his greatness—*Why come ye not to Court?—*boiling over with ferocious invective and insolent contempt. At the same time he had such a repute for rough wit and irregularity of life that he became the hero of a book of “ merry tales.” These mythical tales were probably in the mind of the historian who has described Skelton as a “ribald buffoon,” “a profligate and ill-living wretch.” Whether the real Skelton deserved such epithets is doubtful ; his verse undoubtedly contains much that may fairly be described as ribaldry and buffoonery. It has not a trace of the chivalrous spirit of Chaucer, and his most character­istic form, known as Skeltonical verse, is wayward and unconventional—adopted as if in mad defiance of regular metre. Still, as Skelton himself claimed for it, “it has in it some pith.”

“ Though my ryme be ragged,

Tattered, and jagged,

Rudely rain-beaten,

Rusty and moth-eaten,

If ye take well therewith It hath in it some pith.”

*Colin Clout, Why come ye not to Court?* and *The Book of Philip Sparrow*—which Coleridge pronounced “ an exquisite and original poem ”—are written in this metre. *The Bouge* (ship) *of Court,* a satirical vision of personified abstractions, is more conventional in form, and was prob­ably one of his earlier works. Both it and his interlude *Magnificence* show great power in the vivid description of character.

SKIMMER, the English name bestowed by Pennant@@1 in 1781 on a North-American bird which had already been figured and described by Catesby *(B. Carolina,* i. pl. 90) as the “ Cut-water,”—as it appears still to be called on ‘some parts of the coast,@@2—remarkable for the unique formation of its bill, in which the maxilla, or so-called upper mandible, is capable of much vertical movement, while the lower mandible, which is considerably the longer of the two, is laterally compressed so as to be as thin as a knife-blade. This bird is the *Rhynchops nigra* of Linnæus, who, however, united with it what proves to be an allied species from India that, having been indicated many years before by Petiver *(Gazoph. Naturae,* tab. 76, fig. 2), on the authority of Buckley, was only technically named and described in 1838 by Swainson *(Anim. Mena­geries,* p. 360) as *R. albicollis.* A third species, *R. flavirostris,* inhabits Africa ; and examples from South America, though by many writers regarded as identical with *R. nigra,* are considered by Mr Saunders *(Proc. Zool. Society,* 1882, p. 522) to form a fourth, the *R. melanura* of Swain­son *(ut supra,* p. 340). All these resemble one another

very closely, and, apart from their singularly-formed bill, have the structure and appearance of Terns *(q.v.).* Some authors make a family of the genus *Rhynchops,* but it seems needless to remove it from the *Laridse* (Gull, vol. xi. p. 274). In breeding-habits the Skimmers thoroughly agree with the Terns, the largest species of which group they nearly equal in size, and indeed only seem to differ from them in the mode of taking their food, which of course is correlated with the extraordinary formation of their bill. (a. n.)

SKIN DISEASES. These form a large and important class. In number they are very extensive, owing to the varied forms of morbid change which the skin texture may undergo, no less than to the different portions of the structure and its appendages which may be specially affected. Further, the modifications of the typical forms of these diseases which are to be observed have led to arrangements and classifications of very complex character and multiplied greatly their nomenclature. Skin diseases are regarded by the physician as of great importance, not only from the fact that morbid action in this texture must have a powerful influence on the general health and may bring in its train other maladies, but also because they are not unfrequently themselves the expression of constitu­tional conditions, inherited or acquired, the recognition of which is essential to their effectual treatment. In order to clearness of description it is necessary to make use of some method of classification. Various arrangements have been adopted by writers on the subject, but the following appears sufficient for the present purpose : @@3—

I. Disorders of the secreting apparatus (of the seba­ceous and sweat glands) ;

II. Disorders specially relating to nutrition (hypertro­phies ; atrophies ; new formations ; pigmentary changes) ;

III. Inflammatory affections (erythematous ; papular ; vesicular ; pustular ; squamous or scaly) ;

IV. Neuroses (nervous disorders) ;

V. Parasitic affections (animal ; vegetable).

I. Disorders of the Secreting Apparatus.·—(1) *Of the Sweat Glands.—*The chief morbid conditions are exces­sive sweating *(hyperidrosis)* and fœtid sweating *(bromi­drosis).* Excessive sweating is a symptom observed in various diseases, such as phthisis and rheumatic fever, but it may exist apart from such conditions, and either be general, affecting the whole body, or confined to a part, such as the axillæ, head, hands, feet, or, as in some rare instances; the one half of the body. Some persons habitually perspire, often to a great extent, on making any effort, yet never appear to suffer in health, although the discomfort is considerable. Excessive perspiration may often be pre­vented by the habitual use of the cold bath, and by tonics, such as iron, quinine, strychnia, &c. Locally, the use of astringent lotions of vinegar or a weak solution of lead will also be of service. Bromidrosis or fœtid sweating is often associated with the former condition, and it too may be general or local. It most frequently affects the feet, especially in those who have much fatigue, and is a source of much personal discomfort as well as of annoyance to others. It is apparently due to rapid decomposition in the perspiration which has saturated the stockings, and for its treatment it is essential that these should be frequently changed and the feet washed several times a day, dried carefully, and dusted with some antiseptic powder, such as boracic or salicylic acid mixed with starch or French chalk. Hebra recommends the application to the feet of a composition of equal parts of olive oil and litharge plaster spread upon linen and used twice a day.

(2) *Of* *the Sebaceous Glands.—Seborrhoea* is a term

@@@1 “I call it *Skimmer,* from the manner of its collecting its food with the lower mandible, as it flies along the surface of the water ” *(Gen. of Birds,* p. 52).

@@@2 Other English names applied to it in America are “Razorbill,” “Scissorbill,” and “Shearwater.”

@@@3 For the structure of the skin see Anatomy, vol. i. p. 897.