

AVITAJUNA

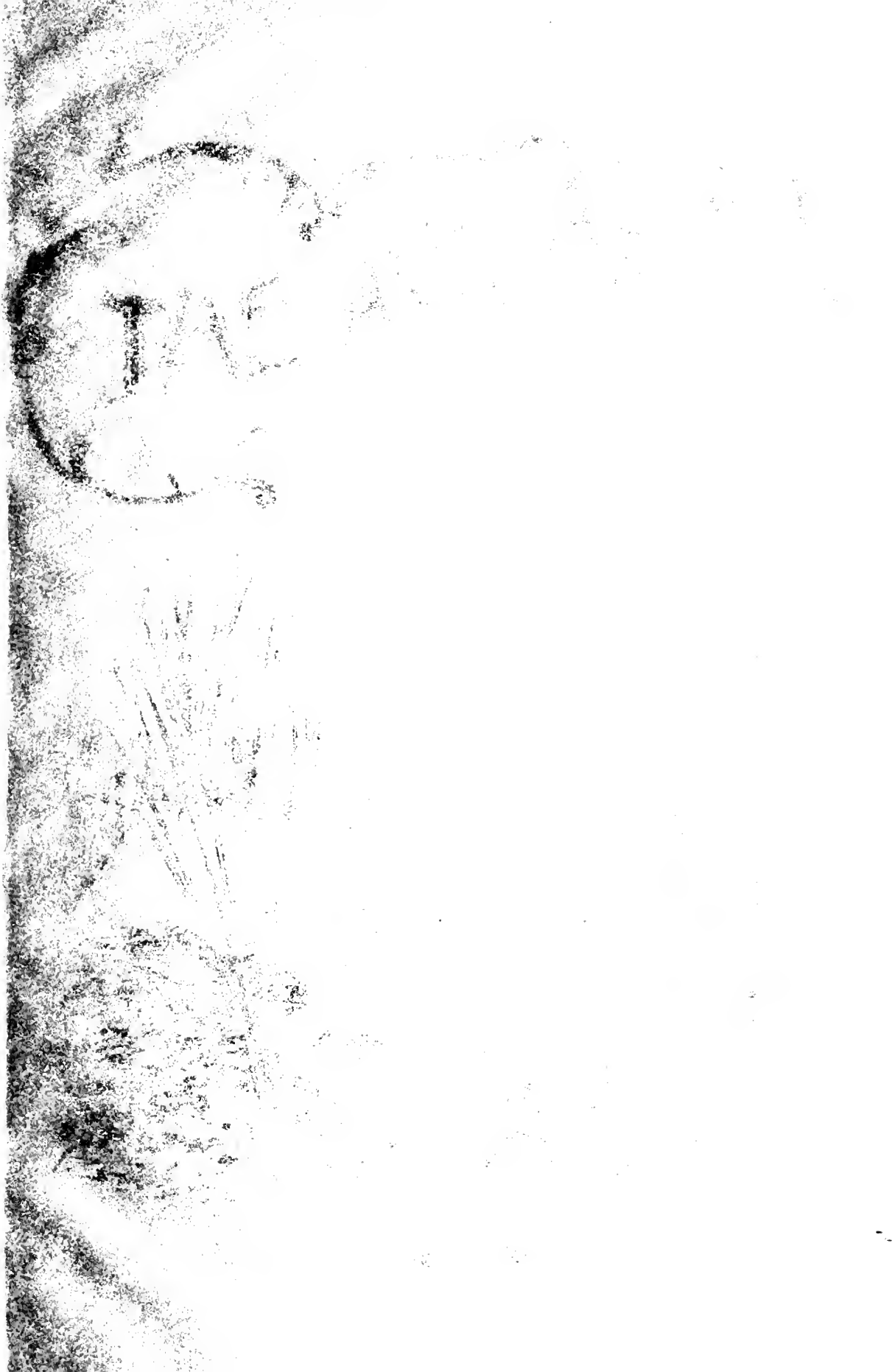
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# THE AVIFAUNA

Published by  
W. A. Hoffman  
Los Angeles Cal.



E. W. Currier Del.

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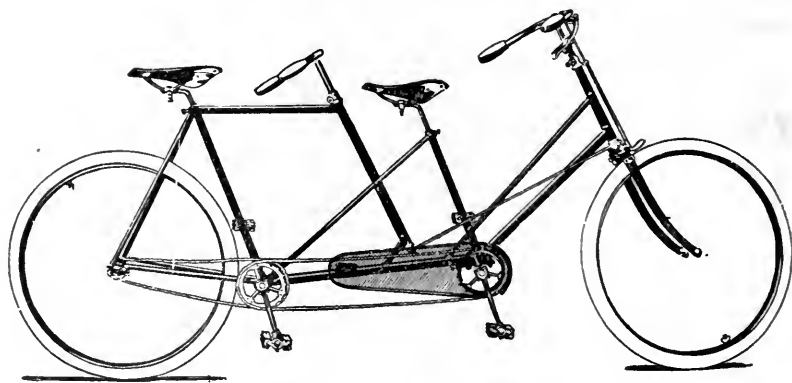
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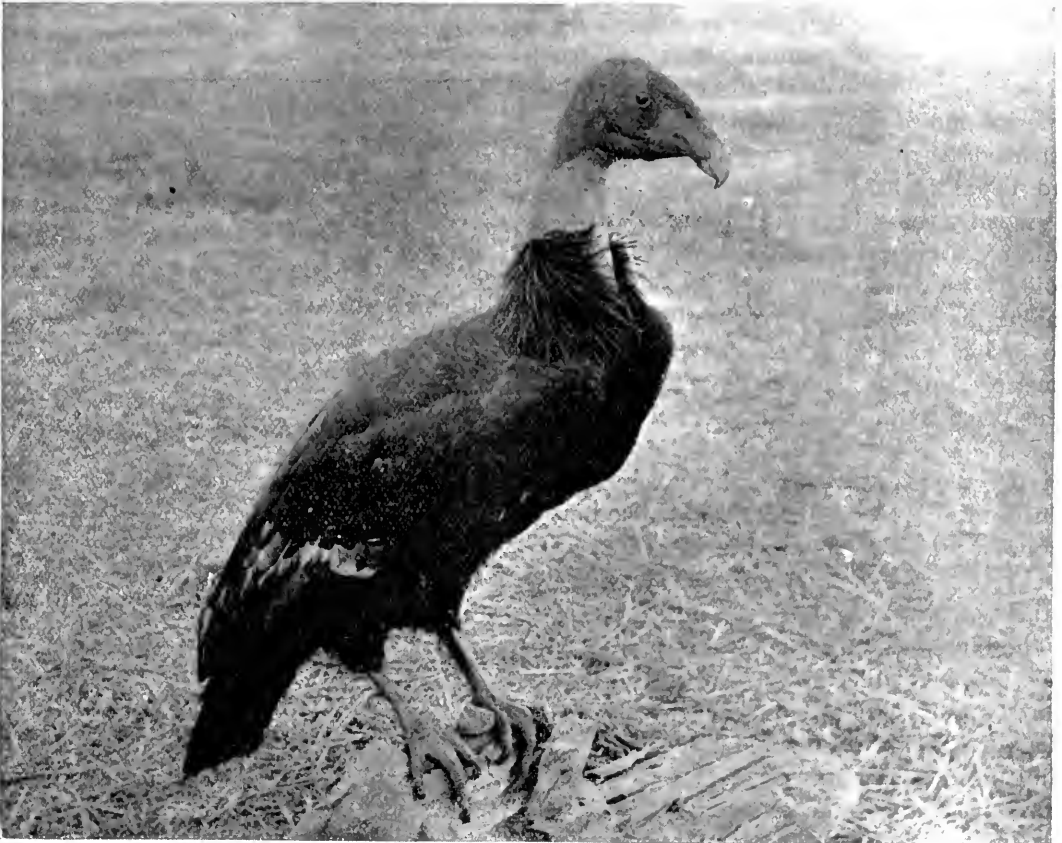


THE AVIFAUNA

*Vol. 1, No. 2.*

*Los Angeles, Cal., October, 1895.*

ONE DOLLAR  
PER YEAR.



**CALIFORNIA CONDOR.**  
(From Collection of G. FREN MORCOM.)



CALIFORNIA VULTURE.

Mounted by Thos. Shooter.

### Notes on California Condors.

**A**LTHOUGH this bird is now comparatively rare, and as Dr. Brewer remarks "The single species composing this very distinct genus belongs to western North America and so far as known has the most restricted distribution of any large raptorial bird in the world.

Virtually the skins and eggs are of extraordinary divideration and value to our ornithologists and oologists. Of the skins Los Angeles has probably the largest number in proportion to population, of any city in America, no less than eight perfect specimens being found in our private collections. Likewise Los Angeles boasts of the possession of two out of the three known eggs contained in all North American collections public or private. (The class of ornithologists residing in the home of the AVIFAUNA is therefor obvious.)

The illustration on page 17 is of a bird now in the collection of Mr. G. Frean Morcom. It was killed near Julian, San Diego Co., Cal. on June 2nd, 1888 and is an adult female, measuring 3 ft. 7 1-10 inches length, 9 ft. 2 7-10 inches in extent, weight 21 pounds. The half Tone on this page is of a male bird shot April 21, 1895, by Mr. J. M. Henry with a 38 caliber revolver about seven miles northeast of Santa Monica, Cal. Its weight was 27 pounds, extent 9 ft. 8 inches.

This Vulture was perched on a rock at the time and was shot by Mr. H. from his

horse while ascending the canyon. Notwithstanding these birds are generally quite wary, the one in question showed no fear so that it was approached within about 30 feet before attempting to rise.

The condor is variously described as to size and weight. Prof. Ridgway gives the extent as 8½ to nearly 11 feet, weight from 20 to 25 lbs. In the Nidiologist of February, Mr. Geo. F. Breninger of Santa Cruz, Cal., reports shooting an adult bird which measured 11 feet from tip to tip.

One of the more noticable differences between this species and the Condor of the Andes is the absence in this variety of the crest or comb found on its more tropical cousin.

Our colored plate of the egg is a splendid reproduction of the specimen collected for Mr. Shields in April last, by Mr. O. W. Howard of this city. It was obtained from a cave in the side of a lofty precipice in the San Louis Obispo mountains this state (see Nidiologist July 25, 1895.)

It is so far as known one of the three authentic specimens now in the United States, two of these are now in Mr. Morcom's collection, the other in the U. S. National Museum.

Thus far no one has been found who can confidently assert that any of the European Museums possess a specimen.

The original of the colored plate is a perfect prepaired egg measuring 4.42 x 2.65 inches. Its companion in Mr. Morcom's

collection, we understand was recently purchased by him from Mr. H. R. Taylor. Its measurements are 4.40 x 2.60 inches. The eggs are very similar, the first mentioned being a shade darker and the pits are somewhat coarser and deeper.

W. H. HOFFMAN.

A Double Nest



It has not been my good fortune to find many double nests, but the one which I mention is a very extraordinary find. In May 1893 as I was out collecting in a grove of eucalyptus trees, my attention was attracted by a scolding above my head in a

tall tree, and looking up I soon discovered a pair of Bullock Orioles hopping around in the small branches of a large limb and was not long in finding a nest about 50 feet up. I climbed to it and found five young birds about a week old.

In the following year about the same time I was going through the same grove and remembering my last year's nest I looked up and instead of one nest I saw two. A new one had been built about four inches above the old one. I climbed to it immediately as I expected to find a set of eggs, but both nests were empty. I visited the nests again and again, but with no better results, so at last I cut both nests down. I think by this and other incidents I have noticed that the Bullock Oriole inhabits the same locality year after year.

LEE CHAMBERS.

What others say of us.

The Avifauna.

THE AVIFAUNA, a magazine devoted to the interests of oology and ornithology, is edited and published by W. H. Hoffman, of this city. The initial number, just received, is bright and cannot but prove interesting to those loving the study of birds and their eggs and nests. The contents, among other good things, embrace articles on Owls of Pasadena and Vicinity, by Mr. Horace Gaylord: The Valley Partridge, by Mr. A. M. Shields: The Blue Jay, by E. W. Currier: The Red-breasted Sapsucker, by Joseph Grinnell, and the Nesting of the Louisiana Tanager, by Ralph Arnold. The illustrations are many and good.—*L. A. Herald*.

A well-printed, highly edited monthly magazine called the AVIFAUNA, devoted to oology and ornithology, has been issued by W. H. Hoffman at 544 South Main street. The new journal takes a peculiar field all its own, and promises to be an instructive and exceedingly interesting journal of extensive circulation. The first number is replete with good illustrations.—*L. A. Record*.

THE AVIFAUNA starts out better than any journal of its class which I have seen.

