

JACK MINER HIMSELF

*Photo by his friend
Frank Scott Clark,
Detroit*



Jack Miner
and the Birds

AND

SOME THINGS I KNOW
ABOUT NATURE

By

JACK MINER
of Kingsville, Ontario, Canada

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PREFACE

LONG and intimate acquaintance with the author of this book must be my apology for attempting to write a brief introduction. Meeting Jack Miner for the first time in 1888, I was at once impressed with his striking personality. I found myself instinctively attracted to him, and a cordial friendship sprang up between us, which grew in intimacy as the years passed. Although lacking in academic culture, his manner was decidedly urbane, and it was not long before I discerned beneath his rough exterior an enshrined soul.

Inheriting, as I did, a passion for dog and gun, I cultivated his friendship, and many delightful days have we spent together afield. I was a novice in woodcraft; he taught me to hunt and shoot. Many a bird fell to his gun for which I took full credit in those early days, until, on one occasion, when I had made, as I thought, a particularly clever kill, I glanced over my shoulder as I heard him say: "Good shot, Doctor!" only to see him hurriedly slipping a shell into the smoking breech of his gun. I said: "Did you shoot, Jack?" and his face betrayed guilt as he replied: "Take more time, Doctor. If you hit a bird fair at that distance, you will have nothing to pick up!" I was shooting too soon, and of course missing. He had got on to my time, and was now and then dropping a bird, apparently to my gun, to give me confidence.

What impressed me most, perhaps, in the days of my novitiate was the determination with which he pursued a wounded bird. He would spend an hour ferreting out a cripple rather than leave it to die in misery, or become the prey of its natural enemies, owls, hawks or vermin. He invariably repiled the logs and brush he had dislodged in his efforts to retrieve a wounded bird. And this is but one evidence that a keen sense of justice, a full regard for the rights of all living creatures, are conspicuous traits in Jack Miner's character.

Years passed. Until now he had held aloof from church and social life in the community. Then trouble came. Trouble, that so often floors the weak man, is the strong soul's opportunity to reveal itself. Thus it proved in Jack Miner's case. Death robbed his family circle of three of its members in a comparatively brief period of time. Of an exceptionally emotional and sympathetic nature, his grief was overwhelming. Something had to move, or

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break. Gradually he came over to the allies, and became active in social and Sunday-school work. All his dormant virtues seemed bursting with life, and latent genius sprang into activity. He pursued his hobby of making friends with the birds with a zeal, as it were, begotten of despair. Steadily he plodded on in the face of financial burdens, in spite of the discouraging indifference of the many, and in defiance of the more malignant opposition of the few.

Ultimately he secured possession of the entire Miner homestead. He procured thousands of evergreen trees from the Government, and using native trees as well, prosecuted his work of beautifying his surroundings, until he had transformed what was an ordinary farm of two hundred acres, without one attractive feature, into a place which would arrest the attention of the passer-by, and which formed a veritable paradise for birds and waterfowl. Inheriting a love of the beautiful from his mother, he has developed his home surroundings into a bower of lilacs and roses. I venture to say that there is no spot in Western Ontario, if indeed in the entire Province, that attracts to itself, season after season, the thousands of visitors—distinguished men and women of Canada and the United States—that come to see the Miner Bird Sanctuary.

As a lad, however, he did not see exactly eye to eye with his mother. Of what use was an old, battered spoon, the sole surviving member of a set of pewter, that had been in the family for generations? He would convert it into smooth, round bullets, and make it contribute to the upkeep of the table. So one night the spoon went into the melting-pot, to appear in a few days on the table in the form of savory venison steak, and Mrs. Miner was left guessing what had become of her precious heirloom.

Jack Miner has built an enduring monument to his patient toil and his unflinching confidence in an over-ruling Providence, that will stand for all time. That this untutored man of the woods is able to entertain and interest vast concourses of people in our college halls throughout Canada and the United States, being recalled season after season to our educational centres as well as to our towns and villages, to deliver his lectures, is convincing evidence that he has a world message and can deliver it with compelling force.

I have read "Jack Miner and the Birds" in manuscript form. It is a remarkable book, by a remarkable man. While it makes no pretensions to literary excellence, it is free from faults of egotism and verbiage, often present—almost laconic in style. It contains much valuable information, expressed in trite and witty language, and will prove a valuable addition to our works on bird lore.

Of more interest, perhaps, to the average reader will be a brief narrative of a few episodes in the life of Jack Miner. With char-

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acteristic self-effacement, he has refrained from incorporating in his book any incident in which he might seem to figure as the hero. Nevertheless his life has not been without tragic experience and thrilling adventure.

No sketch of his career, however brief, will do him justice without reference to his elder brother, Ted, whom Jack regarded with the profoundest respect and reverence. They played together—if work can be called play—hunted together, slept together, and lived with and for each other. As boys they practised shooting with a rifle at snowballs thrown into the air, at twenty-five yards rise, until they became so expert that they could break forty-six out of fifty.

In 1898, when the brothers were hunting with a friend in Northern Quebec, Ted was killed instantly, shot through the head by the accidental discharge of his companion's gun, as he was dropping on one knee to dispatch a wounded and charging bull moose. Imagine the situation, if you can! Jack came running down the ravine through which he had driven the moose, confident that the boys had made a kill, only to meet his friend running toward him, his face pale as death, frantically shouting: "I have killed Ted!" Though dazed by the shock, Jack nevertheless realized the necessity of submerging his emotions, for the occasion demanded sane judgment and prompt action, and the friend was helpless by reason of his grief. They were twenty-five miles from the nearest railway station; help must be procured promptly and—it was up to him. Washing the blood from his dead brother's face, and pressing a kiss on his pallid brow, he covered his body with snow, lest the smell of fresh blood might attract a band of prowling wolves before he could return, and, leaving him within a dozen feet of the big bull moose he had shot as he pulled the trigger for the last time, Jack set out for help. He ran thirteen miles to the nearest settler's cabin, where he procured the aid of an old man and his boy. On returning to the scene of the accident, a litter was improvised on which the body was placed, but the absence of all trail, and the deep snow, made it impossible to proceed except in single file, and so Jack took his brother, who weighed 202 pounds, across his shoulders as he would a dead deer, and carried him almost the entire distance of thirteen miles, while the other three men cut brush and broke trail. Arriving at the lake they placed Ted's body in the bow of a home-made punt, and Jack paddled twelve miles down the lake in the face of a blinding snowstorm, making the entire distance in twenty-four hours. From this terrible strain he has never fully recovered.

Many times he has rescued men lost in the woods. Indeed he has never once failed to bring his man out alive, although in some cases he had nothing human to guide him, all trail having been

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obliterated by heavy snowfall. For this signal success he takes no credit to himself, but attributes it to Divine Guidance in answer to his petitions.

On one occasion he was gone from camp forty-eight consecutive hours without sleep or rest, and with little food, tramping through snow up to his knees, in search of two men who had strayed in entirely opposite directions. He brought them both to camp, his hands being frozen during his adventure.

On another occasion, when hunting moose in Northern Quebec, at about three o'clock in the afternoon, he heard in the distance signal shots of distress. It gets dark early and suddenly in the North in November, but Jack immediately broke into a run, never stopping until, just at dusk, he came up to a young guide, standing guard over a man fallen in the snow. This was a well-to-do gentleman who had joined a hunting party, but was overcome by the strain of the unusual fatigue. His clothing had become saturated with the wet snow, his limbs lost all sense of feeling, and he fell, unable to move hand or foot. Jack Miner gave the rifles to the guide, hoisted the man, who weighed 185 pounds, on his shoulders, and carried him to an old lumber camp five miles distant in less than two hours. Other members of the party arrived, a fire was made, and hot coffee, hot flannels, and much rubbing, eventually brought feeling into the benumbed limbs. By morning the man was able to walk. As so often happens, the most solemn occasion is not without its spark of humor. When all immediate danger seemed to have passed and enquiry was made as to the whereabouts of the rifles, the guide, with the utmost sangfroid, said: "I left them stacked back in the woods at the scene of the tragedy!" Since no one but Jack would brave the dangers of the dark and the swollen river which had to be crossed on a fallen tree, it was up to him to retrieve the guns, and he did it.

He was never so happy as when studying the lives and habits of the wild creatures, whether it was the timid field mouse or the lordly moose, the socially inclined chickadee or the elusive Canada goose. Thus did he lay the foundation of the success he has achieved as a hunter and naturalist.

In traversing the forest his sense of location and direction is akin to that of the denizens of the woods. When an Indian caches his game, intending to return for it at some future time, he blazes trees and breaks twigs to guide him back. Jack Miner was never known to blaze a tree nor break a twig for the purpose of locating a dead moose or a beaver-trap. He can follow a trail all day long to every point of the compass, and at nightfall turn his face directly toward camp. If on the following day he wishes to return to any spot

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visited the day before he will go to it with a directness and accuracy almost uncanny.

Years before he ever set foot in the northern woods he and Ted planned annual hunting excursions. They were the pioneers of big game hunting in Essex County, and while it is true that Jack Miner has killed car loads more game than any other man in Western Ontario, it must be remembered he never wasted a pound of meat, nor kept more than perhaps ten per cent. of his kill for his own use, but gave it away to rich and poor alike. He organized moose dinners for charitable purposes, even buying meat on one occasion when he had not enough of his own to supply the tables.

So did Jack Miner, the boy dreamer, become Jack Miner, noted naturalist, popular lecturer, and Canada's Famous Birdman.

—J. EARLE JENNER, M.D.



WILD GEESE AT MY HOME

These birds belong to you as much as they do to me. They winter on the South-East Coast, and nest on Hudson Bay. In fact the only bird in this bunch that belongs to me is the lady to the left of the two in the lower photograph.

INTRODUCTION

MY REASON, dear reader, for writing this book, I will assure you is not to expose my A, B, C education, but simply because my many friends have requested me to put into book form at least a portion of my interesting experiences.

For years I have simply ignored such requests; but the more I thought about it, the more seriously it appealed to me. So this morning I loaded up chair, stove, tent, etc., and made my way to the woods, where I am at home, and away from the wires of communication and the honk of the automobiles, and even the enquiring voice of my little boy. I have run away from them all and have pitched my tent in the woods.

As I was out gathering wood for the camp-fire I quietly looked around, and a few remnants of old stumps are still visible where I helped to cut the virgin timber, the forest that provided a home and shelter for the raccoon that I once hunted by night, and the birds, from quail to the wild turkey, that I hunted by day. About one hundred yards to the east of where I am sitting is where I split my big toe with a nine-pound broad-axe while hewing railroad ties when I was but fourteen years of age. But Nature is helping me to replace a little, and the second-growth trees are from thirty to fifty feet high.

A hawk has disturbed the Bob-Whites that are increasing in numbers very rapidly, and the sweet tones of their familiar voices are making this old spot fairly ring. In fact the very atmosphere seems so full of cheer that when I entered the tent and sat down to write, I first whispered a few words of silent prayer of thankfulness, and asked God to guide my untrained hand so that you will understand my meaning.

Let me assure you I will be as brief as possible. And while I am very thankful to my many friends who have offered to write it for me if I would only dictate it, yet I firmly believe the majority of readers will enjoy these facts right from the awkward hand of Jack Miner better than if they were polished too much. While it may read very unreasonable, yet please don't forget that outside of a little joke I may attempt to crack, the rest is all facts gathered from personal experience and observation, and I assure you these views are not second-hand, as I am a very poor reader and have never read a book through in my life.

—J. M.

Jack Miner and the Birds

CHAPTER I.

Who is Jack Miner?

NOW, as you have this book in your hands and have looked at the name of the writer, and possibly flipped over a few pages, glancing at the interesting illustrations, etc., I imagine I can see you raise your head, as your eyelids come down for an instant. "Who is Jack Miner? Who is Jack Miner?" This thought repeatedly flashes through your mind.

Well, let me assure you of this fact, that Jack Miner is not Old Bill Miner, nor Jesse James, and although I have been raised in the woods, that is no evidence that I have split feet and antlers. But I will admit there has been many a time in my life that if you could have seen me you would have thought you were looking over Esau's line-fence.

However, just who I am is a question I am not prepared to answer, as it is not a history of my life I am supposed to be writing; but in a few brief words will say that my dear mother's people that are in America are a good, self-sacrificing, respectable, God-fearing people. And my father never had but one full sister; yet, he said, where he lacked in quantity he made up in quality. Father and mother were both born in Leicestershire, England. As to my father, I know he was a truthful, honest man, and, according to his own story, he was raised on the toe of a step-father's boot. A few years after he graduated from this lofty position, he followed mother and her people to America, and eventually overtook them in the good old State of Ohio, and on the 10th day of April, 1865, I was born, barefoot. According to my oldest brother's statement, father was at that time quite down-hearted over the fact that his old favorite yellow tom-cat had been coming home absent for about two weeks, and he had given up all hope; but as soon as I arrived and he saw my complexion, he took me out and laid me in brother's arms, and as he raised up he clapped his hands together, quite cheerful, and said, "Ted, we'll call him John Thomas." John Thomas it really is. Fortunately, my friends have shortened it down to just Jack.

We were very poor financially, and as I was second-oldest boy in a family of ten children, I had to put a shoulder to the wheel and help roll the bread-wagon. The result is I was educated for ditching, cutting cord-wood, and splitting rails. In the spring of 1878 father



LOOKING OVER ESAU'S LINE FENCE AT THE WRITER

Photograph taken in 1907 while on a Moose Hunt.

decided to migrate, and at the age of thirteen I was liberated here in Canada, a sportman's paradise. I took to the woods as naturally as a park hare, and I know I was father's favorite because he always called me to build the fire in the morning, and when the other boys

would lodge a tree I have often heard him shout, "Come out and come away from it! You'll get 'urt! Leave it w'ile Jack comes; 'e'll go hunder and cut it down." If we were splitting rails, father always set the wedges, permitting me to handle the maul.

Father and mother enjoyed life together nearly sixty years and put up with the mingled enjoyment and annoyance of us ten children. How some of father's teachings still ring in my ears! When I have gone to him with complaints about others he has often said, "Shut up; I don't want to 'ear it. But if you have some of your own failings to tell, let's 'ear 'um." Yes, he was always short but to the point. One piece of advice that he gave us boys I have always tried to practise; that was: whenever we grabbed hold of anything and found it was red-hot, to drop it.

But now let me lay these smiling facts aside for a few seconds and close my introduction to you in real earnest. For, outside of unavoidable sadness, my life has been one continuous round of enjoyment made up of failures and disappointments and dark, stormy clouds, which have been completely trampled out of existence by success that in every case exceeded my expectations, and has caused the sun to shine so brightly that it has illumined my path clear up to the Great Divide, and given me an imaginary glimpse of the beautiful Beyond.

CHAPTER II.

My First Pets.

WELL, the first pet I can remember having was a young blue jay. I was, of course, very anxious that he should live, so I filled him to the top with fish worms. The next morning the blue was there, but the jay was silent.

The next I have any recollection of was when father took our pet 'possum by the handle and wound it around the corner of the old stable, to settle a quarrel which arose between my brother and myself over its ownership.

I remember I started one spring with a pair of white rabbits, and when fall came, I had every box on the premises full; even father's old wagon-box was turned up-side-down with a snarl of rabbits under it, and when he used the box my troubles were many. As I knew how to set traps around my rabbit pens I am strongly of the opinion that some of the neighbors' cats haven't got home yet.

How well do I recollect seeing the wild geese, and hearing their "Honk! Honk!" as I strained my young eyes to see them 'way up there, often having to look twice before seeing them, as they passed, in spring and fall, over the good old State of Ohio on their migrating trips. Oh, how I used to stand with clenched hands and wish I were a man so I could follow them somewhere and secure one, but not until I got to Canada did the real fun begin.

All kinds of game, and such a variety of pets as I had; squirrels, coons, foxes, crows and ravens, and I even got a nest of young hen hawks and kept them until father found it out. You know in those days there was one day in the week that we did not work, and I made every minute count; and although I had miles and miles of woods to roam through, night and day, yet my ambition was a little higher. So I secured a pair of tree-climbers, and then there was no tree high enough for Mrs. Crow or Mrs. Hawk to raise her young so as to be out of my reach.

Well do I remember shooting my first deer, and how I burglarized the top shelf of the pantry to get one of my mother's old pewter spoons. This spoon had a great handle to its history, being handed down from somewhere this side of Noah. I pounded it, to remove the ancient look, melted it and ran seven small bullets, while my un-

suspicious mother looked on at the operation of melting and moulding. By daylight the snow had ceased falling, and I put the seven balls in the "thumb-hand" barrel of the old shot-gun and started on my first deer hunt. By noon I was back with a fine deer, and if I had had a melted spoon in the other barrel I surely would have killed two.

CHAPTER III.

Market Hunting.

AS QUAIL and grouse were so very plentiful and good warm clothes were scarce, the second fall we were here my brother and I started to hunt for the market. This caused us to study the nature of game. I soon found myself practising the call of Bob White. I would call early in the morning, when the country was silent, and listen to the echo come back from the woods, until I could call Bob right up to me from as far as he could hear the faintest sound of my imitative note. Yes, many a time during the nesting season have I called five or six male birds up near where I was sitting, then see them have a scrap. I tell you they are gamey little fellows. And what fun it was to be back in the field, hid in a bunch of goldenrod, with my old slouch hat tucked in my pants pocket, allowing my long hair and freckles to blend with the surroundings, and watch these plump little beauties come together in battle, sometimes striking each other so hard they would go fully six feet in the air and come down facing each other. I have had them so close I could almost feel the breath of their wings; and possibly three or four rods away was another one, picking the earth sidewise, apparently challenging the fourth who was sitting on a stump as if he were refereeing.

I tell you, life in the country was so sweet to me I would have agreed to stay here longer than it would take a raft of detectives to find my great-grandmother's pewter spoon.

But the grouse was a hard fellow to call. This, however, did not prevent our success; for as soon as we got one we would examine its crop and find out just what it was feeding on; if it contained buds, then what kind they were, etc. And you could rest assured that ninety per cent. of the grouse in that country were feeding on this same variety of food. Then as we would walk through the woods with the dogs at our heels and our faces as nearly on the tops of our heads as possible, the grouse became very easy. I have shot five out of the tiptop of a cotton-wood tree where nine out of ten men would never think of looking. But if the crop contained seeds from the ground, the dogs were put to work where these seeds grew. As practice makes perfect, we soon became expert shots and the result was we left a bloody trail behind us.

We would walk miles away in the morning and start in so as to be near home at night with our heavy loads. Once or twice a week we would box our game up, and when the road was fit we would wheel it on a wheel-barrow up to the old stage line.

For at least five miles around, these birds appeared to fear us, and fly and scream as though Satan himself was after them. Brother and I often remarked: "Why did they just fly over the fence from the farmer, and ten minutes later, when we arrived, fly a mile or more from us?"

During the summer months these same birds seemed quite tame; in fact, they did not seem to be a bit more frightened of us than they were of the other residents of the country.

However, we soon found that every grain of sport had vanished, and we were in a financial business. So, speaking from actual experience, I know that market-hunting is not sport; that it is murder in the first degree, and no principled sportsman will practise it. For one successful market-hunter will deprive twenty-five real sportsmen of their enjoyable recreation and outing.

I am pleased to say that we two boys soon outgrew this murderous practice, and hunted for pleasure only. And as we kept two well-trained dogs, many pleasant hours' recreation have we enjoyed with some of the best gentlemen this earth can produce, returning home with an appetite for anything and stomachs that would almost digest railroad iron; then about nine p.m. we would roll in and sleep a hole right down through the bed.

Next morning, when you awake after such an experience, you will usually find your eyes are open, and more in focus.

CHAPTER IV.

Our Faithful Dogs.

WHILE I would not advise any person to keep a dog unless he needs one, yet one of the most faithful animal friends man can have is an educated dog. Our two bird-dogs were full brothers, and though my brother and I were always together, yet the dogs knew us apart. If I went to the barn alone, my dog would follow me; yet if we boys walked to the road together, both dogs would follow us and would not come farther unless they were invited. If we threw our coats down, each dog would lie on or near his master's coat.

I never knew Set ("Set" was my dog's name) to disobey orders but once; that was when he was about eighteen months old. Brother and I had started from home before daylight to walk about eight miles, to hunt deer. When daylight came we were about five miles on our way, and I looked around and here was Set following. I at once gave him a right down good scolding, and told him to start for home, but he hesitated. That minute, a snarl of "just dogs" came yelping out from a settler's buildings, and Set took leg bail for home with this bunch pow-wow-ing in pursuit. Just then brother looked at his watch and it was fifteen minutes past seven. When we arrived home at night my first question was "What time did Set get home?" Mother looked over her glasses and said, "He got here just seven o'clock." Now I knew he was going some, by his actions, but just where he gained the fifteen minutes still remains a mystery.

On one occasion three sportsmen came and wanted a hunt, but I could not go; so I introduced Set to them, and as they had guns he eventually consented to go along. In about an hour he pointed a large bevy of quail in a weed field. The three sportsmen lined up and pressed forward, and as the birds buzzed up in front of them, bangety-bang! went six shots, right out in the open. And not a bird was touched. Dear old Set looked around in disgust, turned, and came straight home.

Well, it wasn't long before our faithful dogs were getting a year older every twelve months, but still they clung to us, though life had become a burden. Dear mother, unbeknown to us, got a man

to chloroform them. When he started to dig their graves we caught on, and both of us, men, stopped work and made a box and laid our faithful friends—friends who had never deceived us—side by side in one coffin and buried them under a shade tree on the old homestead. As we pushed the earth on the box I felt ashamed to look up at brother, but when I did I found there were tears in his eyes, too.

CHAPTER V.

Bob White Quail.

NOW as I had grown from boyhood to man and had become the father in a little "home, sweet home," my responsibilities naturally caused me to take life a little more seriously. But, as a boy loves to go bare-foot and play marbles in the spring of the year, when fall came my whole body and soul seemed to reach out for just one sup of pure, unadulterated nature, and many and many a morning, after I have been over to the factory and built a fire under the boiler, have I taken a stroll by twilight, before breakfast, and stepped up into a fence corner, leaned against the old rails and stood and breathed the pure air of a new-born day. Possibly the swish-sh-sh-sh of a flock of small wild ducks might be heard overhead as they darted their way southward; the note of the wood-thrush might also be noticed, and the flutter of the dear old woodcock's wings have sometimes almost caused me to flinch. Then as the last stars were closing their eyes for the day and the white frost of the early-October morning became visible on the top rail, away to the east would come the faint call of the quail. That voice would hardly die out before the father of another family would start calling the roll, right in the next field; then one to the south; another bevy, near the woods, to the north; and again to the west would come these cheerful notes; until the frosty air would fairly ring, all around me, with the melody of Bob White's roll call, the head of the family calling and each member answering. And if all is well, and none is missing, in about three minutes all is still and one would not know there was a quail in the country, unless a hawk happened to dart among them; then a shrill alarm is given, and all buzz for cover.

Now it is said that there never was a tribe of heathen discovered that did not worship some kind of idol. This I am not prepared to prove. But I will say this: That no intelligent man can live in this great, great out-of-doors and study the creatures that occupy it before man has any control over them, combined with the regularity of the sun, moon and whispering stars, without being compelled to believe that there is an over-ruling Power. And although I had not read a word on the value of our quail, this thought often presented itself to me: "What did God put them here for?" Yes, I can

recall time, and time again, when, after I had emptied the quail out of my hunting-coat pocket I have gone to the kitchen door and thrown out by the handful the weed-seed that had worked out of their bursted crops; and how often, in the summer, I have seen them picking insects, as they strutted by my hiding place! Now, I am proud to say, I have not shot a quail in nearly twenty years, and I am still prouder to say that I have this much confidence in humanity, that to-day there wouldn't be one quail shot where there are five, if these shooters would first consider their cheerfulness, beauty and value while alive. For one Bob White sitting on the top rail, sounding his beautiful note, brings more gladness and more cheer to more people than twenty-five will in a bloody game-sack.

Now about the only argument the quail shooter has to put up is that the wire fence has taken the place of the old rail and weedy fence row, and has destroyed their cover, and that if he didn't shoot them the quail would only fight, one among the others, and would not nest. I am not here to say that this man has no brains, but I will say that the itching of his trigger-finger to shoot something has got control of his brains; and when I hear him blowing off this stuff I take father's advice, and "drop it." For the positive fact is that the old fence row is, and always was, the worst death trap that quail ever took shelter in. The height of a sportsman's ambition is to see them alight there; and the prowling house-cat has a great advantage there; and when March comes, that is just the place to look for a bunch of dead quail—quail that sought shelter there during the winter months, were drifted under, and died. All thinking men will admit that when quail are in real need of shelter, this old fence row is nothing but a fence drift. The only drawback quail have in Western Ontario, and in Ohio as well, is the disappearing of the woods that sheltered them from the drifting snows. Not that he gets any of his living there, but just flies there for shelter during the severe storms of winter.

As to them becoming so numerous as to quarrel and not breed, quail do not nest or breed in the woods. When we came to Canada in 1878 there were twenty-five where there hasn't been one during the last ten years. I am sure I have seen one hundred and fifty quail on an ordinary farm; and this change is not because the wire fence has taken the place of the rail, etc. All these excuses are false and without foundation.

Now here is the positive fact: The great mistake the sportsmen have made is that they have directed all their attention on the death-dealing weapons, as to how to destroy the quail. The breech-loader has taken the place of the old muzzle-loader; the six-shot pump gun has taken the place of the double-barrelled breech-loader; the quick,

nitro-explosives have taken the place of the slow black powder; and thus we have gone on and on for the last thirty-five years, to my personal knowledge, thoughtless and ignorant of what we were doing, not taking into consideration at all the increasing number of shooters, year by year, until at last we have waked up to find that our birds have decreased over ninety per cent. during that time.

Has the wire fence destroyed the ducks, the beautiful trumpeter swans, our mourning doves, the woodcocks and meadow-larks? These migratory birds have decreased the same as our Ontario quail have, and God-given intelligence, wrongly directed, is responsible for it all.



SELF-SERVING FEED-RACK FOR QUAIL THAT GAVE FAIRLY GOOD SATISFACTION

Now just picture North America if, during the last thirty-five years, we had paid as much attention to the protection and increase of our birds as we have to these death-dealing weapons. What a cheerful difference it certainly would have made!

About ten years ago I started to protect the quail in earnest. I made eight feed-racks, the same as shown in illustration.

The boxes are eight inches square and four inches deep. The cover is about three feet wide and almost one foot from the feed. If a little snow does drift in, it is very light and the birds will scratch and get the feed, as no sleet or rain can reach it.

The quail soon found the food and I was agreeably surprised to see the number of tracks around these racks the first time I went to

visit them; but when I returned three or four days later there was scarcely a quail to be seen. On investigation I found that the hawks had apparently struck the Klondyke of their lives, and it was a'most sure death to Bob to go near the feed, as Mr. Hawk was always watching.

Then I bought a few No. 1 jump traps and cut three poles, fifteen or twenty feet long and from four to five inches through at the butt. I then drove three or four small nails in the butt-end of each pole, to stay the trap and keep it from blowing off, but leaving it free



HAWK AND OWL TRAP

This photograph shows a mistake in that the Clog got fastened and is holding the Hawk up. This will scare other Hawks and make them shy of the place.

enough so that when it caught its victim he could fly up and raise the trap off the top of the pole. A small brush-clog was fastened to the end of the chain and a nail was driven in the side of the pole about a foot from the trap, to hang the clog on. About six or eight small staples were driven in around the pole, near the trap, to put fragments of weed and grass in so as to disguise the trap, making it appear like an old sparrow's nest. Then I stood the pole, with the butt up, beside another small tree so that the boughs of the tree would project a foot or so above the trap; then wired the pole to the tree. When a hawk or owl gets his toe in such a trap there is nothing solid for him to jerk against, but he can fly down with the trap and clog, and isn't apt to jerk out. Moreover, when hawk number two comes along, number one is not up there, flapping, to scare him and make

him shy of this pole. I have known them, time and again, to alight on the same pole and then fly down and kill and eat the hawk below who was flapping around with the trap and clog.

In these three traps I caught seventeen quail-destroyers the first month I put them up, and I also got the toe of another hawk, and the following winter I got the rest of that hawk.

As proof that birds visit the same places, I will say that I haven't caught over fifteen hawks and owls down there in any one winter, in those three traps, since.



SHELTER AND FEEDING PLACE FOR QUAIL

Well, the feed racks did not seem to fill the bill in every way, so in a year or so I decided to try another scheme. I loaded up all the old junk lumber I could find and hauled it to the woods, and in one day another man and I completed ten little bungalows-in-the-rough. They are about one foot high in the rear, and four to five feet high in the front, with from five to six feet ground space, as shown in the illustration herewith.

Then, to complete my experiment, I begged ten bags of weed-seed from a neighbor who was hulling clover. I threw a bagful in each house, and then threw in, on top of the weed-seed, corn, wheat and buckwheat. In less than a week the birds visited every house, and on a cold, zero day I believe I have seen as high as fifty quail buzz out of one of these little, unpatented shacks. And best of all, they scratched right down through the grain and ate the weed-seeds first. I soon found I had made a hit, as the shacks furnished the birds

shelter as well as food in the time of need, and a certain amount of protection from their natural enemies.

But these birds down in the woods remained quite wild. So I got several quiet bantam hens and kept them ready, and when any neighbor farmer disturbed a quail's nest I had a place for the eggs. In this way I have had some enjoyable experiences.

I first set the hen in a small box on the ground, on a nice cushion of soft grass, pet her lots and let her eat from my hand; I push her feathers forward and pepper her just full of Prussian insect powder, and sprinkle a little in the nest, also. Now I am all ready for some one to phone that they have disturbed a quail's nest.



SHELLS OF QUAIL EGGS AFTER HATCHING

If you take eggs from a nest that is not disturbed, never, never take them until the bird has finished laying and has started to set, for if you take the eight or ten she will build another nest and finish laying, then put in her valuable time with only half a brood, whereas if she has started to set she will only lay off a few days, then will build a new nest and raise a full brood. A quail will lay from fifteen to twenty-two, and sometimes as high as twenty-five, eggs.

Quail eggs all hatch, and hatch very suddenly. One year I looked at a nest at ten o'clock and there was nothing doing, and when I came by at twelve o'clock the old hen scolded, so I took another peep; all hands had apparently opened the door at once, and the

cluster of pure-white eggs had changed so that they resembled a live bumble-bee's nest.

Quail have no trouble hatching, like some of our domestic fowl; they just simply open the door and jump out. See the illustration.

Pat once asked a little boy what he came for. The little chap in his bashful way replied, "Oh, nothing." Again Pat took his pipe from between his teeth, as he said, "Well, you'll find that in the jug behind the door, where the whiskey was." So we can say the same about this illustration; it is where the little quail were. Notice the neat, uniform way in which they opened the door from the inside.

When they are about to hatch, shut the door of the box so as to keep the tiny pets in. When they are from twenty to thirty-six hours old, move all hands to a dry coop near the garden, or in the back yard near shrubbery. The coop should be from eighteen to twenty-four inches square inside, built with a shed roof ten to twelve inches high in the rear and eighteen to twenty inches high in the front, with a board floor so that the old hen cannot scratch and be on damp ground. Now take three boards about one foot wide and two feet long, tack them in front of the old hen's coop for a playground for the quail. Leave the hen in the coop and she will put her head out and talk to her family, who cannot get over two feet away from her. Feed them a little custard (one egg to half a cup of milk; no sugar). Feed tiny bits five times a day, always tapping the tin with the spoon as you go near them. In three or four days they will accept the hen as their step-mother, and you as their step-parent. Now draw the two nails (which are only partly driven in) and pull the three boards quietly away, leaving the hen in the permanent coop, but giving the quail their liberty. See illustrations.

Now don't run after them if they run away; just tap the tin a little, as you drop a little custard in front of their mother so she can call them.

Let me say right here: Never try to drive any bird. They can hide where you can't, and experience has proven to my entire satisfaction that they can fly faster than I can run. Always throw feed and kindness at them, and watch results.

In about a week, let the hen out a few minutes before sundown, so she hasn't time to stray far from home and will go back into the roost. In about another week the hen can run all the time with her family. Feed at the back door, or any place you want the quail to come, and your pets will be there. Remember that it is the human race that is wild, not the birds. Birds are wild because they have to be, and we are wild because we prefer to be. Any creature that is intelligent enough to fly or run from you for self-preservation, will come to you for food and protection from all other enemies.



YOUNG QUAIL JUST FOUR WEEKS OLD
Notice one in Baby's hair.



EATING FROM THE HAND THAT ONCE HELD THE GUN

As to the value of quail, I know this, that they are the farmer's friends; that they cannot live in the dense wilderness and that they do follow up the pioneer's axe where climate will allow; and that fully seventy-five per cent. of their diet consists of weed-seed and insects that are injurious to the production of food stuffs for the human race. The small amount of wheat they eat is 'most all gathered from the stubble field, and as for the few kernels of corn, this is mostly taken during the winter; and we all know that a farmer who makes a practice of leaving his corn out, is an undesirable heavy weight and possibly has no appreciation of Bob White's beautiful note ringing in the country, and the sooner he moves to town and joins the "Retired Failures' Association" the better for the country.

CHAPTER VI.

Raising English or Ring-necked Pheasants in Canada.

HAVING often heard father speak of the English pheasant as a beautiful game bird, and as I was overly anxious to pay Canada back some of the birds I had murdered in my younger days, I decided to try these pheasants.

In 1895 I sent to Pleasant Ridge, Ohio, for two or three settings of English pheasants' eggs. I felt sure this climate would agree with them as they were exactly the same breed as I was, English buck-eyes! However, I was smart enough not to ignore my mother's kind offer, and I let her have one setting to hatch for me. I paid particular attention to the two hens I set, scarcely allowing them to get off the nest; and here is where I now believe I made the mistake. Not one egg hatched. But dear mother signalled me to come over and I was right there. Her old hen had hatched eleven. Mother smiled and gave them to me, hen and all, but told me to leave them with her until the next day. Then I moved them, and raised nine to the size of quail, when a dog killed four, leaving the old hen and me with only five. Four of these proved to be males and a cat owl killed the hen. March, 1896, found me with four beautiful male birds only.

I had now learned that a gentleman in London, Ontario, had English pheasants for sale, and as my experience had proved that an English buck-eye hitched up to a Canadian was a joyous, satisfactory cross, with the human race, I wrote this man and secured two hens which were undoubtedly English-Canadians. I liberated three of the four male birds and put the two hens in with the one male; and from this trio we hatched sixty-two pheasants. Then I enclosed four acres with a wire fence seven feet high. Along one side I made several brood pens about two rods square, each. I put one male bird with every five hens, putting plenty of gravel and grit in each pen so as to secure good digesting powers. I also gave the birds plenty of shade.

Our pheasant hens laid from thirty-five to fifty eggs each between April the 15th and June the 15th. By giving the old birds lots of grit, the egg shells were very hard. I used Wyandotte hens for mothers, putting from twenty to twenty-five eggs under each hen

and setting them on the damp ground as much as possible. The eggs, like quail eggs, hatch in twenty-four days. I pursued the same course, all through, as I have described for raising quail, only the nest and coop are one-quarter larger. I used the insect powder by the pound. I usually set four or five hens at a time; keeping a record of the same, I knew when to prepare for a hatch. I penned them in front of her for two or three days, the same as with the quail.

When raising pheasants, I never let hens out of the coops. When birds are from six to eight weeks old I take the hen away but leave the coop there. Coops may be set around like bee-hives, two or three rods apart. I painted my coops, some white and some red; the little fellows will know their own coops and will not forget them.

