

LETTER.

THE AUTHORSHIP OF [SIR] CHARLES HASTINGS'
"ILLUSTRATIONS OF THE NATURAL HISTORY
OF WORCESTERSHIRE" . . . LONDON . . . 1834.

To the Editors of BRITISH BIRDS.

SIRS,—I possess a copy of this book annotated, about 1855, by a former owner, Edwin Lees, the well-known Worcestershire botanist (Mullens and Kirke Swann's *Bibliography of British Birds*, p. 346), who was honorary curator of the Worcestershire Natural History Society's Museum, a member of the Zoological Committee, and secretary to the Meteorological Committee.

My copy is of interest since the annotations go to prove that Edwin Lees wrote the greater part of the book; as the following notes will show. On the title-page he has written: "With additional Notes by Edwin Lees, Co-Editor of the work." On p. 13 at the third paragraph, he has inserted this note: "Here commence those Illustrations of the Natural History of Worcestershire, the greater part of which were written by myself, E. Lees." He claims the authorship of pp. 37-47 and he notes that from the second paragraph of p. 56 to p. 84 is: "with the exception of one paragraph, entirely my own contribution," and this fact is the more interesting since these pages comprise the ornithology of the county. Again, he claims pp. 86-88 and on p. 90 writes: "The greater part of this sketch of the Geology of Worcestershire was drawn up by me and therefore I must be answerable for such errors as occur." He claims pp. 98-109, part of p. 121 and he states as regards the "catalogue of some of the rarer lepidopterous insects found in Worcestershire" (pp. 136-146, which it must be noticed is acknowledged as the work of Mr. Lees), that he compiled this list "partly from observation, but with great assistance from the beautiful cabinet of Lepidoptera collected by Mr. Abraham Edmunds." Of the "Catalogue of the most remarkable and interesting plants" (pp. 147-180) he observes: "Though not so stated, this account of the rarer plants indigenous to Worcestershire was drawn out entirely by myself. A few plants were contributed by Dr. Streeten of Worcester to the list." Finally he claims the list of "Mineral productions of Worcestershire" (pp. 181-184) as his work.

Thus it will be seen that Edwin Lees claims the authorship of nearly three-fifths of the 184 pages of the book. As regards the map—of which [Sir] Charles Hastings says he is "indebted to the exertions of Mr. Lees, Mr. Pearson and Mr. Strickland"—Edwin Lees notes: "the Rev. Thomas Pearson rector of Great Witley is here alluded to. But although Mr. Pearson sent a paper on the Mineralogy of Witley Parish to the Worcestershire Nat. Hist. Soc., he had in fact nothing to do with the Geological map."

The most interesting point, however, is the fact that Edwin Lees appears to have been responsible for the ornithological portion of the book (pp. 62-72) whereas this has been attributed to E. Brown (Mullens and Kirke Swann's *Bibliography of British Birds*, p. 284). The late Mr. R. F. Tomes, in the *Victoria History of the County of Worcestershire*, Vol. I. (1901), p. 142, states that the *Illustrations of the Natural History of Worcestershire* was "prepared under the auspices of a great authority, H. E. Strickland, and contributed to by Mrs. Perrott," and he adds that "a list of the birds of the Malvern District, by Edwin Lees, appeared in the *Trans. Malv. Nat. Field Club* 1870, but the record is not very

satisfactory."

The annotations, made in my copy, by Edwin Lees contain nothing of any ornithological importance except a note concerning Mrs. C. E. L. Perrott of the Chantry, Fladbury, who died on August 21st, 1836, and about whose "elephant folio"—*A Selection of British Birds frequenting Worcestershire and the adjoining counties*—there seems considerable doubt (Mullens and Kirke Swann's *Bibliography of British Birds*, pp. 469-470). Lees's note is as follows: "This lady, Mrs. George Perrott, afterwards came to reside in Worcester, where she died about 1836. She was an ardent, intelligent woman and had drawn a great number of British Birds in water-colours. These she intended to have engraved and published, but only one number in folio ever came out." The last words of this note are interesting as stating definitely that only one part of this lady's book was ever published.

CAPENOCH, Jan., 1920.

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