

Troubles of Bird Housekeeping



If the average small boy knew what a hard time birds have to rear their families under the best conditions he would hesitate to disturb their nests, even if there was no law to threaten him with punishment if he did so.

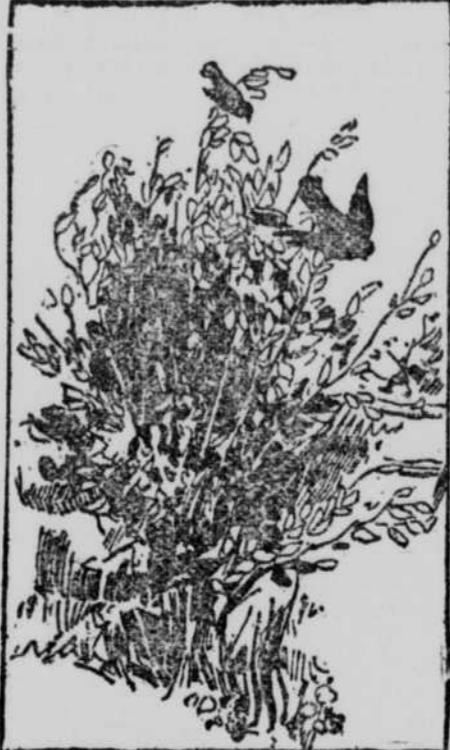
There was a patient pair of robins, for instance, who built their first nest more than six weeks ago in a low apple tree in the orchard. Presently there were two blue eggs in the nest. Then came the first catastrophe. Next morning the nest was empty. On the ground under the tree lay one of the eggs with two holes picked in its shell. That was the work of a big, sneaking bluejay, if one may judge by the fact that the same afternoon the robins were seen chasing a scolding jay about the orchard and that the picture of the jay has long been in the birds' rogue gallery.

Immediately after the destruction of their eggs the robins set about building a second nest on another limb of the same tree. They got so far as to have three blue eggs in this prospective cradle when a red squirrel came down one afternoon from the oaks adjoining the orchard and made a robins' egg omelet of what he found there.

Then a third nest was built and on that the old mother bird has now been sitting for two weeks. Perhaps she will succeed this time in rearing an in-

ten two cowbird eggs are found in the same nest, but rarely if ever have four been found.

The greed of the cowbird in thus completely occupying the warbler's nest brought its own punishment with it. The warbler, disgusted, abandoned



COWBIRDS STOLE THE WHOLE NEST.

the nest completely. A day or two later something—boy or beast—had discovered the deserted nest and stolen all four of the eggs.

If the yellow warbler builds another nest and succeeds in raising its brood where the cowbirds cannot find it the first catastrophe may be all for the best. Even when only one cowbird's egg is laid in a nest and is hatched out with three or four young warblers the latter are likely to get far the worst of it. The young cowbird from the moment it breaks the shell is bigger and greedier than its foster brothers and sisters. It will crowd them to the side and insist on eating much more than its share of the food which the yellow warblers bring for their young.

Across the barbed wire and rail fence from the warbler's nest is a big woods pasture. Close to the fence grow thick clumps of hazel brush and wild crab and plum trees. In some places the thicket is so dense that a man has hard work in forcing his way through it. High up in these tangles, six or eight feet from the ground, two pairs of catbirds have built their nests. They are apparently safe from all but other bird enemies, for the long, sharp thorns and the interlacing branches protect them from attack from the ground. This is evi-



THE ROBINS.

resting family, but there is an old white cat with three kittens under the hay mow stairs, who spends hours standing motionless, all but the tip of her tail, in the tall orchard grass and who thinks that a dinner of young robins would do her own children much good.

There is a little yellow warbler who built down in the pasture wood lot and who had equally hard luck in a different and really peculiar way.