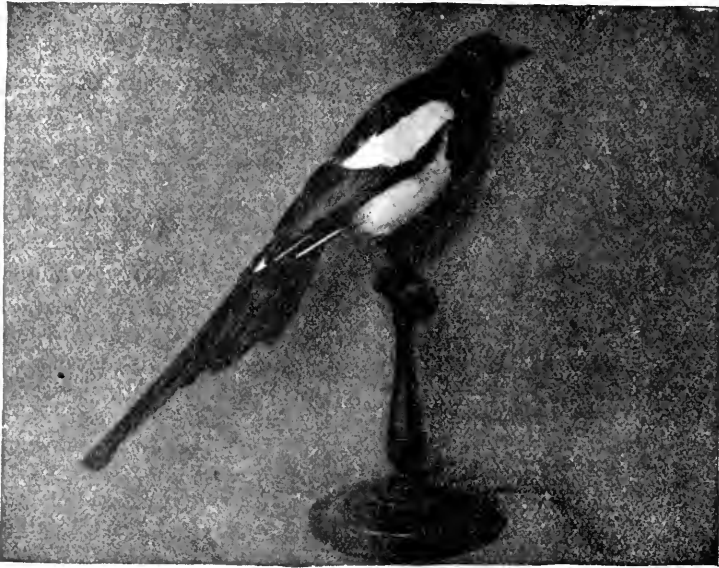
M. L. WICKS, JR.  
Los Angeles, Cal.

### The Yellow-Billed Magpie.

*Pica nuttalli.*

It was not until early this spring that I had the pleasure of forming the acquaintance of the Yellow-billed Magpie (*Pica nuttalli*) though I had heard much concerning its nesting habits from brother collectors. March 31st dawned a beautifully clear day at Sargent's in the lower part of Santa Clara county where I had gone the evening before to spend a day with our feathered friends. Arising early I was

ance in their striking black and white plumage. Soon a few others joined them and the colony was depopulated, the birds not returning while I remained, though they could be heard now and then in the distance. Walking under one of the trees I beheld my first Magpie's nest; not so wonderful an object as I expected it might be. The nest, outwardly presenting the appearance of large masses of sticks, were situated in the highest forks of the trees, averaging 30 feet in height. It was in general somewhat earley for eggs, one nest contained but one fresh egg, another a set of five eggs and



YELLOW-BILLED MAGPIE. (*Pica nuttalli*) From the collection of C. Barlow.

greeted with the industrious tapping of a Woodpecker near at hand and the ringing notes of Parkman's Wren, and the hills everywhere carpeted with green, invited a stroll. After a pleasant tramp I approached a knoll covered with live-oaks in which I suspected several pairs of Magpies had their abodes from an occasional "caw" which emanated from out the foliage. As I drew nearer several of the birds flitted lightly from the tree-tops and soared away, rising to quite a height and decidedly beyond gun range. They presented a pleasing appear-

ance in their striking black and white plumage. Soon a few others joined them and the colony was depopulated, the birds not returning while I remained, though they could be heard now and then in the distance. Walking under one of the trees I beheld my first Magpie's nest; not so wonderful an object as I expected it might be. The nest, outwardly presenting the appearance of large masses of sticks, were situated in the highest forks of the trees, averaging 30 feet in height. It was in general somewhat earley for eggs, one nest contained but one fresh egg, another a set of five eggs and

Near by a nest was observed 30 feet up

in a white oak which held six young apparently just hatched. The parent birds did not make their appearance at all, though several adult birds were seen feeding on a bog a short distance away. Three weeks later I visited this nest with the intention of placing two of the young birds in my collection. The tree was duly climbed but the birds had flown and I was about to descend when a glance into the tree top brought to view the young Magpies sitting contentedly in a group. They had not made a sound or movement which I could detect while I was climbing about in the tree. Cautiously advancing upon the group I made an attempt to catch one but they were all on the alert and fluttered out of reach. After several unsuccessful attempts I resorted to a small charge of dust shot and secured two interesting specimens. They are precisely the same in plumage as the adult birds, though not as bright and with scarcely any tail feathers.

The small colony on the hill was again visited but aside from a few fresh eggs and one nest containing young (which had been overlooked on the previous visit) there was nothing interesting to note. Two of the old nests had been taken possession of by Desert Sparrow Hawks and a beautiful set of five eggs was collected.

April 7th was billed for a trip to a well-known colony of Magpies so the writer and friend were out on the road before day-break, one riding a horse and the other propelling his "silent steed." The oft-told beauty of a California sunrise was witnessed as we journeyed along the tortuous road amid the hills. Finally we travelled up a creek well wooded with sycamores, in which we were informed Magpies were nesting. Unfortunately, as it afterwards proved, we had taken the wrong trail and after walking for several hours over the hills beneath the scorching sun, a number of nests were found in the sycamores bordering a small stream. Most of them were inaccessible, being placed far out on some small limb of the tree at a con-

siderable height. A few were climbed to but all were empty, having been recently lined. One nest held five eggs but was just out of reach on a small limb. The Magpies could be heard in the scrub oaks on the hillside and a few were observed hopping about on a marshy spot. They seem to feed largely upon worms and grubs, though I am told that they are incessant nest-robbers and do not despise young birds for food either.

As the afternoon crept on it dawned upon us that we had missed the rookery for which we were searching and threading our way out to the road once more, we followed it for perhaps half a mile when we came upon the much-sought colony. The white-oaks in the field held each from one nest upward, though many were old structures. Our earlier efforts had told upon us and after facing several of the climbs and being encouraged only with empty nests we retired. Thus it was that through one little mistake we missed an interesting day, but experience, while often severe, is nevertheless a profitable teacher. Future trips may prove pleasanter, though we must confess that our spirits were consoled by the satisfaction that we had robbed no poor bird of her treasures! The accompanying illustration is from a photograph of a mounted Yellow-billed Magpie in my collection, the work of Mr. R. H. Beck, who has succeeded admirably in giving it a natural and pleasing position.

C. BARLOW.

Santa Clara, Cal.

The Sept. AVIFAUNA presents a very neat appearance and shows up well. It would seem that there is a good field for it and you have my best wishes for its success.

C. BARLOW,  
Santa Clara, Cal.

Copy of AVIFAUNA received. Am pleased with its originality. Find amount for subscription. Actions speak louder than words.

W. S. COBLEIGH, Los Angeles, Cal.

Enclosed please find one dollar bill for one years subscription to AVIFAUNA. She is simply immense and I am more than pleased with it. Success and long life. LEE CHAMBERS, Santa Monica, Cal.

### The California Partridge.

A<sup>n</sup> abundant resident of Alameda County, California, and formerly included the Valley Partridge whose habitat is given in Mr. A. M. Shield's article in the September number of this Magazine.

The two terms: Valley Partridge and California Partridge of the Ornithologist are not correctly recognized by the sportsman who knows the partridges, or quail, as he calls them, as two varieties in this State, viz.: the Mountain Partridge and the Valley Partridge. The former term embraces the Mountain Partridge and its subspecies, the Plumed and the San Pedro Partridges, while the latter is the California and the Valley Partridges, that look alike to him.

In this locality the California Partridge is mated by the latter part of March, and eggs may be found early in April, but most are laid in May. Eggs under the process of incubation are occasionally found in August and I once discovered a bird on a nest of eggs in September. These were probably second sets, the first having most likely been destroyed.

This Partridge has as many if not more enemies than any other ground nesting bird. The collector and the ubiquitous small boy do not cut any figure compared to haycutting and wild animals. The scythe and the moving machines either kill the birds that are very close sitters, or, change the aspect of the surroundings so that the birds will desert their half incubated eggs. I have seen the first sets destroyed by cutting the hay and the second sets, which were laid in the hay-cocks were scattered and ruined when the hay was hauled. Strange to say, not a single Partridge nest was noticed this year in a thirty-acre hay field on my home, in which field there were annually many nests.

This bird prefers to nest in clearings and on farms where it hopes to escape wild animals, but, cats kill a large number of the setting hens, as is indicated by a few of the eggs being found broken among the tangled

grass and bunches of feathers. Another casualty was noticed this year when a cow trampled fourteen eggs that were almost hatched.

There were this spring at least one hundred pairs of partridges on my home and I found five nests of eggs within a radius of 95 to 110 feet.

As written for the Nidiologist, it is a common occurrence to find this bird nesting in elevated places, such as tops of vine-clad sheds and fences and in crotches and hollows of trees thickly covered with vines. One nest noted was eighteen inches from the ground, in a vine-covered cavity of a live oak, and another was fully twenty feet from the ground in a hollow crotch of a similar tree and well concealed by ivy. The latter hollow was lined with a large quantity of grass that had been cut from the lawn below by the gardener and had been carried to the nest, without a doubt, by the birds themselves, and goes to demonstrate the inventive genius of birds that are not nest builders except in cases of sheer necessity. In several instances I have found eggs of this partridge in abandoned California and Spurred Towhees' nests in trees and in vines, from six to twelve feet from the ground, and took this year in one nest Spurred Townee,  $\frac{1}{3}$  and California Partridge, 1-18 and a set of "*Gallina Domestica*" close by; in a clump of poison oak and wild blackberry vines partridge eggs are sometimes found in chicken and turkey nests in the brush and in the fields.

Clumps of prickly thistles are favorite nesting resorts, as the sharp spines defy cats and other small animals, and horses and cattle avoid tramping on them.

In 1886 I was cutting out a large, circular clump of these thistles, and was working around the edge, making the clump smaller and smaller until only a small bunch remained. My hoe struck out once more and I was startled by a sharp whirr and saw a partridge disappear, and a lot of little ones just hatched scrambling under protecting leaves. I imitated the low chuckle of the

mother, and, one by one the confiding little birds ran toward me, and in about five minutes I had them all in my hat—about fourteen I believe, and some were so recent from the shell that their down was still moist, and one egg in the nest was just hatching. The mother was not to be seen, so I put them all out on the ground and they immediately scrambled for cover, while I departed to allow her to return and collect her little treasures.

These partridges can be raised successfully from eggs set under domestic hens, but their wild instinct leads them away forever at approach of the mating season.

Eleven to fifteen eggs seems to be the average number in a set, and, in sets of twenty or more, the markings, color, shape and size strongly indicate the product of two or more females. Under the laws of Nature it is not reasonable that one bird would lay, say, twenty-five eggs, because those first laid would be stale by the time incubation was started. I have observed as many as five eggs deposited in one day in a single nest, but the number will vary greatly from day to day.

There is a wide difference in markings, color, size and shape of the eggs, especially in the ground color and markings. The eggs are of various shades of cream color, more or less blotched, spotted and dotted with old-gold and chestnut-brown, the latter color often approaching black. One egg of a set of twelve was buff, unspotted, like the egg of the Ruffed Grouse. Five eggs of a set of seventeen were light buff with rough shell granulations, so minutely and faintly dotted as to give them a queer appearance. Occasionally an almost pure white egg is found among a set, but more often dropped and deposited at random along road sides and in fields, or wherever the bird may be when forced to get rid of the egg; but these eggs lack the smooth, shiny surface.

My largest find was one bird incubating thirty-eight eggs, piled in layers, one on top of the other, and in such a case, where the

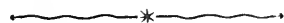
“set” was made by more than one bird, only one pair assumes ownership at and after incubation is begun, although an occasional egg may be deposited under the setting bird and the others seek new nesting sites for their second sets.

Both parents are engaged in rearing the brood, and the oldest flocks become gregarious about September, remaining in flocks of ten to fifty or more until they pair off next spring.

A few years ago there was a band of these partridges, at least one thousand, that daily entered the grounds of Mills' Seminary, situated in the foothills back of Alameda, to be fed. Flocks could be seen at feeding time running over the lawns and walks, some of them almost as tame as chickens. Hunters on the outskirts played havoc with this band; it was no uncommon sight to see wounded birds limping about the grounds—and of late years the gentleman whose pride was his flock of partridges has passed away and the custom of feeding them has been neglected so that there are now very few birds left on this once magnificent preserve

D. A. COHEN.

Alameda, Cal.



The specimen copy of AVIFAUNA received and Mr. D. and myself think it a beautiful little journal. I like the cover and think it very artistic and graceful as well as appropriate. We wish you much success. I mail you one dollar for one year's subscription. D. A. DODGE, Chula Vista, Cal.

I received the sample copy of the AVIFAUNA and am very much pleased to know that Southern California is to have so valuable an addition to ornithology and oölogy. Enclosed please find draft for one dollar for one year's subscription. May success crown your efforts is one of my wishes. J. MAURICE HATCH, Escondido, Cal.

Your creditable magazine received, thanks.

W. E. Webb, Albion, N. Y.

Sample copy AVIFAUNA to hand, am much pleased with same. D. M. AVERILL, Portland, Or.