Remember, I have experimented with a great variety of pheasant foods. I have raised flies by the tens of thousands to feed to them. To do this I would take a piece of meat, say of beef's liver, allow the flies to blow it, and a few hours later throw the meat in a barrel; the barrel would be partly filled with rotten sawdust and the top of it would be covered with a screen, with a hole left about an inch in diameter. In a few days the maggots would have the meat all eaten up, and would have disappeared into the sawdust below. In about two weeks the barrel would be simply full of flies. I would now put a small flytrap over the hole, darkening the rest of the screen; the flies would come to the light, get into the trap, and when in the small trap could be either scalded or drowned. I have also fed the pheasants the maggots. But to raise either flies or maggots is not as desirable for the nose as it might look from the eye and both are unnecessary. Feed a little custard, and when about two weeks old, add corn-meal to it. Keep them hungry and let them hunt for insects. Exercise is what they need and what they must have. When birds are three months old, they should be caught and shipped.

The high fence for young is unnecessary, for your birds will know you and will be just as tame as chickens. In this way I made my pleasure self-sustaining, and I would often let an old hen and fifteen or twenty go. The finest brood I ever saw was out of two poor hatches. I put twenty-five with one hen and in about a week I let hen and all out. They roamed all over the premises, but of course like spiteful deeds and chickens, they came home to roost. I fed them just enough to give them a sweet taste in their mouths, and the hen raised twenty-three of them. How they did grow! Finally she left them and they went to the woods about one-half mile away.

In this way I stocked this township so I could have shot a two-bushel bag full in half a day. Two miles north of my place there were twenty-eight seen dusting in the road at one time. But to-day

I doubt if there is one left in the township. Men came for miles and miles around. Yes, I have seen them come twenty-five miles to hunt rabbits in this neighborhood! Now I don't want to insinuate that all rabbit hunters were hunting pheasants, but what I really want to say is that all pheasant hunters were hunting rabbits!

CHAPTER VII.

The Natural Enemies of Our Birds.

NOW we come to the most serious question that the bird-lovers of America are up against; and until this great question is settled, we shall continue to pull against each other.

At a sportsmen's show in Michigan I once saw one-half dozen mounted hawks in a glass case, and there were thousands of school children looking at them. The label read: "These are all valuable hawks." Another man will say, "Protect the cat-owl, or great horned owl," and possibly this same man will advocate the destruction of the wild house-cat, when the positive fact is that this owl is nothing but a wild house-cat with the advantage of wings, and for cruel, blood-thirsty, murderous depredations he has got the house-cat chased right out of the slaughter-house, for he will kill and eat a great variety of adult birds and animals I have never known a house-cat to destroy, such as turkeys, wild geese, peacocks, all kinds of hawks and all other owls, and animals such as skunks, muskrats, groundhogs, minks, weasels and hares. Now, although I have no personal knowledge of this, yet a gentleman farmer who lived near the woods told me (and I believe him, or I would not repeat it) that his bunch of house-cats which were about half grown, were in the habit of climbing upon the roof of the house and sitting near the chimney to keep warm during the winter months; these horned owls came and took away every one of the cats. However, I have no positive proof of this last statement. But this I do know: There is nothing roosts high enough or sleeps low enough to be out of reach of this heartless cannibal. One regrettable fact to me is that I have never seen where another bird or animal ever killed a great horned owl, although they have lived in the township with me all my life.

A particular friend of mine was dissecting a shrike. This shrike is a bird about the size and color of a blue jay, known to a great many people as the butcher bird. I said to those standing by, "He is a bad one; always shoot him on sight." My friend stopped for a moment and said, "Beg your pardon, Jack, but you are wrong; this is not the big northern shrike you have reference to." "No, no, my dear fellow," I replied; "I mean the very one you are skinning, and again I say, shoot him on sight." My friend smiled and replied in a kind, cheerful manner, "Jack, I am surprised at you." Now, dear

reader, here were two natural born naturalists right opposite each other, one advocating the protection, the other the destruction, of the same bird. I had watched this shrike in Ohio when I was a kid. I had often found his nest and knew what he fed his young upon. I have caught dozens of them, right in the act, in Canada, and they are always searching for birds, chiefly the small fly-catchers. Well, we dissected this fellow, and found two little birds' legs, and they were not mates. Last fall I saw a shrike follow a snow bird fully five hundred feet high, but the snow bird won out.

I said to another man, "The crow and bronze grackle take the robin's eggs." "Why," he said, "I don't understand that; there is a robin's nest within a rod of my door, and the woods are full of crows." Why, bless your life, that is just the reason why the robin built there, it simply came to him for protection.

Now first of all we must not lose sight of this fact: That there never was but one perfect Manager stood on this earth, and He put these creatures all here. So let us roll back the pages of time and take a look at nature before man interfered. Likely you have read the history of America; I haven't; but I doubt if there is any account known of the clouds of birds that once hovered over this continent. The settlings in the bottom of the little artificial pond near my house, caused from the wild goose and duck droppings, are exactly of the same material that we find in our marshes, and which is from three to ten feet deep in the average marsh. I will not attempt to mention the number of birds I have seen in one day, because the average boy of the present would not believe it; but I will say that I firmly believe I have seen more birds in one day, before I was ten years of age, than the average ten-year-old boy of the present day has seen in all his life. Time and time again during my life have I seen a wounded bird lag behind as the flock flew to cover; and often have I seen a hawk dart at them, and he never failed to get the wounded one. And some wounded quail have been stolen from me by hawks before I got to where they lit, and if it were not for the snow I wouldn't have known what had happened as I did not always see the hawk.

Once in my life I had a flock of about thirty young wild ducks. There were two little runts that appeared to want to die, but I rebelled and kept patching them up. Finally one took with a sore eye disease, and in a few days the other little scab had it, and both died, but not until they had introduced these sore eyes to the rest of the ducks and all my nice, healthy ducks started drooping. When I eventually got this disease checked I had only seven ducks left. Now, according to my own experience, if a hawk had come along he would have picked up the weak ones and prevented this disease. So, after all my life's study I am fully convinced that these cannibal

birds were put here to destroy the weak and sickly and prevent contagious disease, letting the strong and healthy survive. But man has interfered. He has paid all his attention to the destruction of the food birds and has almost annihilated them and let what we now call their enemies go; or, in other words, we human beings have combined our forces with the food birds' enemies.

Now Point Pelee marsh is about fifteen miles from where I am sitting. Point Pelee is the most southerly part of mainland in Canada, and the hawks cross there by the thousands every fall; yet I never knew of a hunter going purposely to shoot them. But if there were twenty-five ducks in a pond down there and twenty-five men knew it to-night, there would likely be fifty guns there to-morrow morning. Yes, I honestly believe there are as many hawks and owls in America to-day as there were thirty years ago.

Last fall, when the hawks were migrating, in October, they started roosting in our woods, and in less than a week there were thousands upon thousands coming there. So I took a flash-light and the .22 rifle and went down and I am sure as high as twenty-five would fly out of one little tree every time I shot. It was a bright moonlight night, and they soon took the hint, and I only killed fifteen or twenty. But to hear their wings as they hovered around, over the woods, would cause one to wonder where they came from and where they were going. However, once was enough; the rest took the hint for the next night not one was seen going there. So don't let us blame the Great Provider; it is man's mistake, that is all; we have gone wrong.

"Oh, but say, Jack Miner, do you pretend to say that there were once birds enough in America that the old and the delicate, crippled, maimed and diseased would supply all these hawks and owls with food?" Yes, that is just exactly what I want to say, yet I have no proof of it. I only know that the hawks will take a cripple every time and let the strong and healthy go. "Well," you say, "how about a flock of little ducks? He could take any one of them." Not so easily. Wild ducks at six hours old will dive like a lot of frogs, but a delicate one cannot; he will possibly just put his head under, and his body will stick out like a bloated toad. Yes, I believe that less than one hundred years ago there were more of the above class of birds for the hawks, each year, in America, than there are altogether, now. So, after having a lifetime of experience raising birds, instead of doctoring the sickly ones and petting the droopies and sore-eyes, I just take the hawk's plan and destroy them.

While I would not like to see these cannibal birds become extinct, yet I would be pleased to see them decreased the same as our other birds have become during the last forty years.

CHAPTER VIII.

Some Things I have Known Cannibal Birds to Do.

NOW, dear reader, I am well aware of the fact that my book would be more popular if I left these questions out. I am like yourself, I wish I had nothing to say but good about every bird, for I love to see them. But remember, what I am telling in this book is what I know about nature, so please don't jump on me with both feet for telling the truth.

First of all let me say that the larger the hawk, the more anxious the majority are to shoot him. This is a mistake. It is the medium-sized hawk that is the worst. The sparrow-hawk is the smallest, and he is hard on fledglings such as bobolinks and song sparrows. Yes, I know they will eat grasshoppers, but these are usually eaten by the young birds; the adult sparrow-hawk lives chiefly on mice and small birds.

When I raised pheasants I always made a "hide" where I could lay for the little chicks' enemies. One day I fed my chicks at one p.m.; when I returned at four-thirty I tapped the tin to call them and only seven out of the seventeen little beauties came and they were on their tiptoes, shy and frightened. My first thought was, "a weasel," but when I saw Mrs. Hen turn her head sidewise and look up, I called to my boy to bring the shotgun and a couple of loads of No. 6. I soon was in the "hide," and the boy had scarcely got to the house when I heard the old hen say "k-tt-tt-tt," meaning "lie low," so I took her advice, and in about five seconds a sparrow-hawk came down out of the heavens like a bullet—too fast for me. Before I could get the gun on him he was on the ground. He saw me and missed his bird; and when he was about four feet in the air again I just lifted him with a load of shot. The next morning we went over to the woods and destroyed the other old one and the young, and found remnants of some of the young pheasants. Now this hawk killed and carried away ten of these little chick pheasants in less than four hours. These little pheasants were about ten days old. After pheasants get to be the size of a small quail or mourning dove, sparrow-hawks will not take them. Many a small hawk have I fooled by taking a little dead pheasant and running a wire through him, standing up in a natural position on a steel

trap, letting Mr. Hawk come down out of the air and help himself. I have often caught owls in this same way.

I could go on and on, relating such experiences until you got hungry. But remember, the sparrow-hawk is only one. The worst are yet to come, the Cooper's, the sharp-shinned, and the goshawk; these three are just like bullets in the air. But while the pheasants are tiny the sparrow-hawk is the worst, because it is more numerous. To any person who might think of raising pheasants for profit let me say that unless you first study how to destroy weasels, barn rats, stray house cats and cannibal birds you had better give up the business a week or so before you start. Remember, when hawks are driven to it by hunger they will kill and eat each other, and owls will do the same; I have known dozens of cases of this in my life.

There are two large hawks I never destroy, the Red Tail and the Red Shoulder. They are too big and clumsy to be very destructive on our birds. When these two varieties get in my traps I usually label them with an aluminum band and let them go; but, strange to say, I have never heard from one of these in my life. I know they will kill a clumsy barnyard fowl or so, and they will also kill snakes; so I say of them as Pilate said, "I find no fault" with these fellows.

I spend a lot of my life burning brick and draintile at night, and during the summer months it is very interesting to see the toads come before the light of the fires and catch insects. The snakes that these big hawks eat, kill the toads; and I don't like snakes, even if they are not in my boots.

Now this innocent-looking little screech-owl! Just last summer I went over to the martin house one morning to see what was wrong with them, and here were three or four helpless fledglings flapping on the ground, and the old ones hovering at the house as if it were a bees' nest. Well, to be brief, we killed nine screech-owls in less than two weeks, but not until they had killed and driven all our martins away for that year. At a screech-owl's nest I once found my hat-full of remnants of blue-birds' wings, young robins' wings and feet, and quail, song-sparrow and English sparrow feathers. In another case a screech-owl went through the two-inch mesh wire netting and killed a golden pheasant hen for me and ate her throat out. This owl only weighed three and one-half ounces. A doctor in the town of Leamington once called me in to see what had killed his golden pheasant hen that was setting on twelve eggs. The pen was made of two-inch mesh netting. I at once said it was a screech-owl and showed him how I knew. He then told me he harbored screech-owls in and around his barns to kill the English sparrows.

Another man I knew kept a screech-owl in his barn to kill the sparrows, and he was puzzled to know what killed his tame pigeons.

The screech-owl is just a miniature horned owl, both in looks and habits. But I have never had my wits tried more with any bird than I have with the Great Horned Owl. On one occasion one of these winged brutes came and apparently just got his toes pinched in a trap; and night after night he sprung the traps and took a hen pheasant. This went on until he had taken twelve. Then I put on fur coat and made a bed of robes out in the "hide" which I always kept ready in the enclosure; and there I lay in that bright moonlit, stinging-cold, zero night. At last I saw an owl hovering over the ground, and fortunately for me he got fooled; he came to examine the decoys near me and while his attention was rivetted on them I raised up and fired, and he never knew what hit him. When I went to the house it was three a.m. I usually catch twelve to fifteen of these owls every winter.

Remember, when he comes and gets a bird he will eat what he wants of it, and come back the following night for a new one.

But how these cannibals locate other birds for miles and miles across the country is a mystery. Yet if we go down in the field and kill a beef on a hot summer's day, the turkey buzzards will be here in less than one-half hour. Where did these vultures come from? You perhaps have not seen one for a month. How did they know you were killing a beef? This question may be just as much in place as: How do the hawks and owls find their prey?

The great horned owl nests in the winter or early, early spring, building in a cavity of a tree or a crow's or hawk's nest. They lay two pure white eggs, round like a turtle's eggs, about the size of an ordinary barnyard fowl's or a shade smaller. I have got the nest as early as the first day in February, when old Mrs. Owl was setting. The female horned owl is larger than the male; she will weigh about four pounds and has a wing-spread of fully fifty inches.

Now I know there are a lot of people who protect these cannibal-birds because they kill mice. Yes, they do kill mice. But it takes dozens and dozens of our insectivorous and weed-destroying birds to raise one owl. I claim that the good one robin or quail does, in one day, overbalances the harm a dozen mice will do.

Now we come to the crow and bronze grackle, the largest black-bird. These two birds raise their young chiefly on the eggs of other birds. Why this is, I won't pretend to say, nor will I attempt to throw a ray of light upon it, but will frankly confess I do not understand. Possibly it has come about through man's interference with their natural habits.

The crow was the first bird I hunted in Canada, as we thought they pulled our corn. I went to the woods and located their nests, and soon I became wise enough to imitate the call of the young; then I had Mr. Crow beaten. I would first destroy the young if possible, then hide in the green bushes and caw quietly as I had heard the young do, and dozens of crows have brought their food to the wrong baby. Yes, I have even gone so far as to call them right down into the small trees so as to make a very light load of ammunition do the work, as it cost money to buy powder and shot in those days. Now comes more of what we don't want to hear. What were these crows feeding their young on? Crawfish, pollywogs, small frogs, grubs, etc.; but seventy-five per cent. of the food that these old crows would vomit up as they struck the ground was eggs. It was these old black rascals that taught me what to raise fledglings on, and it is just as easy for me, now, to raise a young bird on custard as it would be to raise a row during a political campaign.

I am going to tell you some pitiful things. I have seen young, unhatched robins spued out of a dying crow's mouth, and the little things were still alive. Whether the eggs were broken in her throat before I shot her or not, I do not know, but they were broken when thrown up. Yes, they will take blackbirds' eggs just as quick as they will the robins', and other, weaker birds' if they have the opportunity; but the robin does seem to be their choice, possibly because he does not conceal his nest better. Yet I was hunting the crows because they pulled our corn! In all my life I never knew a crow to bring corn to her young. Yes, I have shaken as high as seven little, unhatched birds out of a gasping crow's mouth, and any one of these creatures, if left to mature, would do as much good as a crow. If you want to trap a crow use hens' eggs for bait, but bear in mind he is cute, and you must conceal the trap very carefully.

The bronze grackle is nothing only a small crow; his habits are exactly the same. He will drop on a tree and look around; seizing an opportunity he will come down and go through a bush where there is likely to be a song-sparrow's nest just like a ferret will go through a stone-pile after a rabbit. I have known him to take the young birds after they were hatched. But so many men who know the habits of these birds will say they think they do as much good as they do harm! Why they make this statement I don't understand. And if you throw this book across the room and never pick it up, I cannot help it, for I am telling you the truth: These crows and grackles are the worst nest-robbers in America. They do ten times more harm than good. Remember I am not writing just to please the reader, but to give you facts gathered from personal experience and observation, and my beliefs founded thereon; and I

am sure that fifty per cent. of the eggs and young of our song, insectivorous and game birds in Ontario are devoured by these cold-blooded, nest-robbing cannibals, the crow being the worst of all. He will take young mourning doves out of the nest when they are as large as sparrows; the quail, and kildeer, and dozens of other such beautiful mothers are perfectly helpless and can no more keep him off than a human mother's naked hands could keep a vicious lion from tearing her baby into fragments.

By the way, I am now perfecting a trap whereby I can catch crows by the hundreds during the winter months. These crows will be handed over to gun clubs for trap-shooting purposes. And although he is a black murderer we must treat him fair, and give him a chance for his life; therefore, my request will be to shoot them from five unknown traps at twenty-five to thirty yards rise. The shooter will not be charged for the crows he kills, but will be fined for every one he allows to escape; in addition to the above fine he will be liable to any other punishment a good, cheerful bunch of trap-shooters see fit to impose upon him, such as rail-riding him around the club-house for allowing one of these black murderers to get away. The shooters will be fined according to their shooting ability. These fines will be used for buying up old, faithful horses which will be humanely destroyed and used for bait to decoy more of these old, black Pharaohs to their just doom. Thus what is now the crow nuisance will be turned into a sport.

The hawks and owls are worst on the adult birds, the screech-owl is not so innocent as he looks, but there is none can compare with the great horned owl, and I just wish you knew the annoyance he has caused me by taking my choicest pets. Yes, it seems he delights in taking the nearest and dearest. But now let me give my horn a toot: Never did a horned owl take a bird from me but what paid the penalty.

About the only argument you hear in favor of the hawks and owls is "mice." But when a bunch of successful farmers meet at my tile factory, never in my life have I heard them complain about mice, and I know mice seldom bother clean, shrewd farmers. But I have heard them complain about worms until I could almost feel myself crawling. The cut-worms were cutting their corn, or the wire-worms were destroying their oats, the army worm was working north, and so forth. Personally I have never had any experience with worms, but field mice I have often carried in my pockets, and if it wasn't for some youth practising the same sport, how I would like to tell you some of the fun I have had with them when I was a lad. For the death of each mouse by hawks and owls possibly we lose several birds which would destroy thousands and thousands of worms each year. I know there is a type of farmer who is much

more easily annoyed by mice than others. You will usually find him down town, sitting on a soap box, smoking in the time, now and then getting up and moving his seat around and possibly turning it end for end to keep it from getting tired; his stock at home are of the rainbow variety, with long whiskers, and when they see him coming they don't know whether to come or go, and the one or two razor-backed, South Carolina, thistle-digger hogs don't care whether or not they get out of the steaming manure heap, to be disappointed; the remnant of scrubby apple trees in the field, which some one else planted, have been fleece-grown with cut grass ever since he got possession of the farm, that, of course, was handed down to him.

If your orchard is stubble or clover sod, go through it in the early fall. By being careful you can determine whether there are any fieldmice there by their little runways that criss-cross on the ground. If so, take about one-half bushel of grain and thirty or forty bundles of corn fodder; throw a handful or two of grain on the ground and two bundles of fodder side by side over it, making a nice mouse cover. Refuse hay, or clover chaff will do, but I prefer the corn fodder. Fifteen or twenty of these little harbors are sufficient in an ordinary orchard. In ten days or two weeks all the mice in the orchard will be under these covers. Now take the six- or eight-pronged pitchfork, scratch around these little harbors to destroy their road of retreat, then throw the cover off quickly; the light striking their eyes so suddenly, they are apparently blinded for a second, giving you just time enough to give them a side whack with your fork; if you study what you are doing, you will kill seventy-five per cent. of them the first time 'round, always placing the cover back ready for next time. If you don't care for this sport, just introduce a bunch of school boys to your plan and you will soon find your annoyance turned into sport and education for the neighbor boys.

In case you haven't the above-mentioned material to make these mouse covers, old junk lumber thrown on the ground will answer the same purpose. But if you leave these mice and depend on the hawks and owls to destroy them, some of your trees will be girdled, as the mice seem to have a sort of human appetite, and appear to like the apple tree bark equally as well as the human race likes the apple-tree juice.

The mouse question always reminds me of a story told on the other fellow. It is said that he saw an advertisement: "How to kill potato bugs! Full directions sent on receipt of one dollar." This of course was a cheap opportunity, and he enclosed a dollar at once. In reply he received a small box containing a little block and mallet; the directions were: "Put him on No. 1, and hit him with No. 2."

CHAPTER IX.

Weasels, and How to Destroy Them.

NOW, as a field-mouse destroyer we have come to the king of them all. I have found as high as twenty-seven adult field mice stored in a weasel's winter home. Yet of all the four-legged enemies our birds have, I know of none to compare with the weasel. But if I were to ask the experienced hunters of America if they know the weasel all would be disgusted, because the weasel is so common throughout this country. I was once in that class myself; I thought I knew all there was to be known about them. I had shot them out of the tops of trees, and dug them out of the ground; I had called them into the tile shed and even into the engine room; I had sat here in the woods and called them so they would come up and smell of the ends of my fingers; I had seen dozens of the little rascals in Northern Ontario when I had been hunting moose, and had sat down and called them across the creek to me. Yes, I thought I was well acquainted with them.

Now, when I come to think of it I am always reminded of a middle-aged, corpulent gentleman who once came to our tile yard. After he had his wagon loaded he climbed down over the wheel; as he struck the earth, he took both hands and pulled his loose trousers up over the dome of his constitution; then pushing his right hand down into his pants pocket he pulled it out full of what looked to be tobacco, Canada thistles and milk-weed chaff; after pouring this from one hand to the other and blowing the coarse gravel out, he tipped his mouth on top of his face, and raising his hand above, he let this junk roll into the cavity, just like throwing garbage into a skunk-hole. Then he turned and said, "Mr. Miner, do you know Mr.—?" calling his neighbor by name. "Yes," I replied, "I am well acquainted with him." "Well," he said, as he raised one hand and came towards me, "that is just where you are mistaken. Now, Mr. Miner, you think you know him, but you don't." Then raising both hands, he continued, "Now let me tell you who he is, Mr. Miner. He is a limb of the devil," and he continued coming closer and going from bad to worse, saying nasty, unclean things about his neighbor until this combination in his mouth was all churned into a dirty froth, with the over-splush slopping out the corners and run-

ning down his chin like tar boiling out of a hotbox on a manure-spreader. So I excused myself: The engine in the factory needed my attention.

So now, whenever I think of this man's conversation I always think of the weasel, as I was sure I knew him. To prove I didn't, the third year I raised pheasants these innocent-looking little vermin took over two-thirds of what were hatched. You talk about worms bothering the farmers' crops; they weren't in it. Really, these weasels bothered me more than the heavy mortgage that held my buildings down and took care of my insurance policy.

I watched them day and night. I shut the birds in so tight that they smothered in their pens, and yet the weasels got them. I sat on the fence and blew several into fragments with a load of shot, and would go to the house quite light-hearted; next morning likely I would find ten or fifteen more dead pheasants. I put traps everywhere and caught as many pheasants as weasels. I used all kinds of bait, and failed. I tried to call them, but no, no. I took young, live birds and put them in a small mesh wire cage and set traps on the outside, but nothing doing. At last I brought the pheasants near the house and all hands watched them, and even then we lost some. I studied weasels night and day, but I was beaten. Where did they come from?

For there were weasels in the door-yard,
 Weasels in the barn,
 There were weasels in the hen-house,
 Weasels all over the farm;
 There were weasels in the engine-room,
 Weasels in the shed,
 And when I went to sleep at night
 There were weasels in my head.

I could see weasels on the bare ground,
 Weasels in the weeds;
 I could see weasels in the pheasant-coops
 Doing their bloody deeds;
 I could see weasels coming across the road;
 I could see weasels in the lane;
 And in the morning when I awoke
 I had weasels on the brain.

For in spite of all my determined efforts the weasels were increasing by leaps and bounds. Not that they were getting more numerous throughout the whole country, but they were simply at-

tracted here by the pheasants, and it was no use, as there would be more and more next season. I thought I would have to give in, beaten. But Mr. Weasel had run up against a determined fellow to kill, and I was dying hard; and while it is not my intention to preach a sermon, yet I want to tell you what happened.

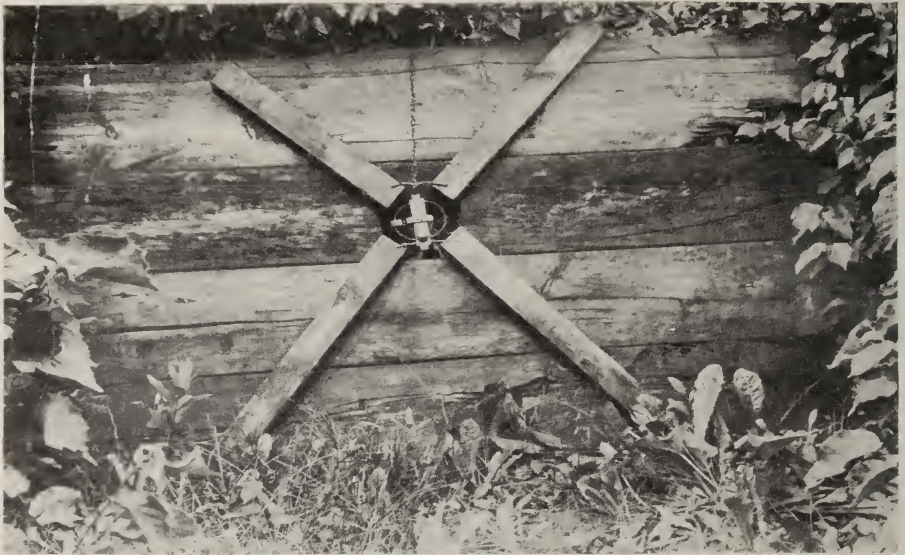
A few years previous to this, a dear little boy whom God lent to me for a short time climbed upon my lap, and putting his little arms around my neck with his sweet face looking into mine, pleaded with me to go to Sunday school with him and mamma. I unclasped his little arms one at a time, and told him to get down and go along as it was all right; but he insisted, stating it looked lonesome to leave me at home all alone. His sincere request took such a hold on me that I could not resist, and the very next Sunday found him and his father, hand in hand, on their way to the little old red school-house. And although against my will, as I had no schooling, but finally to my delight, in about three months I was teaching a class of boys. They, of course, did the reading, but I was general manager and furnished the brute force if required. It took us several Sundays to get acquainted, and when we read the 26th verse of first Genesis we were very much encouraged to know that we were given "Dominion over all." Now, dear reader, lest I forget I want you to know His promise in this verse is the foundation of a great percentage of my success in taming and controlling these so-called wild creatures during the last twenty years. Although the weasel had me beaten, yet my mind kept drifting back on His words, "Let man have dominion over all."

Eventually I thought, "Why did the weasel take the remnants of pheasants over to the rail pile, nearly one hundred yards away?" Yes, it was plain enough he was over there and knew that hiding place before he got the birds. Well then, if I had had a trap over there I would have headed him off. So I would reverse my plans, and instead of destroying their homes I would build them some as perfect as I knew how. So with bright prospects and a light heart I went at it again and built three weasels' houses as follows:

For each one I took four pieces of two-by-four scantling, three feet long, laid them down on the level ground, pointing these scantling east, west, north and south, but leaving them about six inches apart in the centre—just room enough to set a No. 1 or 1½ jump trap. Then I covered the top with old lumber and nailed it fast, leaving a hole in the centre about a foot square, right over the trap, which I covered with a loose board. See illustration.

Now I had a weasel house, complete, six or seven feet square, the cover just two inches from the ground, with all the runs leading to the trap like the spokes lead to the hub.

I placed these three platforms around in the most likely places, two in the enclosure and one on the outside. I then threw pieces of stumps, rails, or anything I could find, around to make a complete weasel harbor. Then I scratched a hole out about an inch deep in the centre and put in a handful of soft hen feathers, and placed trap down on them, setting the trigger of the trap very light. Then I dropped two or three light feathers on top, making it appear like a perfect mouse-nest. I now put the loose board cover over. I set the traps early in the spring, but weasels did not come until I put the pheasants out. Then the real fun began, for I caught three in



UNDER SIDE OF WEASEL TRAP AND HARBOR

one trap in one day; this was in the trap on the outside of the enclosure. To prove to your satisfaction that my weasel story is not exaggerated, I caught fifty-seven weasels the first summer, and they only got four pheasants; for three seasons in succession I got over fifty weasels each year. But now they are so nearly exterminated that we only keep one weasel platform, as we call them, and catch two or three weasels a year.

Please let me ask you to excuse me for writing so much to say a little, but I want you to understand just how to head off this pest, as one weasel will kill as high as twenty or thirty young fowl in one night, and to know how to catch him the night before, instead of the morning after, is worth the price of this book a good many times a year if you have had a taste of my experience. And the great

beauty of it is you cannot help yourself without helping your neighbor. Previous to my exterminating over ninety per cent. of the weasels in this neighborhood, some of my neighbors were almost discouraged trying to raise young turkeys, and, in fact, any domestic fowl, but to-day these complaints seem to be a thing of the past and the weasel annoyance, ancient history.

CHAPTER X.

Robins.

NOW I have tested your staying qualities, giving you the worst first, and we have come to the bright side of what the birds have taught me. After all, I have a lot to thank the cannibal birds for, as there is about thirty acres in this piece of second-growth woods where I am now sitting, and during the summer months I take a stroll down here at least once a week. This is the most perfect place for robins to build that one could find in a day's travel, yet the last four or five years I haven't seen five of their nests down here; but just one-half mile away, at my home, there were seventeen nests last summer, all within one hundred yards of the house, and outside of the thirteen maples that shade our door-yard the shrubbery is very young. All thinking humanity must admit that they come there for protection from their natural enemies, as there is usually a crow's nest hidden away in this or the neighboring woods. But remember a crow knows better than to venture near my house. And the robins know it.

The chief reason the robins leave us early in the fall is because their choice food, the worms, have gone into the ground for the winter; but as soon as the worms start coming to the surface again the robins come back; and the beauty of it is they come to the same homes, and perch on the same limbs of our trees, sounding their cheerful notes to brighten the dark spots in our paths. Between songs they drop down on the lawn and hop and listen; all at once they start pecking at a grub in the grass; as soon as they have pecked him out and turned him into a robin they either listen for more, or jump up and give us another song. By catching so many mothers of the season's grubs they render us tens of dollars worth of service.

Then about July the first the grubs that are not destroyed are under the hard, dry soil, and the robin has its second family to support; and Shame! Shame! Shame! on the man who claims to be intelligent who will slip out and shoot him because he took two cents' worth of sour cherries that possibly were not worth picking. Has this man got a heart? If so, let him go under the tree where the little starving young robins are calling, "Mamma! mamma! mamma!" That's the exact interpretation of these three chirps that

are getting fainter and fainter. Now, my brother, let me ask you again: Have you got a heart? You love your little baby brother or your darling baby boy, and the very thought of King Pharaoh makes you wicked within; but remember, as cruel as he was, he never demanded that a baby boy should die a lingering death as these dear little robins have to do through the fact that you shot their mother. Personally, I hate to shoot a crow or a grackle, as bad as they are, during the nesting season, on that account.

Now it would not be fair for me to pass the robin by without giving you a taste of our enjoyable experience, as while I know that by times robins will annoy fruit growers by congregating there in hundreds, yet to be fair we must consider the most good for the most people. So let us take the average farm, occupied by the cleanest of farmers, with his corn, potatoes, tomatoes, cabbages, and other crops too numerous to mention, all coming up through the clean, fertile soil. And now, like a sneaking thief in the night, the annoying cut-worm crawls out like a snail, cuts down the promising plant and then passes on to another and repeats his destructive doings. Then when he has gorged himself to the limit he will just dig himself in under the soil near the stump of the last plant he has destroyed. I have known fully one-fourth of the plants in a field to be destroyed by cut-worms in less than five days. Not that there are so many of them, but, like the weasel, each one is so destructive. Now just think of the expense and drawback to this farmer, having to replant. Moreover, the second planting never produces the same crop as the original one would have done. Here is only one of the valuable points I could explain for Robin Red Breast. For long before the average farmer is out of bed, he is in the field, hopping from one plant to another in search of these worms; and when he gets two or three in his throat he flies across to his family, and in less than three minutes he is back again.

Yes, I know there are men who will tell you the robin will not eat cut-worms and that his song is no better than that of a warty toad. One of these statements is just as true as the other. The robin will eat about all kinds of worms I have ever seen excepting the dirty tobacco worm, and we must give him credit for that. Last summer I saw a young robin not over six weeks old, picking up ants at the rate of sixty per minute. What does this mean to your lawn?

Some years ago a boy was passing my house carrying a .22 rifle. I heard him shoot, so I went out to the road and investigated; went and picked up the old robin that was fluttering, a few rods away, and as she gasped her last, two cut-worms spued out of her mouth and a third was squirming on the ground near where I picked her up. After this boy and I had had a heart to heart talk about the matter

we separated, but that afternoon I found another robin with a bullet in its back. The next day was Sunday, and at ten a.m. I was sitting near the window trying to read, and as I glanced out I saw a young robin, dying, under the fir tree. I soon found a nest above it, and two larger ones were still alive, but cold. We brought them in, nest and all, and when they got warm I dropped a little custard in the mouth of the larger one. This caused number two to realize that there was some to be had and he, too, awoke from his slumber, and apparently put all his strength into his neck and jaw bones, for he opened his mouth so wide that it seemed to split his head completely in two. The little bits they choked down them immediately gave them strength to want more, and as soon as they were satisfied, we covered them up with good warm flannel. When we returned from church about an hour and a half later and uncovered them, one hopped right up on the edge of the nest and just squealed for more custard, and in two days they were out, hopping around us for their feed. In fact I have never had robins accept us as their step-parents so quickly as these two did. Possibly when they were in their unconscious state they forgot their original parent to a certain extent. In two weeks they were flying all over the premises, but always came to the back door and chirped when they got hungry, and would stay until some one fed them. Finally they would follow us men over to the factory and often have I seen them sitting on the mill, watching the stream of clay run out, now and then turning their heads sidewise as if they doubted their best eye. Once or twice I saw them alight on a hot gas pipe; this always made me laugh, because they got off long before one had to tell them. The next one might see of them they would be out at the clay bank, watching the man dig clay, now and then picking out an earth worm. But they never went near any stranger that happened around, and this point alone brought us a lot of satisfaction, just to know that these two innocent robins, that had scarcely been acquainted with us a month, knew every person that worked around the premises.

These two stayed with us until October and disappeared. But they taught me one good lesson: What a great mistake I had made, through life, by keeping my pets shut up, as one bird having its liberty to go and come at will is worth a hundred in a cage.

Well, that is some years ago, but we have had pet robins ever since. The last seven or eight years, strangers have been coming here by the thousands, and all want to feed our robins; we, of course, let them, and sometimes I will not feed them myself for days. But I often see them come flying when a bunch of strange people arrives. Why? Just because they are fed so much by strangers; that is why.

