

Bird-Lore

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EDITOR'S NOTE.—The photographs of Passenger Pigeons appearing in this number of BIRD-LORE form a unique and important addition to our knowledge of the appearance in life of this beautiful and now lost species. They were made by Mr. J. G. Hubbard, who generously contributes them to BIRD-LORE, at Woods Hole, Massachusetts, in the summer of 1898, and represent birds in the aviary of Dr. C. O. Whitman which are referred to in the succeeding articles. The birds were in perfect condition, and the photographs are believed to be adequate portraits of a species which, if we except the single individual still living in the Cincinnati Zoölogical Garden, will never be photographed again.—F. M. C.

A Vanished Race

By MORITZ FISCHER

IN the memorable year of grace 1534, Jaques Cartier of St. Malo, master pilot of Francis I, king of France, entered the Gulf of St. Lawrence in search of a waterway to India for his royal patron. Coasting along the eastern shore of an extensive island, he one day landed to explore the country, and found that, to use his own words, the land was of the best temperature that it may be possible to see, and of great warmth, and that there were many Turtle Doves, Wood Pigeons, and other birds.

This casual reference to a few birds observed by the intrepid Breton near Cape Kildare on Prince Edward Island opens the marvelous and fragmentary story of a creature that ranged the unknown continent in flights of stupendous magnitude, and became known to later generations as the Passenger Pigeon.

When the great captains of the sixteenth century, of whom Cartier ranks as one of the first, discovered and explored the mainland of North America, and for more than two hundred years afterward, an unbroken forest of broad-leaved trees covered its eastern half. Fringed by evergreen wildwoods to the north, its western border, much indented by spacious grasslands or prairies, spread its verdant tents northward to the Height of Land and beyond. In this mixed forest there flourished here and there, as soil and climate favored, and indeed compelled, woods composed entirely of one species, and holding their own by shading out all other kinds. Such were the beech and oak forests of the Ohio and Mississippi Valley, those of maple and chestnut east of the

Notes from Field and Study

Bird-House Tenants

A bird-house has stood for several years on a pole in front of our "Wickiup" in the woods on the outskirts of Washington, D. C. It is a ten-room Martin house built in Jacob's best style, but so far not a Martin has deigned to occupy it, though there is a large colony only half a mile distant. I had supposed that one reason was that the Bluebirds came early and were already in possession when the Martins arrived, but this year the severe winter so sadly reduced the Bluebirds that not one appeared around the house, yet still no Martins visited the premises.

The bird-house has ten rooms, and, though each of these has in turn been occupied, there has been no time in all the years when two families were living there together. In 1911, the Bluebirds came first and dallied in the neighborhood for a month. Just as they finally began building, a pair of House Wrens appeared, which had occupied a room in the house late the previous season. An active warfare ensued that lasted for several days, and had not yet been decided when a pair of Great-crests took a hand in the scrimmage. These latter had nested for years in the woods behind the house, but this season they determined to come out into the open. They routed both Bluebird and House Wren, built in one of the rooms of the Martin, and successfully reared their family. The House Wren then retreated to a knothole in a nearby fence-post, where a Carolina Chickadee had raised a brood the previous year. The hole was so small that the Wren could not bring in even one stick, and laid the eggs on the remains of the Chickadee nest.

The young Wrens left the nest two days before the young Great-crests were ready to launch out into the world. Those two days were days of trouble for the

Great-crests. The Wrens wanted the bird-box for their second brood, and were not bashful in proclaiming the fact. Mr. Wren would alight on the bushes under the house and sing his loudest. Accepting the challenge, out would come Mrs. Great-crest and drive him off, only to find him back again as soon as she returned to her household duties. After two days she carried off her family, and within an hour the Wrens began bringing sticks. In due time they departed with their second brood, and in less than a week the Bluebirds appeared and took an apartment for their second venture.—WELLS W. COOKE, *Washington, D. C.*

A Narrow Escape

It is not often that one sees attempted murder in the broad daylight in New York City, at least within the confines of a theological seminary.