Sunday morning August 31, 1895, I noticed a small group of white-throated Swifts flying due south over the city, undoubtedly migrating.

O. W. Howard.

### The Mexican Raven on Catalina Island,

IN the very early part of the spring of 1894, I had occasion to visit Santa Catalina Island. This island is about twenty-three miles long, with a trend nearly parallel to the coast, and is eight miles in its widest part; and lies twenty-seven miles south of San Pedro, the port of Los Angeles.

making a drawing card for the summer sportsman.

Few trees, but many large bushes are found; only the cottonwood, willow, wild-cherry and perhaps an oak reach a size that warrants them being called trees, and they are hidden in the narrow canyons, bushes, however grow almost everywhere, but most luxuriantly upon the northern exposures of the steep slopes, where they often seem to be too large for bushes.



Two mountains form the island, which indeed comes near being two islands but for an isthmus only three-fourths of a mile wide and thirty feet above sea level, which joins them. The mountains reach a height of between 1,000 and 2,000 feet; their sides are broken by numerous canyons and gulches and the summits are often somewhat level or rolling. The canyons sometimes widen into small level parks, but ordinarily they are narrow and the sides are very steep, water being found only in the larger ones.

The island has for many years been inhabited by sheep and wild goats, the latter

On landing the first thing I noticed, after viewing the little town of Avalon, the queen summer resort of the coast and which has many permanent residents, was the flock of what I at first thought to be Buzzards circling high up back of the canyons.

There were also a lot of Ravens around the town, which at first I thought were Crows, they were very tame and could be approached within eight or ten yards unless you had a gun along, when they would keep out of range.

Very early the next morning I was awakened by some loud cawing and a strange queer gurgling noise which I was at a loss



for the cause, later in the day, on nearer approach I found my very early risers to be nothing else but the Mexican Raven *Corvus corax sinuatus*, and was told that the birds I saw circling high up in the air, were the same and not Buzzards as I at first supposed.

I have never seen a Buzzard on the island but found the hawks and especially the Red-tail quite plentiful, probably the Ravens have no use for them and keep them away.

Leaving the island the same day I did not have occasion to visit it again until April 25 and then I put in a little time looking about. The Ravens had just begun to pair off and were making it quite noisy with their loud (croaking) cawing; the smaller birds were also quite lively, especially the mocking-bird which was then in full song and quite common.

I had not up to this time, found out what that strange queer gurgling noise was, but one morning I saw a Raven on the hotel roof apparently in the act of vomiting, however he was only commencing to make this queer noise which he kept up for five minutes.

The Raven and the common Crow act about the same in their general habits but the depredation of the former on the young chickens of a resident of the town is becoming a nuisance. I ask him to shoot me one on the morning I was to leave which he willingly did. He found the surest way to shoot them was to fasten a shot-gun to the fence, in such a way as to have it aimed at a spot where the Ravens generally alight and pull the trigger by means of a string which leads into the house.

One afternoon I took a stroll up the canon and seeing a wall of rocks at the head of a small canon and a noisy pair of Ravens flying about, which were continually after a red-tailed hawk whenever he came near. I thought there must surely be a nest near by; I had not proceeded very far before three nests were seen on shelves of rock; I

hurridly went back of the rocks and climbed down from above only to find the first nest an old one and also the second but the third, which was rather dangerous to get at without a rope, contained three fresh eggs nearly hidden in the thick lining of sheep's wool: all this time the birds kept well away and only cawing at intervals, finally leaving. I could not reach the nest by four feet so I procured a stick forked at one end and tied a handkerchief at this end in such a way as to make a cup shaped scoop, with this I secured the eggs one at a time. The nest was similar to that of the Crow except larger, being made of coarse sticks and measuring twenty-two inches across, the cavity was five inches deep by a foot wide, and lined wholly with wool and that to spare. The eggs in color and markings, are similar to those of the Common American Crow, but in size are much larger, measuring 1.96 x 1.20, 2.02 x 1.24, and 1.96 x 1.22. This being a very early nesting for them I did not find another set.

I am told by persons familiar with the islands about here, that on San Clemente Island, which is twenty-six miles south of this island, the Ravens are quite common, but breed high up on the cliffs in very inaccessible places, probably on account of the depredations of the foxes which are quite numerous on both islands. I am also informed about the breeding of a few pair of bald-eagles and fish-hawks on these islands. I have noticed three nests and several of these birds on Catalina, but had no opportunity to collect their eggs.

OTTO J. ZAHN.

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Mr. Joseph Grinnell reports that the Pine Siskin has not been observed about Pasadena since 1892. In that year these birds were quite common in the arroyos, in the willow and sycamore trees, they seemed to be feeding on seeds from the cathins and sycamore balls. A specimen of the Pine Siskin taken in 1892 by Mr. Grinnell was exhibited at one of the late meetings of the Annex. Mr. Judson reported seeing flocks of these birds in June 1894, while on a trip through Bear Valley.

### Hutton's Vireo in Los Angeles, Cal.

(*Vireo huttoni*.)

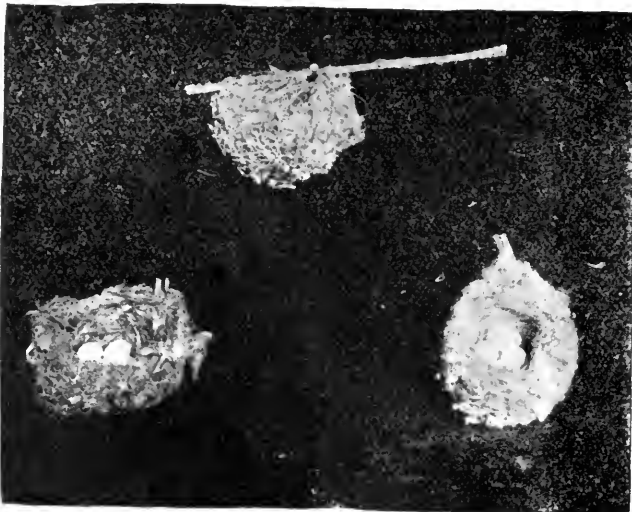
THIS neat little Vireo is a common resident of this locality; more common perhaps in the fall and winter than during the other seasons. Every arroyo, canon, and plot of oak woods in the immediate vicinity of Pasadena seems to have among its inhabitants a number of these birds, and at almost any time during the day they can be found among the thick branches of some tree quietly and contentedly searching for food. They live entirely on insects and insect larvæ, judging from the contents of several stomachs examined during the past year; in no case was there any trace of vegetable matter in these stomachs.

The separation of "*V. huttoni*" from the other Vireos of this vicinity is an easy matter; for of the four species found here the Hutton's is the only one having the under parts decidedly yellow. There is no difference in the plumage between the two sexes. The size is small, being

March the more ambitious couples have laid their set of eggs. During the mating season two, or even three male birds follow one female and court her favors until she shows her preference. Some times two males become jealous of each other, but a little combat among the thick branches of an oak tree settles the supremacy



NEST AND EGGS OF HUTTON'S VIREOS.



NESTS OF HUTTON'S VIREOS.

less than five inches long. A male taken on March 16, 1895, shows the following measurements: length, 4.90 in.; stretch, 7.55 in.; wing, 2.40 in.; tail, 2.00 in.

Early in the spring this species begins to mate, and occasionally by the latter part of

of one, and the defeated suitor departs to seek the affections of another female.

Soon after mating the new couple search through all the favorable localities for a nesting site, and eventually decide upon one suitable to their tastes. They will often try several situations before settling their minds on the one where they complete the nest. While the nest is being constructed the male is constantly near the female uttering at intervals, a single low note. This note is uttered only when the female is within hearing, and after the eggs have been laid, when she is on the nest.

Notwithstanding the abundance of the birds during the breeding season,

very few nests are found by collectors; and he who is fortunate enough to collect a nice set, feels well paid for a long tramp and a diligent search. Even when you find a nest it is often quite another thing to collect it, especially when the birds have been cautious enough to

build at the extremity of a slender cotton-wood limb near the top of a tall tree.

The nest is generally situated in a tree from eight to thirty-five feet up. The oak is perhaps the kind of tree most frequently used; but alders, cotton-woods, and sycamores are not neglected. The composition of the nest is a sure means for the identification of it. The great quantities of a lichen, taken principally from the oak tree, used in the construction of the nest gives it an appearance which none of the nests of the other Vireos of this vicinity possess. Cotton, fur, cobwebs, and fine grass are among the other materials used in the building of the nest.

The breeding season begins in the latter part of March and lasts through the spring months into the early part of July. April and May seem to be the favorite months. On March 25, 1892, I found a nest of Hutton's Vireo built near the extremity of an oak branch, eight feet up, containing four fresh eggs. A set noted July 15, 1894, also contained four fresh eggs, and the nest was built in an oak tree twelve feet up. These are the two extreme nesting dates that I have record of, while sets collected during the month of May and the first part of June show the average date. The usual number of eggs in a set is four; but three is very often a full set, and a set of five is very uncommon, in this locality at least.

HORACE A. GAYLORD.

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### A Sparrow in a Fly Wheel.

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A sparrow flew into the bar works factory at Anderson, Ind., and getting too near a small fly wheel, was sucked in. The men who noticed it thought the end had come for the sparrow, and did not shut down the machinery. They ran along till noon, four hours after the incident, and then shut down. They had forgotten the bird, and were surprised to hear it chirp. They looked over to the pulley and the sparrow was perched on one of the inside braces. He seemed a little dazed, but a moment later jumped off his perch and flew away. The wheel made 31,000 revolutions in four hours and the bird was carried around over 73.8 miles.

S. F. BULLETIN.

### Bryant's Marsh Sparrow.

(*Ammodramus sandwichensis bryanti.*)

JUDGING by the dearth of articles on the nesting of these birds, they would seem to be more rare than they really are.

One reason for this is no doubt the comparatively limited area in which they are to be found breeding.

On June 28, 1891, while walking near the end of Market St., San Francisco, toward the ocean, I saw several of these birds perched around a marshy spot in a field which had very recently been used as a cattle pasture. Thinking it might not be too late for a set of eggs, though they are generally said to nidify a month earlier. I began to look around and very soon saw a bird flush from the grass in front of me. You can imagine my delight to find a nest containing three fresh and prettily marked eggs, having a light ground color blotched and spotted with reddish brown and lilac.

The eggs and nest are before me as I write, the latter being composed of small dry grass slightly lined with finer grasses and is necessarily loose on account of the material but fairly thick.

It was so placed in a depression in the ground that its top was even with the surface and being at the edge of a bunch of weeds was sheltered and protected by them.

The measurement of the set are as follows: .77 x .59, .76 x .58, .73 x .58, inches, or 19.63 x 15., 19.33 x 14.66, 18.5 x 14.66 millimeters.


The two smaller eggs are alike in having nearly the entire ground color covered with markings, while in the larger one much more ground color is exposed. It is of a slightly darker tint and the lilac markings are much more abundant.

M. L. WICHS, Jr., Los Angeles.

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The subscription price of the AVIFAUNA for one year is \$1.00, low enough for any one who takes pleasure in the study of Ornithology and Oölogy,—Its interesting, try it.

### A Trip along the North Shore of Lake Superior.


 ANY interesting articles have been written upon the beauties of the Lake Superior region in general, and that Elysium of brook trout fishers, the "*North Shore*," in particular, but nearly all relate to the pleasures of the trip and the magnificent trout fishing indulged in along its different water courses. The fact is there is little to attract an ornithologist and I have often noticed that once engaged in the excitement of landing speckled beauties, the enthusiastic anybody has an eye for little else, at least that was my experience. As the years rolled on, however, I began to look about and it was a red letter day in my ornithological studies when in answer to an oft repeated croak I laid the rod aside and climbed a cliff over one hundred feet high to investigate a raven's nest; but I only reached the base of the stunted pine in which it was placed, for I recall how my enthusiasm gradually ebbed in contemplation of the trunk of that tree hanging out at an angle over the precipice, and it did not take long to convince myself that the few sturdy roots had a very insecure hold in the crevices, and the contents of that nest remain a mystery to this day.

At the mouth of Cross River we called upon a fisherman who proved to be a better collector, for he had a pail nearly full of Merganser and Gulls-eggs, taken from a little rocky isle near by, and even with this well stocked Jarder he had feasted on fried eggs for a week back.

About every half mile along the rocky shore one meets, in the right season, a pair of loons, and a close inspection of the little gaps in the shore line where short beaches of bright colored pebbles glisten in the sun, would be rewarded by the finding of their eggs, a find that always filled me with enough satisfaction to take the place of the great amount of breath expended in the blowing of such magnificently large eggs.

