

WOOL - ALIENS AT PORTCHESTER, 1939.

By PATRICK M. HALL, F.L.S.

IN August 1939 I was consulted professionally by a market-gardener who was under notice to vacate at September 29th. fifteen acres of land at Portchester, of which he was tenant. He had also received notice from his landlord that the latter proposed to make a claim against him for an excessive growth of weeds upon the land.

On inspecting the land, I found that a considerable part of the fifteen acres was indeed covered with a veritable jungle of weeds, many of which were quite unknown to me. In particular there were large colonies of *Chenopodiums* growing to six feet and more in height, thickets of spiny plants like *Xanthium spinosum* and *Centaurea solstitialis*, very conspicuous with its bright yellow flowers, and numbers of a Cape 'gooseberry'-like plant with pretty pale blue flowers (*Nicandra physaloides* Gaertn.).

It transpired that this exotic growth was due to good husbandry rather than bad, since parts of the land had been dressed heavily with shoddy in the two preceding years. The tenant recovered compensation for the residual value of the shoddy but a set-off had to be allowed for the fact that he had failed to keep the weeds reasonably in check, so that at the end of his tenancy the landlord had to mow them down and gather them up in cart-loads to be burnt.

A representative collection was gathered and sent, when dried, to the Director of the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, who kindly had them identified for me. This showed that there were plants from all parts of the world—the Mediterranean countries, S. Africa, Australia and S. America.

The following species were represented :—

- Sisymbrium orientale* L.
- Lavatera plebeia* Sims. Native of Australia and not previously recorded as an alien in Britain.
- Erodium moschatum* L.
- E. Botrys* (Cav.) Bertol.
- E. cygnorum* Nees.
- Medicago hispida* Gaertn. var. *denticulata* (Willd.).
- M. minima* (L.) Desr. var. *recta* (Desf.) Burnat.
- Trifolium glomeratum* L.
- Anmmi majus* L.
- A. Visnaga* L.
- Calotis hispidula* F. von Muell.
- Erigeron crispus* Pourr.
- Xanthium spinosum* L.
- Cryptostemma calendulaceum* (L.) R. Br.
- Carduus tenuiflorus* Curtis.
- Centaurea solstitialis* L.
- Nicandra physaloides* Gaertn.
- Nepeta Cataria* L.
- Amaranthus chlorostachys* Willd.
- A. Dinteri* Schinz var. *uncinatus* Thell.
- Chenopodium hircinum* Schrad.
- Monolepis Nuttalliana* (R. and S.) Greene.
- Diplachne fusca* (L.) Beauv.