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"RUNNEL."

TO THE EDITOR OF BERROW'S WORCESTER JOURNAL.

Sir.—This is a name here and elsewhere for a "pollard-tree." It is a corruption of "roundel," and marks the round shape in which trees grow after they have been "polled," or had their "poll" removed. The practice of "polling" trees was general, when wood was the chief fuel; and the crop of pollards supplied the most usual billets for burning, called "brands," "brans," "brons." The Burnham Beeches, notable for their picturesque beauty, were the source from which the London Corporation drew their supply of fuel; beechen billets being accounted some of the best, because they burnt well and gave out a sweet smell in burning. In old leases I believe a clause was often inserted, and an important one it would be, authorizing the tenants "to top, lop and crop pollards." One effect of polling trees is to hasten their decay, and so "runnels" are mostly hollow; and this will explain how it is true that badgers make their hols in an old "runnel." Such can be the case only when the "runnel" is hollowed by age.

The Salamanca Corpus: "Runnel: Letter to the Editor." (1896)

I am told that in a very long and severe winter in the thirties, I suppose in 1836, there was a great scarcity of fuel in town and country; and as there were no railways, and the canals were frozen, teams were sent into the Black Country for coal, but furnished a very imperfect supply with infinite labour; while "many a owld runnel" succumbed to the woodman's axe in country places. "Rundlet," "runlet" (originally "roundlet" is an old word for a "cask" or "barrel," and points to its shape.

HAMILTON KINGSFORD

Stoulton Vicarage, June 8, 1896.