In running off shore in the fast little steam craft often used in the trips, we occasionally came onto a pair far out in the lake directly ahead, and as we drew near they would dive and swim to one side; by changing the course of the craft in that direction it would sometimes happen that they would rise to

the surface almost alongside the boat and be off after a tremendous flapping and splashing about. I secured my first loon under these conditions. The next one, with the help of my brother, I secured in a little isle dotted bay on Isle Royal, by strategy. We were camped on one of the rocky islands and found the bay much frequented by loons which always kept just beyond shooting distance, although their wind call or laugh came into camp at all hours of day and night. One morning we took a light boat and went further up the bay where they had not been disturbed. Seeing a pair opposite an island ahead we went through a channel on the other side and when completely hid I landed and crawled to the edge of the brush on the opposite side, my brother continuing on beyond the island with the boat just as though no stop had been made. The loons, however, were out from the island too far to be shot so he went on a distance, then turned and came back outside of the pair far enough away to not scare them, but near enough to cause them to move a little towards the island. Travelling up and down, each time a little nearer, the loons were gradually driven close in to the island when from under cover I took a favorable opportunity to shoot one.

It was on this same trip that we stopped at a fisherman's hut and found the breasts of several loons tacked to the shanty door drying, to be used, the fisherman explained, as lining for his snow packs next winter. Further enquiry elicited the fact that he caught from one to six every day during the early spring on his set lines. When the lake trout move towards the reefs to spawn, the fishermen use long lines anchored about a fathom below the surface. To these, at intervals, are attached shorter lines with hooks baited with large herring, and these attractively baited hooks not only catch the desired trout but are sure to take any loon unfortunate enough to notice them when diving for food. There is usually slack enough in the line to enable a bird so powerful to come to the surface where the fisherman finds him full of fight, but it is always one-sided for each boat carries a heavy club for this use alone. No use was ever made of these birds, except as noted above, and their carcasses were often noticed along the shore until a few years ago a taxidermist in one of the

larger cities, hearing of these accidental catches, arranged with the fish packing company to pay 50 cents each for them. The company notified the fishermen and over one hundred were sent in the first spring. We found these same fishermen varying their diet by a free use of the eggs of the American Herring Gull gathered at Gull Rock, N. E. of Isle Royale. My first visit to Gull Rocks after a series of adult gulls, was in one of their sail boats. The three little isles designated as Gull Rocks were still surrounded by a barrier of honey-combed ice formed by the spray of wintry storms. A rope was tied about a great mass of it and a man left aboard to hold the craft away with an oar. While I busied myself getting specimens the other two men wandered over the island taking eggs from nests which contained but one or two, for the eggs were generally fresh where the whole complement had not been laid. Taking off their coats and tying the ends of the sleeves with strings, these impromptu bags were soon filled with eggs and delivered aboard without accident. I found that it was the custom of every fishing hamlet on Isle Royale to gather three or four hundred eggs each spring for home consumption. The birds enter only a mild protest to this arrangement for they continue to breed, about a thousand strong, from year to year.

The gulls, loons, a few ducks, crows and ravens are about the only conspicuous birds seen along the North shore in the spring. Of course there are many of the smaller varieties, but during migration they either pass around the West end of the lake or tarry on the islands only long enough to rest after the weary flight over the open water, the chill air from over the icy waters driving them into warmer quarters further inland.

One week's collecting at Duluth at the West end of the lake would produce better results during the seasons of migration than a month along shore further East.

FRANK S. DAGGETT, Pasadena, Cal.



On account of lack of space, it was impossible for us to insert several first class articles which will appear in our next issue—Readers watch for them.

## Report of the Annex Meeting, Sept. 30, 1895.

THE regular monthly meeting of the Annex was held at the Residence of Mr. W. B. Judson, at Highland Park, members present, five; visitors, five; total attendance, ten.

An editorial, to be published in the October Nidologist prepared by H. R. Taylor, in regard to an article entitled, "Wholesale Frauds," published in the July Nidologist, was read and accepted.

The plan for the formation of the Bureau of Exchange, discussed at previous meetings, was again discussed, and definite plans were formed for the organization of such a bureau. Every member of the Cooper Ornithological Club wishing to join this bureau, should send his list of specimens, (skins and eggs) to the following address; W. B. Judson, Highland Park, Cal. In exchanging through this bureau, all specimens must be sent "on approval" to insure an even exchange.

An amendment to the By-Laws was proposed, concerning the change of the name of the Annex. A committee was appointed to draw up such an amendment or amendments and present the same in proper form at the next meeting. The Committee consists of two members, Messrs. Judson and Gaylord and one advisor, Mr. W. H. Hoffman. The name of Mr. F. S. Daggett of Pasadena, Cal. was proposed for active membership and duly elected. Interesting papers were read; The Flycatcher, F. B. Jewell; Hammonds Flycatcher, W. B. Judson; Representatives of the Family Tyrannidae in Los Angeles Co., H. A. Gaylord; An Inland Rookery by Corydon Chamberlain. Twelve species of Flycatchers were exhibited all taken in Los Angeles Co., including a specimen of the King-bird, taken by W. B. Judson at Santa Monica Beach, Aug. 31, 1895. This is apparently the only record of this bird being taken in California. The nest and eggs of Hammond's Flycatcher collected by Mr. Judson in Bear Valley were exhibited.

The next meeting will be an outing, to be held on the last Saturday and Sunday in October, each person attending, must carry his own blankets and provisions.

HORACE A. GAYLORD, Sec'y.



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The complimentary notices we are receiving from many of our exchanges are indeed very encouraging.

\* \* \* \* \*

We have just received the Autumn bargain list of Mr. Walter F. Webb of Albion, N. Y., and in looking it over we are surprised at the bargains he is now offering. If you have not received one of his lists, we advise you to send for one. His prices on eggs and skins are unusually low, to say nothing of quotations on other nature history specimens.

\* \* \* \* \*

One of our local collectors had occasion to go to Lordsburg (this county) recently and while there his attention was called by the rattling of a chain. On looking around he was surprised to see a young Golden Eagle, in good plumage, chained to a plank up between two eucalyptus trees and was told that it had been captured a few months before at the Bear Valley Dam by means of a lasso as it had not then learned to fly well.

Among the boys who have dropped in during the past few days we are pleased to mention Mr. W. S. Cobleigh, formerly of Peoria Ill. Mr. C. is an ornithologist of the true type and has promised that the readers of the AVIFAUNA shall ere long have the benefit of some of his most interesting experiences. We are glad to say Mr. Cobleigh has decided to make the home of the AVIFAUNA also his own; we congratulate the ornithologists of Southern California in this worthy addition to their ranks.

Mr. Frank S. Daggett of Pasadena also favored the AVIFAUNA with a call. During the short time Bro. D. has resided in Southern California, he has made considerable additions to his already large collection of western skins.

Mr. A. M. Ingersoll of San Diego, was also a recent visitor, but we regret very much being absent at the time. Mr. I. is an enthusiastic ornithologist and was one of the first to send in his dollar for the AVIFAUNA. We sincerely hope he will again favor us with a visit and shall endeavor to be at home next time.

\* \* \* \* \*

GAME BIRDS AT HOME.

THEODORE S. VAN DYKE has an established reputation as an authority on sports in California, so his "Game Birds at Home" may be taken on trust by any one who sees his name on the title page. This book is made up of reminiscences of hunting well-known game birds, with many useful hints to the inexperienced. A good specimen of Mr. Van Dyke's style may be seen in the chapter on "The Quails of California." It shows the difficulties of the sport and at the same time it is saturated with that love and appreciation of nature which the author justly says forms half the pleasure of hunting with genuine sportsmen. The book will please any lover of sports, but the general reader will find it entertaining, for there is no dullness in the style, and even the tyro may see that the author is a master of his craft.

\* \* \* \* \*

The AVIFAUNA has been added to the number of magazines published in Los Angeles. It is an ornithological monthly, well-printed and prettily illustrated. W. H. Hoffman, is the editor and publisher.—*L. A. Times.*

The latest aspirant in the field of ornithology is the AVIFAUNA, published monthly at Los Angeles, Cal. If future numbers are as good as the Sept. No. 1, Vol. 1 number is, its success is assured.—*The Oregon Naturalists.*

We have awarded a set of two eggs of the Golden Eagle to Mr. W. S. Cobleigh, who won first prize in the subscription contest. The second prize goes to Mr. R. Vincent, the third to Mr. Horace A. Gaylord and the fourth to Mr. O. W. Howard.

\* \* \* \* \*

The AVIFAUNA desires to extend thanks to Mr. G. Freaan Morcom for interesting notes and photo of Condor; also to Mr. M. L. Wicks, Jr., for valuable information and field notes, and to Mr. O. W. Howard and several members of the Annex for valuable and much appreciated assistance in making this number what we modestly believe it to be an A1 edition of neat ornithological matter.

\* \* \* \* \*

The AVIFAUNA is much flattered that its esteemed contemporary "*Sports Afield*" has shown its appreciation of our first number by inserting in its October issue adaptations from several of our best articles, some mere extracts, others reproduced bodily. As above stated we were much flattered thereat, but would respectfully inform our e. c. that we would be still more flattered if due credit be given us in case "*Sports Afield*" sees fit in the future to make further extracts from the columns of AVIFAUNA.

\* \* \* \* \*

The California bluejay, that beautiful bird of gaudy plumage, will soon have its death-knell pronounced. The bluejay is a predatory bird that diligently and constantly searches for the nests of other birds and eats the eggs contained therein. This is exceedingly discouraging to birds that are laying, and quail are particularly affected by it.

The consequence is that a raid will soon be commenced on bluejays with the hope of exterminating them. The Olympia Gun Club hopes to secure the co-operation of all the sportsmen in the State in this matter. The idea is to appoint some one particular day, to be called "Jay Day," when every one who has a shotgun will sally forth to shoot bluejays.



In and around the port of Ensenada, Lower California, pelicans are more plentiful than at any point on this coast. It is estimated that fully ten thousand of these birds can be seen at any time from the Ensenada pier, all of them soaring above the sea looking or diving for fish. Hundreds of these birds constantly plunge beneath the waves, seizing fish, and the surface of the ocean is dotted with the splashes of these bird-plungers. They are among the most expert fishers of the bird kingdom, and at the single port of Ensenada they probably capture thousands of pounds of fish daily.—*L. A. Times*.

## Extracts from the Fish and Game Laws of the State of California.

Seventh Edition, 1895.

### Killing, etc., Birds in Cemeteries.

598. Every person who, within any public cemetery or burying ground, kills, wounds, or traps any bird, or destroys any bird's nest, other than swallows' nests, or removes any eggs or young birds from any nest, is guilty of a misdemeanor.

### Valley Quail, Bob-White, Partridge, Robin, Wild Duck or Rail.

626. Every person who, in the State of California, between the fifteenth day of February and the fifteenth day of October in each year, shall hunt, pursue, take, kill or destroy, or have in his possession, whether taken in the State of California or shipped into the State from any other State, Territory, or foreign country, except for purposes of propagation, any valley quail, bob-white, partridge, robin, or any kind of wild duck, or rail, shall be guilty of a misdemeanor; *provided*, that the right to have in possession for the purposes of propagation shall first be obtained, by permit, in writing, from the Game Warden of the county wherein said birds are to be caught.

### Mountain Quail or Grouse.

626a. Every person who, in the State of California, between the fifteenth day of February and the fifteenth day of August in each year, shall hunt, pursue, take, kill or destroy, or have in his possession, whether taken or killed in the State of California or shipped into the State from any other State, Territory, or foreign country, except for purposes of propagation, any mountain quail or grouse, shall be guilty of a misdemeanor; *provided*, that the right to have in possession for the purposes of propagation shall first be obtained; by permit, in writing, from the Game Warden of the county wherein said birds are to be caught. Every person who, in the State of California, shall take, gather, or destroy the eggs of any quail, bob-white, partridge, pheasant, grouse, dove, or robin, or any kind of wild duck, shall be guilty of a misdemeanor.

### Doves.

626b. Every person who, in the State of California, between the fifteenth day of February and the first day of July in each year shall hunt, pursue, take, kill, or destroy, or have in his possession any dove or doves, shall be guilty of a misdemeanor.

### Pheasants.

626g. Every person who, in the State of California, shall, within three years next after the passage of this Act, hunt, pursue, take, kill, or destroy, or have in his possession, except for the purposes of propagation, any pheasant, shall be guilty of a misdemeanor.

### Cold-storage, Hotel Keeper, Marketman, etc.

626h. Every cold-storage company, person keeping a cold-storage warehouse, tavern or hotel keeper, restaurant or eating-house keeper, marketman, or other person, who shall buy, sell, expose, or offer for sale, or give away, or have in his possession, in this State, any quail, bob-white, partridge, pheasant, grouse, dove, or wild duck, during the time it shall be unlawful to kill such birds, whether taken or killed in the State of California, or shipped into the State from any other State or Territory, or foreign country, shall be guilty of a misdemeanor.

