

## New Publications.

**ANIMAL ARTISANS; AND OTHER STUDIES OF BEASTS AND BIRDS.** By C. J. Cornish, M.A., F.Z.S., with a prefatory memoir by his widow. Illustrated, 274 pages. London and New York, Longmans, Green & Co. \$2.50.

This is a collection of the author's contributions to various English periodicals. His nature studies are peculiarly pleasing, shorn as they are of improbability and told with the earnestness born of long observation. One of his chapters deals with the animal life on both sides of railway tracks and the changes wrought by reason of travel on the steel rails. One of his anecdotes relates to a sacred Brahmini bull that opposed the passage of an engine on a new railway in India. The sacred bull, however, made but a poor showing against the iron horse, and when he was left dead on the field, the railway officials were fearful as to the effect of the incident on the Brahmins. They, however, decorated the engine with flowers and made offerings to it, as being the stronger divinity.

In another place he relates how annoying were the depredations of wild monkeys, which boarded passing freight trains and threw off large numbers of the sugar canes with which the open cars were loaded, then sprang to the ground and devoured the morsels, which may have seemed all the sweeter, procured, as they were, at some risk. He relates how wolves frequent the railway tracks in winter and follow them in search of bones and bits of meat thrown out. Foxes search for the bodies of birds killed by the telegraph wires, and crows and rooks catch young frogs which, bred in nearby ditches, persist in their attempts to cross the rails until they are snatched up by their winged enemies.

Mr. Cornish devotes chapters to the migration of animals; to those that in a sense construct roads or paths; to those that have been instrumental in changing the characteristics of wild and domestic landscapes. In one place he says:

"As the cattle of the New Forest and the rabbits on the downs have dwarfed and sweetened the herbage, so the vast herds of game on the African veldt would in past ages have turned that fertile region into a grassy lawn were it not for the unfortunate cessation of almost all rain in the three summer months. During this time the surface becomes so arid that the tread of beasts instead of compacting it, helps to disintegrate it and destroy the surface grass, and thus the veldt never becomes turf."

Mr. Cornish's versatility is remarkable and his knowledge of natural history, his logic and his philosophy combine to make of the volume anything but dry reading.