

tion. The edges and points of many are very sharp, and the opinion is maintained that they are undoubtedly slate implements used as knives, scrapers, and needles for cutting up animals and sewing skins. These would be of real service, for a man recently told me how he had shaved himself with a flint razor made by the Indians, and declared that only twice did he cut himself. Slate implements were previously unknown, so that in this respect the cemetery at Harlyn would be unique. The fact that the flakes are said to be of a much harder kind of slate than that found in the district, if conclusively proved, would be greatly in favour of this theory. Certainly many of the flakes which I saw were very sharp and tapering. Other experts, however, are unable to convince themselves that they are anything more than fragments of slate, sharpened by the action of the sea and sand rather than by human workmanship, similar to countless pieces which might be collected on the beach. Tourist and visitor may form their own conclusions, for hundreds of these flakes are carefully preserved on trays in the new museum, where the owner, Mr. Reddie Mallett, zealously guards his antiquarian treasures.

ARTHUR KELLY.

Tame] Moor-hens

EVERY winter, for several years, with curious punctuality, at the first frost, there has appeared upon the lawn before the house a moor-hen. This year another has come with it, with brighter plumage, a red beak and yellow legs. It is a cock-bird, and our solitary visitor of the years before must, from her dingier wardrobe, have been a hen. We call them all moor-hens or water-hens, though the males should surely be called moor-cocks or water-cocks. But "moor-cock" is already the name of a grouse, and water-cock sounds so much like water-taps or turn-cock, or something to do with a cistern or pump that it would be absurd. So there is nothing for it but to say cock-moor-hen. But how folk would laugh if we called a she-grouse a hen-moor-cock! Yet there would be no difference between the two—except that one is right and the other is not.

One of these moor-hens we know to be the same visitor year after year, for there is one particular bush in the shrubbery from which it always comes walking out and to which, when alarmed, it always goes running back. It knows its way everywhere; sits on the wall when the dogs are being fed and, when they have done and are gone, comes down to look for the scraps which are always thrown out specially for it; hides behind the wych-elm in the poultry-yard when the chickens are being given their corn, but always comes out when its own piece of bread is thrown to it; forages in the "potato-house," where the sprouting potatoes, beetroots, and other vegetables have always a treat for it, and pretends not to know that the gardener sees it when he comes in, but sits in the very corner of the wall with its tail stuck up hard against the wall, and its head on the ground, so that it does not look like a bird at all. So it must be the same bird every year. Besides, there is one thing it does that makes it quite certain that it is, and that is this. Whenever it gets a large piece of bread on the lawn—it will take it away from anything, from a crowd of sparrows, or from a cock pheasant—it runs off, *not* into the shrubbery which is only a few feet off, but right across the open lawn at its very widest part to the shrubbery on the other side. And it always runs to exactly the same spot every time. Now this is very odd, for except when there is a hard frost we never see or hear a moor-hen anywhere. As soon as the ice melts it is off back to its pond or stream or ditch, but where it goes to we never know, yet it appears every year upon the lawn.

A moor-hen is a very clever bird at hiding. In the water, it will sit among weeds or in a shady place, or under a single dead leaf that happens to be on the water, with only its beak and nostrils out, and there it will stay as long as you stop to watch it. On land, it disappears in a most wonderful way, but the explanation is quite simple, though most people do not seem to be aware of it—and certainly no dogs know it. The moor-hen, as soon as it gets a chance, hops up into a bush or a hedge or, if there is one handy, a tree. Those who are looking for it hunt about

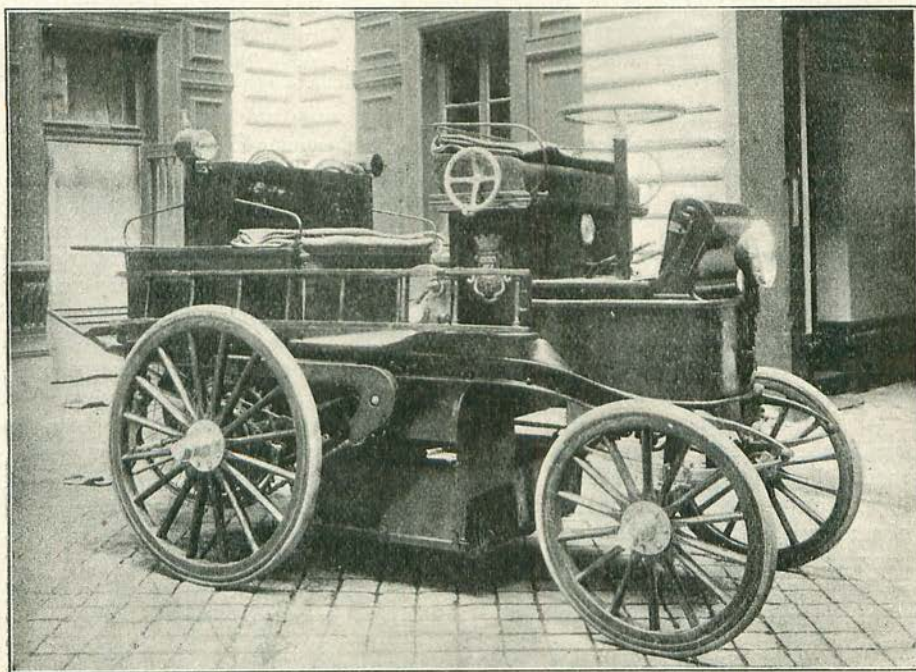
among the reeds by the water's edge and poke about in the holes in the banks and search the water for it, while all the time the moor-hen has slipped off to a perch it knows of, and is perhaps watching its persecutors from the top of a tall fir-tree. The moor-hen I am speaking of always gets up into a yew, and walks along one of the boughs and stands at the end quite hidden from the view of those who do not know its trick, and watches what is going on when the food for the birds is being scattered about. As soon as the house-door is shut, it walks along the bough again, hops down from one bough to the other to the ground and comes out on to the lawn to feed.

Of course I know its trick, and on purpose I walk under the bough it is hiding on, but though my head cannot be more than two feet from the moor-hen as I pass, it does not fly. When it is in the water it escapes, or finds safety, in being perfectly motionless, keeping perfectly quiet. In a tree it does just the same, and it knows it. But this, of course, requires a good deal of courage—or

stupidity—on the part of the moor-hen. Which it is I have never been able to decide. Nothing would be easier to kill than a moor-hen, when you have once seen it, either in the water or in a tree. For it will not move. Is this bravery or is it want of sense? They are timid birds, we know, for when they are walking they are nearly always flicking their tails. This means that they are nervous. A tame moor-hen, like the one I am writing of, never flicks its tail so long as it is sure that there is no danger. But if it hears any strange sound its tail begins to "flick" at once. It will go about picking up crumbs on the lawn as if it knew that we were all friends, but a tap at the window will make its tail flick up at once. So, knowing this, I am inclined to think that the moor-hen is not a sensible bird—but the way that it will snatch a crust out of a cock-pheasant's beak ought to get it the Victoria Cross.

The Only Motor Fire-Engine

THE London County Council Fire Brigade possesses no motor fire-engine, although



Automobile fire-engine used by the Paris Fire Brigade