### Sale of Game.

626i. Every cold-storage company, and every person keeping a cold-storage warehouse, tavern, hotel, restaurant, or eating house, and every marketman or other person, who shall buy, sell, expose or offer for sale, in this State, any quail, bob-white, partridge, grouse, dove, or wild duck, whether taken or killed in the State of California, or shipped into the State from any other State, Territory, or foreign country, except between the fifteenth day of November and the fifteenth day of January of the following year, shall be guilty of a misdemeanor.

### Caliber of Shotguns.

627. Every person who shall use a shotgun of a larger caliber than that commonly known and designated as a number ten gauge, shall be guilty of a misdemeanor. The proof of the possession of said gun in the field, on marsh, bay, lake, or stream, shall be *prima facie* evidence of its illegal use.

### Song Birds.

627c. Every person who, in the State of California, shall at any time hunt, shoot, shoot at, take, kill, or destroy, buy, sell, give away, or have in his possession, except for the purpose of propagation or for educational or scientific purposes, any English skylark, canary, California oriole, humming-bird, thrush or mocking bird, or any part of the skin, skins, or plumage thereof, or who shall rob the nests, or take or destroy the eggs of any of the said birds, shall be guilty of a misdemeanor.

### Trapping Quail, Partridge, and Grouse.

631. Every person who shall at any time net or pound, cage, or trap any quail, partridge, or

grouse, and every person who shall sell, transport, or give away, or offer or expose for sale, or have in his possession any quail, partridge, or grouse that has been snared, captured, or taken by means of any net or pound, cage or trap, whether taken in the State of California or shipped into the State from any other State, Territory, or foreign country, is guilty of a misdemeanor; *provided*, the same may be taken for the purposes of propagation, written permission having been first obtained from the Game Warden of the county wherein said birds are to be taken. Proof of possession of any quail, partridge or grouse which shall not show evidence of having been taken by means other than a net or pound, shall be *prima facie* evidence in any prosecution for violation of the provisions of this section that the person in whose possession such quail, partridge or grouse is found took, killed, or destroyed the same by means of net or pound.

## Acts of the Legislature relating to Different Kinds of Birds Not Specified in the Penal Code.

### Mocking-Birds.

*An Act to prevent the capture and destruction of mocking-birds in this State.*

[Approved Feb'y 14, 1872; Stats. 1871-2, p. 102.]

SECTION 1. Any person or persons who shall willfully and knowingly shoot, wound, trap, snare, or in any other manner catch or capture any mocking-bird in the State of California, or shall knowingly take, injure, or destroy the nest of any mocking-bird, or shall take, injure, or destroy any mocking-bird's eggs, in the nest or otherwise, in this State, shall be deemed guilty of a misdemeanor, and upon conviction thereof before any Justice of the Peace of the township in which the offence shall be committed, shall be fined in the sum not less than five dollars nor exceeding ten dollars, and the cost of the action, for each offence, or may be imprisoned not less than five days nor more than ten days, or by both such fine and imprisonment, as the judgement of the Court may direct.

SEC. 2. All fines collected under the provisions of this Act shall be paid into the County Treasury for the benefit of the Common School Fund.

SEC. 3. This Act shall take effect and be in force from and after its passage.





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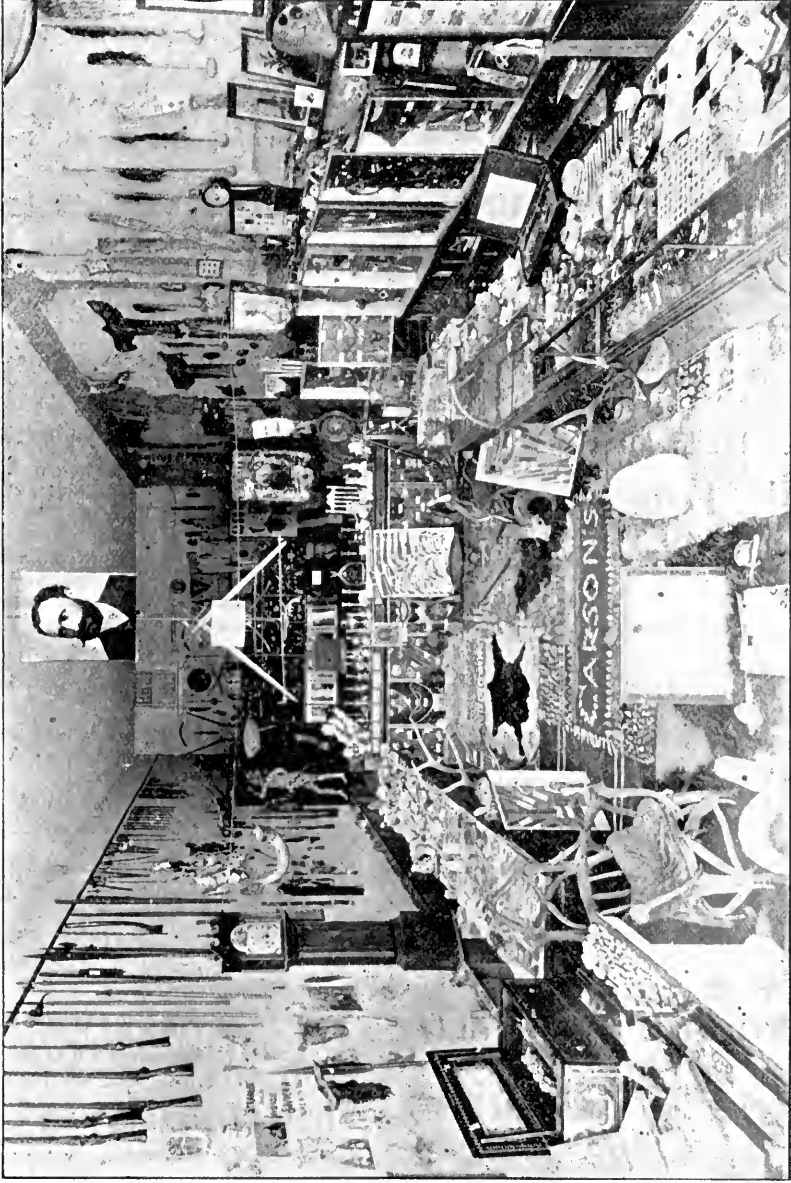


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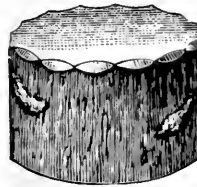
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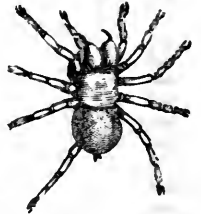
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THE AVIFAUNA,

544 S. Main St , Los Angeles, Cal.



Press of L. HERZOG, Los Angeles.

# THE AVIFAUNA

Published by  
W. A. Hoffman



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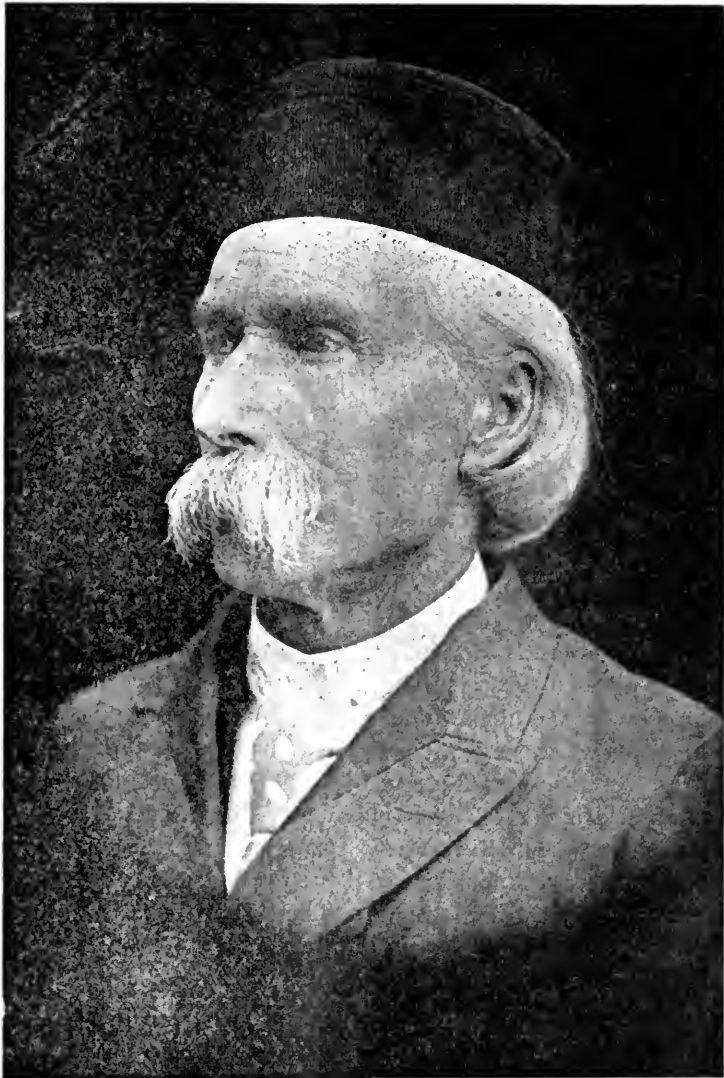


THE AVIFAUNA

Vol. 1, No. 3.

Santa Barbara Cal., September, 1897.

ONE DOLLAR  
A YEAR.



HENRY CHAPMAN FORD.

## Henry Chapman Ford.

Artist, Traveler, Patriot, Soldier and Naturalist.

THE remarkable subject of this sketch was all this and more, for in addition to his scholarly acquirements, he possessed a personality of exquisite refinement and a gentle reserve that vaunted upon no occasion whatsoever, although he was an accepted authority on special lines. Mr. Ford was born at Livonia, N. Y., in the year 1828. When quite young he decided to pursue art as a profession and spent several years in Europe, studying principally in the cities of Florence and Paris. He returned to the United States at the commencement of the civil war and enlisted in the army in 1861. Of delicate physique naturally, his service was consequently limited, and in one year he was discharged on account of physical disability. He opened a study in Chicago, Ills., and here the sketches made in the South became valuable capital. He was the pioneer landscape artist of that city and was one of the charter members of its Academy of Design, filling the president's chair for several years. For sketching purposes he toured the picturesque portions of the northern, southern and middle states. He visited the Rocky Mountains, accompanied by his wife and two other artists, in 1866, and spent the summer in the then wilderness of Colorado scenery, through which no railroad had as yet made travel easy. In 1874 a failure of health necessitated an absolute change of climate which resulted in his removal to Southern California, and locating permanently at the little seaside city of Santa Barbara. Nearly every summer season was spent in camp, either in the Yosemite valley or among the old Franciscan Missions throughout the state, of which he made a complete set of etchings and painted many beautiful pictures in oil. As a naturalist Mr. Ford occupied a prominent

position in Southern California. For many years he was president of the Santa Barbara Society of Natural History and always an active member of the Horticultural Society of that county. On his beautiful country seat in the rural suburb of Carpinteria he gratified his fine botanical tastes to the lasting benefit of the community. Here he devoted time and space to the cultivation of rare flowers, importing many trees and shrubs that were strangers in the valley. Mr. Ford was an especial lover of birds and the writer remembers with delight an infinitesimal owl that was domiciled and thoroughly domesticated in one of the deep-seated windows of his studio. His lamented death occurred February 27, 1894, leaving a vacancy in hearts and places no other man can fill.

JULIETTE ESTELLE MATHIS.



### The Golden Eagle.

*Aquila Chrysaetos.*

THIS magnificent "king of the air" has received considerable attention at the hands of our ornithological writers, and it is with no idea of adding any remarkable facts to its life history that this article is presented. In Santa Clara county the Golden Eagle is perhaps as abundant as in any other portion of the world, from which it is not to be inferred that it is a common bird for he may well count himself fortunate who has stormed the stronghold of *Aquila* and borne away her treasures to his cabinet. The eagle inhabits both the mountainous and valley regions, showing little preference so long as its food is abundant. They are resident, usually remaining throughout the year near the locality in which they are accustomed to nest. During the winter months and in the spring they may at times be observed soaring idly and most gracefully over the deep ravines in the mountains. By a series of circlings they rise from the bottom of a cañon to far above



its summit with the utmost ease.

The Golden Eagle associates with the Western Redtail to a greater or less degree while soaring about in air but is easily recognizable by its plumage and superior size. The nesting sites of this eagle vary according to surroundings. I have never seen a nest placed elsewhere than in a tree, though I am informed that a few pair nest on cliffs in the region south of this county. In the mountains, pines are frequently selected and sycamores share the honors as

and all were so situated in the trees that they afforded a view of the cañon, doubtless a precaution on the part of the builders. The nests are composed chiefly of sticks and twigs of varying sizes, forming a compact mass. In the center of the nest a slight depression is lined with grass, stubble and various other materials.