A laughable thing happened last summer. I heard the lady of

the house scolding and shooing with the broom; I found that little Jasper had left the screen door open and three of his pet robins had flown in and roosted on his mother's choice picture that hangs in the cold storage room, or parlor, as some call it. When Jasper found what the noise was about he just took the feed tin and went in, gave the pan a few taps with his spoon, and the birds at once flew down into the pan, the boy walked out with it and ended all confusion.



JASPER FEEDING THE ROBINS

In 1917 we had twenty-one pet robins, and I have often seen little Jasper start for school and have to come back and feed his pets to keep them from following him away.

The way we get them is when some neighbor gets afraid his cats are going to kill the young robins around his place, we get them. If you want to try it, keep them warm, in a small dry-goods box. When you have had them about six hours, open their mouths and slip a little custard in them. The second day they will open their own mouths and in about three days they will accept you as their step-mother and you can let them out. Be sure and keep them good and warm, and feed often.

We put tags on some of our robins, and odd ones returned the next spring, and they are always more wild; in fact when they return they will not let you near them. This fact I do not understand.

My last experiment was to take two robins out of a nest of four where the parent birds were the tamest of any I knew; then I went and got one out of a nest of two, with exceptionally wild parents. The birds were all taken the same hour. But the two were tamer in two days than the one was in four.



SNOWBALL

This reproduction of a photograph will introduce to you Miss Snowball, our pure white robin with pink eyes and cream-colored beak and feet. Snowball was hatched in a nest with three others, but, like the parents, the other three were just common robins.

CHAPTER XI.

The Bluebirds.

TO THE average middle-aged person of America, this bird needs little or no introduction, but to the young people they are now quite rare. In fact I was speaking to a young lady quite recently, and she has camped out every summer for the longer part of her life (but of course, like all other girls at her age, she has just passed sixteen; passed it coming back, of course) and she told me she had never seen a bluebird. They have decreased over ninety-five per cent. the last forty years, but when I was a boy they were as common as the robin is to-day. They usually arrive the same day in the spring, bringing with them their beautiful note that no musician has ever been able to imitate correctly.

In 1908 I put up three or four nests for them and in 1909 a pair came and built in one. These nests were made of wood; so it occurred to me possibly they would build in tile houses, and I set to work and made six or eight different varieties of drain-tile, and to my surprise and delight the wrens and bluebirds both took to the tile houses and have never built in the frame one since. Last summer I put a wren house up on Monday and the very next morning Mrs. Wren had her nest half built; or in other words, the tile house had hardly gotten cold before she started carrying in sticks.

I had one pair of bluebirds raise their first family for three successive years in the same house. So last summer I made about two hundred bluebird houses, taking this, their choice house, as a pattern. This pair of birds I know raised three families one summer, but they usually raise two. The same house does for both wrens and bluebirds; if the wrens use it, they will stop the large hole up with sticks so the English sparrows cannot get in, but of course leaving door-room enough to get in themselves, as they are so much smaller. This is my experience, but whether these birds will take to tile houses away from here, where they are not accustomed to seeing red tile and a red man, remains to be proven.

In case they do not, there are several remedies. The houses could be painted any color in order to get them coming. But first of all, leave it to the birds, as they seem to know whom it was put there for. So, knowing that the birds prefer them, and as the tile house

can be made for about one-fourth of the cost of the wood and, like Pat said about the stone coffin "Sure it will last a lifetime," I know I have secured a home run for the birds.

The removable top can be left off all winter if preferred. The wet and frost will rid the house of mites and so forth, which sometimes kill fledglings. By the use of these little fireproof bird dwellings around our home, the wrens have become far more plentiful than English sparrows, as the latter know they are not wanted. Although we have four or five pairs of bluebirds each year, yet they do not



TILE BIRD HOUSES

The house to the right is the old original that the birds picked out, and the one to the left is the duplicate I made with the removable top.

seem to multiply as rapidly as the wrens; I believe this is due to the wrens' cunningness in barring the door against these cruel "flying rats." This experience has compelled me to believe that the sparrows are responsible for the decrease of our lovable bluebird. I say "lovable," and so will any person who is acquainted with the bluebird, for they expose their love for humanity by preferring to build their nests near our dwellings so they can rely on our protection.

We usually toe-nail their houses on top of the fence posts around our premises. I have never tagged the bluebirds, therefore I have no positive proof the same one returns year after year; yet I am like the Scotchman who said he was open to conviction but he would

like to see the man who could convince him otherwise, for we have several old birds any one of which will permit us to climb up the fence post and remove the roof from her house, and when we peep in she will sit there on her eggs, within eight inches of our eyebrows, and, turning her head sidewise she will cover our whole face with her one little eye as much as to say "Beg your pardon, sir, but you should have rapped before you opened the door." If a stranger is permitted to do this, she will fly out, every time, though after I have taken the top off she will permit him to look in and will not fly out.



"WHY DIDN'T YOU KNOCK BEFORE YOU OPENED THE DOOR?"

The chief cause of the decrease of the bluebird is English sparrows. One of man's great mistakes was when he introduced this little, domineering Bolshevik into America. Not that he doesn't destroy insects enough to counterbalance the amount of grain he takes, but here is my charge against him: He is doing all in his power to exterminate several varieties of birds that God put here, and any one of these birds will destroy more insects in a day than he will in a week.

Last summer when I awoke one Sunday morning I heard the voices of sparrows and bluebirds fighting at the bluebird house, which was about one hundred feet from my open window; but as I knew the young bluebirds were hatched, I just rolled over and had anothe_r

snooze. About an hour later I saw that the English sparrows had possession. So I went over, and found five young bluebirds lying dead at the foot of the post. Now I did not see the sparrows throw them out. I only know that the old bluebirds were chirping and hovering around the nest and were driven back by the sparrows, and that the little dead birds were still warm. In fact, one was just gasping its last when I picked them up, and each showed marks where it had been pecked. I pinned the five little murdered babies to a piece of cardboard and hung them out and took their picture, which is shown herewith.



THE ENGLISH SPARROWS' VICTIMS

CHAPTER XII.

Woodpeckers.

NEAR where this tent is pitched is a soft maple tree with a decayed limb in its top, and about one-half dozen downy woodpeckers are making their home there. This morning there is about four inches of snow, and the air is still, so that I could hear these little God-given helpers at work. So I took the ax and went and cut some samples to show you just what they are doing, cutting these little trees off three inches above and below the gimlet-holes made by the birds; then I split the blocks and photographed them. Of course I knew before I went what they were doing, as I have noticed their valuable work for over twenty-five years. The illustration shows gimlet holes made in the proper place by Mr. and Mrs. Woodpecker; then with their long, sharp, bearded tongues which they insert into the grub they gradually draw him out, either head or tail first, I don't know which. The life of the tree is thus saved.

Some years ago when I was cutting timber to secure lumber to build my present home, we sawed down an oak tree over four feet in diameter. The heart of this tree showed where the little woodpeckers had taken the grubs out, over a hundred and fifty years ago, as the marks were preserved there, in the heart of that tree, as plain as they are in the photograph reproduced above. And through their help, a hundred years before I was born, I am able to have nice quarter-cut oak in my home to-day.

Yes, the photograph makes me think more seriously of myself than it does of you. Is it possible that Jack Miner was ever so ignorant and cruel as to shoot one of these dear little forest-protectors just for the fun of seeing him fall!

But there is an old proverb, familiar to all, "Misery likes company." A friend of mine was telling me just yesterday how he and his man went to the back cornfield and shot the red-headed woodpecker because they were pulling his corn. After they had killed all the old birds in sight the man suggested that they cut the old stub down and destroy the fledglings. When this stub fell, the rotten nests broke up in dozens of pieces, killing the young. As the crop of each of these little birds resembled a wart on a needle, they decided to cut them open and see the amount of corn each contained;

but to their surprise they were packed full of injurious worms and bugs, and not one kernel of corn could be found.

Now these two incidents are only fair examples of the ignorance of us human beings during the past, regarding bird life. I could go on enumerating such convincing points for a week about our beautiful bobolink, meadow-lark, and the song-sparrow family, and dozens and dozens of other insectivorous birds. This is all outside their song service, and the cheerful, clear note of such as the bobolink as he flutters across the meadow, singing "Johnny why don't you mend your britches?" or of the cat-bird, who is perfectly willing to come and sing in your back yard if you will plant just a little shrubbery.



Wormhole.

Gimlet-hole made by Woodpecker.

HOW THE WOODPECKER GETS THE WORM

This calls to mind a particular friend of mine, Mr. Angus Woodbridge, whose summer home is about three miles from where I live, located on the north shore of Lake Erie. He has less than two acres, but the fifth year the shrubbery was planted there were over seventy birds' nests around this lovely home, twenty different varieties, a pair of mourning doves being so bold as to build on the window-sill and raise their young there. The brown thrasher, who has such a beautiful imitating voice, could not resist the temptation and built his home in the wild grape arbor that covers the path in the little ravine that wends its way down to the sandy beach. My chief reason for mentioning this fact is to make it plain that these beautiful creatures will come clear across the continent to you, if you will go a few steps towards them.

CHAPTER XIII

The Swallow Family.

THIS is, to my notion, the most valuable family of birds we have in America, as they live entirely on winged insects. And while I am writing on their value, I want you to keep your eye on their intelligence.

Over twenty-five years ago we built an extra large drying shed at our tile factory. It is two hundred feet long, and two stories high; then with the addition of one hundred feet of machine shed, we have over three hundred feet of the very choicest place for the old-fashioned, fork-tailed barn swallows.

Here it stood, with those windows continually open, for years; but no swallows came near.

During that time I read the first game law I have any knowledge of ever being published. I found it in Deuteronomy, twenty-second chapter, verses six and seven, which reads as follows: "If a bird's nest chance to be before thee in the way in any tree, or on the ground, whether they be young ones, or eggs, and the dam sitting upon the young, or upon the eggs, thou shalt not take the dam with the young: but thou shalt in any wise let the dam go, and take the young to thee: that it may be well with thee, and that thou mayest prolong thy days." I read, and tried to analyze the meaning, but my eyes were too weak to see the point.

Finally, to my delight, when I went over to the factory one morning here was the pair of long-looked-for swallows darting around near the south end of this shed. Now the machinery, where ninety per cent. of the work is done, is at the extreme north end of the shed; the south part is used for drying purposes only. And the next morning this pair of birds had some mud stuck up at the points of the third pair of rafters from the south end. They were building just as far from us workmen as they possibly could and still be under the same roof. How this pair of birds did keep those two verses of Scripture fresh in my mind.

Well, they had no sooner completed their house and started setting on five eggs, than along came their deadly enemy, the English sparrow, and destroyed the nest. Then I went up in the air pretty high and came down with a .22 rifle in my hand, and pointed a whole

lot of my attention at this particular variety of sparrow. And I had the pleasure of seeing those swallows rebuild and successfully raise their second brood, which is four. Before they migrated, they got quite tame and by times they apparently came closer to us than necessary.

The next spring two pairs came back, one pair occupying the old nest, but the others built about fifty feet closer to us. I watched the sparrows closer than ever, and it seemed that the swallows called to us as much as to say "Help! Help!" whenever their enemies put in their appearance, and I always tried to be on hand like a sore thumb. That summer each pair raised two broods, making a total of eighteen young. Now we had just what we had been looking for, and these birds apparently thought the same, for every man in the factory had learned to love them and know their call when a sparrow arrived. This, too, may sound a little fishy, but I will go you one better: I know you could blindfold me and I could tell you if there was a swallow's enemy approaching them. If they looked to us to help them why surely they knew we were their friends.

The third spring they came back in goodly numbers and built five nests, and the fifth year there were no less than twenty nests in the shed. But the beauty of it all is, they simply discarded the south end, and fifteen of the nests are within twenty feet of the busiest spot on the premises where the men are all working and the steam is sometimes blowing. This proves without a doubt that these little, innocent, valuable birds came to us for protection.

I have seen three alight on the cart-horse's back, at once. I have also seen the clay digger put his hand upon the nest, and the old mother bird would simply look over the side as much as to say, "Do you like me?" But let a stranger go in the clay shed, and you will hear their sweet, alarmed voices ring out by the dozens.

Another very interesting sight is when the parent of, say nest number one, darts in at the window, fifty feet away from the nest, the hungry mouths in that nest will go up, proving that each nest of fledglings know their parents as soon as they see them at that distance.

Another great satisfaction to me is that there are now swallows' nests in about every horse-barn of this neighborhood. The great question is: What good are they? We have made a careful study of this point. I have time and again put a sheet of paper under the nest, and when these five fledglings are at their best for consuming flies there is about one-half cupful of droppings thrown overboard every twenty-four hours. I have seen our cow and cart-horse and our self-starter all three lying down in the shade of the shed, and

comfortable as could be because here were a dozen swallows dipping up and down after every fly that appeared.

Now scientists tell us that these typhoid flies will carry germs. Such being the fact, when this bird catches and devours the fly that is on its way to your house with that dreaded disease, then it has prolonged your days. "That it may be well with thee, and that thou mayest prolong thy days."

There are six different varieties of swallows that visit this part of Canada. The purple martin is by far the largest, and his warbling voice should be heard around every country home in the greater portion of America, because he is so easily attracted. Thirty-five years ago there were a few in this country; they usually built their nests in old, deserted woodpeckers' holes. I knew a chestnut stub that afforded several pairs a home for the summer. But the first martin house I ever saw was on Mr. Jasperson's building in the town of Kingsville. Then a Mr. Elliott, who kept a summer hotel near the lake, built houses and had good success. This gave me the martin fever very bad, so I hooked up the self-starter and drove to the lake and saw Mr. Elliott. The dear old gentleman's voice trembled as he said, "Jack, I had twenty-five or thirty pairs around my houses, but the boys thought it fun to shoot them. They would go up the lake shore for nothing else, only to hunt my pets; and now I only have three birds left. I am going to pull the houses down because I would rather not have them come than see them shot."

The question was, how could I get them coming to my place? I am three miles from the lake and seldom ever see a purple martin out here. Finally I saw an advertisement in the little journal known as *Our Dumb Animals*, published in Massachusetts: "J. Warren Jacobs, Waynesburg, Pennsylvania, manufacturer of martin houses, shipped three carloads last week." Just then I caught myself thinking that these birds would know his houses wherever they saw them. I at once sent an order for a twenty-roomed dwelling, but when the house arrived the wild geese were continually sitting where I wanted to erect it, so to avoid frightening them I waited till they left for the breeding grounds, still farther north. On the evening of May the 2nd, 1913, I had all the boys in the neighborhood come and we raised the house on a pole sixteen feet high. The questions I was asked that evening would surely have puzzled a Philadelphia lawyer, as to "How soon would the martins come?" and so on.

The next morning, before I had my working harness sufficiently buttoned to avoid an embarrassing accident, I took a peep out the window to see what the bird house looked like in daylight, and really my breath was almost taken from me, for here was a pair of martins hovering around the house, and when the schoolboys went by they

shouted, "Uncle Jack," and as they shook their little dinner pails and laughed heartily they said, "there are two blackbirds around your martin house."

In less than a month there were thirteen rooms occupied. This, of course, taught all of us children, old and young, what a purple martin was. In August I counted sixty-three hovering around the house at one time.

Now I have built two of what I call "martin castles," but it took me three years to induce the birds to come to them. To-day they have almost discarded the frame house, and are in the "castles;" the fact that the "castles" are warmer in the spring and cooler in the summer possibly accounts for this. But the brick house is altogether too expensive.



THE MARTIN "CASTLE"

Photograph taken during the absence of the birds

CHAPTER XIV.

Wild Duck Hunting.

THE FOLLOWING, I know, will sound strange to most readers. But the fact is, duck-hunting is the one sport above all others for me.

Yes, it is true I have hunted the swift, ruffed grouse, which is sometimes called partridge, and as this beautiful bird darted through the undergrowth I have downed eleven of them without a miss.

In northern Ontario I have time and again got the wind in my face and slipped up and peeped over a hill at a doe and fawn that were quietly feeding there. I have stood with the crisp breeze cutting my eyes, watching Nature in all her beauty, and presently a big fellow steps out from some concealed spot, nibbles a little browse, or perhaps walks up to a sapling and rubs his antlers. There he is, perfectly unconscious of the fact that a deadly enemy is unfolding his arms from around a clean rifle; and in the midst of life he is in death.

The lordly moose is another of our Canadian beauties (I said "beauties" when I believe I should have said "homelies") and more than once have I had an ordinary carload of these noble animals at the mercy of my rifle. There they have stood, watching their leader die, apparently unconscious of what had taken place.

I have crawled, head-first, down into an old, deserted bear den, and to my astonishment and surprise almost rubbed noses with Mr. Bruin. Needless to say I didn't require telling to back out. This was in the winter, of course, when the bears were hibernating.

On another occasion, one still, frosty morning, I stood at the top of a hill and answered the howl of a timber wolf, and to my delight he replied. Then with my mouth close to the ground I again imitated that lonesome, blood-curdling sound; and in about one minute he answered back. Then in a few seconds I very carefully let out another call, and while I was examining and cocking my rifle he again answered. Now I was sure he was coming my way. There I stood, waiting, for over five minutes, with the crispy air in my favor, every nerve keyed up with anxiety. Just as I was about to turn my face to call again, I saw this monstrous, shaggy wolf break from the green cover out into a beaver-marsh about one hundred and

fifty yards away, and as I pressed the rifle firmly to my shoulder a low whistle from my lips brought him to a stand, and I had the great satisfaction of seeing him give one tremendous leap in the air as that two-hundred-grain bullet blew his heart into fragments. I mention this incident because our timber wolf, the great red-deer destroyer, may be poisoned or trapped, yet, owing to his keen smelling powers, hearing, and sneaking ability, very few sportsmen—yes, very few of even the most experienced trappers—have ever had the satisfaction of stinging him with a bullet.

Yet in spite of all these experiences, which are the height of thousands of sportsmen's ambitions, I can recall no line of hunting that afforded me more real pleasure than duck-shooting over a flock of home-made decoys. And before I attempt to tell you some things that the wild ducks have taught me I want to give you a glimpse of a real duck-hunt my brother Ted and I had, way back in boyhood, muzzle-loading days, when a dollar bill would blanket a horse.

Somehow or other we had gotten our duck-boat up at a place on the north shore of Lake Erie called Cedar Creek, a distance of about five miles south-west of our home. I had whittled in nearly every night of the winter, making a flock of decoys, and brother Ted did the painting. This particular spring we were splitting rails to finish fencing in one hundred acres of bush; so one Monday morning about the first of April, father gave us a stint, to put up so much fence for the week, and at it we went. At half-past five Friday evening we had our week's work finished, ready for a duck-hunt on Saturday.

After supper we got everything ready for an early start, and as we shook the powder in the flasks and sized up the amount of shot we had in our leather pouches, the anticipation of the next day worked on us until one said, "Let's go up there to-night. We can build a fire in the cedars and sleep under the boat." Enough said; here we go! Dear mother scoffed at the idea, but she seemed powerless. "Well," she said, "if you are bound to go, I will put you up a basket of food." "No, no; we are not going to carry a basket of grub all the way up there. Just give us a small lunch to put in our pockets for breakfast."

Well, just about sunset found each of us with six wooden decoys, some in our hunting-coat pockets, others strung around our necks, and with each a pair of those old-fashioned cow-hide boots on. We started by hand over those soft, sticky, newly-built clay roads, a great percentage of it running through the unfenced forest; and by the time we got there I can assure you those twelve decoys were heavier than they were when we started. It was a beautiful night; the moon which was only a few days old, lay on its back in the south-west, those two little, sharp, bright horns almost outlining the

picture of a full moon. To think of it, even now, calls to my memory a sweet little song my older sister sang to me when I was but a lad:

“Oh, Mama, how pretty the moon is to-night;
 ’Twas never so lovely before,
 With its two little horns, so sharp and so bright—
 I hope they don’t grow any more!
 If I were up there with you and my friends
 We’d rock in it nicely, you see;
 We’d sit in the middle and hang on to both ends,
 And what a nice cradle ’twould be!

We’d call to the stars to get out of our way
 Or else we would rock on their toes,
 And there we would sit till the dawn of the day
 And see where the pretty moon goes.
 Oh, there we would rock, in the beautiful skies,
 And through the bright clouds we would roam;
 We’d see the sunset, and see the sun rise,
 And on the next rainbow come home.”

Soon we made our way into the cedars and found our boat just as we had left it. Then we carried the decoys back to the lake shore again, and as we put them down on the sand, Ted suggested we carry old driftwood and build our “blind” ready for the morning’s sport. Even with this we weren’t satisfied, but we also waded out in the shallow water, threw out our decoys, and had the pleasure of seeing the sinking moon glitter over the rippling waves of beautiful Lake Erie on to the sides of our newly-painted decoys. Then we started back into the cedars.

In those days there were about twenty acres of this red-cedar jungle and in some places one could not see a man over twenty-five feet away. The camping place we selected was about twenty feet in diameter, partly surrounded on three sides with a bank of sand fully six feet high, heavily capped with cedars. Here we gathered dry twigs and built a fire. Then we dragged the boat over and turned it on its side, thus filling the gap and making almost a complete circle around our fire. After gathering armful after armful of wood for our night’s fuel and cutting lots of cedar boughs for our bed, we sat down to rest. The sand was dry, and as the night was still, a very little fire kept us quite comfortable. Then we pulled off our cowhide boots and set them back on the opposite side of our fire. They made great reflectors, mine especially; for although I was only sixteen years old, most of my growth had gone into foundation.

Ted allowed his boots were French kip; I said mine were cowhide.

This caused brother to pick at his sprouting moustache as he remarked, "Jack, to look at them from here, one would think they were cows' fathers' hides."

As I got up and dropped another stick or two on our fire, Ted spoke up quite cheerfully, "Jack, let me tell you just what this made me think of. You know the other night when I was down at that country dance, I ran across one of the sweetest French dolls it has ever been my pleasure to meet. She was a real little bird of life, and the more I danced with her the more I wanted to, and really I began to think I held a hand bigger than a foot. Finally as we were standing on the corner, awaiting our turn to swing, she nudged me and as I leaned over she whispered in my ear, 'Mr. Miner, don't you think if you were to trade your cowhide boots off for a pair of light shoes it would be easier on this man's white ash floor?'"

About the next suggestion was to eat our lunch so as not to be bothered with it in the morning. This piece of work was eagerly accomplished, only the programme was altogether too short at the one end, as I could almost feel the pieces of dead hog and hunks of bread strike the log I was sitting on. However we were compelled to be satisfied.

As we sat there watching the sparks disappear into the darkness we could hear the lonely hoot of the owl in the distance; and the swish-sh, swish-sh-sh-sh, of the small waves on the lake a few rods to the south of us; and from the slew to the north came the faint creak-k, creak-k-k-k, of the little spring frogs, as much as to say, "Go to sleep. Go to sleep." All at once Ted's voice rang out, "Wake up, Jack!" and really our surroundings were so completely covered in with Nature she had closed my eyes and I did not know it. Shortly the wind started moaning through the cedars, and we imagined we could feel a change in the atmosphere, and brother suggested we crawl in under our boat and have a sleep. So we straightened the soft cedar boughs around as best we could on the dry sand, crawled in, letting the boat down over us. We wrapped ourselves around each other very closely. The next I knew I was lying on my side with brother's warm arms around me, but my eyes were open and I imagined I could see light under the boat; so I raised it up. Ted spoke first, "Jack, look at the snow!" And really the sight almost caused one to doubt his own eyes, for everything was hanging with snow; the only bare spot was the small pile of smouldering ashes; those cowhide boots were simply snowed full. To make bad matters worse the wind was in the north and it was still snowing.

Well, we knocked it out of our boots the best we could and put them on. While I was fixing and blowing smoke in my eyes out of

the fire, trying to get it started, Ted knocked the snow off his gun and went to see if the decoys were all right, and before I got the blaze going I heard "Bang!" I only thought he was trying to dry his gun out, but presently I heard "Bang!" again. Then I knocked the snow off my shooting outfit and made fresh tracks toward him. I found him quite excited. "Jack, hurry! The ducks are coming by the thousands!" There were about fifty or more in the decoys when I came. "Look! Here they come again! Get in the 'blind' and keep your red head down!" and he continued pricking dry powder in the tube of his gun with a pin. As about twenty-five ducks hovered to alight we rose up and lit into them. That is, he did, and down came three; but my old gun just went "Snap! Snap!"

Ted sprang to his feet and said, "Prick some dry powder in the tubes of your gun while I go and get the boat," and just as I was in the middle of this operation brother shouted from the edge of the cedars, "Jack, get ready; here they come again." So I slipped a cap on each tube, but none too quickly, for the ducks were upon me. "Snap! Bang!" and down came a big red-headed drake. Brother fairly ran with the boat on his shoulders, a paddle in one hand; and then the real fun began, for it wasn't a case of looking for ducks, but how fast could we load those old soft-coal burners and get the fuse started. Although some of the decoys were half covered with snow, yet the ducks would alight right among them while we were standing up loading our guns; really the snowy air seemed full of them, and we had the pleasure of seeing five tumble out of one flock.

Soon our empty powder horns compelled us to stop shooting; but this did not stop the sport by any means, for there we lay low in our "blind" and watched and studied these migrating birds, as flock after flock settled down among our decoys, until I firmly believe there were over two hundred blue-bills, canvas-backs, red-heads, golden-eyes, ruddies and so forth, within gunshot of our hiding place.

But like lots of other good times, it had to come to a close and about eight o'clock the storm ceased, it cleared off and the ducks got wise and scarce.

So we picked up the decoys and hid them in the dry sand, carried our boat to its hiding place, and about 10 a.m. we shouldered our thirty-seven ducks and started for home.

The snow was now nearly all melted on the road, leaving the clay so sticky that we decided to go home through the woods and fields. But our heavy load of ducks and the spongy fields made our traveling real hard work, and our progress was of the very slowest character. The farther we went, the slower our gait, for our steam was gradually running down. And how we thought of the basket of

grub dear mother wanted us to take! Finally we crossed the last road and the next house to become visible was ours. How high some of those old rail fences did seem, and how my stomach did gnaw for just one bit of food! Talk about Esau selling his birth-right for a plate of porridge! really there was such an aching void in me I would willingly have given my birthright, or birthwrong, for just one handful of corn-mush and pork-grease.

As we neared the house mother came to meet us. Glancing over her glasses, she said, "Are you hungry boys? Let me carry some of your ducks. How many did you get? Aren't they beauties! Now sit down, boys, and I will have your lunch ready in a few minutes." Just then the old clock said "Three." Here we had been nearly five hours coming that many miles.

But just the same, this was a real outing for your life, and as I went to bed I can remember mother and my younger sisters starting to pick ducks. When I descended the old-fashioned stairway again it was Sunday.

CHAPTER XV.

Knowledge and Ways of the Wild Duck.

IN THE previous chapter I have just given you a faint taste of some of the enjoyable hunts Providence has permitted me to have. If it were possible I would like to throw in a whiff of the home-grown savory dressing, when mother opened the old-fashioned elevated-oven door. But as I grew older, ducks, like all migratory birds, got scarcer until I seldom ever went to hunt them. Yet I have always liked to see wild ducks, both on the table and in the air.

In April, 1902, I secured some wild duck eggs and succeeded in raising three, two ducks and a drake. But it was several years before I got a pond suitable, as artificial ponds cost more than duck eggs. Then in 1905 Mr. Forest H. Conover of Leamington gave me three young black mallards that were hatched from eggs direct from the marsh. In 1907 I built my first real spring-water pond. I always kept the wings of my old birds clipped or pinioned, and the young we usually sold to sportsmen for decoys, but in 1908 I concluded that it was worth more to me to see them flying around, and that fall a bunch of the young went away. I naturally thought they had gotten out to the lake and were decoyed before some pump-gun.

The next spring several black mallards dropped in the pond and acted and looked for all the world like the ones that had gone away the previous fall, but the question was, these ducks came several days apart, and if they were the same ones they would come back together; so I just gave in, and said they were tame because they were with my domesticated wild ducks, that was all. Another point I argued with myself against their being the same ducks: These young tame ones that had left the previous fall, would be shot by the first man that ran across them, because they wouldn't know an enemy.

However, about April the 20th all the wild ducks left. One Sunday evening in June I was tapping the food tin and calling a few young wild ducks in the park when my wife's voice rang out from the house, saying, "Here are your ducks outside." As I looked up, here was an old black mallard duck and eight young ones, about one-half grown, working away to get in at the gate. For a few minutes I stood perfectly bewildered, in thought. My ducks were all around my feet; what duck was this, with eight young, trying and

trying to get in at the gate? How did she know there was a gate there? At length I went and opened the gate and she withdrew to the north along the fence; the gate opened to the north but the young were to the south a few feet, and as I stepped around them they toddled, in single file, along the fence and worked their way in through the opening. As soon as the mother saw they were all through the wire netting, she just stepped back from the fence and flew over, like a crow; dropping down she spoke to her family and all walked into the water together. I then went and got my feed tin and tapped it as I usually do to call all the ducks, and sure enough, this strange duck came right up, but her family stood back; in fact, they did not come out of the water. Again I tapped the tin and she turned her head sidewise, looking at me with first one eye and then the other, as much as to say, "How long will it take you to tumble? Don't you know I am one of the ducks you raised last year, and that I returned here to my home last March, and went away to my nest about the 20th of April; and now I have brought my family here to Safety Inn."

The fact was hard for me to believe, but I was compelled to, for the very next week another black mallard, which was evidently her sister, came home, and when I got up one morning she was standing at the gate with a broken family of four ducklings as much as to say, "Will you please let my babies in?" Useless to say her request was soon granted.

In less than two weeks these old ducks and their young would all eat out of the pan; in fact I would put feed in my pockets and the old ones would climb up on my lap and put their heads in my open pocket and scatter feed to their young.

This duck story I know is beginning to sound strange to you, but remember, I have only just started telling you how they have cornered me up and made me frankly confess I didn't know anything about them. Why do these old ducks, in every case when they return with their young (that of course cannot fly) bring them around to this gate to be let in? How do they know there is an opening there? It is plain to be seen they have thinking ability enough to know that that is where we human beings enter the park and that there must be an opening there.

Another mystery is, where did they bring their young from; where did they hatch them, and so forth? In answer to this, young ducks, at three days old, can run as fast as adult Bob White quail.

Since this happened, we know of one old duck that hatched her young over four miles away and was home with them inside of a week. In another case a lady telephoned that the school children were trying to catch some little wild ducks in the ditch, and that the

old duck had a tag on her leg; this was after four o'clock, and these ducks were over a mile away from here, but at six o'clock she and her family were in our north pond, scudding over the water, catching flies.

But perhaps the most interesting case I had was when a farmer phoned me to come over and help him catch a crippled wild duck that went flapping out of the clover field in front of him. He said that she could just get over the fence, but he couldn't quite catch her. I firmly believed him, because he was still out of breath when he called me up. This story sounded good to me, so in a few hours I



OLD DUCK AND YOUNG WAITING AT THE GATE

Note Aluminum tag on her leg

took a stroll around, and this wise old pet that he thought crippled was home with her family. What had she done? Why, outwitted this intelligent man by leading him to believe she was crippled; then, as soon as he disappeared, she flew back into the clover field, dropped down and gave a few quacks that brought all her family out of the grass, and they continued their journey homeward. But the fact is that if there hadn't been danger of this man stepping on some of her babies, he would never have known she was there.

About the most touching duck scene I have ever witnessed was in 1913. A wild house-cat robbed an old gray duck of her seven young. I now and then heard her squawking, but I was looking for

a hawk or weasel; some men that were making hay near by saw old Mrs. Cat as she sprang upon the last ducklings. The way the old duck carried on was pitiful. She flew and squawked around for two or three days. Then one morning I missed her altogether and concluded she had gone away to the lake. But on my way from the factory to dinner I happened to think of the brood of ducks the old Wyandotte hen was about to bring out, so I jumped the fence into the park. As I neared the old hen she started scolding. I raised her up, and all had hatched, and gone, but two. Where were they? My first thought was "Weasels;" but just as I was backing away from the coop I saw the eye of old Mrs. Duck. There she sat in the weeds, about four feet in front of the coop, as still as a corpse, and I was compelled to tumble, for here was the head of a sweet, tiny duckling projecting out of her feathers near her wings. This dear old, broken-hearted mother was sitting here, stealing this hen's ducks as fast as she hatched them, and surely she knew they were not hers, for her ducklings were ten or twelve days old. As I looked at her I thought of the times I had crossed the street to meet some curly-haired little child that looked like my sweet little girl did. Well, when I went back again the old hen was alone in the coop. The other two had hatched, and Mrs. Duck was gone with the eight; and she raised them all, for that cat never came back.

Another thing worthy of notice is that this is a well-settled farming country. I am three miles north of Lake Erie and about five miles north-east of Cedar Creek, which is the nearest natural duck marsh, and some of these cute old ducks raise their families until they are nearly full-grown before they bring them home, and are seldom seen by any person, unless they happen to be in the big ditches.

A very small sportsman who stood six feet in height sprinkled corn in a living stream in order to get a shot at some of these ducks, and on Good Friday morning, 1911, he succeeded in getting a crack at a pair. As they flew up in front of him he killed the duck dead, but the drake fell with a broken pinion and ran into some rushes. After hunting for him for fully one-half hour he went for his bird dog, thus giving the drake nearly an hour to make his escape. When the dog arrived he took up the trail at once, but when he came to a ploughed field he apparently lost the scent. One week from the following Sunday Mr. Drake was at the park gate, trying to get in. Here he had been about nine days coming one mile and a half, dragging his broken wing. What handicapped him worst was a shot that had entered at the hip joint. I caught him and examined his wounds. As I let him down in the park he didn't flap away, as one would expect, but simply stood and looked for food. Fortunately

for him only one of the bones was splintered and in less than six weeks he was flying again. But it took over two years for all the particulars regarding the shooting of him and the death of his mate to reach my ears.

Another fact worthy of notice is that the park gate is only thirty feet from our dining-room window, and in every case these ducks come here to look for an entrance when it isn't at all likely they ever passed through this gate themselves. Only they see us enter there. Really the way some of these birds expose their intelligence compels me to believe what I heard a farmer say at one of our Corn Growers' Conventions. This man rose up, stroking his beard; then, raising his right hand, he remarked, "I tell you, gentlemen, there are a lot of things in this world we haven't come to yet."

Another interesting fact about wild mallard ducks is the extreme difference between the faithful mother and the lazy drone of a father; for as soon as the duck starts to set, the drake deserts her entirely and he lives the life of a Brigham Young for the rest of the season. In fact he hasn't got a bit more principle than some of us men! Hence the faithful mother has to be father and mother both to her family, hatching and guarding them from their enemies, and leading them to proper feed as well as supplying the necessary shelter and warmth. Yes, she is just as faithful and true as a kind washerwoman who is compelled to bring her nursing baby with her while she scrubs the morning away and earns two dollars, but willingly takes fifty cents, and on her way back to the place called home spends it all to relieve the hunger of the three or four more darling tots that are anxiously awaiting momma's return, while the lazy, good-for-nothing father is loafing around the smoky end of nowhere, swapping garbage stories, and remarking about some lady who is passing the dirty window that is corroded with smut.

CHAPTER XVI.

Do Birds Return to Their Same Homes?

DO BIRDS return to their same homes, year after year?" This is a question that has been put to me more than any one along the bird line, and it is usually followed by: "How do you know?" Then I have had to take father's advice, "drop it," and talk about the weather or some other side line. For while I was sure of this in my own mind, yet I had no proof.

