the Rose-coloured Starling, which is not an unfrequent visitor to the British Islands. It is a bird of most irregular and erratic habits—a vast horde suddenly arriving at some place to which it may have hitherto been a stranger, and at once making a settlement there, leaving it wholly deserted as soon as the young are reared. This happened in the summer of 1875 at Villafranca, in the province of Verona, the castle of which was occupied in a single day by some 12,000 or 14,000 birds of this species, as has been graphically told by Sig. de Betta *(Atti del R. Ist. Veneto,* ser. 5, vol. ii.);@@1 but similar instances have been before recorded,—as in Bulgaria in 1867, near Smyrna in 1856, and near Odessa in 1844, to mention only some of which particulars have been published.@@2 (a. n.)

STARODUB, a district town of Russia, in the govern­ment of Tchernigoff, 116 miles to the north-east of that town, on the marshy banks of a small tributary of the navi­gable Sudost. It is regularly built, with broad straight streets, the houses being surrounded by large gardens. Its 23,890 inhabitants—Little Russian descendants of former Cossacks, with about 5000 Jews—support themselves chiefly by gardening and agriculture. Tanning is also carried on, and the trade in corn and hemp exported to Riga and St Petersburg has some importance.

Starodub at one time played a prominent part in the history of the Ukraine. As early as the 11th and 12th centuries it was a bone of contention between different Russian princes, who appre­ciated the value of its strategic position. The Mongols seem to have destroyed it, and its name does not reappear till the 14th century. During the 15th and 16th centuries the Russians and Lithuanians were continually disputing the possession of its fortress, and at the beginning of the 17th century it became a stronghold of Poland.

STARO-KONSTANTINOFF, a district town of Russia, in the government of Volhynia, situated 121 miles to the west-south-west of Zhitomir. It is an old-fashioned, poorly built town, dating from the 16th century, and is often mentioned in history in connexion with the rising of Cossacks under Bogdan Khmelnitzky. Owing to its excellent position close to the Austrian frontier and its railway communication with south-west Russia, it has a very active trade in corn, cattle, and salt with Austria, Prussia, and Poland. Its population (17,980 in 1884, of whom two-thirds were Jews) is rapidly increasing.

STASSFURT, a town in the Prussian province of Saxony, and one of the chief seats of the German salt- producing industry, is situated on both sides of the Bode, 19 miles to the south-west of Magdeburg. Although saline springs are mentioned here as early as the 13th century, the first attempt to bore for salt was not made until 1839, while the systematic exploitation of the salt- beds, to which the town is indebted for its prosperity, dates only from 1856. The shafts reached deposits of salt nt a depth of 850 feet, but the finer and purer layers lie more than 1100 feet below the surface. Besides the rock-salt, which is excavated by blasting, the saline deposits of Stassfurt yield a considerable quantity of deliquescent salts and other saline products, which have encouraged the foundation of numerous chemical factories in the town and in the neighbouring village of Leopolds­hall, which stands upon Anhalt territory. The formation of the Stassfurt salt-beds and the composition of the rock- salt are described under Salt (vol. xxi. pp. 231, 232). The rock-salt works are mainly Government property, while

the chemical factories are in private hands. About 2000 workmen are employed in the Stassfurt salt industry, and about 490,000 tons of raw salt are annually excavated. The population of the town, which contains one or two miscellaneous factories, was 16,457 in 1885.

STATE, Great Officers of. All the principal ministers of the British crown are popularly called the great officers of state. Under this designation are more or less accur­ately included the premier for the time being, the other members of the cabinet, and the leading functionaries of the court. But properly speaking the great offices of state are only nine in number, and it is to the holders of them alone that the description of “ the great officers of state ” strictly and distinctively applies. They are the lord high steward, the lord high chancellor, the lord high treasurer, the lord-president of the privy council, the lord-keeper of the privy seal, the lord great chamberlain, the lord high constable, the earl marshal, and the lord high admiral. Of these, three—the lord chancellor, the lord-president of the council, and the lord privy seal— are the first and second always and the third almost always cabinet ministers. The offices of two more—those of the lord treasurer and the high constable—are now executed by commission, the chief of the lords commis­sioners, known severally as the first lord of the treasury and the first lord of the admiralty, being likewise members of the cabinet, while the first lord of the treasury is usually at the head of the Government. But, although it has become the rule for the treasury and the admiralty to be put in commission, there is nothing except usage of longer or shorter duration to prevent the crown from making a personal appointment to either of them, and the functions which formerly appertained to the lord treasurer and the high admiral are still regularly performed in the established course of the national administration. The four offices of the high steward, the great chamberlain, the high constable, and the earl marshal stand on a different footing, and can be regarded at the present day as little else than survivals from an earlier condition of society. They have practically ceased to have any relation to the ordinary routine of business in the country or of cere­monial in the palace, and the duties associated with them have either passed entirely into abeyance or are restricted within extremely narrow limits, save on certain occasions of exceptional pomp and solemnity. All of them were once hereditary, and, taking the three kingdoms together, they or their counterparts and equivalents continue to be held by right of inheritance in one or other of them even now. The prince of Wales is the hereditary great steward of Scotland, and the carl of Shrewsbury is the hereditary grand seneschal of Ireland. The great chamberlainship of England is held jointly by Lady Willoughby de Eresby and Lord Carrington on the one part and on the other part by the marquis of Cholmondeley. The hereditary high constable of Scotland is the earl of Erroll, and the hereditary earl marshal of England is the duke of Norfolk. It is of the great offices of the steward, the chamberlain, the constable, and the marshal that we shall at present speak, the rest of those we have mentioned being dealt with under their proper headings, or in the articles Cabinet, Ministry, Privy Council, and Royal Household.

The lord high steward of England ranks as the first of the great officers of state. His office is called out of abeyance by commission under the great seal only for coronations and for trials by the House of Lords. At the former he bears the crown of St Edward immediately before the sovereign in the procession to Westminster Abbey, and he presides at the latter on the arraignment of a peer or a peeress for treason or felony. From the reign of Richard II. to that of Henry VII. it was the duty of the

@@@1 A partial translation of this paper is given in the *Zoologist* for 1878, pp. 18-22.

@@@2 It is remarkable that on almost all of these occasions the locality pitched upon has been, either at the time or soon after, ravaged by locusts, which the birds greedily devour. Another fact worthy of attention is that they are often observed to affect trees or shrubs bearing rose-coloured flowers, as *Nerium oleander* and *Robinia viscosa,* among the blossoms of which they themselves may easily escape notice, for their plumage is rose-pink and black shot with blue.