The accompanying illustration is of a nest in a white pine on the side of a ravine, and is difficult of approach, owing to the steepness of the cañon. The nest which is



Eggs and Nest of Golden Eagle.

well. During the spring months the nests may usually be seen at a distance owing to the sparing foliage of the pine and the bareness of the sycamores. Live-oaks are chiefly used in the valley regions, the dense foliage affording a hiding place for the nest. Ordinarily the nest of this eagle is easily told from that of the Western Redtailed Hawk, owing to its greater size and flatness of construction, though there are rare exceptions to this rule. I have examined several nests placed on the sides of gulches

an average one is placed 75 feet up, near the top, and the tree being two feet across at its base and partially dead presents a formidable appearance to one who reaches it and gazes at the nest so far above. Near by is a waterfäll, which lends to the enchantment of the cañon. A set of two eggs was taken from this nest February 29, 1892, and were slightly incubated. The nest has not since been used by the birds. The usual nesting time seems to vary from February 25th to the middle of March for

fresh eggs, though it may be later in a particularly wet and cold season.

March 31st of this year I took a set of two eggs from a nest in a live oak 35 feet up. The nest was about 4 feet across and 2 feet deep, being composed of oak limbs and twigs of varying sizes. The nest was lined with dry stubble and grass, and contained by way of ornament a soap-root and a mullein leaf. The nest was very substantially built and one could walk around in it without fear. One egg of this set was normal in size and appearance while its mate was elongated, and not unlike a buzzard's egg in shape, though proportionately larger. This latter egg was infertile; the other being advanced in incubation. Neither of the eagles made their appearance during my visit, but doubtless returned later to discover their loss.

Average set of two eggs of the Golden Eagle measure  $3 \times 2.25$  and  $3 \times 2.12$  inches respectively. Sets of three eggs must be considered as uncommon, and are only occasionally taken. Throughout Santa Clara County are numerous old ornithological landmarks in the shape of abandoned eagles' nests. Some remain intact as yet and are drifted full of dead leaves, offering perhaps a nesting site to some stray *bubo*, while the wrecks of others are marked only by a ragged mass of dead sticks; the weather-beaten and deserted castles of some eagles of the past.

C. BARLOW.

Santa Clara, Cal.



### The Road Runner and Snake.

THE Road Runner, Chaparral Cock, or *Paisano* as it is called by the old Spanish residents, was once one of the most common sights in the lowlands of California, but is now becoming very rare. This is because of the stupidity of tourists who want to murder everything new and the cruelty of many who call themselves sportsmen, but whose only claim to the name is

the possession of a fine gun. With this they start out to murder everything of any size that can fly or run and this harmless and useful bird is one of their favorite victims.

Probably nothing in boiler-plate science is now so firmly established as the idea that this bird kills rattlesnakes by putting balls of cactus in the coil of the snake, upon which the snake strikes at it, hits himself, and dies of his own poison. One of the last acts of Prof. Spencer Baird was to describe this in an article in Harper's Magazine, called "Our Guardian Birds," as an actual fact, and the funny part of it was that the artist—probably under his direction—put the lobes of the prickly pear in the bird's mouth. If the bird did such a thing at all it would be with the balls of the cholla cactus that are shed freely by the plant and lie in plenty upon the ground, remaining for a long time with spines as strong and sharp as ever. But the lobes of the prickly pear are not shed until the plant has passed the stage of ability to injure anything. Lobes as fresh and stiff as are represented in that picture could only be torn from the plant by an ostrich and he would want to snublet the job after the first trial. The dear public does not want truth in natural history. It wants something astonishing. Truth is too tame. Probably not a paper in the United States would publish a refutation of this old story, but a rehash of it with a spice of big adjectives would make a boiler-plate round of the world.

The old story of raccoons catching crabs with their tails is far more probable than this for it contains nothing contradictory to known facts. Crabs might take hold of a tail as well as of a piece of meat on a string and the tail might be twitched quickly enough to land the crab on the bank within reach of the coon's claws before it could get back to the water. But the snake story is contradictory to several well known facts.

A Typical Scene in Southern California.



First the rattlesnake lives in cacti of all kinds and especially in the cholla. It crawls over, under and through piles of the balls as readily as among leaves, and is

perfectly at home in the thickest mass of them. This is not as surprising as it is to see quails run or fly in or out of it at full speed, run over the limbs and roost in it,

flying into it in a large mass when it is apparently too dark to see a spine. The cottontail, the rat, kangaroo mouse, and several other animals and birds care no more for it than for so much swan's down. Why then should the snake, with a far tougher skin, care for it, or care for it when in coil any more than when out of coil? The other form of the story, that the bird builds a barrier of it, fences in the snake and picks him to death, is still more absurd. I have seen snakes climb more cacti than a road runner would heap up in half a day. A cottontail would prefer it to open ground.

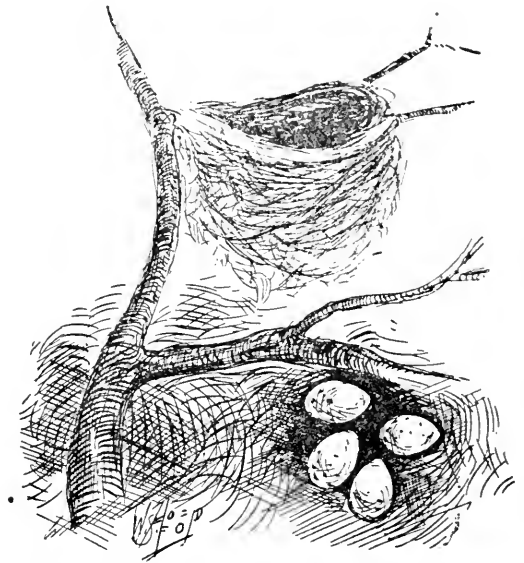
Secondly I doubt if the snake ever strikes itself with the poison fangs. I have often seen rattlesnakes and copper-heads bite themselves when wounded or even when tantalized with a stick, and have often made the rattlesnake of this country do it. But it is with the teeth and not the fangs. They grab with the jaws instead of striking as they do at the thing that is troubling them. I have played with scores of snakes and made them do this many times and it is always the same biting or grabbing movement and not striking.

Thirdly it is very doubtful if the poison of a snake will injure it even in a large vein. The experiments of Dr. Weir Mitchell show positively that it will not. I know men who ought to be good observers and who were not writing for the great American Educator—boiler-plate—who say they have seen a snake die from its own stroke. But Dr. Mitchell has innoculated snakes with their own poison so often that I prefer his word to that of anyone else. That reputable men should say they have seen it is not strange. Many now living can remember, as I can, reputable men saying they had seen birds fall from the telegraph wire when the dispatch went through. They had seen dead birds on the ground that had flown against it, in the early days of the telegraph the shock was supposed deadly to small things, and from these two facts it was easy to convince fancy that it had seen them drop. T. S. VAN DYKE.

## The White-eyed Vireo.

*Vireo Novboracensis.*

THE sprightly little White eyed Vireo is an abundant species wherever suitable localities are found. It is not very choice in regard to its habitation, for every bushy swamp, blackberry patch or hazel thicket is found to contain many of them. It seems desirous that all should know of its presence, for it continuously utters its song—if such it can be called—which is remarkable both for oddity and its great strength,



Nest and Eggs of White Throated Vireo.

which makes it appear entirely out of proportion to the bird which produces it.

It does not show that fear of mankind which is almost universal among the bird family, but on the approach of one, it advances and meets him half way, where very marked curiosity is exhibited. When they have a nest this lack of suspicion vanishes and the bird is ever on the alert.

When near their nest, great uneasiness is expressed, and should one venture too near he will be greeted by a torrent of scolding and abuse, which if it could be translated into English, judging from the emphatic

way in which it is uttered, would be more forcible than elegant.

Few birds are capable of constructing a more beautiful nest. In a forked branch of the hazel bush it collects a mass of odd materials and weaves, or rather glues, them into a cup-shaped structure. Straws, mosses, lichens, grass blades, bits of decayed wood, bits of spider webs and various vegetable fibres are curiously intermingled. In this beautiful nest, which is rather large for the size of the bird, five eggs are deposited by the parent bird. They are of a clear, crystal white ground and are spotted about the larger end with fine, dark purple and reddish brown spots. Their average size is about .60x.70.



The White Eyed Vireo.

It has two distinct white bands on the wings. The lores are dusky and bordered above by a yellow streak with a white orbital ring. The upper parts are olive green, with the nape usually of an ashy color. The lower parts are white and the sides greenish yellow. In the adult the iris is white.

Its unpronounceable name of *Vireo Novboracensis*, with which scientists have burdened it, does not seem to bother it in the least, but it is ever the same joyous, light-hearted bird, which has earned for it its place in the hearts of all observers.

P. WILBUR SHOAP.

Abingdon, Ill.

## N. W. Canada Notes.

THE American Hawk Owl undoubtedly breeds in Alberta. On June 28th a friend shot a female near Red Deer, with the belly bare of feathers and the skin of a glutinous nature, proving that the bird had been nesting. On July 1st, when driving from Red Deer to the Blindman River I saw two Hawk Owls, but unfortunately my gun had been sent on ahead of me and I was not able to secure them. They were tame and allowed us to drive within easy gunshot several times.

The American Goshawk breeds in the Red Deer region. My friend found a nest containing four nearly fledged young on June 10th at Snake Lake.

The Prairie Falcon breeds in suitable localities throughout Alberta; I collected two specimens, both females. One day early in August I saw one of the above birds dash at a fowl on the main street of Calgary, and although it made the feathers fly, it did not succeed in carrying off the bird.

I had the good fortune to take the nest of Richardson's Merlin on this trip; on July 21st I found a nest containing five downy young, which I secured along with the female. On May 18th my friend took a beautiful set of five eggs near Calgary, the male was shot and the identity established without a doubt. For a full account of these two nests see the "*Oologist*" for Sept., 1895.

Clark's Crow breeds in the foothills west of Calgary. The local taxidermist at Calgary told me of a nest he found in May, situated in a thick pine tree; both birds were seen around the nest but he, to quote his own words, "*didn't trouble to climb up to the nest as he thought the eggs were no use.*" Ignorance is bliss indeed!

Richardson's Grouse, (*Dabscurus Richardsoni*.) breeds in the foothills west of Calgary; on Aug. 3d I shot a female and a

fully-fledged young male out of a brood. Franklin's Grouse are also found in the mountains; they are commonly called "Fool Hens"; both species inhabit very rough country and the collector who goes in search of them must make up his mind to do some pretty hard work.

The Bohemian Wax Ring breeds in the mountains. On Aug. 12th, I saw a flock of five at Banff, unfortunately I had no gun, but I had a good view of them as they sat on the top of a small pine tree.

The White-tailed Ptarmigan is said to breed on the mountains around Banff, in the winter they descend into the valleys and the foothills, particularly if the weather is severe, but in summer are only found above timber line. I am (probably like many more ambitious oologists) contemplating a trip after their eggs in the near future.

On August 4th, I shot a female Am. Three-toe Woodpecker (*P. Americanus*) in the hills west of Calgary, and have every reason to believe they breed there.

The Solitary Sandpiper breeds in the vicinity of Calgary, about the third week in July (exact date not noted), I came across a pair, which by their actions evidently had young in the grass, but although I hunted carefully for some time, I was unable to locate the "proteges"; upon several other occasions I observed pairs of these birds.