On August 5th, 1909, a wild black duck lit with my ducks in the north pond. I started cozening around her, not by me going closer to her, but by letting her come closer to me. Finally she was eating out of the long-handled spoon that I had previously used for throwing little feed over to her. The spoon, of course, was on the ground, gradually being drawn towards me until it came over my left hand that was lying flat on the ground, and on September 10th of the same year this duck actually ate out of my hand. We named her Katie. In a few months Katie got so tame she would follow us in the barn where we went after the feed. So I scraped around in my hunting-case drawer and found a piece of sheet aluminum about three-quarters of an inch wide and one and a half inches long; I then took my sweetheart's best pair of scissors, and with the pointed blade I managed to scratch my post office address on it. Then I caught Katie and wrapped it around one of her hind legs. She disappeared on December 10th, and in January I received the following letter:

ANDERSON,
SOUTH CAROLINA,
January 17th, 1910.

Box 48,
Kingsville, Ontario.

Dear Sir,—

On Friday evening, January the 14th, I was hunting on Rocky River, near this city. I killed a wild duck with a band on his leg, marked Box 48, Kingsville, Ontario. I suppose whoever sent him out wanted to hear from him, so I am writing to let you know where he came to his end. He was a very fine specimen. I must commend him for his judgment, for he came to the best County in the best

State in America. If you will let me hear from you I will return the band I took from his leg. So hoping you will send me his pedigree I will close until I hear from you. Send me your address in full.

Very respectfully,

W. E. BRAY.



KATIE FEEDING OUT OF MY HAND

I at once wrote Mr. Bray and he kindly returned the tag, which is the centre one in the photograph of my collection of tags. Mr. Bray made two distinct mistakes; one was when he called Katie "him" and another, equally as big, was when he stated that the duck came to the best spot in America, for the fact is that Essex County, Ontario, this duck's summer home, is the best spot on this beautiful earth; this, of course, will include all of North America.

In 1910 and 1911 I was so busy I didn't take the pleasure of tagging any more, but in the spring of 1912 I hatched four young mallard. No, I didn't hatch them; I stole the eggs from a black

duck that had paired off with a gray, green-headed mallard drake and set them under a domestic fowl; a few days after they were hatched they accepted me as their step-father, and this old hen and I succeeded in raising four. I always fed them in one spot on the brick wall that surrounded the pond. The fish got so they came regularly for the bits that the ducks pushed overboard; as I would tap the tin to call the ducks, I also called the fishes. I was compelled to believe this, for before I would drop a bit of food, the fishes would be right there. They were what we call bull-heads, a little, miniature cat-fish, about six inches long. To see them with their whiskers up above the water all along the wall was quite interesting, especially when I would go to the opposite side of the pond from where I usually fed them, and tap the tin. This makes me think of the Irishman who was asked the question "Do fish sleep?" He replied, "I never caught any that way."

At any rate the little ducks got all they wanted to eat, for they grew like mushrooms. I took a day off for no other reason than to go to Detroit and buy sheet aluminum and a set of stencils, and when these four ducks had their growth, each was presented with a leg-band stamped with the following inscription: "Write box 48, Kingsville, Ontario."

These four ducks' names were Polly, Delilah, Susan and Helen. On or about December 5th they left, and on the following day Dr. Rutherford, Chatham, Ontario, shot Helen at Mitchell Bay, Lake St. Clair, Ontario.

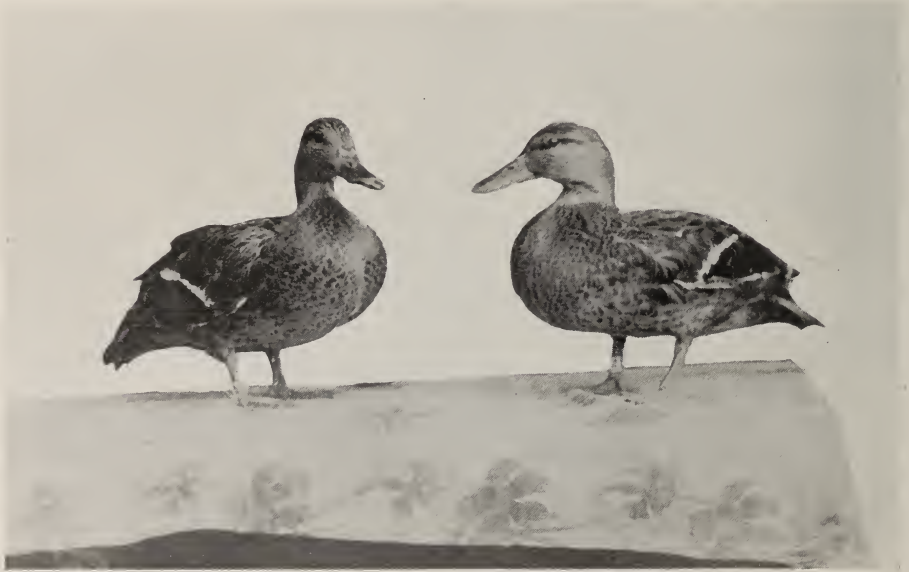
Well, I looked to hear from the other three, all winter. But to my delight, on March 10th, 1913, Polly came home, and on the 18th, Delilah came; and although badly crippled in the wing and leg, Susan came squawking down out of the heavens on March 30th. I caught each one and examined their tags; and for the next three months I did all I could to induce people to ask me how I knew that birds returned to their same homes, for I had double proof: First, these ducks were mulattoes; they had a black duck's breast, and a grey duck's wings. But the climax was the tags that I put on their legs.

That summer, 1913, Polly and Delilah each raised a family, but Susan remained in the hospital nearly all summer. That fall they all three migrated again, and Noah Smith of Paris, Kentucky, shot Susan, February 27th, 1914.

On March 14th, Polly came home. On March 21st Delilah came; she was accompanied by a Yankee sweetheart and this spot seemed too good to be real for him. When Delilah would come to me, he would scour the heavens above, but finally he believed what she said and he, too, came to me for food.

That summer Delilah raised her family, but Polly came home May 20th without any, and both ducks migrated again that fall.

On March 13th, 1915, Delilah came home, and on the 16th Polly came, but Polly had had a narrow escape, as part of her beak was shot off. The sight was pitiful. With a fragment of her beak hanging down she could hardly eat, so I mixed up some corn-meal and put it in piles for her. Finally I reached out and grabbed the opportunity, then with the scissors in the other hand I clipped the dead fragment of her beak off, and in a few days she appeared to eat quite naturally. Later on I caught the two sisters, put them in a twine sack, took them to town, stood them on a table and stroked them until they became quite contented; then I stepped back and the photographer took the photograph which is shown.



POLLY AND DELILAH

Wild ducks spending their third spring at my home. Notice where the piece has been shot off Polly's beak.

My boy said Polly got her beak a little too far ahead. At any rate she appeared to think that was a close enough call for her, and the next winter she did not migrate, but stayed here with our domestic fowls, and she was shot by a wild goose hunter in April, 1916. But Delilah continued to migrate and returned for the sixth time on March 25th, 1918. That summer she raised a family of twelve, which is, by the way, the largest family of mallards I have ever known to grow to maturity. The last I have any positive proof of

seeing her was in September, 1918. During the six years she brought to my home five families, two eights, two nines, and a twelve. In 1917 she came home without a family.

Providing all of her descendents multiply as she did, how many ducks have you got in six years? Surely this is worth thinking over, and when we see that it runs up into the thousands we cannot help but be encouraged, and our confidence increased in His lovable, truthful promise to us, His children; for He says "Let the mother go that it may be well with thee, and that thou mayest prolong thy days." Who could ask for a plainer fulfilment of His promises?

Now in case the reader might think that possibly I am mistaken in the ducks, and this was not the same bird, I will say that outside of other proofs of her being the same duck (such as coming when we would call her, and now and then eating from our hands, her peculiar marking, and so forth), we caught her each year and examined the tag. In the spring of 1917, after she had returned the fifth time, Mrs. Miner and I caught her and gave her a new tag, as the old one was so badly worn.

Now before I go farther I want you to stop and think. Remember, these are just wild ducks that we are apt to think know so little. Yet the fact is, these birds have shied out around thousands of hunters who are hidden in the ambush with all kinds of decoys to assist them. Yet these ducks have outwitted them all, year after year. Then when they return they will almost eat from my hand the first day they arrive, when if they had allowed themselves to have ventured within two hundred feet of the hunters' decoys it would have been almost sure death to them. Can you blame me for enjoying nature study? Do you wonder that I have hung up the gun and am trying in my A, B, C fashion to tell you these unpolished facts? Yet I doubt if the best writers on earth could give you a taste of this grateful feeling in having your pets return to you year after year for food and protection; really it almost makes you feel you were personally present when He said, "How often would I have gathered thee as a hen doth gather her brood under her wings."

Another thing that interests me: These ducks always leave here in flocks, and return singly, except those that have doubled by bringing mates. I have never seen two with tags on return together. In 1914 I tagged twelve. One was shot at Gueydan, Louisiana and one at Cooksville, Tennessee. In the spring of 1915, day after day added to the number until on March 28th there were six sitting on the brick wall surrounding the pond with bright aluminum tags on their legs. In the fall of 1915 I tagged fifty-three, and in the spring of 1916 nearly half of them returned. In the fall of 1916 I caught and tagged fifty-four, and in catching these fifty-four I caught twenty-three that had been tagged previously.

CHAPTER XVII.

Birds as Missionary Messengers.

SINCE 1915 I have more than doubled the interest of my bird-tracing system by stamping a selected verse of Scripture on what previously was the blank side of the tag. Now whoever is lucky enough to get a bird with my tag on it also gets a personal verse of Scripture, whether he needs it or not. Safety first! No harm done. I said "personal," but of course there are exceptions. In case you are bald-headed and when out shooting you bring down a good fat goose wearing a tag, and on investigation you find that the message reads: "The very hairs of your head are all numbered. Matthew 10: 30," if you don't think this goose was intended for you just place the tag back on its leg and hand it to the other fellow.

However, I do not feel that I should pass on without first giving you an explanation of how this great advantage was handed to me.

One Saturday afternoon in the fall of 1914 I was standing in a shoe store in the town of Kingsville, conversing with two gentlemen, when a plainly dressed Salvation Army lassie approached us and holding out a small roll remarked, "Buy a calendar, gentlemen; buy a calendar?" I happened to be the last one to refuse, but as I shook my head I glanced at the situation. We three men all wearing good warm overcoats, and this girl, dressed in what I would call a summer suit. I spoke just as she was turning away. She at once whirled, her face beaming with smiles as she held out the paper roll towards me, while I dropped a quarter in her other extended hand and carelessly pushed what she had sold me down into my outside overcoat pocket. I have never seen her since to my knowledge.

A few days later I noticed a beautiful picture hanging on our dining-room wall; its outer cover appealed to me very much, so I got up and walked to it and began asking a volume of questions, Where did you get that? Who brought it here? Where did it come from? and so forth. Mrs. Miner turned and said, "Why you brought it home. We found it in your overcoat pocket."

By this time I had lifted the outer cover and found it contained a selected verse for me to consider each day in the year. This was the first one I read: "From this day I will bless you."

I then studied one after another of them until I had read and re-

read dozens and dozens of these encouraging promises that seemed to fill the whole room with heavenly bread right from God's own oven of love.

The overflow of my heart was: How can I pass it on? I decided to select a few of these verses that had hit me square in my living room, and have them put in booklet form, then pass them on to friends as my Christmas greetings.

That week we were burning our last kiln of drain-tile for the season. It had been our custom that I start work at one o'clock, a.m., my eldest son taking the first part of the night. I am on duty, firing, every half hour, which takes me from ten to fifteen minutes; then I withdraw from the heat and roar of the fires, and lean back in our old chair with my feet upon a wheel-barrow. The clock is hung where the glare of the light will shine on its face and I take things quite comfortable for fifteen minutes at a time. I pull the blanket up over my shoulders and lie right back.

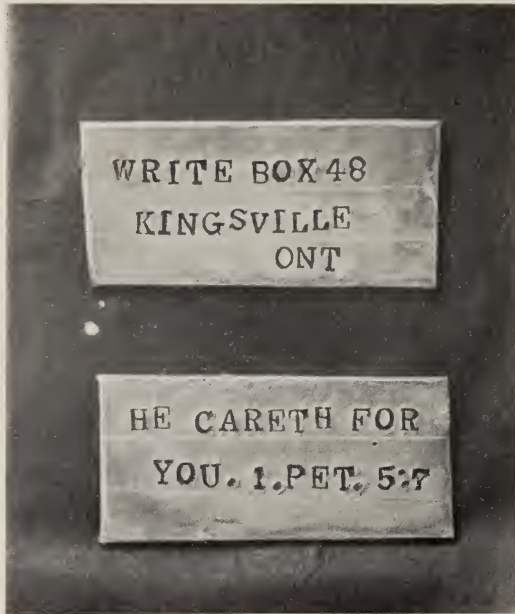
It is a beautiful warm morning for the time of the year; in fact the park pond is not frozen over, and the ducks and geese are still here. The silence is broken now and then by the crowing of the roosters, which is Nature's introduction to the new day. The sky above my face looks bluish-black, illuminated with thousands of twinkling stars, and each is staring me right in the eyes. There I am—*alone*. I pick out a space between four bright stars and try to count the dimmer ones in that small area, until the whole heavens seem to burst open with wireless messages, and my heart is the central station.

I have said I am alone. Yes, I am alone in company with Him who has been the foundation of all my success; alone with Him who, time and again while in the northern wilderness, has heard my earnest, awkwardly-worded request and has guided me to my lost companions when my strength and ability had failed; yes, when the night has been as black as ink, and the stormy gale was causing the trees to fall all around us, He has guided me safely back to our tent that is pitched in the second-growth timber beside some little stream or lake. Yes, I am alone with the same great, loving Power who has made millions of bare-foot boys into real men, even after fathers' and mothers' kind teachings had failed.

Just then I heard the swish of a flock of ducks' wings and their low quacking as they dropped into the pond about two hundred feet away. At that moment one corner of my mind's eye had apparently drifted over to the three hundred and sixty-five blessings I had bought of the Salvation Army lassie for twenty-five cents, and like a star shooting across the heavens God's radio said: "Stamp these verses on what is now the blank side of your duck and goose tags."

I threw the blanket off my shoulders and jumped to my feet, for I now had my tagging system completed!

In less than a week I had the fowls of the air carrying the word of God, and in six months they were delivering it from the sunny side of the Atlantic to the far-off Indians and Esquimaux of Hudson Bay. And to-day I do not hesitate in saying that I have the most accurate and most fascinating bird-tagging system of any man, or combination of men, standing on the American continent, as the verse of Scripture has more than doubled the interest.



SHOWING BOTH SIDES OF ALUMINUM TAGS AS I NOW STAMP THEM

This brought Rev. J. W. Walton to my home, here. Mr. Walton has been an Anglican missionary on the east coast of Hudson Bay for over thirty years. And when he and I grasped hands in my dooryard we were compelled to believe that we were introduced by the fowls of the air, for his letter of introduction was several goose-tags which I had sent out in previous years. The geese were killed by the Esquimaux, who took the tags to the reverend gentleman for an interpretation.

This system also brought to me another letter from the far North, which is of unusual interest. It reads as follows:

"I have to admit that I have delayed the sending of this tag to you, longer than I should. Hope I have caused you no inconvenience.

“The passage of Scripture on this tag is one which had I fully realized God’s power, and the full extent of its meaning in the past, how often would I have said ‘Get thee behind me, Satan,’ and would have come out of it ‘more than conqueror;’ but, sorry to say, in most cases the opposite has been the result. Rest assured your message has done some good.”

One duck, killed in Louisiana, brought to my home thirty-nine interesting letters of inquiry. Among them was a letter from the Arkansas State Prison, reading as follows:

“My name is ——. My room-mate’s name is ——. I am in here for overdraft on a bank; my room-mate, who is sitting at my elbow, is in here for murder. We have a paper here giving an account of a duck killed in Louisiana with a tag on its leg marked ‘Have faith in God.’ We have looked this up in our Bible; we find that the reference given is correct. We would be pleased to hear from you, to know more about your interesting life with the birds. However, if you do not see fit to write us, we trust you will not be offended at getting a letter from here. We remain,

Yours,

Arkansas State Prison

Little did I think when I stamped this verse on the tag that the duck carried away, that the message would ever find its way into a prison cell, and lodge in the heart of a murderer.

CHAPTER XVIII.

How Wild Ducks Conceal Their Nests.

POSSIBLY there is none of our birds that can conceal its nest better than the wild duck. This may be due to the fact that she has to be father and mother both.

In the first place she selects a spot where the foliage, dry sticks or weeds, are exactly the same color as herself. I once found a black duck's nest right beside an oak stump that was charred black by being partly burned away, and really if you weren't careful you might look at her all day and not see her, as she was exactly the same color.

Yes, I know there are a lot of people who will say "Oh, that just happened that way." I tell you right here it did not happen that way. This is a gift to help these creatures out, and there is no man on earth can conceal anything better than a wild duck can her nest. An intelligent man once asked me how I hid when I hunted wild geese. I told him I covered myself with a blanket, and in a few weeks I saw him returning from a hunt carrying a red horse blanket.

After the duck has the spot selected she gathers a few twigs and so forth, but she lays the eggs right on the bare ground, going to her nest late at night and leaving long before the stars disappear in the morning. As soon as the crows start scouring the country, she flies back to the vicinity of her nest. I have seen a duck give a crow an aerial battle three or four times a day. But of course two crows are one too many for her.

From the time she starts laying, she covers the eggs very carefully with grass and sticks before she leaves the nest, therefore they are absolutely out of sight and protected from a slight frost, such as we sometimes have after the wild ducks have started laying. When the eight to twelve eggs are laid she pulls down off her breast and covers them. Now comes the question, how can she pack these eggs in that down, and cover them with sticks and grass, and not leave a sign of down to indicate that there is a duck's nest within a mile? This is certainly a piece of shrewd work.

Wild ducks seldom ever leave their nests in the daytime after they start to set. I often go back to the north pond and watch them come home to feed, just at dusk, and they are usually there at twilight in the morning. This compels me to believe they some-



PUZZLE: FIND THE DUCK'S NEST



WHERE THE DUCK'S NEST WAS

times stay off all night. However I found this duck's nest, and one extremely hot day I saw her in the pond, so I slipped away with the kodak and got the two photographs. The lower one shows you where the nest is, but I doubt if you could locate it in the top picture. After I took one, I removed the down and got the lower photograph, which of course reveals the mystery. The down keeps the eggs warm until the old lady returns; you see the heat of her body gets the ground good and warm; then she packs the down carefully and firmly around the eggs, which holds the warmth there. She then puts the thatch of grass and sticks over the down and all is O.K., for she can stay away twenty-four hours if she sees fit.



DUCK, WITH YOUNG, CROSSING THE FIELD

Yes, we human beings invented a great thing when we produced the thermos bottle, but to the fowls of the air the invention is as old and as new as this beautiful earth.

Then when the young are hatched and old enough to catch insects, the mother starts off with her little sweethearts toddling after her in single file towards home, where she knows she will be helped in raising her family.

Her feathers are slightly ruffled, but this is a wild duck's way when caring for its young. To me it is a beautiful sight, knowing she is on her way to the park where she will receive food and protection in time of need.

CHAPTER XIX.

My Last Distinguished Family of Pet Ducks.

AT THE present time I have only one grey duck of my own. She is pinioned and lives in the park. In the spring of 1919 she paired off with one of the wild drakes that came here, built a nest and laid eleven eggs.

I have a pair of Egyptian geese in the park, and of all the web-footed devils I know of on earth, these Egyptian geese are the worst. I knew full well I must not let this duck hatch her young there, so a few days previous to their hatching I stole the eggs and put them under a domestic fowl. She hatched the whole eleven and in about twenty-four hours I moved them all to the north pond, shutting the eleven pets in a playground about two feet square which I made in front of their own stepmother. The third day I gave them their liberty by quietly removing the three boards, but of course left the hen in the permanent coop. I sat for a few minutes and watched them as they saw water for the first time. Finally all apparently lined up along the sloping bank of the pond, looking and peering sidewise as they slowly advanced to the edge of the water, where all stood still for a few seconds, then as suddenly as anything could possibly be, they dove into the water, just like eleven frogs, and equally as quick, some of them coming up fully ten feet from shore.

The first week I fed them a little custard, then gradually tapered off to oatmeal, throwing the feed in the shallow water so they would have to tip up to get it.

They grew quite rapidly, but the thirteenth was their unlucky day for a snapping turtle took one. Fortunately three other wild ducks were raising their families there, and these old ducks gave the alarm and I arrived just in time to see this little duck's finish; but the other ten got along O.K., for that was the last meal that old mossback ever required.

In about a week I heard these old ducks' alarming cries again. I hustled back and shortened the career of another snapping turtle, but this time my nerve was not very steady and I missed his head, but the ball split the roof of his house, causing it to leak, letting in the water that gradually pushed his life out, leaving him just strength enough to walk to shore.

About a week later I again heard these old ducks' call of distress, saying "Help, help! Help, help!" and this cry continued until I arrived with the glittering rifle in my hand; then it ceased. All were standing on the shore, and, best of all, my ten had learned the alarm and had also come out of the water; the forty or fifty ducks, young and old, were on their tiptoes, each with one eye directed towards the middle of the pond. So I hid myself in the growing rye surrounding the pond. Finally the three old birds ventured in the water about twenty feet in front of me, and just as I was about to give up watching they all three raised their heads and said "Quack! Quack! Quack!" and they swam quickly towards me and their young who



THE MULBERRY FAMILY

were preening their baby feathers on the bank. I could not see a thing. Yet they continued the alarm, as much as to say, "There he is!" Now what could it be? Finally I saw a little speck not much larger than an ordinary bean projecting above the calm surface of the water. I watched it closely and it still grew larger until I was sure it was the periscope of one of these old four-legged submarines. The ducks having my nerves keyed up to the highest tension, I wanted to make a sure shot. When this speck was as large as my two thumbs above the water I slowly cocked the high-powered rifle, took a steady aim and pressed the button, and I have never seen that turtle's head since.

But here is what is interesting: Of these three old ducks two were tagged in 1916, and have migrated and returned three times to my personal knowledge, and have undoubtedly been shot at, time and again; one has part of her foot shot away. Yet when this rifle cracked, right above the three, not one attempted to fly, but all rushed right up to the muzzle of the gun. This was only a starter of them exposing their knowledge; for ten minutes later each took her family right out into the water. Whether they knew I had killed the turtle, or if it was the calmness and safety brought about by the crack of the rifle the two previous times that gave them confidence to go out into the water, I do not know; only this, that they did go out with the appearance of perfect safety. Moreover I had no proof that I had killed the turtle. But time told that tale; the weather was very hot and on the second day and about the eleventh hour he arose, but minus a head.

Well, to return to the ten little ducks, I was trying to make them grow as fast as the old ducks did their broods. In other words I was racing with the old duck, but I was like Dad's fast horse, just fast enough to lose. Fortunately one day mine followed me towards the house and found the mulberries. These trees were only five years old and therefore hadn't much fruit, but the ducks ate every berry almost before it touched the ground. Now I had the old ducks a-going some, for these Mulberry ducks outgrew theirs. For three weeks they ignored me, but as the weather was dry and hot the bulk of this fruit gave out and the Mulberry family, as we called them, were glad to come back to their old stepfather.

They were hatched on May 25th. The day they were eight weeks old they arose and flew the full length of the pond, two hundred and forty feet. At nine weeks old they were going over the top of the whole premises including the seventy-five foot chimney at the drain-tile factory. On July 14th we caught, tagged and named each one. I put two tags on each duck so I could see how many returned in the spring without catching them, the one being the usual tag that I put on any duck; the other was a little narrower and contained just the initials of the duck's name. Their names were as follows:

Agnes Mulberry	Joseph Mulberry
Ruth Mulberry	Woodrow Mulberry
Mabel Mulberry	John Mulberry
Flossie Mulberry	Theodore Mulberry
Nellie Mulberry	Peter Mulberry.

In August the pond dried up and most all of my ducks went away. Mr. William Scratch, Kingsville, Ontario, shot Theodore Mulberry

on September 1st, at Cedar Creek. Later on, in October, seven of them were home again, and all migrated on December 2nd. On December 13th, Joseph Mulberry was shot by Mr. August Holstein of Columbus, Ohio. Mr. Holstein shot the drake near that city, and on January 3rd, 1920, Mr. H. C. Leiding of Charlestown, South Carolina, killed Mabel Mulberry near that city. In the spring at least three of them returned, but strangely I haven't any proof of what happened to any of the rest; possibly some may be alive yet.

It may seem strange to you that I enjoy keeping a history of different families of birds, but if you were to do the same I am sure you would enjoy it far better than tracing your own family history, for in tracing the history of the birds we are not so apt to find out things we wish we had never known.

CHAPTER XX

Ducks' Love Soon Ceases.

DURING the last few years I have received letters from different men in America questioning about wild ducks' ways, and I have promised to answer in this book.

Yes, wild ducks, as well as geese, all go through an annual moult, their wing feathers all dropping out within a few days, leaving them unable to fly for from four to six weeks, according to the healthy condition they are in to produce new wing feathers.

The drakes have nothing else to do for the summer months, and they moult the latter part of June. Their wing feathers shoot out so fast they usually are flying again in about a month. But the ducks, as I have previously stated, are the most faithful mothers on earth, and neglect themselves for their families, not moulting before the young are full grown and have been flying at least two weeks. Then her wing feathers drop out, and because she cannot fly with her family they all desert her, and she sneaks away in the rushes and is seldom seen until she is able to fly again. By this time her family have completely forgotten all about her. I have never seen them pay any particular attention to her afterwards; in fact they pay just as much attention to a drake who possibly might have been their father, and by the first of October the whole family may be scattered and become comparative strangers to each other, seldom two of them ever being together. This is pointed out plainly by the ducks with tags on being dotted here and there among a flock of hundreds. Further proof of this is that only two or three sportsmen throughout America have ever reported killing over one; yet they will often say, "a flock of ducks came into our decoys; we killed so many; among them was this one with the tag on," and so forth. And as I have previously stated, we have never noticed two tagged ducks return together.

We often hear sportsmen speak of seeing floppers in the marsh on the first of September, apparently believing these are young ducks. I have never seen a young duck in my life that could not fly on that date. They usually all fly by July 20th. Sometimes an old duck will lay a second setting if the first nest is destroyed; this will put her back five or six weeks. The floppers that are seen in September are

old ducks. We had a duck we called "Old Lamey;" she had part of her foot shot away. After raising her family she did not moult until August, and it was October 5th before I saw her flying.

One gentleman writes me, "If a duck loses her mate will she pair off again that summer?"

This all depends on the variety of duck. Wood ducks pair off and if one is killed the other is a failure for at least that season, but black and grey ducks will pair off the very next day. I have known a black duck to hatch some black and some half-grey ducks, all from the one setting of her own eggs.

During the spring months one often sees three ducks flying here and there all over the marsh. This is a pair of ducks and a strange drake interfering. Now I have never seen a case of this rough and ready Brighamite where the duck was the least bit to blame. The drakes are all the same, like barn rats. The less said the better.

CHAPTER XXI.

The Migration of Ducks.

EVER since I started tagging birds, my desire for this never-tiring sport has been constantly increasing, and to-day I have carloads of unsatisfied ambition flying all over America just because I cannot get my tag on them all. Altogether, I have tagged four hundred and forty ducks since starting, and I am well pleased with the amount of interest the sportsmen have displayed in writing me from different shooting grounds of America where these tagged birds have fallen.

It is remarkable how these letters differ in tone, how men will expose who they are by their hand-writing, stating how they captured the bird, or how it got caught in a muskrat trap; this, of course, is their Latin way of saying "I shot the duck out of season." But about the limit was when a gentleman wrote as follows: "I am an officer of the law, and the other night while on duty I was in pursuit of two whiskey smugglers crossing our river. I ordered them to stop, but they did not heed, so I fired my revolver in the air, and down came a wild duck with a tag on."

I would like to match this "officer of the law" against a "detective" we have in our town. This man had been duck hunting and next day when asked "What luck?" replied, "Well, just middling; good and bad both. You know I had the old muzzle-loader, and I got up at Cedar Creek just daybreak; looked, and saw the largest flock of ducks on earth coming right towards me. So I squatted in the rushes, and when they came over I rose up, taking steady aim where they were the thickest, pressed the trigger, and both barrels snapped, but down came twenty-seven ducks. Really if the gun had gone off I know I would have killed a thousand!"

Another letter states, "I wish I could get more of the ducks. I was out all morning and got only twenty-four. The one with the tag on was amongst them. How is the shooting down your way?"

Worst of all was a well-educated man who never wrote at all, but the duck was seen by a friend of mine who reported it; then I wrote the doctor the second time, enclosing a self-addressed postal card before I got a short acknowledgment.

But like all other things in my life, the good that has been blown

my way has completely drifted the undesirable under. I have received some of the most beautiful letters that ever were written by God-fearing and loving hands.

One man explains, "I received the message you put on the duck's leg, and it is so personal it makes me love you for sending it. Will you please let me keep it?" His request was cheerfully granted, for the message read: "He careth for you. Peter 5: 7."

A lady writes, "My boy shot the duck. Thank you for the message; it makes us friends."

A soldier boy writes, "Uncle Sam has called me to the colors and I must respond. Should I live to return I will be pleased to come and see you. You will find enclosed the tag I took from the duck's leg. Good-bye." On looking at the tag which this duck had carried for over a year and finally delivered to this young soldier, out for his last day's recreation before leaving for the battle-field, already soaked with human blood, I found that the message read: "For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain. Philippians 1: 21."

The following is a letter from Dr. Axby in reply to my printed pamphlet requesting him to return the tag. I know the Doctor will pardon my reproducing his letter, as I have dozens similar to it, but his was the first I came to.

January 1st, 1919.

Mr. Jack Miner,

I am in receipt of your interesting letter, and assure you we are glad there are such men as you in the world, and shall endeavor to remember your interest in game life and govern ourselves in accord with your wishes.

Here wishing you a Happy, Prosperous, Peaceful 1920, and more to come.

Enclosed find your tag.

Yours truly,
(DR.) J. L. AXBY.

The following letter would cause one to believe that there are States that have not yet been visited by Billy Sunday, particularly as the entire Bible verse was stamped on the tag:

May 3, 1920.

Box 48,
Kingsville, Ont.
Dear Unseen Friend,—

On the aluminum plate bent around a wild duck's leg bore these words: Jude 1-21. I can't make out the meaning.

Wishing to hear from you,

Yours truly,
C.....H.

HOLLY GROVE, ARK.,
Feby. 28th, 1920.

Box 48,

Kingsville, Ontario.

The mallard drake on which you placed the aluminum tag bearing the following inscription on one side, "Write Box 48, Kingsville, Ontario," and on the other side, "With God all things are possible, Mark 10: 27," was killed near this place a few days ago. We had notice put in the *Arks. Democrat*, published in Little Rock, Arks.

About the 1st of October of each year these ducks begin to come into this country, and they feed on rice and acorns and other seeds. Some years they are very numerous. We also have a few geese. They begin to go away from now on to the latter part of March. None remains except those which have been wounded too badly to make the long flight.

Will you please write me when you put the tag on this duck, and how old was he when you put it on? Do they stay in your country during the summer months? Write me any information concerning them.

Several years ago what we called the Sandhill Cranes came over here in large flocks, passing further south. I never saw but one light. It was about six feet tall, and was a brownish color. They have not flown over for several years. Do they belong to your country; if so, what has become of them?

Very truly,
T. G. TRICE.

Then a lady from the South gives a laughable account of what happened down there over one of the colored preachers getting a message in this most unexpected way:

Dear Mr. Miner,—

I think you will be interested in knowing about some of your geese and ducks. While I was in Mississippi last winter I visited in Louisiana and Arkansas. Along the last of November some of the negroes on the plantation went over on the sandbar to hunt for wild geese, and they got several ducks and two big grey geese, and on one of the legs was a tin tag with a Bible inscription on it. The old ducky that happened to get it was a great preacher; could not read a word, but was gifted with lots of gab and exhorted quite a lot. He thought the message came down from heaven and they had quite a revival over it. I heard him one night and he said: "This am the message of the Lord. I saw Him descending with this fowl in His arms, and it flew right at me. And now am the Judgment coming, and we are the elected, and am going straight to His arms."

I don't remember just what verse it was, but I remember it was your address and think perhaps this will interest you.

Yours truly,

.....

The following are the names and post office addresses given me of each person who has killed or reported the ducks. And fully seventy-five per cent. of the tags reported have been returned and are in my possession.

IN CANADA

Alberta.—Arch. S. Coutts, Earlie.
F. A. Rispler, Lac la Biche.

Manitoba.—T. H. P. Lamb, Moose Lake.

Ontario.—W. S. Falls, Amherstburg.
F. C. Clarkson, Toronto.
A. Chaphus, Windsor.
Henry Smith, Walpole Island.
Thomas Moore, Amherstburg.
Alexander Moore, Amherstburg.

Dr. Rutherford, Chatham.
John Harris, Kingsville.
E. O. Scratch, Kingsville.
William Scratch, Kingsville.
Franklin L. Warner, Fort Francis.

Quebec.—Dr. L. P. Legendre, Ste. Croix.

Saskatchewan.—H. J. Koep, Englefeld.
S. W. Brooks, Humboldt.

IN UNITED STATES

Alabama.—Henry Grayson, Ararat.
Edward J. Bangle, Mobile.
J. N. Winn, Florence.
Dr. S. C. Frederic, Mobile.
Hennan Sehnur, Decatur.
Herman Putman, Point Rock.
Mose Harris, Madison.
Otis Denson, Cullman.
J. H. Clerkler, Clanton.

Arkansas.—W. O. Sims, Manila.
Robert White, Holly Grove.
J. C. Cox, McGehee.
T. G. Trice, Holly Grove.

Florida.—Walter Huff.

Georgia.—T. H. Clark, Milledgeville.
Miles A. Dolphus, Oconee.

Illinois.—E. G. Baxton, Pleasant, Pike Co.
R. R. Banta, Oquawka.
Jerry M. Lashbrook, Beardstown.
Edward Sholm, Peru.
Rev. Chas. Vandettum, Bushell.
James Walls, Elizabethtown.
Catharine Hobbs, Goleonda.
Richard Hess, Elizabethtown.

Indiana.—Dr. J. L. Axby, Lawrenceburg.
Clarence Carter, Memphis.
Percy R. Gordon, Shelbyville.
Mrs. Andrew Brauman, Leconia.
Roy Wellman, Michigan City.
E. R. Kemp, Evansville.
James Trautween, Evansville.
Charlie Frederick, Jeffersonville.

Iowa.—James Jarvis, Redding.

Louisiana.—R. C. Boisseau, Shevelport.
D. P. Hysnel, New Orleans.
Eli Guidry, Gueydan.
R. J. Leblans, Baton Rouge.
Fred Frontenot, Washington.
Mrs. L. DeJean, Opelousas.
Herman Hall, New Orleans.
H. W. Kofman, New Orleans.
Jack Sims, New Orleans.
Abram Sonnier, Holmwood.
Jos. Zaunbrecher, Branch.

