deeds. The first of these attempts was on the evening of the 3rd March, when a small bag containing a cake or two of giant powder, with a fuse inserted in it, was placed by the hand of a Fenian on the ledge of a window in the southern façade of the building occupied by the Local Government Board, Whitehall. While the criminals were at work on their dastardly outrage,
2 I was quietly taking notes within | a stone's throw of the spot—that is to say, at the Institution of Civil Engineers in Great George Street, Westminster, where a lecture was being delivered by the celebrated physicist, the late Sir William Siemens, to a very crowded and distinguished audience. It was one of a course of lectures which I had been engaged to report for the institution. The subject was "The Electrical Transmission and Storage of Power," and the
3 lecturer, curiously enough, was, at the time | to which I am referring, speaking not indeed of dynamite, but of a dynamic subject—namely the forces evolved by certain kinds of dynamo machines. This was the sentence which he had just uttered: "The enormous difference between the values here given shows sufficiently what scope there is for the development of the dynamo machine. For instance, in this machine 1lb. of copper produces 17 watts or units
4 of electro-motive force; in another (the last which has been | produced) the effect is 48. You will observe "——

At this moment the building was shaken by what might have been a terrific clap of thunder, which stopped the lecturer in the middle of his sentence, and brought my pen to a standstill, startling every one present, and giving a general impression that a violent explosion had taken place on the premises. With many an audience a panic would have been produced,
5 and as the means of exit were not of | the best the results of anything like a stampede in a densely-crowded hall would have been disastrous in the extreme. As it was, there was not the slightest indication of anything of the kind. A set of hard-headed engineers were not the men likely to lose their wits on such an occasion. All eyes were instinctively directed to the ceiling, where there was suspended a large sun or Drummond light as nearly as possible over the little
6 desk | at which I was writing, the prevailing idea being that there was something wrong with the gas. But no one stirred from his seat except the secretary, who, with great promptitude and presence of mind, immediately left the room by a back way close to where he was sitting, to ascertain if anything had happened on the premises, and very shortly afterwards returned and made the gratifying announcement that there was no injury to the building; but the cause
7 of | the shock was still shrouded in mystery. My note-book was covered with dust that had fallen from the ceiling, but before leaving off writing I hastily scribbled (with the instinct of a reporter, who does not like anything to escape him) the word "explosion" just at the moment that it happened. I suppose if an earthquake had taken place I should, in the same way, have made an attempt to record the fact.

8. The only damage done to the | building was that a semi-circular window high above the platform was smashed, but not a single pane in the skylight was broken. After a short interval Sir William Siemens continued his lecture as though nothing particular had happened, and it was not until the audience had separated that they ascertained the cause of the interruption. For myself, it was not until I reached my club that I became acquainted with the
9 facts of the case. A Central Press telegram had | been received announcing that a dynamite outrage had taken place at the offices of the Local Government Board, and this accounted only too well for the shock we had experienced. As was subsequently explained by Sir Frederick Abel, if the explosive used had been gunpowder instead of nitro-glycerine, not a window within half a mile of the Home Office would have escaped destruction. Nearly every window in
10 Whitehall Club, Parliament street, was broken, but the next house was untouched. |

(*c.*) At the rate of 100 words per minute. Takes 5 minutes.

Nothing is more sad than a landscape without birds. The well-known forest of Fontainebleau, so varied in its aspect, so majestic in its wooded glades, is always melancholy; not the song of a single bird breaks the silence. Destitute of water, for the sandy soil drinks up all the rain, having no spring nor stream, it is deadly for the bird, which flies away as from a land under a curse. Under the first impression, you admire it, but by degrees the feeling of
1 sadness oppresses you, and at last renders you insensible to its beauties. Of the many | varieties of birds, some prefer the fields, while others belong exclusively to the forest. These are eminently useful, destroying insects and other injurious animals; many of them furnishing excellent sport as game, and food for the table. There are two kinds of birds especially valuable, the woodpecker and the cuckoo. The first runs up the trunk of the tree, picking out all the caterpillars, wasps, and hornets, and then taps the bark to ascertain if there be any enemy lurking in the interior. Once on the scent, he tears off a piece of bark, and
2 hollows a spot until he | reaches the larva he is in search of. Unfortunately, the ignorant destroy this bird, on the plea that the holes he makes are detrimental to the tree; but this is unfounded, as he never attacks any but decayed wood, and prevents the spread of the malady. The cuckoo feeds principally on the hairy caterpillars, which other birds avoid; and it is said that in 1847 a pine forest in Pomerania was saved by a flight of migrating cuckoos, which installed themselves for some weeks, and cleared it completely of the caterpillars which
3 abounded there. Their sweet and | plaintive note is always welcome as the harbinger of spring. If among the smaller tribes of birds there are some which live principally on grain, there are none which do not redeem the damage they thus cause by the services they render in destroying insects. Nor must it be imagined that a bird is injurious when it lives on seeds only, for it thus destroys a great many weeds. Pigeons, which are exclusively granivorous, do eat the wheat; but in exchange they consume the seeds of fennel, poppy, spurge, and other
4 troublesome plants. While they are treasured in England and | Belgium, these birds are shot down in other countries without pity. The sparrow, too, which has received so much male-