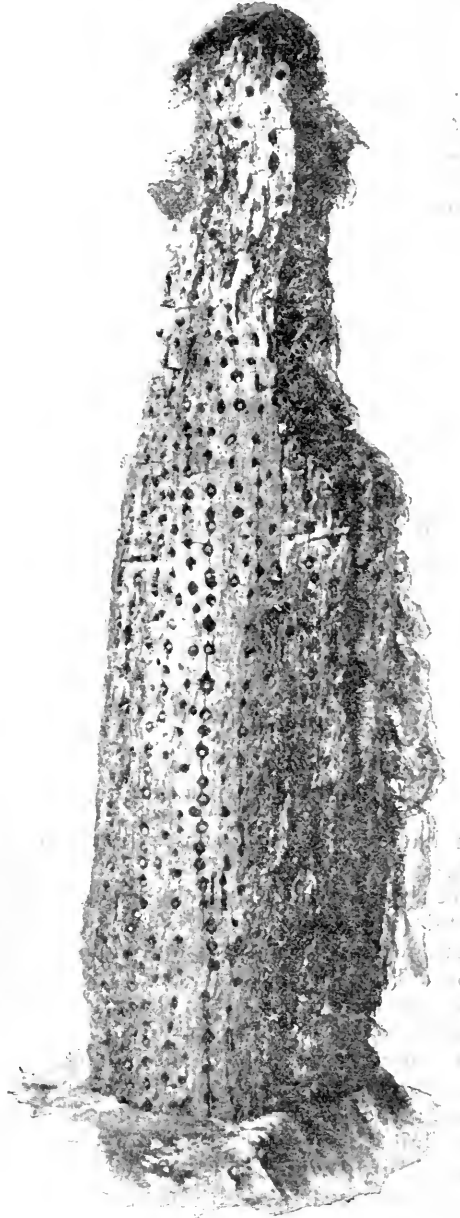
I did not devote much time to the Mammal, but amongst species I collected were, Richardson's Spermophile (*Spermophile Richardsoni*) abundant, Long-tailed Weasel (*Putorius longicauda*), Rocky Mountain Chipmunk (*Tamias a quadricinctatus*), abundant, Nor. Pocket Gopher (*Thomomys talpoides*), abundant, and the White-footed Mouse (*Peromyscus leucopus*) very abundant, and a great pest to the mammal hunter, continually getting into traps set for other species.

G. F. DIPPIC.

Toronto, Can.

## Bird Industry.

OUR engraving presents a beautiful example of the industry, patience and ingenuity of the woodpecker. The fragment of tree is part of a white oak which grew in the upper Santa Ynez mountains, about ten miles from Santa Barbara, Cal.



The Woodpeckers' Storehouse.

When it first reached the hands of the present possessor, the holes which appear so completely dotting the wood were very nearly all filled with acorns, the holes being worked into the wood and the acorns placed therein by the patient toil of the woodpecker. The mountain hunters, who brought the specimen to town, told a rather interesting story of their find. They were eating their mid-day lunch, when they became aware of rather a noisy conclave of birds near by. They investigated, and this is what they saw :—

About the old dead tree trunk were perhaps half a dozen woodpeckers, chattering and scolding in a most animated manner. They had been filling their storehouse and a score or more of black bandits had beset them, helping themselves to the product of their labor and ruthlessly destroying a large portion of what they did not eat, it being scattered about on the ground in all directions. And there were the bandits, the black robbers.

A lot of crows ! they were out on a real lark. They had discovered the smaller birds, industriously at their work, and in apparent deviltry decided "to hold them up," rummage their house, and steal, destroy, and mock the owners. And the rascals were there at their task.

They would rush to the old tree, tear out the acorns, scatter them on the ground, and then "caw, caw, caw" their delight at the remonstrances of the woodpeckers.

This was continued some time, when apparently weary of their sport, the crows flew off in a body and sat upon a near-by tree, and watched their victims repair, as best they could, their loss. But even then the crows were not content, but must add insult to injury by continued ribald caws.

It was an interesting and very humorous affair, though the hunters ended the conclave by a couple of shots which left two of the black rascals lying dead upon the ground.

F. S.

## Notes on the Mocking-Bird.

WHILE spending a few days, recently, with my son Dr. R. W. Hatch, in Los Angeles, I enjoyed an exceptionally good opportunity for observing the Mocking-birds. They are really very common in the residence portions of the city, and are already bringing up their second brood of young. Never having lived where I could observe the habits of this species of birds, and there being apparently but few birds to be seen in general, I was able to notice this species minutely. At a distance of two hundred feet from the porch of his residence, I could continuously see from three to five males, and hear as many more at increased distances during most of the day, and *hear* them all during most of the bright, moonlight nights. The singers, almost uniformly, were perched on the corner of a tall, unused chimney, in which the female was sitting, as was evident by his occasional disappearance down the inside of it, and constituted about the only interruptions of his varied song, made up of snatches from nearly every bird song I have any recollections of having ever heard. While visible, with no interruption to his song, each singer would bound up into the air from three to five feet, and turning instantly would resume the corner of the chimney, in which performance he displayed his pattern and plumage so perfectly that no mistake as to his identity was possible. It seemed to be a method of working off the excess of his energies to avoid explosion. The mimicry includes much more variety in their freedom than in captivity. And I fancy that it is more mellifluous, which, however, I will not assume to be a fact, without further opportunity for observing.

P. L. HATCH, M. D.

H. A. Gaylord reports the taking of an allino specimen from a flock of fifty Western Chipping Sparrows in 1894.

## The Burrowing Owl.

THE Burrowing Owl (*Athene cunicularia*) is quite common in that portion of California north of Monterey and west of the Sierras. In all the valleys that have become the home of that pest of the California ranch owner, the ground Squirrel (*Spermophilus Beecheyi*), this Owl is a joint occupant, sitting throughout the day on a little mound of earth at the entrance of a deserted burrow in delightful companionship with his four-footed neighbor, not in the least dazzled by the brightness of the sun, and allowing a person to approach quite near, and greeting him, with repeated polite bows, and giving a peculiar cackling note.

If closely interviewed, he at once plunges into his burrow or rapidly flies to another not far away.

It has been known to make a burrow for itself in a region where no animal had previously dug one. In the most northern part of the State, the females prepare to lay their eggs in January. During the months of February and March in the early part of the evening the males sit at the mouth of their dwelling or on a neighboring fence and utter a note which resembles the word *cuc-koo* slowly spoken, with the stress upon the first syllable and the last long drawn out.

The tone is soft and quite musical and appears farther away than in reality, and for that reason it is difficult to locate the bird.

An observer speaks of finding the nest of this owl by following a burrow to the depth of three feet, and horizontally five feet, where, in an enlarged chamber, were discovered two fresh eggs, somewhat smaller than those of pigeons, nearly round and pure white, deposited on a few feathers.

About the end of April the young appear at the mouth of their burrows, and sit in the early morning with their parents.

Their food is mice, small birds, gophers, and insects, the hunting of which is done in the evening, or the gray of the morning. They are also particularly active on moonlight nights.

Early in July when on one of my sketching excursions with carriage and tent, while walking up a steep hill to relieve the horse, I discovered by the roadside, in a depression made by the foot of some hoofed animal, a little fledgling covered only with a light grey down. Picking it up carefully and not knowing whether it belonged to the hawk or owl family, I went to the carriage and placed it in the hands of my wife, remarking that I had brought her a strange pet. She at once said, "I will keep and rear it." He took kindly to his new surroundings, nestling quietly in her lap, as we pursued our journey, usually wide awake. His food at this period was small bits of raw beef and mutton or morsels of little birds killed with my fowling piece. He thrived remarkably under this diet and in two weeks had nearly attained his full plumage when we were no longer in doubt as to his parentage. He soon began to utter a soft crowing note sounding like *Too-Too*, with the accent on the last and prolonged. This note decided a name for our pet, which became *Toot* for short.

When we went into camp he sat upon the dash board or seat of the carriage until our arrangements for the night were made, then he was placed at the door of the tent and he went in and out at his pleasure. At this stage of his life he was very playful and we were struck with the similarity of his motions with those of a kitten. When given a small roll of paper he would take it in his beak, turn over on his back, scratch and tear it with evident enjoyment. A pasteboard roll, five inches in diameter and three feet long, in which canvas had been sent me, was at once adopted by him as a burrow, and in this he slept as it lay beside our bed, and to which he quickly retreated



when awake if he was suddenly alarmed.

While striking our tent and making preparations for the day's journey he seemed undisturbed and when all was ready he was placed on the seat between us, where he stood intently watching for hawks or buzzards. Upon his detecting one, no matter how far away, a mere speck in the sky, he would utter quickly a short, shrill cry and hide himself under the folds of our clothing.

When we halted for our noon lunch beside the highway, he would at once fly down and take a bath in the thickest dust he could find, sending it up in a cloud by the quick movements of his wings, like a chicken. After thoroughly shaking himself he would be ready for his meal. He never failed to inform us when he was in want of food, by a peculiar note which was readily understood.

When in camp, as twilight approached, he was peculiarly active, flying about in search of game, which, with the exception of grasshoppers, beetles and moths, he rarely found. These flights were often prolonged to the time when honest campers and civilized owls should be in bed, and gave us so much anxiety that we decided to clip one of his wings. Thereafter his wanderings were perforce made on foot and with less rapidity.

When the evenings were quite cool we heated the tent with a kerosene stove. Toot soon discovered the source of warmth and with much gusto and apparent delight he would place himself before the stove and with outstretched wings remain by the half hour.

Of course so novel a sight as an uncaged owl for a camp pet attracted the neighboring boys, but should they approach too near, Toot made a vigorous dive at their bare feet, which sent them scampering, and this was repeated as long as they were too familiar. My wife insisted that he was jealous of any child that she took up on her lap. He certainly would fly at the object

of his aversion with snapping beak.

He would not brook the intrusion of dogs or cats near the camp and they manifested much fear from the formidable bristling appearance he assumed, for they almost invariably ran away.

Sometimes, when pressed too closely, he would utter a crackling cry and retire to his roll, but soon appearing again sitting at the entrance with his large eyes wide open and fixed upon the intruder, following every motion. If our horse, while grazing, approached Toot's domain too closely, the size of the animal did not save him from a vicious attack by the bird. Other birds were greatly annoyed when they discovered Toot sitting on his stool at the front of the tent or on a near fence.

Blackbirds, Jays, Thrushes, Ground Robins and Sparrows all manifested their uneasiness at his presence by their scolding notes. The Swallows would swoop down near him in their graceful flights, as is their wont when a cat is discovered, but it seemed more in play than having a desire to do him harm.

Not so with the Shrikes, however, for these assassins made more violent demonstrations, but Toot only seemed startled by them and never left his perch, although they nearly knocked him off. When any bird came unpleasantly near he would squat as low as possible, recovering his natural position immediately.

When our camp was near a colony of ground squirrels Toot would at once take possession of one of the mounds of earth thrown out at the entrance of their burrows, sitting there throughout the day and occasionally descending into the ground and peeping from the hole.

Upon reaching San Francisco and Oakland, while leaving our bohemian life for a short period and sojourning in the dwellings of friends, Toot seemed to take kindly to the more civilized conditions, but he occasionally strayed and gave us much concern

until found by searching the odd corners of the neighborhood. On our return to camp life he was at home again. We vividly remember his antics when the first autumn rain fell, while we were in camp near Santa Cruz. As the drops fell profusely he seemed determined to leave the shelter of the tent and stand outside. With some solicitude in regard to the consequences of a wetting we compelled him to return within the tent, but as often as this was repeated he persisted in receiving his baptism, crawling under the edge of the tent which we had tightly closed. Looking out we found him with his wings extended and his whole body quivering with apparent delight. His size was greatly reduced, and with his wet feathers clinging to the body, and darkened by the drenching, and with his big eyes standing out from his head, he was an uncanny looking creature. This was his first experience in a rain storm and whenever rain fell afterward he seemed anxious to repeat it. After that kind of bath he would come in shivering and stand before the kerosene stove to dry himself carefully, pluming his disordered feathers. If the sun shone brightly he would often go out and throw himself down upon his breast and spread his wings upon the ground and with open mouth pant with evident enjoyment.

Upon our return to Santa Barbara we allowed him the freedom of the studio, and his favorite perch was in the windowsill, where he would sit throughout the day watching the movements on the street. If a stranger came in at the door he generally hopped down and ran under a case of minerals; should the supposed intruder come near his retreat he would run out and, with bristling feathers and outstretched wings, give him a peck. He seemed to have his likes and dislikes, however, for he would allow most adults to approach without any demonstration, while to others he manifested great aversion. Children were the

special objects of his spite, although his movements toward them often seemed more in play than otherwise. Whenever either myself or wife returned to the room after an absence, he would invariably greet us with his soft cuc-koo, and what seemed remarkable, from his window he would often detect me as I approached on the walk and utter his welcome. One of our friends, who very often made us a visit, had frequent rough and tumble plays with Toot, much to the bird's enjoyment, for as soon as he opened the door he was recognized and a rush was made to his retreat under the case, but he at once reappeared and gave a bristling challenge. Another friend had in some manner incurred Toot's displeasure and he never escaped a demonstration of it, no matter how often he appeared.

He suffered himself to be handled by those with whom he was familiar, and my wife taught him to nibble her cheek, which she interpreted as a kiss. Whenever he was thirsty, which was seldom, he made his wants known by going to the hydrant and calling.

His food was principally fresh meat—beef, mutton and liver. He invariably rejected the fat and was much disgusted if the meat was stale, always turning away from it when offered. When, very hungry he would eat a little salt beef. Mice, gophers and little birds were a delicacy for him. He was also fond of small fish. He rejected all vegetable substances, with one exception, he would swallow bits of watermelon, perhaps because it had the color of meat. He had great difficulty in swallowing the mice whole when he was quite young, and after repeated effort all would disappear except the tails, which hung out of his mouth in a ludicrous manner. When swallowing a delicious morsel his eyes would be closed with an exceedingly satisfied expression.