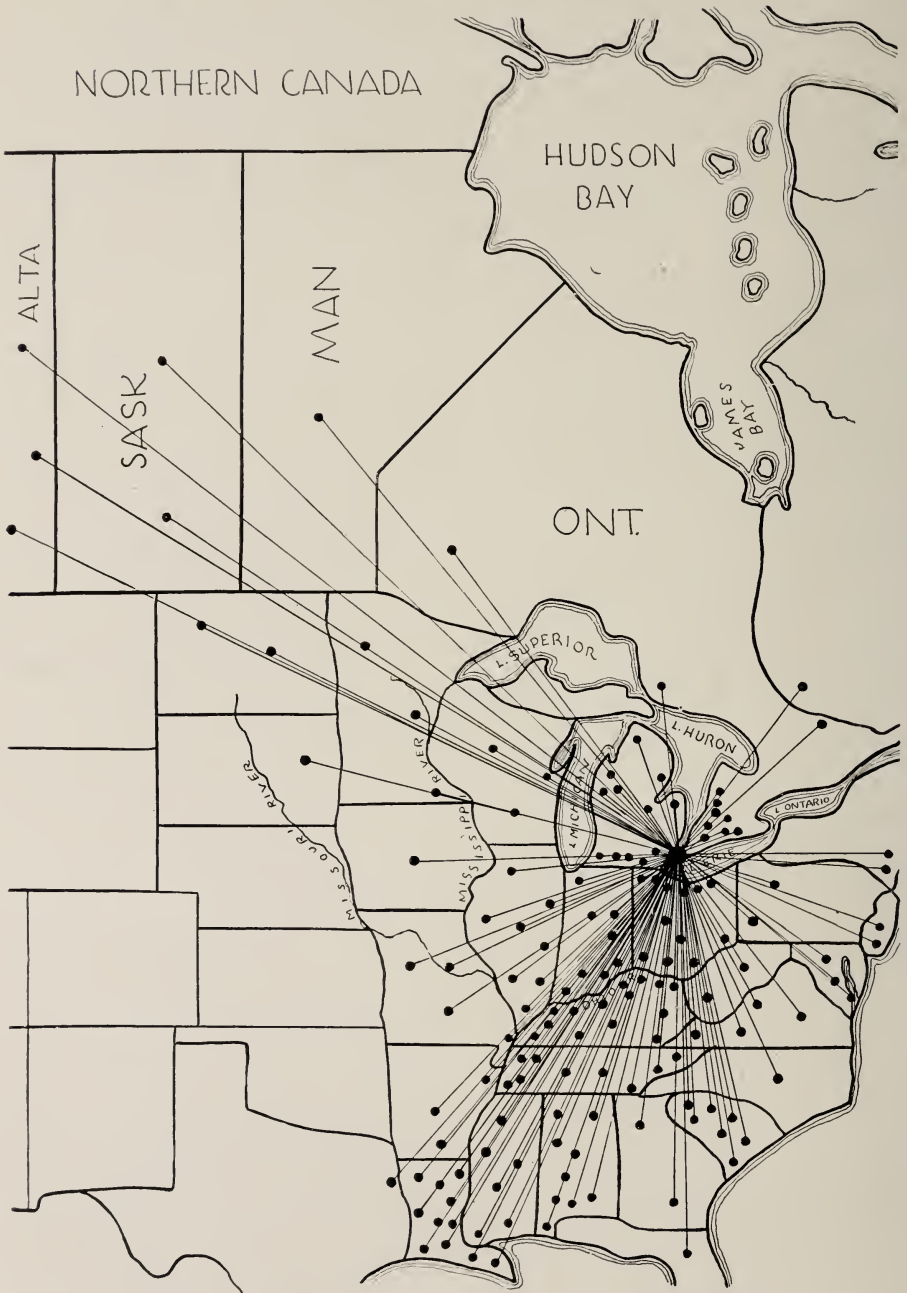
Kentucky.—Mary Smoot, Owentown.
Edward J. Volz, Louisville.
Clyde Spencer, Frankfort.
Noah Smith, Paris.
Leonard Carson, Lebanon.
Neal T. Brisin, Westport.
H. B. Ogden, Sanders.
Miss Ohal M. Jennings, Louisville.
J. J. Oerther, Frankfort.
Floyd Standfield, Cowan.
Harry Porter Hightown, Beneco.
Floid Standfield, Paris.
J. M. Grubbs, Danville.
Hollie Peavler, Harrodsburg.

Maryland.—John L. Bradshaw, Tylerton.
George B. Fowler, Lower Martboro.
Henry B. Price, Betterton.

- Michigan*.—Emory L. Ford, Detroit.
 Geo. E. Bartlo, Detroit.
 Charles LaPoint, Detroit.
 Box 342, Grandy Ave., Detroit.
 Vandes Gildersleeve, Rockwood.
 D. M. Cummings, Rockwood.
 James H. Quick, Rockwood.
 J. C. Adams, Munich.
 N. Rugee White, Grand Rapids.
 Geo. W. Francisco, Newport.
 Mr. Blank, Sault Ste. Marie.
 James B. O'Donnell, St. James.
- Minnesota*.—William Gibson, Breckenridge.
 Mrs. B. E. Koher, Brainerd.
 M. H. Carstens, Glencoe.
- Mississippi*.—J. C. Miller, Smithsville.
 Chas. Dunlap, Rosedac.
 Tom Galliday, Bew Springs.
 Homer J. Williams, Jackson.
 H. H. Peason, Cedar Bluff.
 R. E. Ramsey, Ellisville.
 Dr. W. Sumrall, Balzoni.
- Missouri*.—D. B. Ashbrook, Carrollton.
 G. E. Adcock, Boekerton.
 Dorin F. Winters, Bragg City.
 John W. Sawyer, Caruthersville.
- Montana*.—J. L. Dellart, Helena.
- New Jersey*.—Fred W. Meerbolt, Secaucus.
 Willis T. Johnson, Lakewood.
- New York*.—F. A. Haughey, Watkins.
 W. de F. Hayes, Long Island.
- North Carolina*.—A. B. Wallace, Belhmen.
- North Dakota*.—Walter Shield, Carrington.
 John B. Schneider, Fredonia.
 E. G. Erbe, Bismarek.
- Ohio*.—August Holstein, Columbus.
 J. O. H. Denny, Fremont.
 Lewis B. Erwin, Erwin.
 Chas. Gibbs, Genoa.
 Miss Flora Lambert, Orient.
- E. H. Mack, Sandusky.
 W. A. Beverley, Celina.
 David Stout, Circleville.
 Earle Moore, Seekiton.
 Harry Smith, Greenville.
 John H. Wright, Port Clinton.
 K. B. Brown, Amanda.
- Pennsylvania*.—Marleah Moulton, Frankhannock.
 Clarence Hibber, Richie.
- South Carolina*.—L. A. Beckman, Santee.
 W. E. Bray, Anderson.
 H. G. Leiding, Charleston.
 W. F. Gaylord, Fountain Inn.
 Bernard M. Baruch, Georgetown.
 Eugene DuPont, Georgetown.
 S. S. Owens, Hawthorne.
- South Dakota*.—Ben Hilderbrant, Crandall.
- Tennessee*.—John V. Thomas, Chattanooga.
 R. E. Lewis, Sale Creek.
 Lance McAllie, Birchwood.
 Harry Stamps, Cooksville.
 W. P. Ray, Cooksville.
 G. H. Elrod, Shelbyville.
 Mack Stewart, Martha.
 John Fite Robertson, Lebanon.
 Johnson Little, Gates.
- Texas*.—J. Lewis Thompson, Houston.
- Virginia*.—Rev. Albert P. Dixon, Williamsville.
 C. S. Lawson, Saluda.
 C. W. Waller, Martinsville.
 Robt. J. Dunn, Sweet Hall.
- West Virginia*.—Corporal John I. Smith, Ravenswood.
 Howard Haddox, Mahone.
- Wisconsin*.—E. P. Gallaway, Fond-du-Lac.
 Miss Hedwig Hener, Larson.
 Geo. F. Bishop, Elk Mound.

The foregoing names are written as correctly as I can give them, as some of the signatures were quite a puzzle. However, the map will explain to you the migration of these ducks, as the round dots on the map, indicating where each duck was killed, will help you out.

The straight line leading from Kingsville to each of these dots does not prove that the duck followed that course. For illustration, the two ducks that were killed in Alberta and Saskatchewan in the fall of 1917 left here with a flock of other ducks in the fall of 1916, and some of the bunch were killed in Georgia, Alabama and Louisiana.



MAP SHOWING THE MIGRATION OF THE DUCKS

The lines are drawn simply to help you out; also to prove to your entire satisfaction that Kingsville, Ontario, is the hub of America.

I have only one request to make of the reader. That is: In case you call one of these men up, or write him, and get no reply, do not give up, but get after the other fellow, until you find out for yourself that the above are all facts.

CHAPTER XXII.

Can Birds Smell?

THIS is a thought that all bird lovers will come face to face with, sooner or later, and though we may not be able to steal bases like Ty Cobb, yet if we study the *game* and watch the *fowls*, *balls* of interest are sure to *fly* our way. There are very few people living in the country that haven't seen crows make some queer manœuvres when they are hunting food.

One hot July day, many years ago, as brother and I were nearing the house for dinner, one of these old black murderers went quietly flying across the road about two hundred feet east of my house. When about three rods in the field he gave a very sudden right-about-face curve, and hovered for about a second, then started stroking the air back to the fence. Dropping on the top rail he did not even take time to look around, but instantly jumped down among the thick growth of goldenrod, which was nearly as high as the fence. That instant my bare feet started throwing dust, and in less time than it is taking me to write it I had the gun and was pushing two loads of number six in the barrels as I ran to meet him. I got there just in time to draw one long breath, and as he came flapping up up out of the weeds he uttered a gurgling "Caw!" at my red face which was smiling all along the gun barrels, and his body dropped beside the road, but a great portion of his feathers floated away on the air. As we picked him up, four unhatched song sparrows spued out of his mouth.

On investigation we found an old stump lying on its side in the fence corner; two projecting roots and its top held the middle about six inches off the ground; and right under there, nestled away in the dry, and perfectly out of sight, was this empty song sparrow's nest.

As the old birds were chirping around near us a real loud argument took place between brother and me as to how the crow located this nest. Brother's first question was, "Jack, didn't you know that birds could smell?" As I laughed he said, "What did you think their nostrils were made for?"

He insisted that this old ground-bird, as we call them, had been setting close all morning, and now, just at the heat of the day, the eggs had become too warm and sweaty; the mother had just gotten

off to air them as Mr. Crow came flying over, and that the crow did smell the eggs.

I put up such an argument it apparently got on brother's nerves. He said, "Just you wait a minute," and he stepped out into the field and picked up a flat stone about eight inches in diameter, putting it on the stump just above the nest. Then he took a small handful of punk and placed it firmly on the stone. As the day was extremely hot it only required the least touch of a match and he had a smudge started; and sure enough, as the smoke rose in the air it floated to the exact spot where the crow was when he turned so suddenly. "Now," said brother, "are you satisfied?" and he took the stone, with the punk on it, away from the fence and put the fire out. But still we have no proof that the crow smelled the eggs. Yet we were absolutely sure that he could not, and did not, see them until after he dropped off the fence into the weeds.

Since that I have time and again noticed crows and bronze grackles locate birds' eggs where I know they cannot see them.

But I think the turkey buzzard furnishes us the most convincing proof of birds using their nostrils to locate their food, for we actually know that they will come for miles and miles, not to carrion, but to freshly killed beef.

Now here is a fact for you to analyze: One Sunday morning last June I got up at the week-day hour and took a stroll back to the north pond. For some unaccountable reason I forgot to take feed to the family of young pet ducks that were about four weeks old. When I arrived they all came scudding over the water to me. I had no feed so I picked up a little coarse earth and threw it out into the pond, and all went after it; as they rushed out I ran away and came, by a roundabout way, back to the house, first coming about four hundred feet across newly-cultivated earth where I had trees set out six feet apart; then I came out on the ball-ground and made a crooked path for fully three hundred feet in the dewy grass. As I neared the house I stopped for a few minutes looking at the climbing roses and listening to the birds, when I heard young ducks peeping. Looking up, behold you! here were the little pets following the same trail across the ball park. The sun was just high enough for me to see the path very plainly in the dew, and these toddlers did not vary a foot, but came, in single file, right up within twenty feet before they saw me. I then got some food and they followed me back to their old stepmother who was waiting in her coop for them. I then went and found that these little hungry pets had knocked dust in my tracks all through the cultivated grove. In other words, they had followed every step of my trail to where they overtook me.

On another occasion I had two young pet silver pheasants, and in

March, 1909, I went into the little park and forgot to shut the gate; then, instead of coming back through it I jumped over the brick wall to the north and went right on to my work which was at that time laying drain tile at the extreme north side of the farm, fully three-quarters of a mile from the park. In going there I had to pass through thirty acres of woods, where I visited three weasel traps; therefore I did not go in a straight course. I left home about seven o'clock. At nine, as I was working with my head down, I heard familiar sounds; looking up, here were my two pet silver pheasants pecking the earth beside me. They stayed there until eleven thirty, then both followed me back home just like two puppies, for their wings were pinioned and they could not fly four feet, and never could, as this was done when they were very small. They were about ten months old. There was not a bit of snow on the ground and the weather was quite warm.

Now these are only a few of the hundreds of convincing facts I have personally observed which compel me to believe that birds can smell. I have no positive proof that they can. But I know they can smell, just as much as I know they can hear.

I will tell you how to prove it to your own satisfaction. When it is snowing, take a piece of fresh meat that is cold, and lay it down in the centre of a field. Let it snow under, and if there are crows around see how quickly they will find it! Or if you are in the northern country, throw a piece of meat into the snow and let it drift under; the next morning watch the jay locate it. I refer to the snow because it is the best natural cover on earth and will give the fairest test, but if you are where there is no snow to try it out, just take some chaff, straw, or sawdust and cover your bait with that.

Now I will not say that a crow or blackbird will smell cold birds'-eggs, but if the eggs are warm and sweaty I know that these cannibal birds will locate the nest by the use of their nostrils. "Well," you say, "that cannot be; there was a crow came right up to the barn while I was in there." Yes, but remember he was accustomed to you being around there. Go to the woods where this same crow has been shot at, and see how close you will get to him if the wind is in his favor. The great trouble with the majority of us human beings is that we are too slow to observe.

I once saw a man run bang into a stone wall; his excuse was that he did not see it. When I was a boy in Ohio I went with an Englishman to dig out a rabbit. When we got near the end of the hole Old Jack, as we called him, dropped on his side and ran his arm right in, clear up to his shoulder. I was of course peeking very closely, to see the rabbit, but the instant I saw him pulling out black and white fur I retreated backwards over a pile of loose sand, looking back just

in time to see Old Jack get it right in the eyes. And say! he came bounding out of that cavity without being urged, snorting, sneezing and coughing, and with his long hair thoroughly powdered with yellow sand—and something worse. He went here and there and all over at the same moment, trying to gather all the snow in the country in each hand to wash his eyes out with. I was of course all alone and had to conceal my joy. My joy however did not last long, for this poor fellow nearly strangled to death and it was fully fifteen minutes before he could speak; but finally, looking up at me with his eyes and face all apparently washed into one red blister, he chokingly said, “Jack, Hi didn’t smell the beggar till hafter Hi ’ad ’im by the toyie.”

CHAPTER XXIII.

The Canada Goose.

NOW I have told you that by protecting the one swallow's nest at our tile shed there were twenty-five nests the fifth year; and how the sweet bluebird became so well acquainted with the members of our family as to permit us to remove the roof of her house while she would sit there within eight inches of our eyebrows, with her beautiful head turned sidewise looking us square in the eyes, and then permit us to put the cover back on, and she would not fly out. I have explained how the robins fairly swarmed around our home when there was neither shrubbery nor fruit to attract them there, and how the purple martins folded their wings and came down out of the heavens, warbling their songs as they descended, the very first day we had their home erected. But these truths are simple compared with the facts contained in this chapter.

Some one has said "the silly old goose." This, to my mind, is one of the many demonstrations of how a man's mouth can go off empty. For the facts are that our Canada goose has a great amount of knowledge, and many qualifications that the human race could well afford to profit by; and although I was born under the protection of the American eagle's wings, and respect him in every way, never shooting one in my life (though I scared one to death!) yet when you speak of our Canada goose, this bird is one of the most intelligent, self-sacrificing creatures on earth, and as for purity of character he has gotten the human race backed right off the boulevard into the slums, and no person on earth can study him without profiting by it. Personally, there has been many a time during the last ten years of my life when I have felt like raising my hat to the clean, gentlemanly principles exposed by one of these old ganders.

Now the question is, how did I become so well acquainted with them?

Well, about thirty years ago a few wild geese (as we call them) were alighting on a sort of prairie then known as Cottam Plains, which is about four miles due north of my home. As I was a noted hunter several persons spoke to me about going out to shoot these geese, as no one had apparently been able to kill one. At length one hunter came to me in dead earnest. "Jack," he said, "you want to



THE CANADA GOOSE

To get the effect of this picture, hold the book above your head, as the Goose was, above mine, when I took the photograph.

get out there and try them. They come nearly every day. They are old lunkers; I believe the old ganders will weigh twenty-five pounds." I enquired how many there were and he said, "Fifteen; seven in one flock and eight in another." As I stood, thinking it over, I said to this man, "If one flock is there, will the other bunch go and alight with them?" "Yes," he replied in a loud voice; "every time."

Well that day I went home, took the axe and chopped out the bodies of three wooden wild geese decoys; then I used a drawing-knife for the rest of the work; finally I had three geese standing on one leg in our back yard—one leg each of course. And I had everybody who saw them laughing at me. What color should I paint them, was the puzzle. I had never been close enough to a wild goose to know anything about his color; I couldn't tell from hearing their faint "Honk!" I finally decided to paint their breasts light and the rest a slate color. The neighbors still kept laughing. Then when there were no persons around I would practise the "Honk!" till the echoes from the buildings sounded something like it.

One morning, about two o'clock, my brother-in-law and I hooked up the Old Reliable and, believe me, we had some load in that old phaeton buggy, the three blocks of wood, a spade, blanket and lantern. Away we went. Fortunately when we got there the soft ground was frozen just enough to hold us up, so we took the lantern and scoured the fields for tracks. Finally we found goose-prints in an old, partly drowned-out corn field which was adjoined by a field of fall wheat, no fence in sight. It was evident that the geese lit on the wheat and then walked into the corn stubbles. Here we selected our site. Standing these three decoys on the wheat, I dug myself in on the edge of the corn field. I say dug myself in, but not much, as the water was close to the surface; so I dug a coffin-like cavity about six inches deep and covered myself with a blanket which was, of course, the exact color of the ground. Three corners of the blanket were staked and tied fast, arranged to cover this muddy coffin. Then I gathered weeds and so forth and lined this grave to keep me out of the mud.

At the faintest sign of day the other fellow took the old horse and all the rest of our junk and drove fully half a mile away. At last, just before sunrise my eyes caught a dark streak in the sky, away to the south. So I examined the old gun, which was loaded with swanshot, lay down on my back in this bog hole, covering myself with the blanket and holding it firmly with my left hand with the gun in my right. There I lay with just my eyes out, my heart almost beating the ground into a pulp. It seemed so long I thought I must have been mistaken; they couldn't have been wild geese. I quietly called, twice, "A-honk! A-honk!" Just then I heard a low reply

to the east of me. Rolling my eye in that direction, here were the eight geese going quartering by. So I gave another low "A-honk!" and to my delight they turned and saw the decoys, answering as they bowed their wings to alight with them.

But the keen eyes of this old gander detected that they were false. Fortunately for me when he shied from the decoys he swung my way, and just when they got in the right place I threw the blanket off with my left hand; raising the gun and my body at the same time I fired, sitting down. At the first shot the leader crumpled up with fourteen swanshot driven almost through him, and his mate started to follow long before he struck the frozen earth, leaving two distinct puffs of feathers floating away on the frosty air, the six young screaming, and darting in all directions for their lives away from their fallen parents. They went screaming back in the direction from which they came.

As soon as my chum arrived we had a good laugh when we looked at the decoys and the real geese. We soon loaded all up and could hardly get home quick enough to repaint those blocks of wood. Then they looked O.K., and fooled many a goose after that. But the weight of these geese was far from twenty-five pounds, the gander weighing exactly ten pounds and his mate one pound less.

I hunted geese every spring from then on, but they soon got wise and moved their stopping place about eight miles west to what was then called Walker's Marsh. I even followed them up there and secured an odd one now and then. I never killed over six in one season. This will give you an idea of how scarce they were in this part.

But it wasn't until 1903 that I really tumbled to see the depth of the Canada goose. In March I saw a family of six passing my house. I felt sure they were feeding on Cottam Plains, so the next morning found me out there with a lantern searching for their tracks, and long before the last stars had closed their eyes I had five decoys out and the blanket staked down, ready for action. But it seemed they weren't coming.

The sun is just high enough to be making golden windows in the distant houses to the west of me when I look to the south and a short, dark line appears in the sky. It is geese, sure; and they are coming straight this way.

Just as I am crawling under I see, to my disgust, two men coming out to ditch, right on the next farm; my heart sinks, as they will scare them away. But on and on come the geese. I can now see them plainly, and begin to hear their long-drawn-out safety notes, "A-h-k! A-h-k!" Imagine my delight when I see them come right on past these men, heading straight for me.

As they come over the field that I am in, a call comes from under the blanket, "A-honk!" and the old leader replies, turning my way. Seeing the decoys, they all bow their wings and drop their black feet to come down. But just before they get in range of my deadly aim, this cunning old father's voice suddenly rings out on the morning air, "Khonk! Khonk! Khonk! Khonk!" These sharp, alarming danger-cries are given in rapid succession, and every goose darts for his life. Their terrified cries can hardly be described. They finally fall in line again and fly back towards the lake.

That morning I was all alone and as I urged the driver along I was doing some tall thinking. And really I felt like a one-cent piece coming home from Klondyke! Here were my thoughts: Why did he pass right over, within shooting range of these two men, and then shy before he got that close to me? Moreover, why were they so dreadfully frightened? Possibly because he saw one red hair of my topknot projecting from under that blanket and, to his sorrow, he had seen that fellow before. "That's our deadly enemy! Everybody get, for your lives!" were the cries he uttered.

Well, these thoughts presented themselves to me in this way: He does know me. And these are some of the same geese that come around here every spring, for they frequent the same places. To be frank, I studied wild geese until I felt like flying. Surely they must be the same geese. They do know me as their enemy. No man on earth knows their cunningness and depth. If they know me as their enemy, surely they would know a friend if they had one. But what can I do? I own only ten acres of land, and it is very much disfigured by taking about three feet of the surface off for making drain-tile and brick. But I will try.

So I called the neighbors (mostly boys) together and told them if they would not shoot at a wild goose around here I would bring some right to that place and we would shoot a limited number when the opportunity was right. This seemed too good to be true, as only one of them had ever shot a wild goose, and all jumped at the scheme.

I graded up a bank at the far side of this sore-eye ten acres, making, not a pond, but a mud-hole. Then I bought seven wing-clipped Canada geese from an old gentleman who had trapped them unlawfully, put them back in this cavity and fed them there. They soon became quite tame and interesting. This was in the spring of 1904. The seven geese got so they roamed all over the ten acres, making this mud-hole their home; but no wild ones ever came. In 1905 none came; 1906 brought the same result; and even 1907 came, but no geese. And really I was the mark of the neighborhood;

the questions I was asked would surely jar the cherries on Aunt Sarah's Sunday bonnet.

But April the second, 1908, was my innings, for the whole neighborhood was aroused long before breakfast. "The geese have come! the geese have come! Jack said they would come!" and everybody had a gun.

Now I was face to face with another serious problem, but all listened to me as I explained that if we did not shoot at them until they got settled down and made this their spring home, the ones we did not kill would return next spring and surely bring more with them. Every hunter was very reasonable, and, after having a quiet chat, each took his gun back home. In about three weeks I hoisted the signal and every one was on deck. I believe I was the biggest boy of the bunch. All of us went over to the tile factory and watched these eleven geese from the upstairs window until the goose fever got a few notches higher than our nerves. Then we all came down and marched up behind the embankment. "Now," I said, "don't shoot at them sitting, or you will hit my tame ones." Then I said, "Cock your guns," and I gave an alarming "Honk!" and that instant every one of the eleven geese was in the air, and "Bang! Bangety! Bang!" went the eight guns into them. When the soft coal smoke had finally cleared away, five geese lay dead on the muddy water. The other six, screaming with fright, flew away to the lake.

Now how fortunate this was for me: The eight guns came from five homes, and thus each home had a good fat goose for the oven. And all was going well so far.

I did not expect to see these geese come back until another spring, but to my surprise in about two hours they were circling high in the air and honking for their lost companions. Finally they went away again, but the next morning they were back, bright and early, and to my great satisfaction they lit and fed with mine, and it was surprising how soon they quieted down. I asked the neighbors not to shoot at them again that spring, and all kindly agreed.

Then came a whole lot more fun for the public. "Jack Miner is not going to shoot those six geese; he says they will come back next spring!" Really this furnished fun for a great percentage of the community. One old gentleman told me how his great-uncle Dave killed 'steen wild geese before breakfast; and this dear old gentleman's white hair just shook as he explained the points, how to clean right up on this six, and not one could get away if his plans were carried out. Why, bless your life, they had gotten so tame I honestly believe I could have killed them with a fishing pole. Yet of course

I respected his grey hairs enough not to interfere with his trembling thoughts.

One morning about May 1st, they rose up and circled higher and higher, and started straight north.

It was not until the next spring that the flood of sneering questions poured in upon me! "Jack, when do you expect the six geese to return?" And another smart fellow said, "Jack, which direction will they come from?" But feeling confident I would be able to laugh last I just gritted my teeth inwardly, and smiled from the outside, and answered as kindly as I possibly could. I only remember answering one fellow short. He said, "Jack, when are the geese coming." I said, "Likely they will come when they get ready."

Sunday morning, March 18th, 1909, the ground was frozen as hard as Pharaoh's heart. I was out watering our self-starter. While she was drinking out of the trough I was putting in the time talking to my pet geese which were not over thirty yards away. All at once they all started honking at the very top of their voices and acting extremely strangely; but in spite of their chatter, when I pricked up my ears I could hear strange geese honking, and looking over my right shoulder I saw something that caused my heart to fairly jump. Here was a string of Canada geese, with wings bowed, coming right towards me. Finally they dropped their black feet and lit on the ground, some of them not over twenty-five yards from where I was standing, and I had the great pleasure of seeing these wild geese dance and flap their wings with joy as they honked aloud to each other, apparently introducing their families and friends. I fully expected to see them fly away at any instant, but no. As they saw me, the leader spoke quite sharply, and all was as still as night in a graveyard, with their eyes rivetted right on me. But they were quiet for only a few seconds; then they honked louder than ever, and our geese flapped their wings and shouted, apparently for joy.

Well I finally withdrew, coming away as slowly as a pall-bearer waiting to cross on the Detroit-Windsor bridge. I put the old nag in the shafts and we went to church; but for all the good that sermon did me, I might as well have stayed home. He evidently preached from somewhere between "Generations and Revolutions" but you could not prove it by me. All I could think about were these twenty-six Canada geese that the six had brought back with them, thirty-two all told. Best of all, it was my turn to laugh, and I wanted to get back home to give vent to my feelings, and as soon as the benediction was pronounced I was the first one out the door, got into our machine, and, believe me, we went home in high.

On or about April 12th I had the photographer out and the accompanying photograph taken.



THIS PHOTOGRAPH SHOWS THE TOTAL FLOCK OF GEESE IN 1909, INCLUDING TWELVE OR SIXTEEN OF OUR OWN, ALSO, A FEW DUCKS



THE FLOCK OF WILD GEESE, 1910
This photograph was taken after we had shot the twenty-six.

A day or so later I gave the signal and the gunners all came. We shot ten and let twenty-two go. And on May 1st they all circled high and took the airline Hudson Bay Limited.

That year did not bring me quite so many inquiries. One interested man asked how many I thought would come next spring; I said, "Possibly sixty or seventy-five." He said, "Is that so?" I replied, "I don't know." But on March 4th, 1910, they started coming again, and for two weeks the flock kept getting larger until there were over four hundred. We shot twenty-six and allowed the rest to go north, although we could just as easily have shot two hundred. But before they left I was fortunate in getting this picture, which gives you a glimpse of what game protection will do. Do not kill all you can but "Let the mother go, that it may be well with thee, and that thou mayest prolong thy days."

The last contingent left April 27th. By the way, this is the earliest we ever knew the last of them to leave.

Right here I wish to make an explanation, that although we shot twenty-six, they were not all eaten by us shooters, but were given around to our nearest neighbors.

On February 20th, 1911, they started coming from the South again, and in less than three weeks there was a small cloud of them. Really I did not know there were so many Canada geese on earth.

As I have previously stated, my home is three miles north of Lake Erie, and these geese most always go to the lake for the night; and by times when the first bunch would be alighting in and around the ponds at my home, you could not see the south end of the string of them, coming.

Now I faced another problem: Where was the feed coming from? Very true, I have made a little park just west of my house and have graded out a pond one hundred and ten feet in diameter; yet this does not furnish them with feed. So I quit feeding them in what we now call the north pond, and just fed in the park, thinking the wilder ones would go on and that only the old acquaintances would come to the house. But that did not work out very satisfactorily; they were bound to make my home their home.

One morning we neighbors were shooting a few at the north pond. We shot into a family of five. I shouted "Don't shoot, boys, they are too far off," but the words were too late. The bangs of the guns were the only reply I heard, and two geese fell dead; one extremely large gander fell with a broken pinion; the other two flew away to the lake. At my request the boys gave me the big gander. I took him to the house and performed a surgical operation on him, myself. I first tied the severed arteries with strong linen thread, then cut the end of the wing right off and let him go in the park. In



SPRING, 1911

The earth, the water and the heavens were literally alive with geese the fourth year. The photograph, of course, shows only part of the flock of geese. Drain tile and brick manufacturing plant is in the rear.

about an hour the other two geese came back, circling very high. By this time there were fully one thousand geese around the premises; all seemed to be honking to bring them down. Finally they circled over the park and this big, broken-pinioned fellow gave a honk, and instantly they answered and started to lower, making the air fairly hum as they descended. They lit near the house, with their wounded brother. To be brief, on May 2nd, the goose migrated with the big flock, but the big gander never left his broken-pinioned brother. Really it was one of the most self-sacrificing sights of my life to see this big gander give up all his liberties of this North American continent, and voluntarily live in captivity with his brother. We named them David and Jonathan.



DAVID AND JONATHAN

Dear old Jonathan! How he would get David to back clear across the pond, then run against the wind and try to fly! Yes I have seen this happen fully twenty times a day; Jonathan would fly across the pond, but when he saw his brother David was not coming he would alight and swim back to him. This sight took the desire to shoot out of most of my neighbors, and there has not been a goose shot on my premises since.

When fall came we thought possibly Jonathan might go South, but no; neither our cold zero winters, nor the extremely hot summers could drive him from his brother.

Jonathan's noble ways soon won the admiration of every visitor that came on our premises. While David was one of the heaviest

wild geese I have ever seen, Jonathan stood a little taller, but not quite so heavy-set. He was very powerful and active; more so than any goose we have on the premises. Having both wings to defend himself with he always faced an approaching enemy. They lived together in the park for seven years, but sad to say, in January, 1918, one morning when I looked out the window, here was dear old Jonathan lying dead on the snow near the centre of the pond where they always roosted. The hand-writing on the snow told the story. A great horned owl had attacked them in the night. The other eight or ten wing-clipped geese, including David, had run under the evergreens and shrubs. Jonathan, having both wings, gave the enemy battle, but being handicapped in the darkness, the owl sunk his grappling-hooks into Jonathan's head and put his eyes



THE DEATH OF JONATHAN

out, killed him and ate his neck off right at the breast bone, drew some of his entrails and ate them. Useless to say we all felt sad, and the telephone rang time and again that day, "Is it true an owl killed old Jonathan?" "Yes." And with a sigh they would hang the receiver up.

But I was determined to avenge his death. The other geese did not come out that day. When night came I concealed a trap in dead Jonathan's feathers, as I knew this murderer would come back. And the next morning this bird-eating devil was fast. Really I could have burned that owl at the stake with a good heart.

In 1912, owing to the weather being very cold and snowy, the geese did not come until March 16th.

In 1913 they came on March 10th. On Good Friday of the last-mentioned year the wind blew a perfect gale, and there was a five-acre field full of geese here, as thick as in any picture shown with the exception of the one where the ladies have driven them into a huddle. A piece of sheet iron blew off the engine room at the tile factory and rolled end over end until it struck the wire fence that enclosed the goose field. Every bird screamed and took flight, going with the wind. When they were about a half mile away they turned to come back, but this iron was bright on one side and they could see it. There they stood, floating in the air. Only we older people that have seen the clouds of passenger pigeons, back in the seventies, have any idea of what this skyfull of geese looked like. I stood and looked at them for a few minutes. Then I went and took the tin and rolled it up. This took me two or three minutes, as the tin and the wind were both stubborn. All at once I heard "Honk!" and behold, here were these thousands of geese alighting in the field again, some within one hundred feet of me. I finally took the roll of tin or sheet iron back to the buildings. Stopping on my way to rest and glancing back at the wild geese I was fully convinced that they knew me from a piece of sheet iron, for by this time they were all on the ground again, lying down facing the wind, and were equally as thick over all that five-acre field as they are shown in any one of the accompanying photographs.

Another advantage comes with the wild birds: There is always something new cropping up.

In the winter of 1909-10 I had eleven of my own, pinioned, wild geese. And as we youngsters wanted the ice good and clean in the park for skating, I turned the geese out and they were living over the fence, to the north. One stormy, cold day, as they were sitting in the lee of the tile factory buildings, two big American eagles attacked them. I ran in the house and grabbed my high-powered rifle in one hand and three or four cartridges in the other; out and down the road I went, just as fast as my moccasined feet would carry me. Soon I had gotten into the south end of the shed without being observed by the eagles. I at once ran upstairs, and went quickly but quietly, and fortunately to help muffle the sound of my moccasins, a little snow had drifted in on the shed floor. Soon I was at the north end.

Peeping through a crack in the side, I saw a sight that to me was beautiful, and I only wish I could give you the picture. For here, upon the crusty snow, were these two big, bald eagles, one about ten feet in front of the geese, the other fully four rods away. But where was the old gander that we called Tom Johnson, and his opponent, whom I have seen fight for fully half an hour for supremacy



GEESE RISING FROM THE POND
Photograph taken from the public highway

of the premises? Had they run under the shed, or flunked in any way? No, no. The nine weaker geese had huddled together and could have been covered with an ordinary wagon-box; but Tom Johnson and this other powerful gander were standing shoulder to shoulder, right in the face of this monstrous eagle. As the eagle would walk a little, sidewise, on the crusty snow, the geese, with eyes rivetted upon him, were doing likewise. There wasn't a sound uttered, but it was a great sight to see these faithful, self-sacrificing old Ganders at the head of their little bunch with their wings up, ready to strike, saying by their actions, "You must cut us down before you can have one of our loved ones."

There I stood for fully five minutes, with my nerves just tingling, at the highest tension. Finally I couldn't stand it any longer, and I slid the three cartridges into the magazine of the rifle and quietly worked the lever which threw one cartridge into the barrel. As the north slide door was about one inch open, I sneaked over there. If those eagles had touched a goose I would have knocked a hole in one big enough for a dog to jump through.

But good things always come to those who wait, and eventually the eagle farthest away turned her head sidewise and began to show signs of moving, which she did, but not towards the geese. She just simply squatted, opened up her broad, powerful wings, and with a few strokes she started straight west. In a few seconds the other turned half around, rose up against the wind, and followed. But the geese kept their eyes continually fixed on them as far as they could be seen.

