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IV. Notice of *Adelges piceæ* of Ratzeburg

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that more aboundeth in the bosomes of the leaves than in any other plant that is knowne," viz., *Silene inflata*, Bladder Campion, which Gerard nominated "Spattling Poppy." This is the English of *Papaver spumeum*, which again is translated from the Greek *Μηκων ἀρρωδης* of Dioscorides, a plant that no one can recognise, but which Gesner thought might be this plant. Gerard's name has not come into common use. Plants besmeared by this insect were formerly considered emblematical of cuckoldom. "There was loyal Lavender," says Green, "but that was full of Cuckow-spittles, to show that women's light thoughts make their husbands heavy heads." The Northumbrian name of the insect is "Brock," and hence, some one told Brockett (Glossary of North-Country Words), the expression, "to sweat like a brock;" but this applies to the badger. Boys take them for the early state of the cuckoo; and Isidore, with all a boy's credulity, tells how at the dog-days they inflict matricidal retribution; for then attaining perfection, they rush upon her in a body, cluster under her wings, and kill her with their bites. (Joh. Johnstoni Thaumato-graphia, p. 250.) Isidore regarded it as the offspring of the Musical Cicada of the south of Europe. Our countryman, Muffett, in his "Insectorum Theatrum," 1634, pp. 122, 132, seems to be the first who had a correct conception of the nature of the "young gowk." The passage has been rendered by Sir T. Browne ("Vulg. Err.," p. 237): "Certaine it is, that out of this, some kind of locust doth proceed; for herein may be discovered a little insect of a festucine or pale green, resembling in all parts a Locust, or what we call a Grasshopper." Near Newcastle, the small springing Homoptera, to which class it belongs, are still called Grass Locusts. "Not worth a Gowk-spittle," is a Galloway phrase. (Mactaggart, "Gallovidian Encyclopædia.") "Gesner asketh, how any man dare be so foolish or venturous as to eat of a cuckoe, whose much spitting argueth a corrupt and excremental flesh." (Muffett's "Health's Improvement," p. 99.)

IV. *Notice of Adelges picæ of Ratzeburg.* By JAMES HARDY, Esq.

In a letter to Professor Balfour, Mr Hardy says—"I see by the report of last meeting of the Botanical Society that a supposed *Coccus* is infesting the silver firs about Alloa. This, I apprehend, will be the

Adelges picea of Ratzeburg, specimens of which I enclose, rather more advanced than those seem to have been which were sent by Mr Dawson, and examined by Mr W. R. M'Nab. It is closely allied to the species found on the twigs of the larch, *Adelges laricis*. It is most hurtful to young trees, by destroying the leading shoots; on the trunks of old trees it will remain for years without visibly impairing their vitality, and one tree will continue infested while a long avenue will remain clean. It probably occurs more or less in every collection of silver firs. Mr Andrew Murray sent me specimens from Kinross-shire several years since, and I had others from Roxburghshire from the late Rev. James Duncan. There is another so like this, on the bark of the Scotch pine, that I cannot observe any difference in wingless specimens. It is the *Adelges corticis* of Kaltenbach. It has come from the nurseries on young trees; I have not seen it prove fatal in this vicinity. The larch *Adelges* began to excite notice in the country about 1814, as appears from the thirteenth vol. of the 'Bath Society's Papers.' It is now found on almost every tree, and yet the larch continues to flourish."

V. Notice of an Ash Tree struck by Lightning near Edinburgh. By Mr M'NAB. (Plate VIII.)

On Thursday the 1st of May at 10 p.m., a severe thunderstorm passed over the south side of Edinburgh, damaging a large ash tree standing on the grass lawn half way between the porter's lodge and the dwelling-house at Moredun, three miles from Edinburgh, the seat of David Anderson, Esq. The tree seems to have been struck by the electric fluid about 40 feet above the ground, at the point where the stem divided into branches. A portion of the west side of the tree is entirely torn away to the depth of 6 inches and 2 feet broad, proceeding from the top to within 3 feet of the ground, at which point the stem is 10 feet 4 inches in circumference. The portions torn from the tree were thrown to various distances, some as far as 212 feet. One piece, 6 feet long and about 6 inches in diameter, was thrown 180 feet distant. The fragments averaged 120 in number, varying from 6 inches to 8 feet in length, and were scattered more or less all round the tree, the heaviest portions being towards the north; several had their ends stuck deep into the ground. The pieces as they now lie scattered about, all denuded of their bark, have more the appearance of being blown into their present grotesque positions with gunpowder than by a stroke of electricity. (See Plate.)

Professor Balfour read a notice from the "American Association for the Advancement of Science," relative to the "Polar plant (*Silphium laciniatum*)."

Major Benjamin Alvord, of the United States Army, says that the radical leaf of the plant presents its faces uniformly to the east or west, the plane of the leaf being north and south, or coinciding with the meridian plane. This is uniformly true of the radical leaf of the *Silphium laciniatum* when there are no disturbing causes. In the valleys or lower portions of the rolling prairies, where most sheltered from the winds, this polarity is most accurate, and the plants are seen arranged all parallel to each other. This is true of the radical leaf from one to two feet in height, before it grows up, as it does in the second year, to be the flowering plant. Surgeon De Camp, an officer in the medical department of the army, who accompanied General Kearney's expedition to New Mexico, says:—"I have seen the Polar Plant growing luxuriantly from Fort Towson, near Red River, to Fort Leavenworth, on the Missouri. In the direction of Santa Fe I have not observed it more than 200 miles from Fort Leavenworth, that being about the point where the rich prairie lands terminate and what are called 'the plains'