A box of pulverized earth was placed out-

side the window and in this he took his dust bath every morning. He was in a habit of standing before the fire in the grate of cool mornings, and on one occasion my wife detected the smell of burnt feathers and noticed that Toot had backed up to the fire and spread his wings in such a manner that the extremities had touched some live coals. On the occasion of our evening receptions he would sit motionless upon a covered match box on the mantle without apparently taking any interest in our proceedings. One evening a young lady remarked to her companion that I had an exceedingly fine specimen of taxidermy in the owl, as she approached pointing her finger in close proximity to Toot. He at once snapped at it, eliciting a shriek from the victim and a laugh from the company.

When vexed, if he could obtain a sheet of newspaper he would viciously tear it to shreds with his beak and claws.

He was wont to sit upon my shoulder for hours while I was reading in the evening and he would occasionally lovingly pull my mustache with his beak, and sometimes he considered the top of my head a capital perch.

As he was an important member of the family we thought best to perpetuate his appearance in a photograph. Taking him to the gallery he was excited by his ride in the rattling street car and it seemed difficult for him to properly compose his nerves for a successful picture. Whenever the cap of the camera was removed he insisted upon responding with a gracefully twisted bow that totally upset and defeated the plans of the photographer, who had no instantaneous snap attached to his instrument. The project was abandoned for that day but a subsequent trail was made successfully.

During an absence in the East for several months we left our pet with a friend, and from whose quarters he frequently strayed, usually being found by the neighboring boys and returned. But finally he was missing for the last time, probably having fallen a victim to some dog that had no love or respect for an owl.

PROF. H. C. FORD.

## Sparrow Hawk v. Cooper's Hawk

I saw a very interesting, although very brief, combat that took place recently, the participants being a Sparrow Hawk and a Cooper's Hawk.

There were several song sparrows frolicking around in a field, which I was observing from my office window, when along darted a Sparrow Hawk, catching one of the little fellows and continuing on its course, a few feet above the ground, for perhaps about a hundred and fifty feet, and then darted upward. Here a Cooper's Hawk, which I had not previously observed, swooped down upon the Sparrow Hawk evidently bent upon taking the sparrow from the latter hawk. I ran around into the field, in order to obtain a better view of the combat, but arrived only in time to see the hawks flying away, each going in a different direction.

Which bird secured the sparrow I do not know, but an examination of the ground beneath the place of combat indicated that it did not fall to the ground. The fight while it lasted was quite spirited; but the duration, I should judge, was hardly a couple of minutes.

This incident was to me quite interesting, for does it not raise the question: Do the larger hawks ever prey upon the smaller species of hawks? It is well known that the Cooper's Hawk is quite voracious, commonly making havoc among chickens, turkeys, and ducks. Dr. Fisher (*Hawks and Owls of the United States*) mentions an instance where it was even so bold as to attack a man.

W. E. ROTZELL, M. D.

Boys, if you are not positive of the identity of your specimens in the field do not remove them until you have thoroughly convinced yourself that you are correct. Again, carefully identify specimens received from other collections before exchanging or selling the same. One cannot be too careful; as your reputation depends on your accuracy.



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The publisher of AVIFAUNA takes no small pleasure in again presenting the work, after so long a delay. We will not now discuss the many reasons why the work was so long suspended, more than to hint that the "hard times" had considerable to do with it.

We now present the magazine to its old friends with the belief that they will find in its ample pages matter that interests and instructs. The main topic implied in its name, *Avifauna* (bird-life), has made many and constantly increasing numbers of friends since our last issue. Where one person was interested in our feathered friends then, we can say twice or three times the number are interested now. And we are very glad it is so. The birds are a part of the Divine creation that appeals more and more to our sympathies, as we use more and more our eyes and reflect on the wonderful mechanism that propels them

through space. From now on we hope to issue our magazine with reasonable promptitude on the fifteenth of each month. We will try and make each number more and more interesting, and to do our best we ask the help of all who love to watch and study the birds.

\* \* \*

The present issue is not nearly up to our intention in regard to future issues. We had many obstacles to overcome incidental to changing the place of publication from Los Angeles to this city, and everything could not be expected to run as smoothly as we may expect in the future. But we offer no apologies. Let the magazine speak for itself; hoe our own row; make its own friends. That's our way.

\* \* \*

All old subscribers will receive the magazine to the limit of their subscriptions, and with the object of doing the most and best work in view, we ask all our friends to assist the magazine to new subscribers, as far as possible.

\* \* \*

The more patronage we get, the better magazine we can give — will give.

\* \* \*

Many of our birds have a way of dealing with the robbers of their eggs that is well worth studying. Take, for instance, the swallow: their nests are usually safe from man without resorting to artificial methods of reaching them. The wren is sly enough in placing its nest to elude the cat. The eagles generally select a site beyond the skill of the average collector, while the P. B. grebe locates its nest and covers its eggs so as to elude the strictest search of the amateur and also the crow. The crows and jays are incessant robbers, but many of our birds protect their eggs well by their variations of nesting sites. Crows, jays, cats, and snakes are natural enemies to all birds.

W. D. Cobleigh reports finding sixty-six different specimens of birds breeding on a 160-acre farm in Fulton County, Illinois. This farm lies in the river-bottoms, second bottoms, and the bluffs.

Blow our own horn now; others will blow it later.

Prepare A 1 skins and specimens. It reflects credit.

Cannot the oologists of America get up a *standard* data blank? Some one suggest.

Read the latest periodicals of date and keep posted. Subscribe for the AVIFAUNA now.

Who has found a nest of the Crested Fly Catcher without the traditional snake skin?

## Collecting Under Difficulties.

On the morning of April 17th, Mr. H. R. Taylor, editor of the *Nidologist*, and myself took the nine o'clock train bound for a small station on the South Pacific Coast Railway. Arriving at the station at ten o'clock we set out across meadows and ploughed fields and vegetable farms, cut up with drainage and irrigation ditches, to a thickly wooded swamp, about two miles distant, stopping now and then to examine suspicious looking clumps of wild blackberry vines from which we took two richly marked sets of Samuel's Song Sparrow and a set of the California Bush Tit. Empty nests, some containing a broken egg, especially of the House Finch, indicated that snakes had been dining. Hundreds of Gambel's Sparrows fluttered from the willows and tall grasses and brambles along the fences, but we failed to find any of their nests. A few pairs of Mexican Horned Larks were seen on patches of alkaline land where they were undoubtedly nesting. After crossing a few more fences we were in close view of our destination. This swamp is half a mile wide by about two miles long and partly dried up in summer. It is thickly timbered with oaks and tamarack and gigantic sycamores, with a fair sprinkling of laurel and willows, and full of thick underbrush and rank vegetation. The surrounding land is all under cultivation, chiefly by Chinese vegetable gardeners whose redwood, shingled shanties are scattered in groups of three or four.

Upon reaching the swamp we walked for half a mile along its north side until coming to the road which led through to the south side. Stopping at a well I brought forth my tin cup and we drank freely of the pure, cold water, for the day was hot.

Our first find was a nest of straw containing four white eggs, in a burnt-out stump of a monster forest oak. These we easily identified as specimens of *Gallina*

*Domestica* and therefore decided to leave them as it was rather close to a farm house. Quite a number of Tree Swallows were breeding in natural cavities in sycamores, and, having no climbers with us, we wasted no time shinning up the smooth trunks.

Our business was to get eggs of the Great Blue Heron; we had seen some of these birds perched on trees and flying about before we entered the swamp, so, walking briskly along, we were soon on the south side of the swamp and stopped only once to examine a nest of the White-tailed Kite, about forty feet up in a large oak; it proved to be an old nest. A creek or ditch, four feet wide and two feet deep, followed this side of the swamp and the water was clear as crystal and cold even on a hot afternoon.

Crossing a narrow foot bridge we were soon well into the swamp and followed a trail that soon lost itself in a wilderness of nettles, vines and brambles, poison oak and matted brush. The poison oak in California is very similiar to the poison ivy of the Eastern states. Here my buckskin gloves came into good use to protect my hands and wrists from the venomous nettles and sharp thorns. The poison oak was not shunned as neither of us ever "caught" it.

Soon we were under several sycamores containing nests of the Great Blue Herons and the birds had flown away at our approach and were now sailing and flapping a few rods distant, and arousing others in the neighboring trees by their guttural "konk, konk." Selecting the easiest tree to climb, Mr. Taylor ascended and packed several sets of fresh eggs into a fish basket and let it down to me with a ball of twine. I removed the eggs and he pulled the basket up and repeated the operation.

Several nests were empty and we concluded that we had come about a week too soon to make a good haul. These nests were from fifty to seventy feet from the ground, and there was quite a stiff breeze

among the tree tops that made Mr. Taylor hang on and look at the nettles and brambles below and say that he would not like to take a tumble into them.

Having seen a very large tree, apparently full of nests, some distance to the west before we entered the swamp, we decided to investigate. While hiding my shotgun and our extra baggage in some thick brush we found a lot of honeycomb in a hollow oak stub, and from the quantity of bees on it, decided we did not care for honey. The vegetation became less rank and the nettles fewer as we advanced, but the thorns and matted brush overgrown with tough vines became thicker and thicker and presented a formidable barrier to penetrate. Again we would have to cross mounds of dead brush which at times was just rotten enough to let us through or to pitch us headlong into a clump of thorns or a bog, and the vines played tricks on us by tripping us up. We took turns in breaking a trail through this Garden of Eden, and, crawling, climbing, tumbling and scrambling, at last sat down to rest under the giant sycamore, the object of our toiling search, and I doubt if any human being had ever been in that part of the jungle before we had. The only living things we saw on our way were a snake gliding under the vines and a ferocious looking woodrat sitting on top of his nest, which was a cone shaped affair of sticks built up from the ground as high as a man's head. I fired two shots at him with a revolver before he disappeared.

We counted just 32 nests in this tree, which was about 110 feet high, and no nest was less than 85 or 90 feet from the ground. They were nearly all tenanted too, for, at our approach numerous "konking" Herons flapped hurriedly away. A thrill of oological delight passed through our veins at the thought of 32 nests, most of them containing sets, but the next thought was, "that's a whooping big tree to get up."

That tree was six feet in diameter if it was

six inches, and there was not a limb nearer than sixty feet on its straight, smooth trunk, but a thick growth of vines and poison oak covered the trunk almost to the first limb. The lot of attempting the climb fell to Mr. Taylor, who tried going up the vines and poison oak hand over hand but could not get a good start. So, placing a branch about fifteen feet long against the trunk of the tree the ascent was slowly made up this whitewashed trellis to within a few feet of the first limb, which was found to be too large to straddle without the aid of ropes and climbers. Mr. Taylor did well, but, none but Darwin's Missing Link could possibly have circumvented that limb.

Retracing our steps and obtaining our hidden baggage, we decided to cut across the swamp as the nearest way to the station, as it was getting late and there was but one train home that night. I found a half built nest of Allen's Hummingbird on a briar a foot from the ground near our baggage. Once again on our acrobatic march we were soon into a big bog, and worked and worked to reach the opening of the swamp without seeming to make much progress; and to make matters worse we could not see the sun and had to guess the way the tortuous passage was leading us. After a lot of work avoiding the usual impediments in our way, we emerged from the swamp almost before we knew it, and, bespattered with mud, tired, hungry, battered and torn, set out double-quick across vegetable patches, clods and clover fields to the station, not forgetting to pull up a quantity of onions and lettuce for refreshment.

D. A. COHEN.

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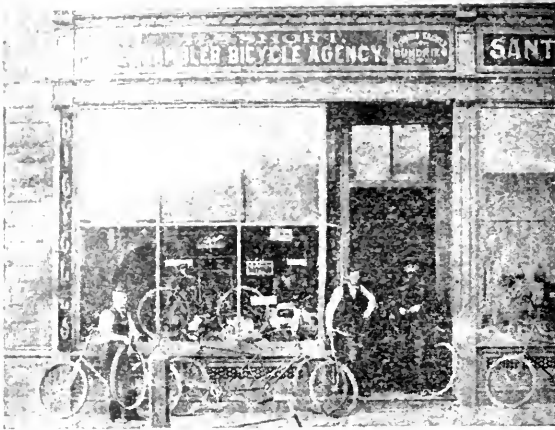
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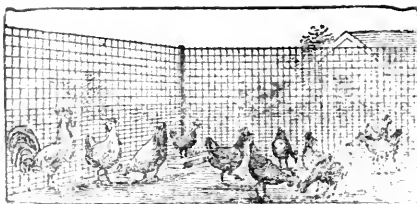
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