Yes, they apparently settled by arbitration. When I saw how it turned out my heart bubbled over with more love than ever for these two beautiful birds, and as I started for the house I couldn't hold but thank Almighty God for the Canada goose and the American eagle, and ask Him to hasten the day when this whole world mass of humanity will settle their differences as these lovely birds did on this occasion. As I took the cartridges out of the rifle and hung it on the gunrack, I caught myself singing the chorus of an old song my mother used to sing:

"If I were Queen of France,
Much more the Pope of Rome,
I would have no fighting men abroad
Nor weeping maids at home;
All this world would be at peace,
Every king should have his rights,
For I'd have them that make the quarrels
Be the only ones to fight."

Yes, such good lessons as this are continually darting at one who is on speaking terms with the Canada goose.

Some time ago I purchased a pair of Egyptian geese from a breeder in Illinois. As they have such beautiful plumage I thought they would add to the attractions around my home, but they turned out to be meaner and far more treacherous than stagnant ditch-water, continually hunting trouble with any creature whom they can dominate. November 14th, as I was out feeding the birds, they caught a wild duck and both piled in, and would have killed her in less than a minute only that a big wild Canada gander heard her squawk. He left his family, who were feeding, flew across the pond and with one blow from his powerful wings he knocked that Egyptian goose all but cold; the other Egyptian took the hint, just in time, giving the duck her liberty. And that Canada gentleman was back at his post in less than twenty seconds.

CHAPTER XXIV.

Nesting Canada Geese.

IN 1907, the third year I had my clipped Canadas, one pair nested, and every season since I have had one to three pairs raise young. This is the very time these old ganders especially expose their incomparable, clean, noble ways which even we human beings might well envy them.

One spring I had a painter from town out here brightening things up a little, so one day I told him to paint the cornice of the bird house, which is about seven feet high. I paid no more attention to him, but went on with my work at the tile factory, about three hundred feet away. All at once I heard a scream that was joined with language too loud to look well in print. I got out just in time to see this scared man come rolling over the brick wall, his legs and arms sticking up like odd sections in a Ferris-wheel. To see and hear him wrinkled my red face into a broader position; he came towards me with both torn shirt-sleeves fluttering in the wind and white paint dabbled on one leg of his trousers, without either hat, paint, pail or pipe. He began to reel it off. Then it all came to me in a flash that I had forgotten to tell him about the goose-nest that was concealed in the weeds near that spot. And now it was too late to give him any explanation. for really he did not know whether he was bitten or stung. While he was not hurt a particle, he was nearly frightened into fits, and he could not, or would not, believe there were only two geese there. I finally went and found his pipe, Christy hat and paint pail, but he never would go back in that enclosure, and worse still, I doubt if he has ever forgiven me as he thought I put up a job on him.

One picture would do for all the pairs of Canada geese I ever saw nesting. While the gander takes no part in building the nest nor setting, turn about, on the eggs, as some birds do, yet he is always guarding her and is never over two rods away, seeing all enemies before they do him. He will usually lie flat on the ground, his black neck and snake-like head straight out, and if any creature goes right on by, all is well; but should one note him and stop then he will suddenly jump on it from an unexpected quarter. His looks and hissing honks will almost frighten any other creature into decline;

and while frightening is his chief defence, yet I know from personal experience how he can bite and hang on like a bull pup while he deals unbelievably heavy blows with the first joint of his powerful wings. The worst blow I ever got in my life was from an old gander that I caught to tag; he struck me on the jaw with the first joint of his doubled-up wings and believe me, I had the mumps for weeks.

While I have seen the goose run at a domestic fowl or so, yet she does not pretend to do much fighting. She usually leaves that



ON GUARD

This photograph shows a faithful gander guarding his sweetheart while nesting. He is telling me in plain goose language: "I don't care if you are Jack Miner. Don't you come one foot nearer or I will break your camera." And past experience caused me to take his word for it.

strenuous exercise for him, and depends on his protection; and well she may, for he never fails her. He will even leave his family and fight for her.

A pair once nested near the tile kiln and a collie dog attached this gander. The goose won out, but the dog bit the end of his backbone right off. I saw the blood running down his legs and in a few days I noticed he was always in the one place, lying down by his sweetheart. I went over and found he was sick and so weak he let me pick him up. I saw what was wrong, so I went and got the turpentine bottle and poured some in this decaying cavity and fully a spoonful of maggots rolled out. I then brought the dear old fellow water and food, but it was fully a week before he could stand up. He finally got well, and I still have him, but he was dying at his post. His name is Tom Johnson.



A GALLANT VETERAN

This photograph shows Tom Johnson guarding his mate as she turns the eggs. Note the disfigured tail feathers, which never grew in properly after his fight with the collie dog.

I never saw the wild geese go near where one of these pairs was nesting. So one spring I took fully ten bushels of corn and scattered it around near a nest. And the thousands of geese that came here would not combine their forces and go near, after the corn, or interfere with his preserve, but would prefer flying all over the country to feed where some of them are continually getting shot. This will explain to you how they respect each others' rights.



WITH THE LITTLE ONES BETWEEN

As soon as the young are hatched, the gander always guards them from the opposite side. In other words, if the young are west of her, he will be west of them again, keeping the young between the parents. Note the roll of Tom Johnson's eye.

CHAPTER XXV.

Our Model Canada Goose.

WHILE I am writing as plainly as I dare, yet I want you to keep an eye between the lines.

For two springs in succession, two pairs of my geese nested on the bank of the north pond, just one hundred and twenty feet apart, each gander always guarding and never going thirty feet away. An old goose I had in my flock apparently couldn't control nature and she went and built a nest on the bank right between these two pairs of geese, or about sixty feet from each nest. These Ganders did not interfere with her in any way, shape, manner or form; but if an enemy approached her, both these Ganders would leave home and would attack him with fury, while if you went near either of their nests, only the one would fight you; the other would stay at home. Both years every egg in their nests hatched, and the young were hearty and strong. This odd, or single, goose set for five weeks on four eggs the first year, and I let her set seven weeks on five eggs the second year. I broke every egg, and not one showed any sign of fertility. Remember, this is not almanac history; these are the facts, as I know them.

Do these geese inbreed? This is a question that apparently bothers a great percentage of us smart human beings, and often in the spring of the year when the geese are sitting around by the hundreds I hear this question asked by all sorts of visitors; I think this is chiefly because of the extreme uniformity of these birds both in size as well as in color.

I have tested this out sufficiently to satisfy all my curiosity. I went so far as to keep four full brothers and sisters in an inclosure by themselves for nearly three years, and they lived together as brothers and sisters only. But March the third year I heard the two geese giving love-sick cries and they kept fighting the wire towards where some wing-clipped Ganders were. So I opened the gate and let them together, and inside of two weeks they paired off with these strange Ganders.

A young goose will lay four eggs the first year, and usually five the second. After that I have had them lay as high as seven, but in their wild state I know they must lay as high as eight for I quite

often see an unbroken family here with ten in it, eight young and the parents; but six is the average brood of young.

During my life I have often crept upon a deer or peeped over the top of a hill at a moose, and with the frosty air in my favor I have watched them fully three-quarters of an hour, or until I got froze out, just drinking in pure nature. Time and again I have taken a little twig in my fingers and cracked it, and I am sure the deer's hearing is at least three times as sharp as ours, or what I might hear at twenty feet the deer would hear at sixty feet; but the hearing of the moose is not as sharp as that of the deer, nor their eyes as quick to locate one. Of all the creatures that carry the latest electric equipment with them I know of none to compare with the Canada goose. One bright, frosty day in January, when the snow was about six inches deep, my wing-tipped geese were out of the wind with their feet pulled up. There they sat on the crusty snow like so many fireless cookers. I called them to dinner, but they replied "Bring it to us." When I would toss three kernels of wheat in the air all would honk, but when I went through the same motion, empty-handed, they would not answer. I stepped the distance and it was over three hundred feet. I am sure these birds saw the three grains of wheat that distance.

But there is no branch in my nature study that has caused me to sit up and take a more bubbling-over, sympathetic interest than to see these poor maimed birds come to me for protection when they really need it. I have seen as high as six lying in front of my dining-room window at once; in fact, I have picked up as high as seven in one spring that came here and died of their wounds. What touches my heartstrings more than ever is that the wounded ones always come to the park pond and usually sit on the side nearest our house. Possibly while we are eating dinner one will stand with his breast toward us and dress the wound made by a buckshot in his breast; then to get him closer we put the field-glasses on him, which show the details; and here the feathers are all fallen out for fully a half inch around the deadly, dark little hole that is causing him so much inward pain and leaving his life hanging in the balance. I tell you any humane being having a heart and actually knowing the facts about these poor creatures needn't be surprised to find his eyeballs sweating.

And to see how they heal their broken legs is still more interesting. On April 2nd, 1915, a leader of a family of eight came home with one leg hanging down which was undoubtedly broken by a large buckshot. He had no more control over it than he would have of a stick tied to him. When he lit I noticed he hovered until he got the right spot, then he lowered away and came straight down into

the water. There he stayed with head up and watched until his family went and fed. Then, while they watched, he rose straight up and hovered until he located the ear of corn preferred; he then carefully lowered, and turning the ends of his wings sidewise for crutches, he let his body carefully down, leaving his broken leg straight out beside his tail. Then reaching out with his long neck he pulled the ear of corn under his breast and pigged the kernels off until he had sufficient. He then put his wings out again, making crutches of them, and with a peculiar spring he was in the air and came down in the pond as before. On the third day he was standing on the bank with his broken leg straightened around in place, and from a distance he looked to be standing perfectly still, but a close investigation showed there was a constant twitching in the broken limb. We timed him, and this dear old father stood exactly in the one spot and in this same position for over six hours at a time. In less than three weeks it was evident that the bones had knit together, for when he would alight on the ground he would just throw himself a little to one side and let his weight down on the one leg; as he walked he would put his game leg through the motion, just touching the toes to the earth, taking the weight off with a short, quick stroke of the wings. The fourth week he ceased to use his wings for assistance, but would put his foot down and go limping across the lawn. During all this time of his untold suffering and agony, this admirable creature never ceased his duty, but kept a constant watch over his loved ones and if the least thing happened out of the ordinary around the premises he would speak quietly to them about it. Exactly one month from the day he came here, wounded, he led his family very high and they all floated away on the air, headed for the North.

The above is only one out of dozens of cases that have come to my observation. Out of the thousands of Canada geese I have closely examined, I have never seen one with a leg or foot healed crosswise, and there are always odd ones, here with broken legs. We have seen one or two with one leg a little shorter than the other. In that case the other leg is always a little the longer.

I know of no bird or animal that can equal them for getting well after being wounded. It is said that a cat has nine lives; if that be true, the Canada goose has at least eighteen, nine on each side of the border.

In March, 1912, a wounded goose came to our park, rested a while in the water, then walked quietly towards the house and finally lay down, its feathers touching the park fence, just exactly thirty feet from our dining room window. I went out to it. She would not let me pick her up, but would allow me within four feet of her.

That night it snowed fully six inches, and she drifted nearly all under but her head. I looked and thought she was dead, so I went up to her, upon the opposite side of the fence, and she did not move. I opened the gate and approached, but before I got within ten feet of her she awakened and would have flown but that I withdrew. (Notice how she knew I was now inside the inclosure.) Well, that goose did not move ten feet for three days, eating a little snow now and then that had drifted there. I threw shelled corn beside her and she ate a few kernels. As the bank of snow had all melted on the fourth day, she walked to the water and drank, but came right back and lay down. But in about three weeks she was going over the top again. This goose had no limbs broken, but was shot through the body.

One of the most encouraging facts that have been demonstrated by my experiments with these most intelligent creatures is how readily and gladly they will come to man for his protection, or how easily this promise of our heritage is confirmed: "Let man have dominion over all."

Previous to 1919 our Canadian Government ignored all the requests my friends and I made to help me feed these birds, which belong to the people of America; and as I am not a man with means, I just feed them enough to tickle their palates and give them a desire to come back. The result is they scour the country for miles around, getting the ears of corn that are mostly knocked off by the cornbinders. This of course gives the shooter an opportunity, and one day in April a neighbor who was ploughing near by saw a single goose. He noticed it was going very slowly and showed signs of weakness, so he stopped and watched it. Instead of rising over the trees and dropping in the pond, it went under the boughs and came to the ground near the house. Little Jasper, who was then three years old, was outside playing. Running in the house he said to his mother, "Mamma, goose out here; goose out here, mamma." His mother saw by his looks and actions there was something out of the ordinary, so she went out with the little tot and he pointed under a spruce tree, the boughs of which touched the house. And there the goose, with her wings spread, lay dying. They called me from the factory, but when I arrived it was stone dead. On examination I found a buckshot hole under the wing, and it was evident that her "powerhouse" was punctured. The clotted blood on one foot proved to my satisfaction that she had been shot fully five minutes previous to dropping. Then I traced the blood back from where I picked her up and found that she lit within ten feet of our back door, for there, on the brick walk, was a big splash of her blood. In a few hours I found that this goose was shot over five miles away.

Do you wonder at me loving them? Can you blame me for feeding them beyond my means, when this is only a faint, roughly-written picture of their trust and confidence in me?

The real home of love is the heart, but the brain is apparently given power to educate the heart to either love or hate. But any man who does not love those who first love him, I don't think has either heart or brains, and to say he even has a gizzard would be a disgrace to these birds.

CHAPTER XXVI.

Do Birds Have a Language?

THIS is a question I have to answer, and I am fully prepared to say "Yes; yes, I know they do." As proof of this statement, one could shut me in and blindfold me, and if I can hear the wild geese I will tell you a certain portion of their actions, while if I were to hear a Chinaman talking I wouldn't know whether it was cleaned windows, dirty laundry, or ham and eggs he wanted me to have.

One evening last spring, after the wild geese had gone to the lake, I strolled back to the north pond to visit a pair of my own geese, but could not find them, nor would they answer my call. I came to the conclusion they had gotten out, and as I have had this pair thirteen years I became quite anxious. Daylight the next morning found me over half a mile north of the pond, watching and listening, to find trace of them. I finally saw hundreds of them coming from the lake and alighting all around the premises, mostly in the pond mentioned, and the air was continually echoing with their honks. Then I heard the voice of the gander I was looking for. I knew the tone, for I went straight to it, and found him guarding a nest with one egg in it. This explained to me why he did not answer the night before. Yes, I was over half a mile away when I heard and knew his voice from the thousands of others. And before you doubt my word, I want to ask you: If you were in a city of millions of people and on going to the telephone a voice you had been acquainted with for thirteen years or the voice of one of your own household came tingling into your ear, would you not know this voice? This question is just as reasonable.

On October 10th, 1917, as we were eating breakfast, six geese dropped on the pond. I left my porridge and went to the door and called "Chuckie! Chuckie! Chuckie!" The old gander raised his head and answered loudly. So I went to the barn and got twelve ears of corn, came back and went into the park where they were. When within about fifty feet I stopped and had a good look at them. Then, just to see what they would do, I threw an ear of corn at the old gander. The four young at once jumped in the air, but he just said "A-a-h! A-a-h!" and all dropped down again. So I threw another ear, and they again jumped, and he spoke again in exactly

the same tone, "A-a-h! A-a-h!" (All is well!) and they immediately dropped on the ground as before. This was repeated several times. He may have told them that that fellow was strong in the back and weak in the mind and didn't care to eat us wild geese; at any rate when I threw the last few ears they took his word for it and did not attempt to fly. My reason for throwing the corn at him was to prove to my own satisfaction that he had seen me throw it before, as, when taking a bag of corn out, I sometimes stand still and throw it amongst them. This old fellow's confidence in the safety of this place will be fully explained to you when I say that he actually dodged some of these ears. Yet it took him fully fifteen minutes to convince his family that there was no danger. The goose, his mate needed no introduction to an ear of corn; she started eating the very first opportunity, but the four young were dreadfully shy of those golden ears of corn, and it did amuse me to see him introducing them to it. With one eye focused on me he would reach down and pick up the ear in his beak, shake it until he got that grain loose, then reach out and drop this kernel at the feet of one of these big babies. But when he did get them started they cleaned off nearly every cob before it came his turn to start in. Yes, as hungry as he evidently was, he stood guard until the other five ravenous appetites were relieved, then he willingly took the leavings. To prove they had come over the top for a long way, these six geese ate every kernel of these twelve small ears, at the one meal. Then after going in the pond for a few minutes they came out on the green sod to rest and did not fly around for a day or two.

In about ten days they were as tame as ours and I concluded we could drive them under the net. So one day when all was quiet and no strangers about, I asked my mother-in-law's daughter to help me and she cheerfully consented. We unrolled enough binding-twine to go clear across the pond; then as she held one end and I the other, stretching it about two feet above the water, we drove them quietly towards the net. Finally ours, which are educated to that purpose, led the way, the six followed them in and the trap-door fell. I, being so confident of getting them, had six tags already stamped, and they were in my pocket. So I opened the door and let our geese walk out. The six others huddled together in the corner of the pen, but as I approached the gander opened his wings and faced me. I at once overpowered him and clamped a tag on his hind leg, then took him to the door and let him go. Did he fly away to the lake? No! He did not fly two rods, but lit about twenty-five feet from the door, and his beautiful breast just heaved as he called aloud for his loved ones, "A-honk! A-honk! A-honk!" The interpretation is, "Come on! Come on! Come on!" As I was

catching number two I heard a commotion at the door; I looked around, and this lady who was holding it preferred being on the inside looking out, for this old gander had come back and was fighting the wire to get in at me. To be brief, he never left the door until every one of his family was liberated.

Now remember, I am telling you about the same species of bird that I once crawled all the buttons off my wishbone wishing to get a shot at him with a high-powered rifle, fully three fields away; and, like thousands of other men who have tried the same plan, I seldom succeeded. But now he was trying to get where he could strike me with his wings. Well, for his faithfulness I recaptured him and put a tag on each of his legs, making seven tags for the six geese. On each of these seven tags we stamped the following verse of Scripture: "No good thing will He withhold from them that walk uprightly. Psalms 84: 11." We named this gander Sir John Moore, after a noted, self-sacrificing General I have often heard father speak of.

They all migrated in December, and the first week in March I received the following letter:

To whom it may concern:

Outside of tag "Write Box 48, Kingsville, Ontario." Inside of tag, "No good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly."

These words were found on a band on a wild male goose's leg. The gander was captured March 1st, 1918, and I am doing as the words on the band requested.

He was certainly a nice one, weighing twelve pounds and as fat as butter.

I certainly would be pleased to hear from you telling me how, when, where and why the band was put on his leg, and I wish you would please tell me all you can tell me about the habits of the wild fowl up in your country.

They come down here in December, but the winter was so cold this year that they went farther south; but they came back in February and are still here. They feed in the rivers and creeks at night, and at sunrise they fly out in the wheat fields for green wheat until sundown, and then go back to the rivers. They leave here for the far north about the middle of March.

I remain waiting for your reply,

LINDEN ARCHIBALD,
Kennedyville, Kent Co.,
Maryland, U.S.A.

I at once wrote Mr. Archibald and he kindly returned the tag.

On March 19th as we were eating dinner one of my boys spoke up quickly and pointing out the window exclaimed, "Look, father!

Look!" And sure enough, here was Sir John Moore and four out of five of his family standing in front of the window eating corn, the two bright tags glittering on his legs.

This Moore family stayed together nearly all the time they were here, the five of them going to the lake at night and returning early next morning. Fortunately it was one of the young that got killed, hence the family was not broken up.

Now and then during the month of April the Johnson and Smith youngsters, yes, and sometimes the McDonalds and Jones' and other young Canadians too numerous to mention, would call on these three young Moores and all would go about the premises together, apparently playing "Pussy wants a corner," "Drop the handkerchief," "Coward, coward, can't catch me," and so forth. But I never knew these, or any other young Canada geese, to be gone from their parents over an hour at a time during their stay here in March and April, and I am confident these families do not break up until they reach the nesting ground.

Well, about the 25th of April, 1918, Sir John Moore and his family disappeared, and in August I received the following letter:

Fort George, Hudson Bay,
June 26th, 1918.

Dear Mr. Miner,—

Enclosed find four tags which I received this morning from an Indian; and as our boat is just leaving for the South, I am sending them to you at once. He tells me an interesting thing about these tags, as he says there was a flock of seven geese came to their decoys, and this Indian and another got four of them, each of which had a tag on it. One of the others killed by another hunter had two tags on.

There was a good flight of geese this spring, but not very many were killed.

The wavies, or snow geese, were very numerous this spring. The Indians say that they have not seen so many for a long time.

Hoping the tags reach you safe, I remain,

Yours sincerely,

L. G. MAVER,
Fort George, Hudson Bay,

The reader can scarcely imagine my feelings when I read the message that each one of these tags contained: "No good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly." This was proof that Sir John Moore's family was exterminated. It was not that I am opposed to the Indians getting the geese; no, no. It was only the thought of my special pets all being killed. As for the Indians and

Esquimaux getting these birds, I believe all honest, conscientious, thinking men will agree with me that there are no people in America who are more justified in shooting them than these natives up at Icicle Junction with their backs to the wall trying to exist. Personally I feel that the best missionary work I have ever done in my life is the thousands of geese I have fattened up and permitted to go back to that isolated country where they were hatched.

Although these tags were mailed from Fort George, Hudson Bay, these Indians may have brought them for three or even five hundred miles, Fort George being their trading post.

Now I have given you quite a collection of rough, unadulterated and unpolished facts about the ways of our lovely Canada geese. And when I call them lovely remember I do not mean because they are so uniform in color; nor is it because they are mostly all Canadian born. Not at all. It is on account of their winning ways and I really want to say Godly principles that in many respects could point the finger of shame at us human beings. This is why I call him "our beautiful Canada goose;" and if five per cent. of us Canadians really knew him, the other ninety-five per cent. could not, or would not try to, keep him off one corner of our Union Jack.

CHAPTER XXVII.

The Career of Jack Johnson.

IN THE spring of 1907, after I had had these seven wing-tipped geese three years, this old gander and his sweetheart started housekeeping near the west bank of the north pond, about two hundred feet north of the north door in our factory. The nest was built on the bare ground near the remnant of an old rail fence, giving me a good, clear view of it from the door of the factory at an elevation of about seven feet. It was evident she was an old goose, for she laid six eggs. And many an interesting hour I put in watching this pair of birds, as I could keep one eye on the machinery at the same time.

As this old gander would scrap any approaching enemy we called him Jack Johnson. He would stand about a rod from her, with his long, black, snake-like neck and head straight up for hours at a time; one would hardly notice a move; he looked more like a fixture than a living object. If a hawk or a crow was sighted, he would walk up, right to her nest; but if a dog went galloping over the fields, he would be lying flat, and any creature would almost touch him before it would see what it was up against.

Remember, he sees everything before it sees him; and only those who have seen one do it will believe how they can draw themselves down on the ground without being detected. When in the water it can bury its body under, leaving just the head and neck out and a few of the feathers along the back, and with the neck slightly curved one couldn't believe it anything but a long, wicked-looking snake. I never knew a creature that could put on a wickeder or more poisonous look than these Canada geese can.

One day as I was standing in the factory door with an eye turned towards the goose nest, I saw the old cart-horse, Charley, grazing closer and closer to the nest, and a shudder came over me, fearing he might put a clumsy foot in it. But where is Jack Johnson, the fellow who is always watching; now an enemy is approaching and he is gone! The goose is lying flat on the nest and I can see plainly her black neck stretched out on the ground, and her head curved towards this big horse that weighs over sixteen hundred pounds, and feet on him like pancake griddles. All at once the sight grows doubly interesting, for here is Jack Johnson stretched out flat, and pushing

himself along with both hind feet until he is within four feet of Charley's heels. Charley is apparently unconscious of having an enemy on earth as he is quietly grazing closer and closer to the nest, his big knees bending forward for fully a second before he makes steps.

Finally when he gets within three feet of Mrs. Goose she slowly rises up, spreading her wings at him. His big ears go forward at once, and he gives a slight flinch backwards, with both eyes rivetted on the goose. That instant Jack Johnson grabs him on the heels with his beak, and strikes him with both wings at once, while both geese seem to honk at the same time. Really I never saw a horse so nearly scared into fits as he was. His tail went into the air as he uttered a combination of loud snorts, and, with his four feet almost jarring the earth, he ran because he could not fly. Judging from his actions he did not know which end he got bit from, for he first jumped sidewise away from the nest. When he got about a hundred and fifty feet away he halted, and with his head erect and his tail bowed up, it added fully one hundred dollars to his appearance. But when he saw the geese flapping and rejoicing over their victory he started again, and if it had not been for the barn-yard fence possibly he would have been going yet.

As the nest had no protection, the old goose of course had to set in the sun, and she finally took sick and left the eggs. I believe she was sunstruck. At any rate she nearly died. So one day we men went and fought old Jack away and took the six eggs. I put them in warm water and found each contained life, so I made a nest in an old washtub and a Plymouth Rock hen volunteered to act as stepmother. In four or five days all six of the eggs hatched, and I removed the cover and let the light in, and the hen showed no signs of pecking them, but on the contrary started to teach them some chicken language. The next day we removed them in a pen near our back door where there was a nice growth of young clover and so forth. We fed them just a little custard as a coaxer, and these goslings were really tamer than their stepmother. And how they did grow! The rapid way in which young Canada goslings grow is almost beyond human belief. At three days of age I have seen them run through two-inch-mesh poultry netting, and at six or seven weeks they are full grown and only experienced eyes will detect the young from the old at one hundred feet distance.

Now this family of goslings never went five rods from our back door, but were continually gorging themselves on this clover. And of all the big babies I ever saw, young wild geese are the limit. After they were larger than their stepmother, I have often seen them huddle around her, putting their heads under her wings, each raising

her a little higher until she would be completely off the ground, making herself into a portable home for the heads of these six goslings.

But the sad thing was to see this old gander, and to hear him continually giving those three searching, sad honks. We put blocks of wood and pieces of fence-rail in the nest, but this broken-hearted old fellow rolled them away. The sick goose stayed in the pond near by the nest, but he strayed all about the premises, constantly hunting for the six eggs or the goslings that he evidently knew were in them, returning every few minutes to his sick sweetheart. He would bow and talk to her and nip a few blades of grass; then off again on the same beat, honking, east, west, north and south. I never saw anything to equal it. If his honking was heard by the six goslings it was of course all Latin to them, as they knew no other parent but this old hen.

Well, the novelty of having these pets near the back door soon grew a little unsanitary; and we found they were a week bigger every seven days; and my brother-in-law's oldest sister gave me to kindly understand, in as pleasant a manner as the English language can possibly be rubbed in, that our back doorstep was not a wild goose roost, and that these geese had to be removed immediately if not a little sooner. So I concluded to take her word for it. But at that time I had only the one big field away from the house. So one bright morning in June, as the sun was just high enough to be sparkling on the dewdrops that were apparently hanging on every blade of grass, I started from the house as usual to build a fire under the boiler at the factory. I called to the goose family, and all followed me through the gate, really quieter than domestic fowls. As I passed through the barnyard I kept on dropping a little feed, and they kept right after me until they came to nice, clean, dewy grass. There I left them and started on. But I hadn't got five rods away before my whole body and nerves were all shaking at seeing and hearing old Jack Johnson coming from the north pond, flapping and honking like a creature that had gone completely mad.

I turned and ran back, fearing he would kill every one. But he beat me there, and thank God he did. For instead of killing them as I feared he might, when he got within about six feet of them he stopped, and with his head and neck straight in the air, his beautiful chest just heaved, and I am not exaggerating in the least when I say that his honks could easily have been heard for a mile and a half. What he said I don't know, but each gosling lay flat on the ground and he put his head on each, apparently caressing and loving them. In turn each got up and flapped its baby wings.

Just then I cast one eye to the north and here was the old, sick mother coming, falling down with weakness every rod she came.

This was the first time I had seen her over the bank of the pond since she left the nest, and the young were now over five weeks old. Old Jack looked and saw her, and ran up and apparently told her all, for she tried in her weak way to come faster. But this dear old father really made several trips back and forth to the young before she got there.

Now comes something worth while for me, and I don't want any reader to ask how it was that this old pair of beauties knew their young. I only know they did know them; that is all. There I stood, bare-headed and bare-footed at the most beautiful time of the day. The whole earth seemed to be transformed into a rainbow of God's pure love, with both ends pouring out upon this one spot; for to see this dear old, broken-hearted father and their sick mother united and knowing their six loved ones which they had never seen, or, in other words, standing and witnessing the reunion of this broken family, caused my brain to fairly whirl in thought, until I melted down, like a little child.

Finally the eight of them all started for the north pond. But Jack looked and saw the hen following; so he just stepped back and gave her one blow with his stub wing which sent her moulting and screaming with terror towards the chicken house. But in about fifteen minutes when I returned from the factory the goslings came back after their step-mother, Jack following them. I succeeded in coaxing her out and he saw her family salute and caress her, as they uttered volumes of baby talk, apparently expressing their sympathy. This old gander never touched her afterwards, and the hen lived out at the pond with the eight geese until the snow drove her in. No other fowl on the premises dared venture near her, for the gander guarded her as one of his family from then on.

The old mother goose got a little better towards fall, but when winter set in she took a change for the worse and one day in January I went back and picked her up and decided to bring her to the house and doctor her up. When I got to the cow-stable I turned the cow out, leaving the goose there while I went to the house for dope. When the cow passed out the door, old Jack Johnson, who was right on my heels ever since I picked up his mate, flew into the cow like a bull-dog and gave her a real trimming. On returning from the house I found he had driven her around the corner, but was still fighting and honking at this innocent old beast.

When I opened the cow-stable door I found the old goose's struggle was over. She was dead. And while her faithful old mate was around out of sight, still busily engaged with the cow, I took the goose out and buried her; therefore he never saw her afterwards.

To be brief, he fought the cow, on and off, for two or three weeks.

Then he seemed to content himself by watching her. And for two and a half years he kept constant guard over her, and never was seen to be over three rods away from her head. On several occasions she broke out, but he followed and was seen over a mile from home. In fact she needed no bell to be located, as his honking answered the purpose. During the summer months he slept at her



FAITHFUL AFTER DEATH

Photograph showing "Jack Johnson" standing at the cow-stable door watching the cow, two years and three months after the death of his sweetheart.

head in the pasture field, but when winter came and the cow was stabled, he always slept on the doorstep. One morning in March I snapped him there.

He apparently blamed her for his trouble, and paid no attention whatever to any other goose, not even his own family. His sad honking, however, became so dreadfully mournful to one and all that I finally got rid of him.

On another occasion I kept a widowed goose for four years and she still honked for her old love. Now, if anything happens to one

of a pair around here, I will give you the other, as I cannot stand to hear their deep, mournful cries, that to me make the whole place gloomy.

I have heard good honest men say that their wild ganders when turned with a flock of tame geese will mate with more than one goose. But here at my home everything is as near the natural state as I can possibly make it, and I haven't seen these geese show any inclination toward acting that way.

Here is a fact hard for you to believe, for it is beyond the human power's control. These wild geese come here from the south-east Atlantic coast, arriving about March the first; if fed and protected they will not leave here for Hudson Bay, where they nest, before April the twentieth to May the first, living here under exactly the same conditions as our wing-clipped or pinioned ones do. And ours usually lay the last week in March.

This year six young were hatched on April the 27th, and it takes twenty-eight or twenty-nine days for incubation alone.

Or to give you a better explanation I will say, take a pair of these wild geese, clip their wings and keep them here. In about three years they will nest, but will do so fully a month earlier than if they had their wings and could go to their natural breeding ground. Possibly their reason for nesting earlier when they are compelled to stay here is to get their young well developed before the extremely hot weather sets in, as I have had them die in dry, hot weather. On the other hand, when they are three days old they will toddle around among the white frost on the clover leaves and enjoy their meal as if it were sugar-coated.

Now I am aware that I have been altogether too lengthy; but I have so many of these interesting facts that I can't, apparently, ring off.

I know you educated people call it nature, or instinct; and really I have heard such a variety of names for this goose-knowledge that I don't try to look up the meaning of these artificial words; for I am sure if all their meanings were boiled down, and all the man-made, artificial names were skimmed off, the real interpretation would be—
"G O D."

Last summer, about the first of July, as I went from the factory to the house, Mrs. Miner said to me, "What is the matter with your geese? This old pair and the four young ones have come to the house and honked two or three times. We have driven them back to the north pond, time and again." I said at once, "Were there only four young that came up?" She assured me that was all. But the looks and actions of the geese were enough; I knew there was something wrong, for when the old pair saw me they honked aloud.

I hustled through the shrubbery and these geese followed me. On my arrival at the water's edge the meaning of their mysterious actions was revealed, for I saw the gosling lying dead upon the east shore. I hurried along and picked it up. On examination I found a small head of rye in its wind-pipe. The noise of the machinery where I was working had prevented my hearing the alarmed cries of the parent birds, or I would have gotten there in time to save its life. However, it was then too late; the gosling had been dead at least an hour.

So I took it by one foot and carried it in my hand; and the parents and the four remaining young followed at my heels right back to the house. I buried the gosling beside the rose-path, with the broken family of geese standing within fifteen feet of me. We had to drive them back several times before they would stay and it was fully a week before they would content themselves back at their home where they had lived all summer.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

The Migration of Our Canada Geese.

AS TO the regularity of the migration of our Canada goose which is pointed out on this map, I must say I am greatly indebted to the kind assistance of the Hudson's Bay Company's agents and those of the Revillon Fur Company, and I have a great ambition to lay aside all home cares and enjoyments and in the near future treat myself to a three months' trip to the nesting grounds of our Canada geese, where I will have the great pleasure of grasping the hands of all classes of these men whom the geese have let me know are on earth.

As proof that these men are genuine I am reproducing some of their letters. The following is the first one I received:

Hudson's Bay Company,
MOOSE FACTORY, ONT.,
August 19th, 1915.
via Cochrane.

