

255
LETTERS.

EXTRAORDINARY DISPLAY BY A PAIR OF
HEDGE-SPARROWS.

To the Editors of BRITISH BIRDS.

SIRS,—With reference to the letters on the above subject (*antea* p. 231, etc.), I venture to send you an extract from my diary of April 4th, 1928, with reference to the actions of two Hedge-Sparrows:—

“The male first started running round and round the hen, who after a bit, started shaking and drooping her wings and cocking her tail straight up. Then twice the male darted in and gave her a peck at the anus, when the hen at once began to shiver her wings more violently than ever. Then suddenly the male darted at her sideways—not mounting at all—and they came together in a flash. So quick was the movement that I could scarcely follow it. Coition must have taken place, for both birds, apparently satisfied, separated and went on feeding. A very curious performance.” A. H. MEIKLEJOHN.

MALLARD KILLING HOUSE-SPARROW.

To the Editors of BRITISH BIRDS.

SIRS,—With reference to Mr. R. J. Buxton's note on this subject (*antea* pp. 222-3), I witnessed a similar incident on the Serpentine, Hyde Park, on August 29th, 1928. My attention was drawn to a scuffle a foot or two from the bank, and I saw a Mallard with a House-Sparrow in its beak repeatedly dip the latter in the water until it ceased to struggle on being raised again into the air. The Mallard then released its hold, and did not touch the House-Sparrow again. Unfortunately, I did not see how the Mallard obtained possession of its victim, but a party of House-Sparrows had been just previously feeding by the bank, and so I assume it was in the same manner as recorded by Mr. Buxton, for the bird was gripped in a similar way.

DAVID L. LACK.