As I was crossing the quadrangle of Union Theological Seminary (at Broadway and 120th Street) on the afternoon of Oct. 28, I became aware of something swooping like an arrow toward the ground. The next instant I heard a feeble bird-cry of terror, and the sound of soft bodies striking the stone walls of the building. As I ran forward to discover what had happened, a male Sparrow Hawk, disturbed by my approach, sailed past and, mounting easily to the chapel tower, perched on one of the pinnacles and peered down to await developments.

At the base of the wall lay a Chickadee flat on his back, with bill open, gasping for breath, his black eyes shining and his heart fluttering with mortal fear. Picking him up, I soon ascertained that no bones were broken and that his chief difficulty was shock and loss of breath. Meanwhile the hawk, foiled of his prey, spread wings for other haunts and sailed disdainfully away.

The Chickadee spent the rest of the

afternoon in my room in a large box, with plenty of holes for air and with abundant food and drink. When I returned to him about dusk and opened the box, he hopped out on my finger, ruffled his feathers, and looked about. Thence he hopped to my shoulder, then to my head, and finally spread his wings and fluttered to the picture-moulding.

After seeing him fly easily about the room for several minutes, I directed him toward the open window and saw him disappear in the twilight, apparently none the worse for his narrow escape.—TERTIUS VANDYKE, *New York City*.

Another November Black-Throated Blue Warbler

Reading the note on 'A November Black-throated Blue Warbler,' by Miss Isabel D. Martin, in the March-April 1912 number of *BIRD-LORE*, prompts me to add that I had a Black-throated Blue Warbler that very same day. It was caught by my brother in the upper hall of our home, about 11 A.M. It was a male bird in fine plumage and apparently in the best of condition. This bird was seen by a family of five, and kept in captivity until the middle of the afternoon, when I liberated it.

We had a severe wet snow-storm the night before, and perhaps it sought shelter. Could there have been a small wave of these birds at that time? It would be interesting to know if any other observations or records were made.—GEORGE P. ELLS, *Norwalk, Conn.*

Additional Notes on Montana Bobolinks

In view of the fact that the range of the Bobolink in the East is believed to be decreasing, bird-lovers generally will be gratified to know that the numbers of this rare song bird in the West are apparently increasing. This is the case in the section where I live, Gallatin Valley, Montana. In 1888-1890 Richmond and Knowlton found but one flock here, while in 1908-1909 Saunders noted

them in many places throughout the valley.

The birds were a little later than usual in coming this spring (1912). On the evening of May 28, a favoring breeze brought to my ears the tinkling melody of their song. As they fly at night in migrating, they had probably been in the meadow all day. Taking my field-glass, I went out to take a census of the flock. Walking from one side of the meadow to the other, I counted twelve birds, eleven of which were males. Assuming that every Jack has his Jill, this would mean 11 pairs—the largest flock of arrivals I have ever seen in this vicinity.

The conditions here, both natural and artificial, during the breeding season, are quite favorable for the birds. Severe storms, which might destroy the eggs or young, are not frequent; and their natural enemies—as owls, skunks, minks, weasels, and the stray house-cat—are not numerous. Then the hay harvest comes so late here that the young birds are not in much danger of being caught by the sickle, unless it should be a belated nest. A couple of days before the hay was cut this year, I visited the meadow and found the young birds strong on the wing. By the last of August the flock had started on its long southern journey.—NELSON LUNDWALL, *Bozeman, Montana*.

A Meadowlark's Unusual Nest-Site

During the summer of 1909, while target practice was being conducted by the U.S. Marine Corps at the range of the Bay State Rifle Association at Wakefield, Mass., I had occasion to observe an unusual nest-site, and the action of the parent birds through trying times.

On account of low ground on the range, it was necessary to elevate the firing point at many places. This was done by raising low mounds of earth, about three feet high, and three feet wide and many yards long, so as to accommodate a line of men. The range that these firing mounds were on was used for the skirmish run.