

or disadvantage of the soil upon which it is built. Generally speaking, a house should never stand low: it often happens that a house standing on high ground, although built on clay soil, is dryer than a low-lying dwelling situated in a valley upon gravel soil. Trees are desirable, if not too near the house, as they aid in drying the soil, certain trees such as eucalyptus, plane, and poplar being specially useful.

What is meant by "made-up ground" is about the fact which a house can be built. This is true in its actual sense, for of holes and hollows filled up with all sorts of a foundation. To slow down the process which will in time be composed of organic matter of size; its gases emanate and force is obvious. Careful inquiry should be made in regard to this important question of soil before selecting a dwelling.

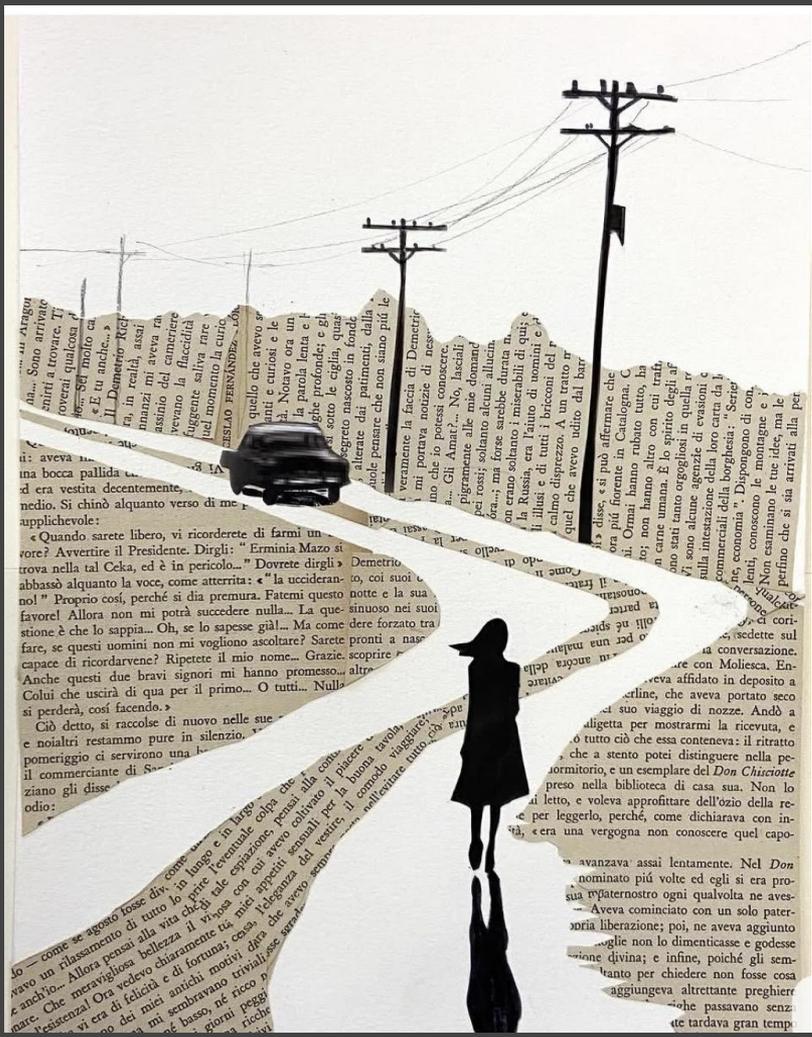
**Construction.**—The absence of damp will also depend to a great extent upon the construction of the house, proper construction tending to minimise many of the disadvantages of an unwholesome soil. Houses built on clay soil should