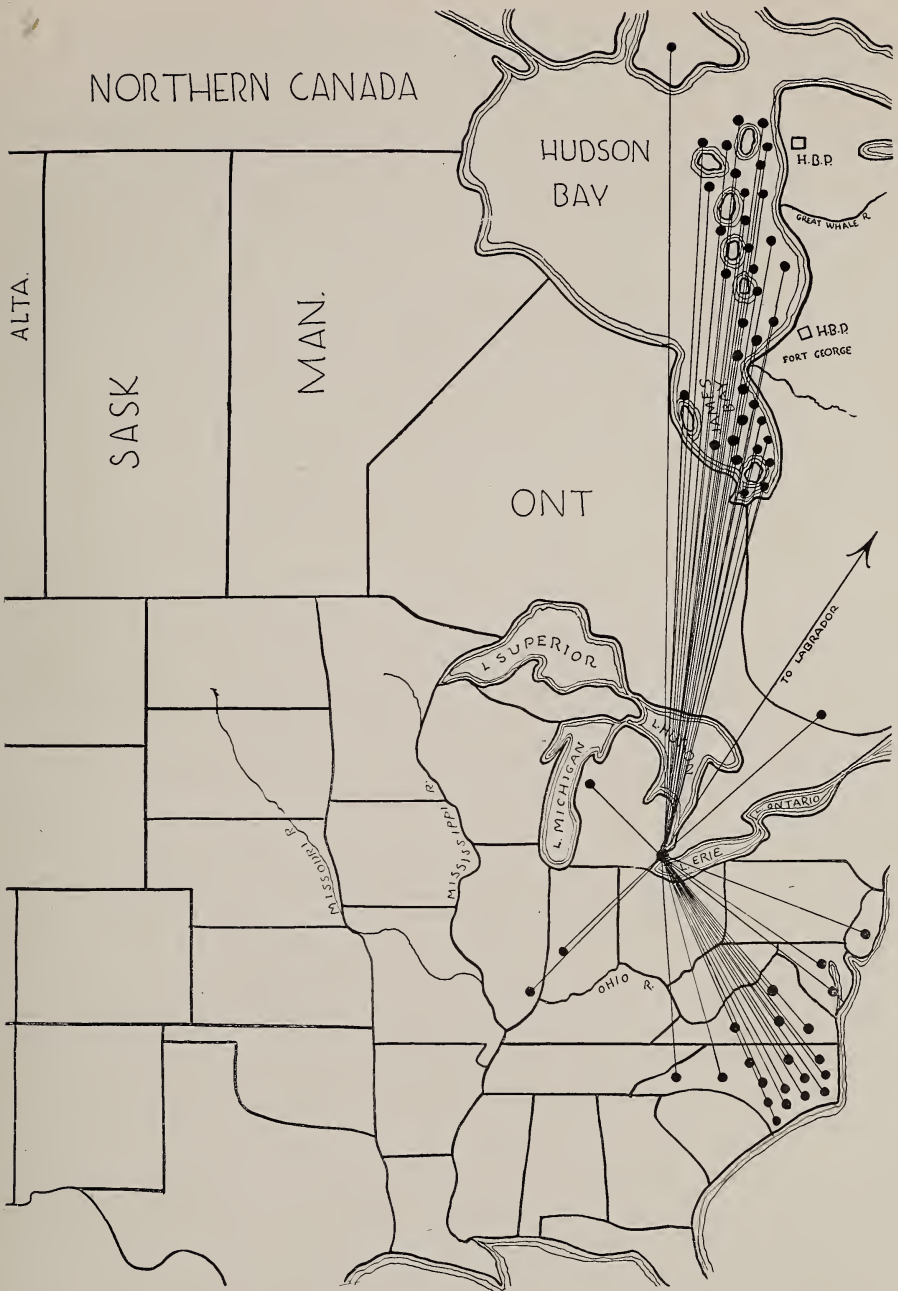
Box 48,
Kingsville, Ontario.

Dear Sir,—

I have an aluminum ring with the above address stamped on the outside and number 15 on the inside. This was taken off the leg of a Canada Grey Goose shot by an Indian last spring about the 15th April a few miles south of the H.B. Post of Eastmain on James Bay. The Indian who shot it said that it was in a band of about fifteen and this particular goose appeared larger than the others and of a lighter colored plumage. It was probably bound for the breeding grounds, north, from the fact of its being in a flock. A good many geese hatch all around the bay but these are generally seen flying around in pairs before nesting. These birds are very easily tamed and I have seen some here taken very young which, after they have grown up, would continue staying around the place after being turned loose. I would be interested to hear from you the particulars of this goose and hope I have given you all the information you require about it. I am,

Yours faithfully,

W. E. CAMSELL.



MAP SHOWING MIGRATION OF THE CANADA GOOSE

Later, in January, 1916, I received another letter, as follows:

Hudson's Bay Company,
FORT GEORGE, JAMES BAY,
via Cochrane.
27th January, 1916.

Box 48,
Kingsville, Ont.

Dear Sir,—

This is to inform you that an Indian last week brought me a band, bearing the above address, which was taken from the leg of a goose, killed about the middle of October last at Comb Hills, a point on the coast of James Bay about forty miles south of this Post.

As the Indian seemed to expect something for giving me the band, I paid him a dollar and shall be glad if you will kindly refund same to me.

Yours truly,
OWEN GRIFFITH.

I at once sent a few dollars to these agents requesting that they pay the Indians and Esquimaux one dollar each for the tags. I also requested them to give me all particulars about that country, as to what the geese feed on, where they nest; in fact, that any information would be acceptable.

The following letters of interest were written me:

Hudson's Bay Company,
MOOSE FACTORY,
via Cochrane, Ont.
14th Nov., 1916.

My dear Jack,—

I was very glad to get your letter of August 30th, and must thank you for your enclosure of \$5.00. I am sure you will think I have been a long while in answering your letter, but I have been over in England this summer and only returned to this part of the country about two weeks ago; it was only on my arrival here that I received your letter, and as there will be a packet out as soon as the ice is strong, I am taking the first opportunity to answer your letter.

I am now stationed here at Moose for the winter and shall be going to Albany in the spring. This is a post on the opposite side of James Bay to Fort George, but a very good place for game, especially for those birds we call "wavies." The correct name for these birds, I believe, is "snow goose." It is a strange thing that on the west coast of James Bay we get almost nothing but white "wavies," with an occasional blue one in the flock, while on the east coast it is just the opposite with almost nothing but blue (grey)

with a few white ones in the flock, while a short distance farther north (on the east coast) at Whale River the white reappear again in large numbers, so that they evidently cross the bay on their annual migrations.

There are lots of geese both on the east and west sides of the bay, but I believe that more pass on the east (Fort George side) than the other, as the coast is rocky with lots of islands where they can breed. We have some islands out in the bay called the "Tioms," which are great breeding places.

The Indians who killed those tagged geese said that they seemed to be tamer than the others and came out of large flocks and down to the decoys when the rest of the band would not turn.

About three miles north of Fort George Post there is a big bay (salt water) with lots of mud and grass at low tide, and in the spring almost every flock of waxies and some geese feed in this bay on their way north. The Indians never hunt them on their arrival in this bay, but gather on a long hill on the other side and then shoot at the birds as they are going off. They generally get up in small flocks; as they have to rise considerably to clear the hill, they can be seen getting up some time before they get to the hill, and then every one runs along a path and tries to get right under where the flock is going to pass. Of course if three or four flocks get up at the same time there is shooting on different parts of the hill and the hunters are apt to spoil one another's sport. The Indians say that once these birds leave this bay that they do not feed again till they get far north (Hudson Straits or Baffin Land). In fact a waxies' nest is a great rarity. Strange to say they do not feed in this bay in the fall.

We have no wild rice in the bay and the birds seem to feed mostly on grass in the salt water, and in the fall they go out to the islands to feed on berries; they fly out to the islands in the mornings and back into the small bays for the nights.

I am staying with Mr. Camsell just now and he tells me to be sure and remember him to you. He is going to walk out to the line in March and will perhaps try to look you up.

I am enclosing you some photos which I think may interest you. I have written on the backs what they represent.

The Indians get lots of fish in their nets but not much in winter except with hooks.

Mr. Camsell showed me the photo of yourself. Please send me one.

Well, I will write you again, and in the meantime remain,

Your sincere friend,

OWEN GRIFFITH.

The following four letters all explain themselves.

The Hudson's Bay Company,
JAMES' BAY DISTRICT OFFICE,
MOOSE FACTORY,
June 15th, 1918.

Dear Mr. Miner,—

The enclosed metal band, No. 18 S, was brought here to-day by an Indian, by name Andrew Butterfly, who killed the goose carrying the band, while hunting in Hannah Bay, south-east of James' Bay.

Andrew informs me that the goose was killed on April 28th, 1918.

We are all very much interested in your experiments down here, and make a point of returning the bands we receive. If you require any further particulars about the geese killed, please let me know, and I will try to give you as much information as possible.

Yours faithfully,
GEO. WATSON.

Mr. Jack Miner,
Box 48,
Kingsville, Ont.

The Hudson's Bay Company,
Great Whale River Post,
via Cochrane, Ontario.

Dear Mr. Miner,—

I have delayed answering your letter of Sept. 4, until I saw some of my hunters from the north, so as to get as much information as I could about the nesting place of the geese, etc.

The Esquimaux tell me that a good many birds nest at some large islands, about north-west of this Post. The islands are called the north and south Belchers, and some of them are fairly large. One of them has a large lake extending nearly the whole length of the island and this is the place where a good many of the geese nest. I have received two tags from the natives who stay on these islands, and I enclose them herewith.

The hunters from the far north told me that quite a number of geese nest about 300 miles north of this place; and I have let them know that if they kill any geese with tags on, to bring them in to the Post, so very likely I will be able to send you some next spring when the natives again visit the Post.

I don't know what has happened to the birds and animals this season; I have never seen it so poor for all kinds of game since I have been up in this direction, and I am hoping that we have an early spring so that perhaps we may be able to get some of your geese or other game.

I have been showing your pictures of the geese in the pond to

some of my hunters, and they tell me that they wish they were only eating some of them; and of course I have to tell them that the spring will soon be here and that they may kill some of the geese they have been looking at in the pictures.

Well, I see the war is now over, and every one up at this place was very glad about it. The natives have some very funny ideas about what the war was really about, and as each man held that his idea was the correct one, there have been some lively discussions about the matter, and this controversy has helped to pass the time at this isolated place.

Well, trusting things are going all right with you and that your geese are well and fat, I remain,

Yours sincerely,

L. G. MAVER.

The Hudson's Bay Company,
James Bay District,
MOOSE FACTORY, May 8th, 1919.
Refer to No. 303.
Subject: Two goose bands returned.

Jack Miner, Esq.,
Kingsville, Ont.

Dear Sir,—

Whilst making a trip last winter up the east coast of James' Bay as far as Great Whale River on Hudson Bay, two of your goose-bands came into my possession, and I beg to return them herewith.

The band marked 17 was on a goose that was killed in October, 1918, about thirty miles north of Eastmain by Charles Shashawaskum, a Cree Indian.

The goose that was carrying the band marked 18 was killed last fall near Cape Jones by Richard Fleming, an Esquimaux.

One dollar has been forwarded to each of these men out of your fund, held by Mr. Nicolson of Rupert's House.

Yours faithfully,

WM. C. RACKHAM,
District Manager.

Address: C/o The Hudson's Bay Company,
Moose Factory,
Clute Post Office, Ontario.

RUPERT'S HOUSE, CLUTE P.O., ONTARIO,
20th June, 1918.

Mr. J. Miner,
Box 48, Kingsville, Ontario.

Dear Sir,—

The enclosed tag No. 18 S was handed to me the other day by an Indian who killed the goose to which it was attached about thirty miles north of this Post. I believe two or three other tags were procured by some Indians who do not deal with me, but no doubt they will be forwarded by the trader to whom they were delivered. As far as I can ascertain your interests seem to be pretty well looked after around the bay generally.

Yours sincerely,

A. NICOLSON.



THE INDIAN ACHIMAYA, who in the spring
of 1915 shot a goose tagged the same year

During my correspondence with the Hudson's Bay Company I have received from them several interesting snapshots. This fellow with the smiling face, I understand is the man who shot the first wild goose I ever tagged.

The old lady whose photograph is shown with this is the grandmother, and was reported as the oldest woman around Hudson Bay,

but she actually did not know how old she was, and I think one glance at the photograph will convince you that both statements are apt to be true.



INDIAN WOMAN, FORT GEORGE

Reverend J. W. Walton, the missionary from that quarter who visited me last winter, smiled all over his face when I showed him her picture. "Why," said he, "she was the dearest old lady you ever met, always wanting to help others carry their load; but she died about eighteen months ago."

Now it is a fact that thirty-six of my returned goose tags have come from Hudson Bay. Yet it would be well for us to remember that over eighty per cent. of these birds were tagged in the spring, and they went direct from this tame spot to James Bay, thus giving the Indians and Esquimaux the tamest opportunity. We are quite certain that two or three were killed by them within three days after

they left here. One goose, tagged and liberated here on April 24th, was killed at the Belcher Islands on the 28th; another, liberated on April the 22nd, was killed at James Bay on the 25th.

On two different occasions when the geese were leaving here at five p.m., I telegraphed the C.P.R. agent at Stralak, Ontario. Stralak is about sixty miles north-west of Sudbury, Ontario, or about four hundred and fifty miles north of my home. On both occasions I got returns before nine o'clock the next morning. My first reply was "Geese are crossing at Metagama." The next year, under similar conditions, the reply read, "Geese are passing at Spanish Forks and at Pogmasing." These three stations are on the main line of the C.P.R., about seventy to ninety miles north-west of Sudbury. At these three particular points the railroad is running nearly straight north, and I doubt very much if the geese would be over four miles out of their east-and-west lines on their northern trip the two different years.

During the same period of time I have a lot reported from their winter home along what I called the south-east Atlantic Coast.

The following are the names and addresses of the gentlemen in the South who have reported the wild geese.

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1. Lewis L. Lewark, Nag Head, Dare County, N.C. | 6. E. W. Brumley, Woodligh, Curriek County, N.C. |
| 2. Irvin Smith, Littleton, R. No. 4, N.C. | 7. C. E. Toppins, Jr., Box 76, R. i., Swan Quarters, N.C. |
| 3. C. S. Boomer, Swan Quarter, N.C. | 8. J. C. Bristo, Richmond, Virginia. |
| 4. L. T. Johnson, Mamis, N.C. | 9. Linden Archibald, Kennedy, Maryland. |
| 5. Dr. J. G. Baum, Pines Island Club, Curriek Sound, N.C. | 10. Oliver T. Crammer, West Creek, Ocean County, N.J. |

I have received odd letters that have become mislaid, but besides what are quoted above, have had letters from the following addresses:

- | | |
|--|--|
| Gust F. Stunhs, Lacrosse, Ind. | M. C. Britt, Elizabeth City, N.C. |
| W. F. Pherkildson, New Holland, N.C. | Simon Alisaibe, Sr., James Bay (two geese). |
| Geo. Cheechoo, James Bay. | Peter Henlisty, James Bay (one goose). |
| Marshall I. Bradshaw, Tylerton, Md. | James Oachigan, James Bay (one goose). |
| C. A. Ulmer, Rose Bay, N.C. (two tags). | E. C. Hallman, Tangier, Va. |
| Francis Clark, Pine Island Club, Poplar Branch, N.C. | Harry P. Smith, Holland, Mich. |
| L. O. Turford, Powell's Point, N.C. | S. Archibald, Salt Water Lake, Near James Bay, Ontario. |
| William Solomon, Albany River, Hudson Bay. | (Hudson Bay Agent), Great Whale River, Ontario (two tags). |
| Haywood Whitehead, Townsend, Va. (two tags). | E. Renouf, Fort George Post, James Bay District (five tags). |
| Arch. Pardy, Hamilton Inlet, Labrador. | |

I am here reproducing one letter from the South which gives us a fair explanation as to when the geese come to, and leave, their winter home.

SWAN QUARTER, N.C.
Nov. 15th, 1917.

Dear Sir,—

I killed a goose yesterday, the 14th of Nov., on the Lake of Matmostuate, Hyde Co., N.C., with a band on his left leg with your address on it. It said "Write to Box 48, Kingsville, Ont." So at your request I am taking pleasure in doing so. Inside of metal band was a Bible verse; it said: "Keep yourselves in the love of God. Jude 1: 21." You will please write me and tell me how you caught the goose, and when you put same on him and all about the geese in Canada, and their raising there. They come on our lakes about Oct. 15th, and stay here until March 15th. Then they all leave and go north to places unknown to us. Lake Matamoskeete is a great place for hunting geese. There were about three hundred killed the day that I killed this one. Will close. Write me soon and a long letter, and tell me all you know about them.

With best wishes for you and yours, I am,

Yours very truly,

C. S. BOOMER.

One of the most recent and interesting of the letters I have received is the following:

Hudson's Bay Service,
James Bay District, Canada,
FORT GEORGE POST,
July 25th, 1923.
via Mattice, Ontario.

Dear Mr. Miner,—

I am enclosing herewith five tags taken off geese killed by my hunters in the vicinity of this post this year.

Should you ever desire further information I shall ever be glad to assist you in the excellent work which you are doing, to the best of my ability.

I am, however, rather afraid that some of the birds which recourse to your sanctuary are lulled there into a greater trust in mankind than is well for their continued well-being, as undoubtedly some of these birds, on leaving the sanctuary you afford them, fall very easy victims to gunners.

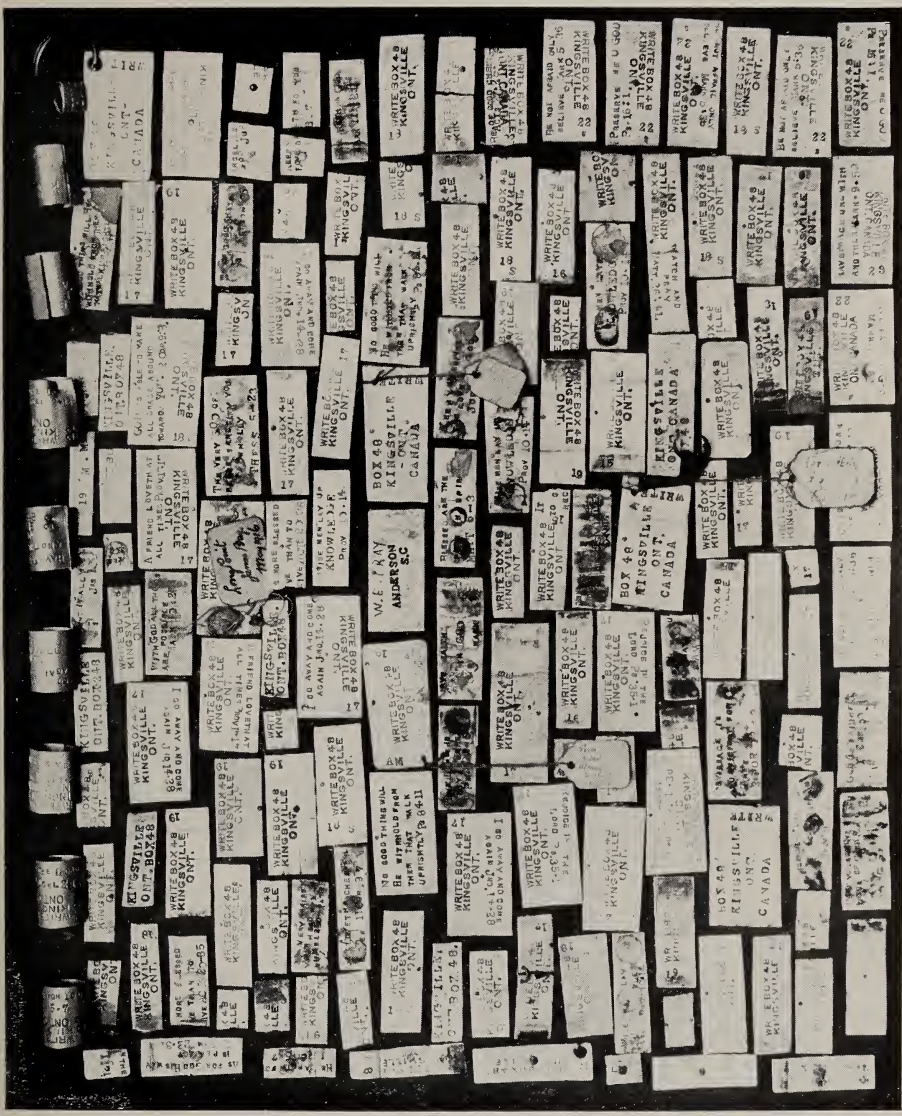
With great appreciation, I beg to remain,

Sincerely yours,

E. RENOUF.

In 1919, Mr. Sainsbury of Toronto, one of our Canadian explorers, was in Baffin Land. There he ran across some Esquimaux with a

goose that had my tag on it. They were superstitious about the goose, but when Mr. Sainsbury explained it to them, they tore its skin off, and ate the goose, raw. This is away north of timber line, where the Esquimaux eat their meat raw. The dot on the map showing the migration of the geese, away to the north of Hudson Bay, is where Mr. Sainsbury pointed out the place to me on his map.



RETURNED DUCK AND GOOSE TAGS

The rolled tags appear exactly as when taken from the legs of the geese.

CHAPTER XXIX.

Catching and Tagging the Wild Goose.

THIS was a proposition that tested my staying qualities to a standstill, although it is true I had tagged lots of smaller birds, including the wild ducks; but that was like coaxing candy from a baby, too easy to be interesting.

Yes, some one has said, "the silly old goose!" But bear in mind that it is through this silly old goose's ability to outwit the human race that there is one living; we would have killed and eaten them all, long ago, but they outwitted us and went over the top. So if they are silly, what is our number, if you please?

Well, silly or not, it took my little, single-cylinder brain over seven years to outwit them. Actually I studied them more than I did my financial obligations, and that's saying a whole lot. Very true, they will allow me to walk among them, and odd, wounded ones have eaten from my hand. But don't hold him, or interfere with his liberties, as one note from his beak will alarm all the geese within a mile.

In November, 1919, there were fifty-five ducks feeding here and when I pulled the trip-wire I caught fifty of them; but the "silly old goose" would walk by and say "A-h-h! A-h-h!" and my family would say "Ha! Ha!" The variety of contrivances I made during these seven years! And the blisters there were on my hands during that time, caused from cutting and fitting gas-pipe frames and trap-doors and stretching poultry netting over the same, are blisters I will long remember. Then to see the geese come, glance at it and walk away, would make any human being feel small enough to pass a ferret in a gun-barrel. In fact this got to be a family joke. Little Jasper said, "Papa, how many goose nets are you going to make this summer?" Yes, I am a firm believer in the words, "Let man have dominion over all," but in this case I have surely been a poor actor.

At last a thought germinated that proved a success. I dug a canal forty feet wide and sixty feet long between two ponds. This canal was made at the mouth of the drain tile that supplies the ponds with spring water, the last water to freeze and the first to thaw out. A high gas-pipe frame was built to cover the whole canal, with a trap-door at each end, This was neatly covered with two-inch-mesh



MY FIRST SUCCESSFUL CATCH OF WILD GEESE

poultry netting, stretched good and tight to prevent it bagging and flapping in the wind. The trapdoors were left constantly up, and our domesticated geese were educated to winter under this, in the open water at the mouth of this drain tile. This contrivance is at the north ponds, where the geese remain quite wild.

It was completed in December, 1921, and March, 1922, found me away from home on a lecturing tour. When I opened a letter from my boy saying, "Father, your goose-net is a success; we saw fully twenty-five follow ours under, this morning," can you really blame me for reading it twice?

In a week or so I arrived home, and was greeted with these cheering words, "Father, there were dozens of geese feeding under the net last night. We are feeding shelled corn and wheat under there, and the wild geese go under without ours leading the way." Early the next morning I was up and dressed, and quite excited, for I was up in the little "oblookatory" long before the geese arrived from the lake; but sure enough, when they came fully forty went under to feed. And they were just as good as caught, for my previous experiments have taught me how to make a trap-door that works to perfection. Just picture, if possible, the way I was stepping around! Here I had been seven years catching one hundred and nine geese, and no two bunches were caught alike; in other words, every catch was an experimental failure! But now I am going to catch them by the hundreds. Yet I must not pull the trap-doors while the big flock is here, to frighten them all.

On April 21st fully eighty per cent. of them had gone north. Sunday morning, April 22nd, only about three hundred were here, and it was now or never, for that spring.

I climbed up and watched them while Dr. Rob Sloan, of Leamington, who is one of my greatest helpers, stood below to pull the trip-wire. The opportunity arrived. I signalled the doctor, the trap-door dropped in the twinkling of an eye—and sixty-one missionaries were in captivity!

In catching the sixty-one we found a pair tagged in 1917; two others had had their legs broken but were healed straight.

Well, now the big flock is gone, and they know nothing of this disturbance, so now I will enlarge on this successful plan, I thought. So in the summer of 1922 I completed my big net having over 5,000 feet of area in it. One trap-door is one hundred and twenty feet long, one eighty feet, and another forty feet; all three are dropped by the one trip-wire.

Even if I had the time I could not give you a detailed explanation of how my goose-trap, trip, and trap-doors, and so forth, are arranged. But if you want to catch wild geese for tagging purposes (and I hope



A BIG CATCH IN THE BIG NET

Photograph shows the west wing of the big net. Note that the trap-doors are down on each side and we are driving a bunch into the catching-pen, which is a little corner at the end, only twelve feet square, with a trap-door to keep them in there. The trap-door can be seen hanging above, ready to fall.

you do) come to my home the first fifteen days in July, when the pond is dry, and get my plans, which have proved to be a success; then you can go home and add to them.

That fall, 1922, about 300 geese came back, but there was not much water as the spring was very low. Yet on December 5th I caught fifty-three, and on Saturday, April 21st, 1923, I caught two hundred and seven. Some catch! "Let man have dominion over all." Now I have caught three hundred and twenty-one in one year.

While watching these last two hundred and seven gradually working their way under the net, my field-glasses showed eleven standing on the bank with bright aluminum tags on, but not a goose in the two hundred and seven had been tagged before. In other words, I have "never caught a goose twice in the same net. "Silly old goose!"

Mind you, it is a job to tag two hundred and seven wild geese! And I had only one hundred and twenty tags made. When we got these all on, Dr. Sloan wiped the perspiration off his face with his goosey hands and said, "Jack, let's let the rest of the bunch go without any religion."

It will be plainly seen that we haven't had time to hear from many of the three hundred and twenty-one that were caught during the last year or so; but out of the one hundred and nine that I caught between 1915 and 1921, sixty-two have been reported killed, and forty-nine of the tags are back in my possession, thirty-six reported at Hudson Bay; one from Hamilton Inlet, Labrador; fourteen from North Carolina; two from Maryland; one from New Jersey; four from Virginia; one from Illinois; one from Indiana; and one from the Ottawa River, thirty miles north of Montreal, Quebec.

CHAPTER XXX.

Game Protection.

THIS, a sportsmen's problem, may appear to you as being entirely out of place in a book like this; yet I want you to read, for I feel fully qualified to discuss this matter in a conscientious, fair and square, look-you-in-the-face manner, as I have the itching of my own trigger-finger fairly well harnessed, and have no desire to shoot any bird other than the cannibals; but on the other hand my boy, Ted, who is twenty-three years of age, and for whom I would willingly lie down and give up the ghost if it were actually necessary, likes to shoot, and I sometimes think he is as crazy for a gun as I once was, but that seems impossible.

Nearly twenty years ago I organized the South Essex County Game Protective Association, which, by the way, now has advanced into the hands of some of the best and most self-sacrificing sportsmen this earth can produce. And let me say right here that they have stood, and are still standing, right behind me, backing me up in every just undertaking. If every county had an association of the same material the question would all be solved, for when these men asked our Dominion Government to proclaim a bird sanctuary around Jack Miner's home, in less than three months no shooting was allowed within a mile of my house, and the game warden came and declared it a Crown Lands' Bird Sanctuary.

To be sure, I have tasted the insults one experiences when he changes from a pull-down to a builder. An insulting doctor once said to me, as he stood in the safety zone and shook his fists at my red face, "Jack, you are just like old Uncle Joe; when he used to dance he wanted everybody to dance, but when he got religion he wanted everybody to pray."

Now the first thing to consider is that over ninety per cent. of the people in America don't want to shoot. They want to see the birds alive. They take nothing from the shooter, but the shooter takes all from them. Which should control, the ninety per cent. or the ten? I say there can be pleasure for both, if properly managed; but the shooter must be considered last, for the fall of one bird out of the air from his deadly aim gives pleasure to one only, while thousands are deprived of the thrilling enjoyment of seeing that

bird alive. God says, "In any wise let the mother go and take the young to thee;" yet some of our people want to shoot the mother before she lays the eggs to hatch the young that He says we can have. Yes, a man may be a good, shrewd business fellow, but when he gets a gun in his hands he appears to lose all self-control and does not expose enough brains to give him a headache.

Government game wardens are usually a bunch of men appointed by pull and favor, and don't know a bit more about game protection than I know about the price of pork grease in Jerusalem. If called by its right name it would be "political protection," and I don't have to lie to tell the truth about it. However the less said the better, and it is of no use to us to look back at the past. We must remember Lot's wife stopped and looked back, and she turned into a pillar of salt; Pat's wife stopped and looked back, first over one shoulder and then over the other, and she turned into a beer saloon.

Personally I don't like to hear any one complain unless he has a carefully thought out suggestion for improvements. Therefore I will proceed to give you my plan, which is based on twenty years' intense interest and careful study.

First of all, every county in America should organize a real live, wild-life conserving association.

Delegates from each county should meet in annual State or Provincial convention with our Parliament members present to hear the discussion.

Appoint our game keepers by right, and not by favor.

Compel them to give an itemized account of every day's proceedings.

During the spring and early fall months let them go to the schools and give half-hour talks to the rising generation on the value and enjoyments of our out-of-door life. During the winter months this same game keeper could often take a bunch of school boys with him as he goes on his visits, carrying feed, and building shelters for the birds in time of need. This would prevent a game keeper from having to make an eagle out of a gnat fly in order to hold his job. Yes, the fellow who dissected the baby hawk's crop and found it contained crickets and grasshoppers, he could attend such a convention and demand the privilege of airing his views; but hawks and owls that live in Canada during the months of December, January and February do not live on grasshoppers during those months, therefore such questions might open up something higher than a grasshopper discussion.

Every gun should be licensed high enough to pay all expenditures, but no State or Province in America should be allowed over one month's open season on migratory birds until they are more plentiful.

No person or persons should be allowed to feed artificial grain to birds for the sole purpose of slaughtering them. This would encourage the replanting of more natural duck and goose foods, and make our marshes more productive.

The bag limit should be kept down. Not that this bag limit law is easily enforced, but for the steady education that it is wrong and unsportsmanlike to slaughter. Any man who wants to shoot more than five ducks in a day, or twenty-five in a season, is not considerate of the other fellow's North American rights and privileges.

But the whole proposition is hinged on better education, and when the people of this continent wake up and find out that good, sensible game protection pays two hundred per cent. annual dividends, then we won't lie back and yawn and say it is no use trying.

As proof that I know what I am writing about, I call your attention to my own success, that you are compelled to believe. Now if one man, with limited means and no natural advantages, but backed up by good neighbors, can do what has been done here, what can the wealth and effort of one hundred and twenty-five millions of people do with our natural advantages?

Yes, I have demonstrated that the sanctuary plan is a sure preventive of extermination. With plenty of such places where neither rich nor poor dare molest them, bird lovers can have first choice and the shooters the overflow. We can have more tagging stations to enable us to trace the birds of different localities, as I have done here. We can organize an international bird-lovers' association. In fact, we can have anything that will lead to deeper interest and more education as to the value and enjoyment of our birds. Personally I have more confidence in a thimbleful of education than I have in a barrellful of bayonet-point compulsion.

Two years ago a gentleman in Peterborough, Ontario, engaged me to come for two days; I went to each school and talked as best I could. The following spring this dear man gave bird-house prizes to the same children. The accompanying photograph shows the results.

Now to those who think it not worth while: You are depriving yourself of a pleasure that is knocking at every man's door. God left the wild life in our care, and it is not a question of what we can have, but the question is, Will we have?

Just close your eyes and ears and abandon all of nature's sights and sounds; what extra attractions would spring have for you? On the other hand, just multiply the present attractions tenfold. Can it be done? Yes; "come over into Macedonia and help us," is my message to you.



*Photo by Fred Roy,
Peterborough*

CHILDREN WITH BIRD-HOUSES, PETERBOROUGH, ONTARIO

CHAPTER XXXI.

Creating a Bird Sanctuary.

A BIRD sanctuary is a suitable area of ground set aside for the birds to congregate in for shelter, food and protection, where their natural enemies are destroyed, and where neither rich nor poor dare molest them, "nor thieves break through and steal."

Here the birds will congregate in countless numbers, especially during their migration, and hold their great annual picnic and vocal contest, which enables each to select the best sweetheart. As soon as she consents to fly in a double harness with him and he says "I will, so help me Sun, Moon and Stars," they are off together, some for life, others for one season only. Now as soon as God's wireless says to them "The weather is O.K. at your nesting grounds," they join in a sort of a God-be-with-you-till-we-meet-again chorus and rise high on the evening air, and before the stars close their eyes again, these winged creatures are one thousand miles farther on, and the rising sun finds them singing on the same old perch of last year, right near their nesting place. I said evening air, because most birds migrate during the night.

The non-migratory birds will winter in this same sanctuary. Last winter, the eighth winter my sanctuary was set out, I fed over one-half bushel of wheat daily to the Bob White quail that wintered in there. As soon as spring came, these quail all left, and are now scattered over at least a two-mile area of the very best farming country, breeding on nearly every farm. And best of all, I have wheat ready to feed a bigger flock next winter.

The sanctuary plan is the only way I know of to control the two-legged cannibal, he who apparently will not allow his heart nor brain to act at all, but simply lets his murderous trigger-finger control his whole carcass. It may sound strange to the reader that I speak so harshly of this class of being, but it is personal knowledge that causes it. Being in the woods so much through life, depending as a hunter does, largely on my hearing, my ear drums have been kept exceptionally active, and up until the last few years I could almost hear a gnatfly sneeze; the result is I have heard a whole lot of things that would have sounded better had I been totally deaf.

One day a man came here with two or three younger fellows,



The pictures above of geese in flight are taken at the North Pond. Notice the evergreens in the distance which run around the pond, forming a wind-break and a shelter during storms.



The pictures above show the birds at the South Pond, with houses and tile plant in the background. These four prints give a fair idea of the kind of pictures presented in the 1,500 feet of motion picture films of geese which have been taken on the property.

including one of his own boys. After showing them around, I came to the park and called the pheasants, and three beautiful Golden Pheasants came out and just spread their gorgeous plumage. As they strutted across the green lawn, all fairly held their breath at such an eye-feast. I turned to go to the house, made a few steps and changed my mind. The boy said, "Oh father, just wouldn't they look nice in our woods?" The father switched his cud over and said, "I'd like to see them in the woods when I had my old No. 10 shotgun."

Years ago I stocked this township with Ringnecked pheasants, and all the power I had was "Please don't shoot the pheasants." A hunter got on the street car three miles north of my house, and as he quieted down he slapped his hand on his gamesack and remarked, "I've got five of them in here the red-headed blank-blank will never see again!" Now this man is hardly acquainted with me and I know he has nothing particular against me; only he just wanted to curse the man that had given him such a good day's sport.

There is another man in this township that apparently sent word to me in a roundabout way that he had three duck-tags, and if I would give him a dollar each for them, as I did the Esquimaux, I could have the tags. Now these tags were put on young ducks that I raised here, and owing to the water drying up in the north pond that summer, they left early in September and went to this nearby water. But if this man lives until I give him a dollar each for the three tags off these hand-raised pets, he will sure hold the world's record for longevity.

One of the common questions asked around my home is: "How do you understand the birds so well?" Really, the birds are an open book. The question is how to understand humanity. Seventy-five per cent. of the hunters that shoot the overflow of birds from my bird sanctuary can easily be called my enemies, while the fact remains they would never see a goose, let alone shoot one, if I did not feed, pet and harbor them here. But I have this consolation: If I met with their approval—Well, 'nuff said!

This makes me think of Ikie and Jakie. Jakie had apparently been imposed upon. Ikie, trying to console him, said, "Jakie, don't worry. Our Saviour had enemies." "Yes," replied Jakie, "but my Got, look vat they done to him!"

A sanctuary where one expects to entertain water fowl should, of course, be quite a large area of land and water; the reader can plainly see this point; and a natural marsh is, of course, the proper place. But a sanctuary for the non-water birds can be made anywhere in the country or suburbs of a town; possibly a ravine with a small stream running through it would be preferable. A great

many sites can be chosen where the trees and shrubbery are already grown. Personally, I prefer growing my own trees, it is such a pleasure. Five acres makes a nice sanctuary. I would sooner have two five-acre sanctuaries, a mile or a mile and a half apart, on three thousand acres, than one fifteen-acre sanctuary, for the same area of land. These sanctuaries should be on or near the public highway so that the game-keeper could drive to and from them, the same as the mail carrier to the country mail box. This would enable him to visit an almost unlimited number of them every three days. What an enjoyable occupation this certainly would be for him, knowing that during the severe storms every bird in the country was in there, safely under his care. "I had rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness." Or I would sooner be a gamekeeper, caring for the birds in these little sanctuaries, than I would dwell in the Waldorf Astoria, free of charge.

If you contemplate planting one, first summer-fallow the land for one year. Plant evergreen trees, seven feet apart, eight rods wide all around the outside, leaving twelve to fifteen rods square in the centre. Here you will build your feed-racks and feed-bungalows. Set this out with all kinds of fruit-bearing shrubs and vines. Now, with a dog-and-cat-proof fence around the outside, your eyes will be opened as to what you can do with the birds.

I got my trees from the Ontario Forestry Department, costing me less than one dollar per thousand; I cultivated them for five years. The eighth year my trees were so thick you couldn't see a box-car a rod from you.

The fifth year one pair of mourning doves came and built; the ninth year, doves nested by the hundreds, and their sweet, cooing voices continue from early daybreak until the stars appear again.

Of course, to grow a sanctuary from seedlings—trees that are no bigger than ordinary tomato-plants—takes time; but remember, the Great Provider, Himself, couldn't make a four-year-old jackass in ten minutes. All of these things take a little time, but time well spent. Every golf course in America should be a bird sanctuary; just a small clump of shrubs here and there does the trick and brings the songs that you golfers cannot afford to be without.

"Oh, but how can we get the birds to come?" is the great cry. Please leave this to the birds. Don't you worry about them, nor don't run all over America to take care of them. Just build the sanctuary and let them come to you to be taken care of. My experiments here have proven that they will come clear across the continent to be cared for, and that the sanctuary plan is a sure preventive of our birds becoming annihilated by their enemies. Just the other day as I walked through my jungle four beautiful woodcocks flushed



SCOTCH PINES, PLANTED MAY, 1914
Photograph taken July, 1922.

from under the boughs that I pressed back. After an absence of over forty years the dear old woodcock is back on the same soil!

Yes, the sanctuary plan will permit us to have Bob White quail all along southern Canada. Quail in such a place will stand almost any kind of winter. It is simply up to us to take more pleasure in doing such things. It is no longer a question of what can we have, but a question of what will we have.

Remember, you can sit in your parlor with the best piano in America, and if some one doesn't reach out and touch the keys, that instrument will remain dormant, and you will be deprived of the lovely music it is capable of producing.

CHAPTER XXXII.

Our Native Swans.

THE SWANS we usually see in our parks throughout America are not natives of this country, and a great many people are not acquainted with the fact that we still have hundreds of real, beautiful, wild swans at large in this country.

Now in North America there are only two varieties of native swans, the trumpeter and the whistling swans. They are both pure white. Often we hear of a flock of swans being seen with some dark ones among them; these are young birds; swans do not get pure white the first year. The trumpeter swan is by far the larger of the two varieties; this bird weighs between twenty-five and thirty-five pounds, and is well-proportioned, not waddle-y like these European swans that are in our parks. But unfortunately for this, the largest migratory bird in America, it nested in what is now the cultivated parts of our continent; the result is it is almost exterminated. But the whistling swan, which is about one-third smaller than the trumpeter, I am pleased to report is still here by the thousands.

Shortly after I got the geese educated to come here the swans started congregating along the shores of the lake, three miles south, where, as I have previously stated, the geese usually go to roost, and occasionally a flock will follow the geese here in the morning, but I have never been able to induce them to alight, possibly on account of the ponds being small and muddy. There seem to be more of these white beauties every year, and one evening last April when the geese went to the lake, the voices of the swans could be heard at my home, apparently welcoming the geese back to the calm bosom of Lake Erie. Before sunrise next morning I was out to the lake, and as I looked over the bank, about one mile west of Kingsville, here were over three hundred swans feeding in the shallow water, all within a stone's throw of shore; a little farther out was a line of two hundred more; and the sandbar, which is from one-quarter to one-half mile out, was simply white with them for fully half a mile. While it was impossible to count them away out there, yet I am sure there were over a thousand. Remember, I have a powerful pair of glasses, and these birds were not gulls, they were swans; and



THESE WERE "WILD" SWANS. THE WILDNESS SEEMS TO HAVE DISAPPEARED

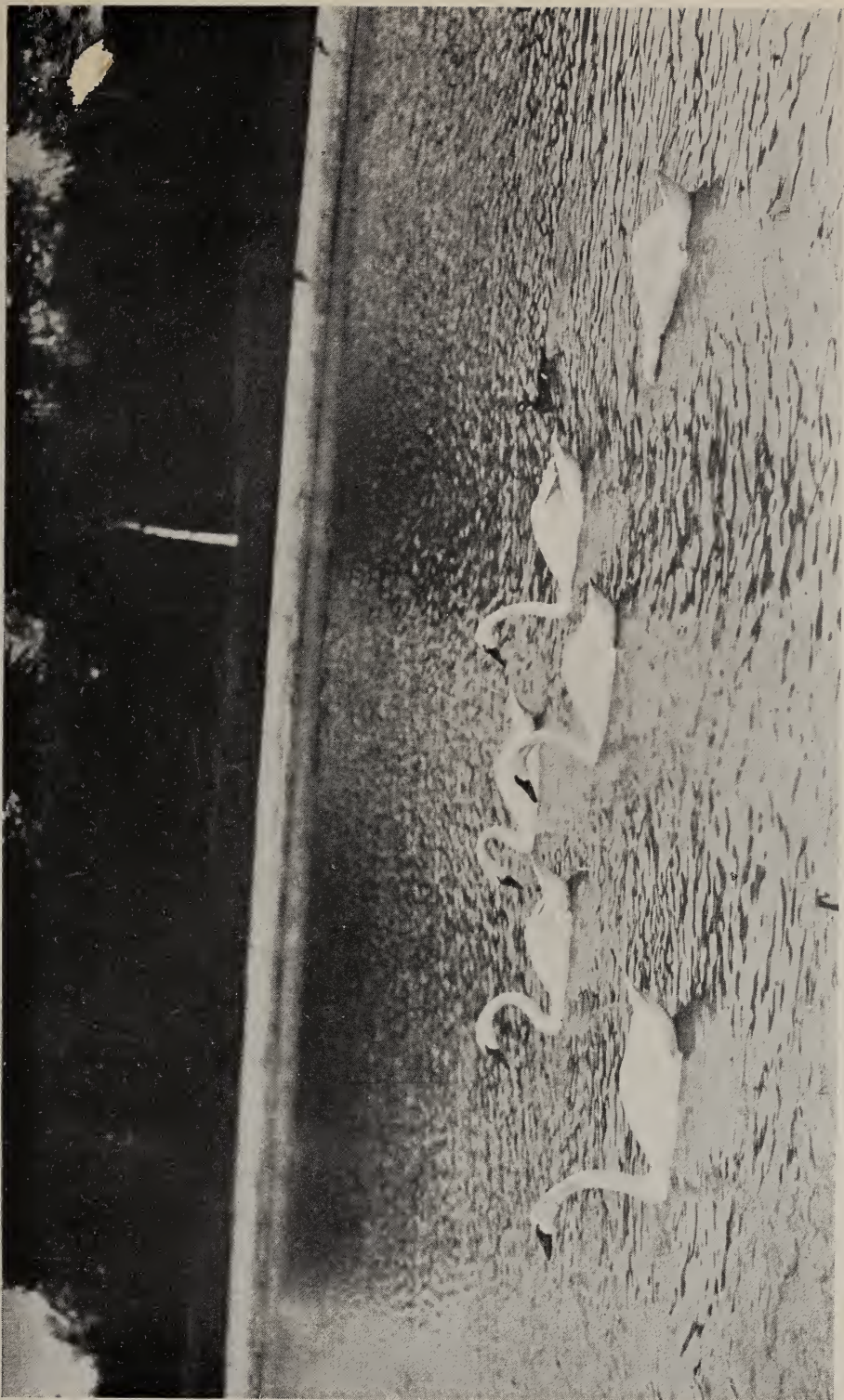
really the bunch of five hundred which I counted in the water did not look one-half the size of the flock that was on the bar.

But the encouraging part of it all is that these birds nest still farther north than the wild geese, therefore there is no danger at that point.

The last few years I have become quite well acquainted with the bird proposition around Niagara Falls, and it is sad to think that so many of our choicest waterfowl are meeting death in this rolling foam. Now I haven't lived there, and there is a whole lot I don't understand about the situation, but it seems that early in the spring these swans come to the open water above the Falls before the rest of the lake is open. Night comes on and they put their heads on their backs and drift, like so many white pillows. By times a bunch ventures a little too far, its members are caught in the rapid water, cannot rise and over the falls they go. Fully seventy-five per cent. are either killed with the ice or are drowned; those that have life enough left crawl upon the icebridge that is formed just below the falls. Now with the iron bridge just below them, and the hundred feet of a foaming falls in front of them, they are apparently bewildered. Not having strength enough to rise straight up they sit there, and gradually grow weaker and weaker, and if the night is frosty, the spray from the Falls simply freezes them into a helpless condition.

Mr. Wm. Hill, of Niagara Falls, told me that one morning last spring there were over forty live swans on the icebridge. Mr. Hill is a man well acquainted with the whole situation, and he got five and expressed them to me, but they were so weak they could hardly stand. One was bruised with the ice and died. Later on two other gentlemen sent me two more. The photograph shows the six swans in my park a few months later. Notice what beauties they are, and they couldn't look worse if they were paid for it, as they have just moulted. The photo shows them on land as well as in the water. Note what neat, trim beauties they are!

Now I am going to put them in my north pond and try to breed them there.



WILD WING-TIPPED SWANS
Happily at home on one of our ponds

CHAPTER XXXIII.

The Line of Migration.

A GREAT many writers that come here report this place as being on the line of bird migration. That is a mistake, for this is no more the migrating line for the birds than Chicago, Detroit or Toronto.

Very true, I am only fifteen miles west of Point Pelee, the most extreme southern part of mainland in Canada, and where thousands of small birds come to cross Lake Erie. But what does a duck or a goose care about hunting a short water flight across Lake Erie, when the latter can rise up and go one thousand miles without alighting?

For thirty-five years of my bloodthirsty life it was my great ambition to shoot a swan to mount with my collection. Did I do it? No. Why? Because very seldom was one ever seen around here. I only know of two being shot in this township, one shot over forty years ago, and the other about twenty-five years ago. Yet last spring when I went up to the lake to see them I could have shot between five and ten at one volley. Not because this is in the line of migration. No; no. But because it is all in the line of education!

The geese have been educated to come here for food and protection, and the swans have educated themselves to know that where the geese alight spells safety for them. And although the wild swans have not lit in my pond yet, I have the satisfaction of knowing that hundreds come within three miles of me, and it has all been done through love and education; for when the wild geese convinced me that they knew me as their deadly enemy, and afterwards showed their love toward me by flying to me from all directions for food and protection, they conquered and won one of the most bloodthirsty and cruel, deadly enemies the birds of North America ever had. And it is not because of the line of migration, but because of that blessed peace, and education, whose doors stand continually open. And if ever this dear old earth is made free from devilish, revengeful fighting, it will be through this same dear love and education, man towards the fowls of the air and the beasts of the field, man towards man, family towards family, and nation towards nation, as compulsory, bayonet-point heathenism always leaves a crimson revenge in its wake.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

Inquiries and Answers.

AS I am a very poor writer and cannot afford a stenographer I am answering, right now, a storm of questions so that I trust I will prevent our female mail-sorters from overloading my mail box.

1. How can I get the wild geese to come to my pond?

If you can get them to alight within a mile, or any reasonable distance away, feed them there, scattering the food while they are absent. After they have been coming regularly for a week or so, go sidling near them with a team of horses as if you were working on the farm. Never drive straight at them, but go quartering past. After you have tried this on a few times during the week and haven't frightened them away, try the same stunt without the team, watching them very closely, and if they turn their breasts to the wind, withdraw, very carefully, not by turning back, but by going quartering away. Always wear the same clothes, and in two or three weeks your birds will get to know you.

Then as you approach anywhere near them, call them, in any way you see fit. They will learn to know your voice. Now you can dress up and wear a stove-pipe hat for aught the geese care. Your voice will quiet them, and by your actions they will know you.

Now gradually move your feed and attractions towards where you want your birds to come, and they will come and will compel you to believe they were glad of the opportunity.

2. Why do you put your full address on the goose and duck tags?

Because it has been a success, while a number is much harder to trace. I have had dozens of rings and tags of different kinds sent to me that were taken off pigeons and wild ducks, and the numbers could be easily read. I advertised them time and again, and up to date have not received one word of proof as to who put them on. Moreover when you have the stamp made, one stroke of the hammer on top of mother's flat-iron completes the trick, and your post office address is the only real way to do it right.

3. Where can I get a stamping outfit?

Almost any stencil manufacturer can fit you out. I have two

stamps, one for the small birds, making letters about the size of small newsprint, and for the ducks and geese the stamp is fully five times as large. I also have a set of individual letters and figures for stamping the Scripture text and so forth. I don't think my whole outfit cost me over twenty-five dollars.

4. I saw a bird the other day; it was about so big and from where I stood it looked to be ringed, streaked and striped. What was it?

The woods and fields are full of such beauties, and I am acquainted with them all, but do not know them by their proper names. Dear mother taught me the names of our commonest birds. That was the only way I had of knowing them. I, of course, had a name for every one. The Nuthatch I called the tree-creeper; the Wood-thrush was called the brown linnet; the Flicker I called a fiddler; and the buzz of a rattlesnake in the long grass automatically called my bare feet upon a log.

5. What bird lays first in the spring?

Here in southern Ontario, the great horned owl is the first I know of to nest in the trees, and the horned lark is the first to nest on the ground. Of the latter, I have seen the young able to fly on April 3rd.

6. What birds breed the fastest?

Bob White quail are the fastest breeding birds I know of. If not molested they will beat the English sparrows more than double. The quail raises two broods a year, and quite often three. I know a pair of quail that reared thirty-eight young in their first two broods. These were in charge of the old male bird on October the 10th, while the female had a brood of tiny chicks that I could not count.

What handicaps this little potato-bug-destroyer has! She is exposed to all kinds of enemies the whole year round, especially during December, January and February, when nature is clothed in her white robe (Bob cannot change his color) while the English sparrow, or flying rat, has a hole prepared that he lines with feathers and only has to come out an hour or two during the day for food.

7. What are the best trees and shrubs to attract birds?

This depends largely on the trees and vines your soil will produce. My soil is clay loam, first class corn ground. I am planting mulberries and elderberries, wild grapes and red cedars, and some sumach which grows fairly well; but sumach will, of course, do better in sandy soil.

I know of nothing to equal the mulberries. I have mulberry

trees only five years old and it is hard to believe the amount of bird food one tree will yield, starting to ripen about June 15th and continuing all through the fruit season, or, in other words, from six to ten weeks.

The red cedar is another tree we must have, as it affords shelter as well as food, the berries, like the wild grapes, hanging all winter.

Where the climate will permit, by all means plant some mountain ash. The big, crimson clusters of fruit hanging on the mountain ash trees in northern Ontario are more beautiful to me than the great Woolworth, or the General Motors office building of Detroit; and what they look like to the hundreds of birds that feed on them during the fall and winter months can only be imagined when we are returning from a moose-hunt, late at night, cold, tired, and hungry.

But the two outstanding ones, to me, are mulberries and wild grapes, the berries for summer, and the grapes for the winter.

8. How can I get the birds to come to my window in the winter?

Make two movable self-servers and nail each to a top of a barrel. Feed cracked nuts, a little suet, etc.

Set your feed-racks a rod or two apart, back among your shrubbery. As soon as you have a nice bunch of birds coming keep moving your racks toward your house; this can be done by just moving the farther one around in front of the other, each time.

9. How long does it take our common birds to hatch and fly from the nest?

Robins set from thirteen to fourteen days, and fly in about two weeks. But wild birds are not like our domestic fowls. If the latter leaves the nest, or stays off one night, that brood is about sure to all die. But if a robin is disturbed, such as staying off the nest for six or eight hours at a time, the young are very apt to hatch. I have known cases of this kind when the eggs didn't hatch until the fifteenth day.

I once set a hen on nine wild duck eggs. She started out fine, and set steadily for two weeks. Then she changed her mind, so I changed hens; but number two was no better. I then took the eggs and put them under hen number three, who finished the job on the thirty-second day, when seven out of the nine hatched, but they were very weak. Yet I managed to raise five of them to mature ducks. Duck eggs should hatch in twenty-eight days.

Barn swallows fly in about thirty-five days from the time the first eggs are laid; yet it must be remembered that young swallows must be able to float in the air before they leave the nest.

The chipping sparrow is about the fastest bird I know. On June 16th a female started building in a little cedar tree one rod from her

other four babies that were still in the nest under the care of her mate. At noon the 17th she had her nest completed and one egg in it; June 18th, at 9 a.m. there were two eggs in the nest; and at 7 a.m., June 20th, she was setting on four eggs. At 3 p.m., July 1st, all four eggs had hatched, and on July 11th the four baby birds flew out of the nest into the other trees.

The mourning doves only lay two eggs at a setting, but still they breed fast as they raise four or five pairs each year. I have never seen three eggs in a mourning dove's nest; we quite often see one egg, but this is a case where some nest-robbing bird stole the first egg. On July 23rd two young doves flew from a nest; on the 25th and 26th the mother laid two more eggs in the same nest; on August 9th the two young were hatched, and on the 22nd both flew out. This spring was very backward, but there were young doves larger than sparrows in a nest right near my house on April the 19th. And they keep on laying right into September. I have tagged the young doves, but have only heard from one; that was killed in Georgia. Last winter a few doves wintered here with us.

I might also say that I have tagged dozens of young robins but have only heard from one; that was killed in Missouri.

But you can just rest assured where birds get peaceable treatment and shelter, all that can return do so. This can be said of all species, from the wren to the Canada goose.

10. What birds lay the largest eggs according to their size?

Killdeers and sand pipers lay the largest eggs according to their size of any bird I am acquainted with.

11. What is the most powerful bird for its size?

The screech owl. I have known a screech owl that evidently did not weigh over four ounces, to kill a domestic fowl that weighed over six pounds, the owl alighting on the hen's head at night, eating her eyes out, and eventually killing her.

12. What do you mean by pinioning birds?

Clipping means just simply clipping the wing feathers to prevent the bird from flying, but pinioning means to take the wing off, bone and all, at the first joint. This is usually done when birds are young, before the wings have developed. A sharp needle and thread is used for tying the two arteries. Then with the scissors the wing is snipped off. But remember, when this is once done, that bird can never fly again, as the wing cannot grow on any more than an amputated thumb upon your hand.

If a bird is slightly pinioned it may not be able to fly when it is fat and heavy, yet this same bird may get thin and on a windy day rise up and make fairly good headway in the air.

This operation may look cruel to some, yet while birds are young, before they can fly, their wings are apparently numb and they do not mind the operation at all. If birds are to be kept in captivity it is the proper thing to do.

But remember, one bird in the bush is worth ten in the hand; so do not let us figure on keeping them in captivity more than we can possibly help; for that is cruel.

13. How long do birds live?

This of course depends largely upon the variety of bird. Wild geese will undoubtedly live to be as old as a human being. I have two breeding pairs with their wings pinioned; three of these birds were originally wild, but Tom Johnson (Jack Johnson's son) was hatched here on May 17th, 1907. He paired off in 1911 with a goose that was wing-tipped in 1909, and old David and his sweetheart were both wing-tipped in 1911. So you see the youngest one of these four birds is at least thirteen, as they would be not less than a year old when they came here, but I have absolute proof that Tom Johnson is now over sixteen. And none of these pets shows any sign of old age. In fact, they play and frolic about the premises with their families as if they were the biggest boys and girls of the bunch.

Wild ducks will live to be over fifteen. Old Susan, the mother of the Mulberry family, was hatched here in May, 1909. I pinioned her. She raised a family every season until this year, but I have noticed that the last two winters affected her very much; in fact, now, when I go out to them, she acts as if she would like me to give her a cane to help herself up the bank. Another fact about her is that in 1921 she laid only seven eggs and raised six young, five of them drakes; the last year she dropped one lower and laid only six eggs; all hatched, but were very weak; one died in the nest but the other five lived to migrate. But all were drakes. Therefore, ten out of the last eleven ducks old Susan raised were drakes.

Another old black duck hatched in 1905 was killed by a great horned owl in January, 1918; she was fat and healthy when killed. I got the owl.

A greenhead drake came here in 1907. One wing was badly shot so I took it off. This drake died in 1917.

But in every case they show signs of weakness first during the winter; therefore it is plain to me that if they have the use of both wings and can migrate to a warm climate, wild ducks will live for fifteen and possibly twenty years.

However, this is a point that I don't think we hunters need worry a second about, as I am sure not one per cent. of our game birds die of old age. Out of the four hundred and forty ducks I have tagged, only three lived to carry the tag six years, to my know-

ledge, seventy-five per cent. of the tags being returned in less than three years.

14. How shall I build a martin house?

A Martin house can be built almost any style desired, say on a miniature scale of your own house; supposing your house is thirty feet square, build your bird house on the inch scale, which will be thirty inches square; or if you want to build a smaller house, build it on the half-inch scale.

By all means have a system to build on. I once heard a colored man say he didn't fear the average human family near as much as he did a yellowjackets' nest, "'cos de hohnets am so doggone well ohganized."

The rooms in a martin house should be not less than six, and not over eight, inches square. The door should be level with the floor, same as our dwellings, the doorstep or verandah one-half inch lower than the floor or door. Door should be one and one-half inches wide, made in any style desired.

White is the best color to paint, trimmed to suit your own taste.

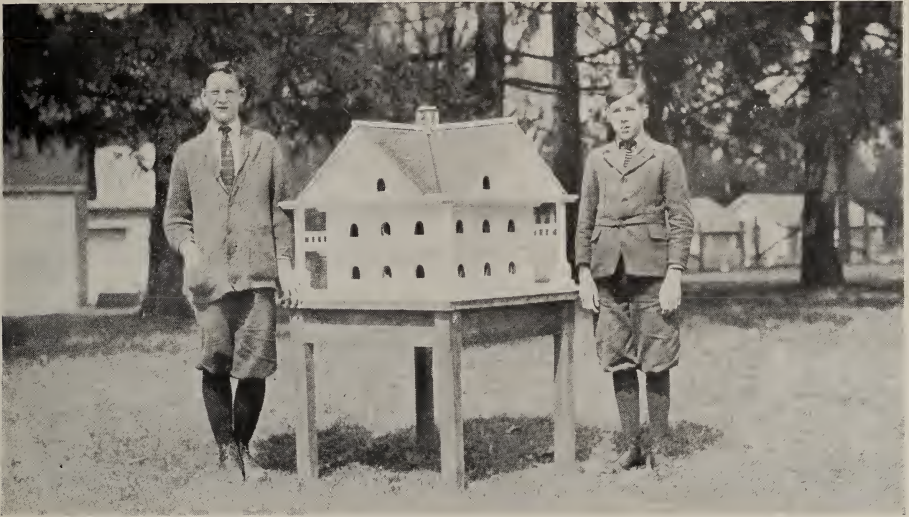
To set house up, first put in two ordinary fenceposts, about four to six inches apart, four feet in the ground and four out. Now put the martin house pole between the two posts, with pole about three inches from the ground. Bore half-inch holes right through all three, one hole about three inches from the top of fence-posts, another about six inches from the ground, and bolt all three together through these holes. This leaves the pole high and dry, and by taking out the top bolt and loosening the bottom one, it permits you to raise and lower the house very easily when you want to clean it out or paint it in the fall. If left up, stop the door to keep out the "flying rats."

Now don't think it a difficult job to build a martin house. It is a sunny pastime.

Some years ago I happened to be in Brantford, Ontario, when a telephone call requested me to come over to the School for the Blind and give them a talk on birds. A second thought caused me to answer, Yes, and the accompanying plate will prove that these dear children listened to me, and I can assure you I listened to them, as several of these smart lads told me how and where they had "seen" different things. At the close, a vote of thanks was moved; the seconder, a youth of about sixteen, used some words I shall never forget. He said, "It is a pleasure to me to second this motion, but coupled with it I just wish to say, dear Uncle Jack Miner, that although we have never seen the sun, we are not blind; we can plainly see all you have been telling us. People often speak of the night being dark. With us there is no darkness. It is all light."

In a few months the boys sent me the accompanying photograph of a martin house constructed by their own hands.

This last June I visited a few towns on the Canadian side of the St. Lawrence River. I took particular notice of the beautiful little parks, the neat way in which they were kept, etc. Really, fifty dollars put into a nice, neat martin house would add thousands of dollars to the attractiveness of these grounds, for I never saw more purple martins in my life where there were no bird houses than there were around those quaint, ancient Canadian towns, but not a bird house. The martins appeared to be building in the eavetroughs and the cornices of some of the old buildings.



MARTIN HOUSE BUILT BY THE BOYS STANDING BESIDE IT, BOTH OF WHOM ARE TOTALLY BLIND

15. How fast do birds fly?

This is a question hard to answer and prove, and one upon which we may differ. I have heard men say that geese migrate at the rate of one hundred and twenty miles an hour. While this may be true, I have no earthly reason to believe it.

My home is three miles north of the lake; these geese go to the lake to roost and in the morning they rise, high and as they reach the shore there is always some one with a high-power rifle to greet them; these volleys of shot on a still morning will tell you the very second the geese have reached shore and are coming our way; and in every case, it will be over three minutes before the geese get to my home.

Moreover, when they start for Hudson Bay I have time and again wired ahead of them, and on three different occasions I have got

returns, and if they were the same geese I wired ahead of, they were travelling between fifty and sixty miles an hour.

Capt. Eddie Rickenbacker, the aviator, tells me that he has often overtaken geese in the air, and the only way they could travel one hundred miles an hour was by dropping, which they did to avoid him.

Because a goose was killed at Hudson Bay three days after we tagged it here, and because another one was killed at the Belcher Islands, Hudson Bay, four days after being tagged here, at my home, this does not prove anything, as we have no proof how long these birds lingered here after being tagged, nor how long they were there before being shot. But there is one thing I am quite certain of: That the great majority of them make the flight from my home to Hudson Bay without coming down, and I firmly believe they go about fifty miles an hour, and not two miles a minute as some report them to.

16. What became of the Passenger Pigeon?

This bird was about twice the size of the mourning dove, and so much the same in looks, ways and habits, that the mourning dove could be called a miniature pigeon.

In the early '70's these pigeons migrated through Ohio in countless numbers, I might say in clouds. We came to Canada in '78, and I am sure I have not seen five hundred pigeons since.

Some people advance the theory that a storm blew them all into the lake. Why, bless your life, there is no lake in America that would hold them all!

I am firm in my belief that they were exterminated by a contagious disease.

The last three pigeons I shot, I shot in the fall of 1884. I was then nineteen years of age, and have a distinct recollection of what they were like. These birds were all three diseased, and were not over two-thirds the actual size of the healthy passenger pigeon. I took them home, but mother said they were not fit for food.

In northern Canada the snowshoe hare, or native rabbit, becomes so numerous about every seven or eight years that a disease sets in and fully ninety-nine out of a hundred—yes, I might say nine hundred and ninety-nine out of a thousand—of them die off. I have seen the skeletons lie in the swamps by the dozens, and when the snow came I hunted, three weeks later, and only saw the tracks of two rabbits. This same exterminating-disease system has controlled the native rabbit in Canada, and they have died off on an average of every seven or eight years, as far back as man has any knowledge of them.

Whether this is a correct explanation of the disappearance of

the passenger pigeon, or not, I have heeded the warning, and have arranged my ponds on the bathtub system, and during the late summer months the water is all let out, and the ponds allowed to dry up; then I sow wheat and rye extremely thick in the bottom to purify the soil, as the sun, and the cropping of ground, will purify the soil the same as circulation will purify water. The overflow pipe is then closed, and when the fall rains come and raise the spring, the underland drain, which is laid from the pond to the spring, floods it over, and preserves the green food in the bottom of the pond for the birds when they arrive, as this green food in the bottom of the pond will not rot but will keep fresh so long as the water remains icy cold.

17. Whereabouts in Canada is your home? And what can you raise there?

My home is two miles north of Kingsville, Ontario. Kingsville is a neat little beauty spot nestled on the north shore of Lake Erie, due north of Sandusky, Ohio, and twenty-eight miles south-east of Detroit, Michigan. Its population is about two thousand, with three well-attended churches, and two first-class hotels.

By the way, Kingsville is the most southerly town in the Dominion of Canada.

Now we can raise almost anything here, from a flagpole to a boiling-hot political quarrel, but our chief crop is corn. We condense it into hogs, and ship them just as they run. Then we bank the money to buy more land to grow more corn to feed more hogs, and so forth, and so forth.

CHAPTER XXXV.

Sportsmanship.

MY BOOK would not be complete without giving you a handful of the material that built the foundation for my enjoyable life.

Now, as I see it, there is a great difference between a sport and a sportsman. As to the sport, I think the less said the better. But the word Sportsman spells a great many great words; first of all it spells *others* and *self-sacrifice*, for to be a real sportsman one cannot stand alone.

When I was a lad eight years of age and slept with my two brothers, I was awakened one morning by the touch of father's powerful hand, and he whispered, "Jack, do you want to go with me for a pigeon hunt?" and my bare feet were soon on the floor. About sunrise found father and me crouched in an old fencerow that bordered a wheat stubble, and the pigeons alighting, or trying to alight, on two dead-topped hickory trees that were in range of us. As they would hover, father would give them both barrels; and really, he made it rain pigeons for a while. Soon my little gamesack and father's hunting-coat pockets were filled to the limit and we were on our way back home, all smiles, and anxious to get there to tell how it all happened.

Father promised me when these pigeons were all eaten up he and I would go again. About the fourth day (or morning, I should say), we were off again; but to my disappointment father had invited another Englishman to go along, Mr. Thomas Perkins. Father called him Tommy. I was more disgusted than ever when we arrived at the shooting grounds, for what did father do but put Tommy in the same hiding and shooting place that we had occupied a few mornings previous, right between the two hickory trees, while he and I went across the field and watched by a big dead elm, where we had only seen a few flocks alight the previous morning. You see the pigeons would alight on these trees before flying down into the stubble.

The fun soon started. I say "fun" but to me it was a clear case of disgust, for every flock that came went to the two hickory trees, and father would almost lose control of himself, laughing,

and chuckling over the way Tommy was rolling them down. "There" he said, "I am sure he killed eight that lick!"

Finally a flock or two came our way, and out of the four shots father fired we got only twelve, and really the dear man did not seem to be watching our side of the field, but got all his enjoyment out of his friend's success.

Finally Tommy waved his hand to us to go over, and as these two met, each tried to talk the faster. But as for me, I was disgusted right from my bare feet to my red hair; I did not have my little game-sack half full! However, I helped pick up pigeons and soon we were off for home. But every fence we came to, the morning's shoot was rehearsed by these two old English sportsmen. When we came to the spot where each went his way, Tommy reached out his hand and gripped father's in a firm, heart-warming way, as he said, "John, I want to thank you from the bottom of my 'eart. That's been the nicest bit of pigeon shooting, John, I hever 'ad." Then as he turned to go he stopped very suddenly. "Oh, 'ere," he said; "I don't want more than a half dozen of these birds, and you have a big family; 'ere, Jack, put um in your bag." And really the dear man loaded me down with pigeons.

That morning's sport did not stop there, but for the next forty-five years I had the enjoyment of hearing father occasionally rehearse the pleasure of seeing Tommy roll the pigeons down. And thus I was raised to know that when one invites another on a hunt, he is your guest, and the more pleasure your guest has, the greater your accomplishment.

Now I am a man that stands five feet, ten inches, and weighs about one hundred and eighty-five pounds; but this I am certain of: Any sportsman would have to be a bigger man to hold a bigger and a better time than I have had.

On the other hand, this earth does not produce bigger and better men than it has been my privilege to hunt and sleep with in the wilds of America, and I do not think there is a better place in this world to find out who you are associating with than when on a hunting expedition.

After my brother and I were accidentally separated I thought very little of going to the wilds again; but a bunch of my friends came to me and insisted that I go with them. As a result, a small party was organized and I went along, as what I considered a guest, for I was allowed to do anything I saw fit; they even carried the water, did all the cooking and sawed the wood, allowing me to do the splitting of it, as I understood the axe maybe a little the best. To say the least, we had one of those enjoyable outings, a good desire

to go, plenty of food and plenty of game, and a good desire to come home.

After we were home and settled down with our loved ones again, one evening a rap came to my door, and on turning the knob, who should be there but my dear old hunting party, not loaded down with moose-meat, but with oysters, and they surprised me by their presence. But my surprise was still greater when one of them rose up from the table, called me their leader, and read the following address:

“Our dear Gorilla Chief”

This, in all probability, will be the last meeting of the Quebec hunting party for 1901. If we should be permitted, in another year, to go again to the wilds of Quebec, there will possibly be some changes in our company—new members added, and some of our present members unable to be with us.

We wish to express to you, our leader, the thanks which are your due, for the kindness shown us all on our hunting excursion and ask you to accept this present as a token of our appreciation. We know that we could not have had a leader more thoughtful of our comfort and pleasure.

It is with grateful hearts that we remember that each was the equal of the others in your estimation, that no rough language was allowed in camp, and that when Sunday came round, no guns were shot off and the hymns of “home, sweet home” were sung [and enjoyed by all.

That you may be permitted to lead hunting parties into Quebec for many years to come is the sincere wish of

LEONARD MALOTT,
JAMES DOAN,
WESLEY ULCH,
ELIHU SCRATCH, Sec.

Actually, up till that minute I had had no thought of them looking upon me as their leader. The words contained in the address filled my living room, and I could hardly reply. But my thoughts drifted back to that September morning of 1873; and if this address were in its proper place, it would be engraved on the tombstones of those two dear old men who set me such a self-sacrificing example of good sportsmanship on that little pigeon hunt, so long ago.



I LOVE THE BIRDS AND THEY HAVE COME TO ME



I PLANT ROSES, AND THEY ARCH MY PATH WITH THEIR FRAGRANT BLOOM



BUT BEST OF ALL I LOVE BOYS, AND BOYS LOVE ME IN RETURN
This photograph is of my Sunday school class twenty years ago

CHAPTER XXXVI.

Conclusion.

IN CLOSING, I wish to say to my many friends that I have done as you requested: I have written the book. And have made many mistakes, often repeating myself when I had volumes of untouched material; yet I have done the best I could.

And to the purchaser, don't think your money is thrown away; for if I get a profit it will surely go towards helping our migratory birds over the top.

On going to the publisher I expect to order a few thousand copies. If I see that these are appreciated by the public I may write a booklet on Boys and Home, although I have nothing from which to write but practical experience, being just a grown-up boy myself; mother said I would never be of age. Yet I feel fully qualified to deal briefly with this most important subject, knowing that H-o-u-s-e does not spell Home.

I can sympathize with all classes, especially him who thinks himself down and out, for I have had black and blue proof that a good, swift kick in the right time and place will give a bare-foot boy a good lift in

T H E E N D.