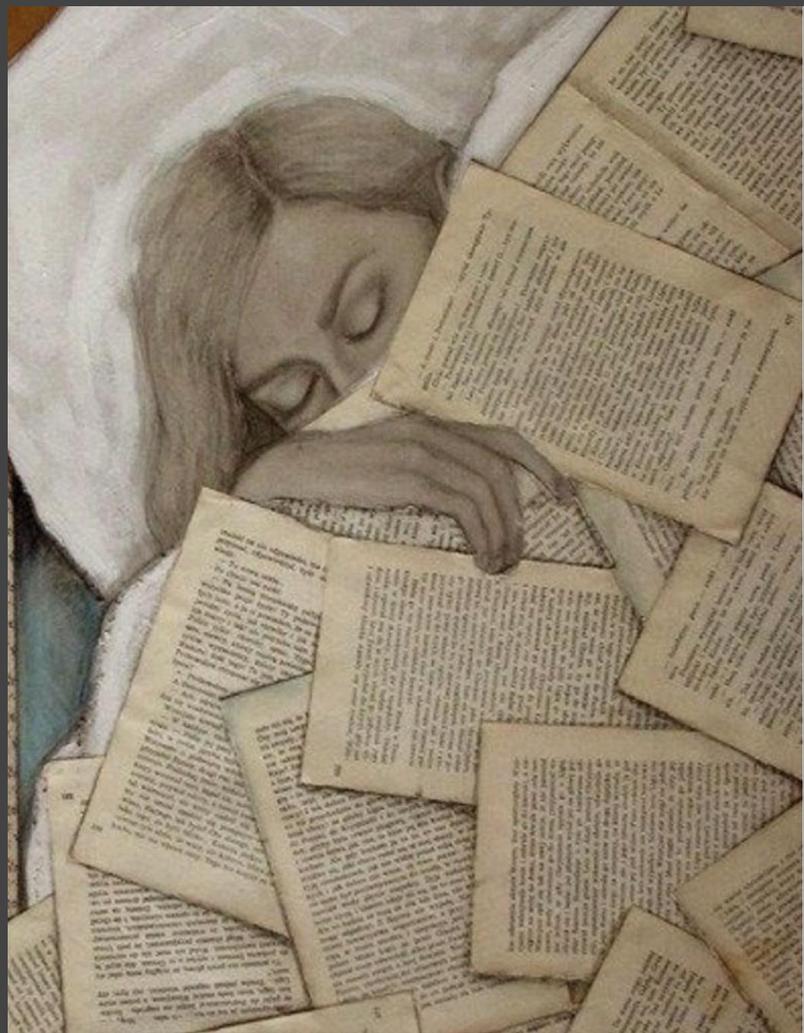
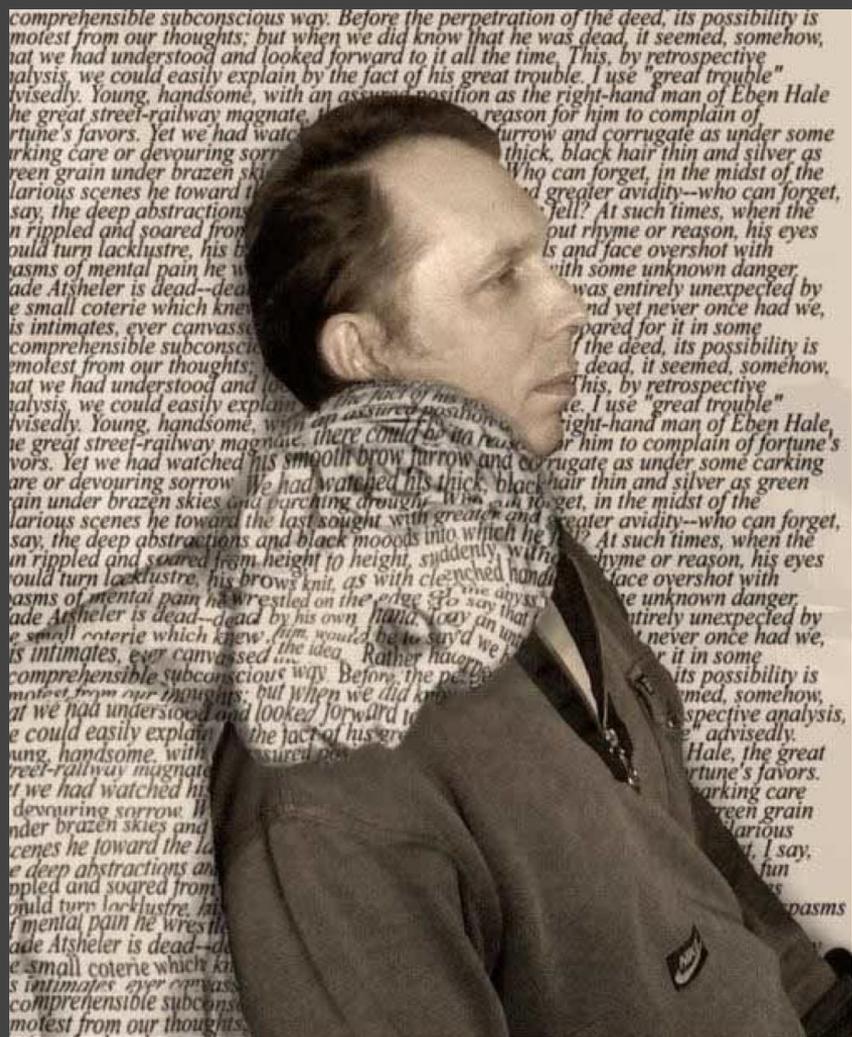






do - come se agitato fosse div...  
vavo un rilassamento di tutto lo...  
e anch'io... Allora pensai alla vita che gli...  
mare. Che meravigliosa bellezza il...  
esistenza! Ora vedevo chiaramente tu...  
vi era di felicità e di fortuna; casa...  
no dei miei antichi motivi, dicev...  
che mi sembravano triviali, disse...  
giorni pegg...  
ricordi...  
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giorni pegg...  
ricordi...

avanzava assai lentamente. Nel Don  
nominato più volte ed egli si era pro-  
sua ripartenza ogni qualvolta ne aves-  
- Aveva cominciato con un solo pater-  
na liberazione; poi, ne aveva aggiunto  
- gli non lo dimenticasse e godesse  
- vione divina; e infine, poiché gli sem-  
- tanto per chiedere non fosse cosa  
- aggiungeva altrettante preghier  
- che passavano senz  
- te tardava gran temp





pires; in other words, he must interfere with succession.

An interesting ecological aspect of this type of community is that forest fires are necessary for a pine forest to maintain itself. If protected from fire, the pines are often succeeded by broadleaved trees. Forestry studies in the 1920s indicated how fire affects longleaf pines. The seedling of this pine is covered by a bushy canopy of needles and is always in danger of being shaded by rapidly growing broadleaved competitors. In addition, the seedling is susceptible to a fungus growth on its needles. If fire passes through the area, it usually destroys the competing broadleaves as well as the fungus growing on the pine needles. The dense covering of needles protects the young seedling so that the plant survives. The pine canopy then grows extremely rapidly for two or three years, finally becoming tall enough to escape damage from the next ground fire. Thus, with periodic burning, a pine flatwoods or forest can maintain itself.

This type of forest is not peculiar to southern pine forests. The white pine of Michigan, Wisconsin, and Minnesota and the Knobcone pine of California apparently require heat from a fire to open tightly closed cones. Some weeds, whose fire seeds fall into the bed of ashes, which are ideal for germination. The seeds of competing species have been destroyed. Here we see an adaptation dependent on the presence of periodic fires! Specialists in forest management have utilized this concept and initiate controlled burning in certain conditions.

What principles can be derived from studies of succession? First, that organisms change the physical and chemical aspects of the environment in which they live. Mice burrowing in the soil, or leaves accumulating and decaying are examples. As the environment changes, so do the kinds of plants and animals inhabiting it. This is the most noticeable feature of the process; hence the term succession. Accompanying the succession of changing forms is an increase in the diversity of species and an increase in the amount of organic matter in the ecosystem. The excess organic material (decaying plant and animal remains) plays a dominant role in changing the physical and chemical nature of an area. Finally, as a community becomes stable, there is a decrease in the net production of living matter. In other words, as succession slows in a community, a balance

piration) and the formation of new organic matter. For this reason, man uses *early* succession stages for the production of food crops or for certain crops like the pines just described.

Man has experienced a mixture of success and failure in his attempts to modify ecosystems for his long-term benefit. The misuse of soil, excessive timbering and grazing practices, and indiscriminate use of insecticides represent failures. Success has been attained in a few areas like wildlife and forestry management. Rice cultivation is an example of the successful manipulation of the marsh ecosystem. Unfortunately, misuses from overexploitation and pollution are increasing at an alarming rate as the result of man's greater power to change the face of the earth and his rapid increase in numbers.

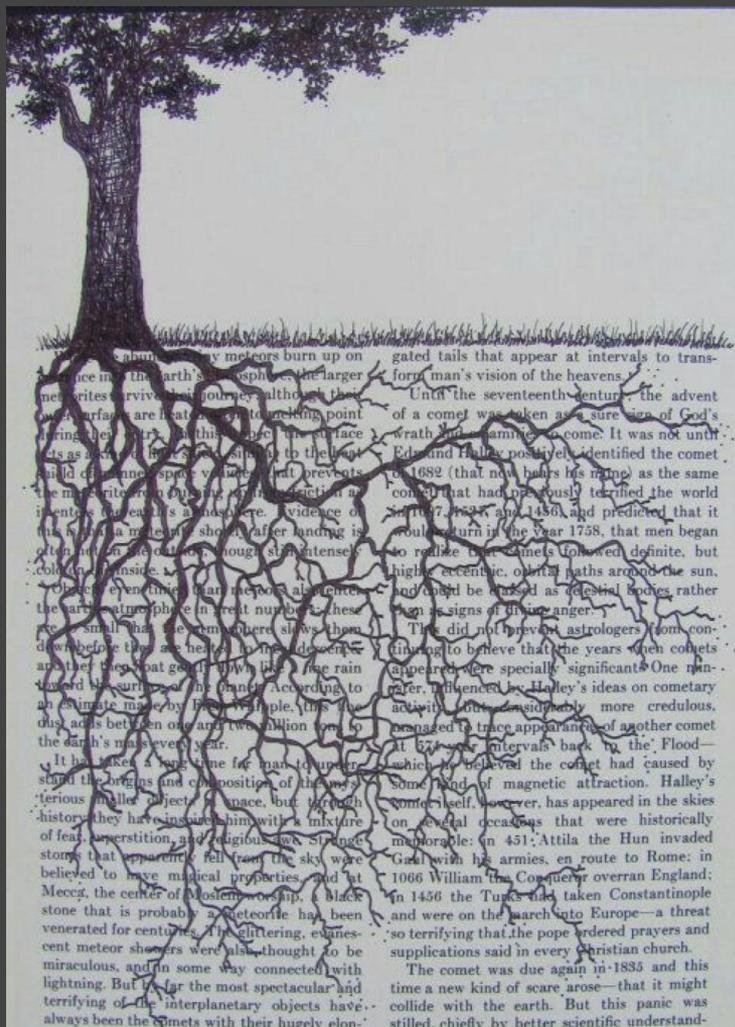
As biologists have attained a better understanding of ecosystems, they have attempted to integrate man's activities with those of nature. Problems associated with water pollution, erosion, overgrazing, and mining are receiving serious attention. The effects of the Second Law of Thermodynamics are inevitable, and we as man is now ready to delay rather than hasten the consequences.

Populations  
We have used the term *population* in various places throughout this book, assuming that the meaning was correctly understood. Thus, a genetic population referred to a self-perpetuating group of organisms, whereas in ecology a population is defined as all of the members of a species inhabiting a particular area. A population, however considered, is an important biological unit and in this section we discuss a few of its major features.

A population consists of individuals, and thus many of its features are a reflection of the characteristics of its members. A population also has a number of unique traits that are an outgrowth of its being a numerical concept or entity. We shall consider these quantitative aspects first.

**Density.** Density refers to the number of individuals per unit of area (or volume). Five meadow-larks per acre, two thousand diatoms per liter of pond water, 10,000 people per square mile are all expressions of density. This is an important aspect of population study in view of the prior discussion of energy relations and structure in the ecosystem.

**Natality.** This term refers to the production of



of about a million meteors burn up on entrance into the earth's atmosphere; the larger ones survive and gouge craters, although their outer surfaces are heated and are melting point during their entry. In this case, the surface acts as a heat sink, and is similar to the heat sink of an engine's piston which prevents the major portion of the heat of combustion of the piston from reaching the cylinder. Evidence of this is shown in a meteorite shortly after landing is often not even melted, although slightly softened and colored on the inside.

Others, even time to time, meteors also enter the earth's atmosphere in great numbers; these are small, but they are there still, when they drop before they are heated to the point where they are blown that gently down like a fine rain toward the surface of the planet. According to an estimate made by Lewis and Clark, this dust falls between one and two million tons to the earth's surface every year.

It has taken a long time for man to understand the origin and composition of the new's "terious matter" object in space, but through history they have in connection with a mixture of fear, superstition, and religious awe, strange storms that apparently fell from the sky, were believed to have magical properties, and at Mecca, the center of Moslem worship, a black stone that is probably a meteorite had been venerated for centuries. The glittering, exuberant meteor showers were also thought to be miraculous, and in some way connected with lightning. But for the most spectacular and terrifying of the interplanetary objects have always been the comets with their hugely elon-

gated tails that appear at intervals to transform man's vision of the heavens.

Until the seventeenth century, the advent of a comet was taken as a sure sign of God's wrath and calamity to come. It was not until Edmond Halley positively identified the comet of 1682 (that now bears his name) as the same comet that had previously terrified the world in 1067, 1302, and 1456, and predicted that it would return in the year 1758, that men began to realize that comets followed definite, but highly eccentric, orbital paths around the sun, and could be treated as celestial bodies rather than as signs of divine anger.

This did not prevent astrologers from continuing to believe that the years when comets appeared were specially significant. One manner, influenced by Halley's ideas on cometary activity, was considerably more credulous, designed to trace appearances of another comet at 67-year intervals back to the Flood—which he believed the comet had caused by some kind of magnetic attraction. Halley's comet itself, however, has appeared in the skies on several occasions that were historically memorable: in 451, Attila the Hun invaded Gaul with his armies, en route to Rome; in 1066 William the Conqueror overran England; in 1456 the Turks had taken Constantinople and were on the march into Europe—a threat so terrifying that the pope ordered prayers and supplications said in every Christian church.

The comet was due again in 1835 and this time a new kind of scare arose—that it might collide with the earth. But this panic was stilled, chiefly by better scientific understand-