The yellow warbler's nest was in itself an exquisite thing. It was built near the top of some thick bushes, about five feet from the ground. It was lined with soft, silky gray mosses and threads of vegetable tissue and it looked like the inside of a spun silver cup. It was built so artfully that leaves and branches hid it on all sides, and it took hard work and good luck to find it even after one knew it was there. It was found the day it had been completed, when the mother bird was just ready to begin laying her eggs.

But there was another bird out that day, sneaking through the bushes like a pickpocket, looking for a chance to leave one of its eggs in a newly built nest. The sneak was a cowbird, which never builds a nest of its own and dismisses the whole subject of maternal responsibility from its mind when it has left an egg in some other bird's nest. One of these big brown and black cowbirds found the yellow warbler's dainty little nest and laid one of its big spotted eggs there. Then it flew back to the pasture again, and got down on the ground among the cattle, with others of its sneaking kind.

Sometimes when a yellow warbler finds a cowbird's egg in its nest it will build a false bottom over the egg and proceed to make its nest above it on the second floor. But this poor warbler got no such opportunity. This has been a cold, late spring, and the warblers and other similar birds have been slow in building. Also there were many cowbirds about, looking for a chance to saddle off the hatching and rearing of their young on their betters, and before the yellow warbler mother could get a chance to lay one of her own eggs in the nest she had built it was actually filled almost to overflowing with four big cowbird eggs. This is believed to be the record in the way of cowbird greediness. Of-



MOURNING DOVE BROODS ON THE GROUND.

dently a favorite nesting place of theirs, for in the branches there are the ruins of nests evidently two or three years old.

Close to the catbird's tangle and lying on the ground in a poor apology for a nest were found a recently hatched mourning dove and a white egg from which the little bird had not yet picked its way. This nest was close to the stalks of some close growing bushes and would never have been discovered if the old mother bird had not gotten up and flown away in a terrible fright when the nestseeker was four or five feet away.

With the instinct of most of the ground building kind the old bird went off with an apparently broken wing and did her best to decoy danger away from her helpless little ones. It is a wonder how these little doves escape the prowling cats which hunt in the

meadows and woods all about, but so far they have done finely, and on Saturday last the elder of the two was already able to use his wings in a flight of three or four feet.

Out in an old telephone pole which stands at the corner of two country roads is a regular birds' flat building. About fifteen feet up from the ground, just high enough up to be the despair of small boys, is a small hole leading down to a circular chamber. Here a bluebird family has its home. Five feet up is another and larger hole. This is the front door to the residence of a redheaded woodpecker. At present the young woodpeckers are just getting ready to try their wings and at almost any time one of the youngsters may be seen looking out of the hole at what must seem a strange world. Still higher up, in the third story of the flat building, is another opening evidently made by a flicker, who changed his mind and left before he completed the work. There is likely to be an English sparrow's nest in that cavity before the summer is over, for the "avian rats" are going out into the country for the summer in great numbers and bid fair as soon to be as big a nuisance there as they are now in the city and nearby suburbs.

There seem to be other birds beside the bluejay which sometimes eat or at least destroy the eggs of their fellows. Thus the other day a horrible suspicion was aroused in regard to that symbol of innocence and gentleness, the robin redbreast. The robin flew from a tree down into the grass of a swamp meadow. There he disappeared for a moment. When he came into sight again he was flying for dear life with a red-winged blackbird close behind it, shrieking "stop thief" at the top of its voice. Of course the robin's



IN THE BIRD'S FLAT BUILDING.

intentions may have been perfectly honorable, but why should the redwing be roused to such a sudden pitch of fury at the sight of him asks a writer in the Chicago Tribune.

Russia's White City.

For three months in the winter Archangel, now to become the great western port of Russia, scarcely sees the sun, and for three months in the summer seldom loses sight of it. Yet there is no city in the whole of Europe which lies for so many months—for the greater part of the year, in fact—under a mantle of snow; and because of this the Russian fondly calls it "the White City."

White, too, it is in other ways. All the chief buildings glare with white paint and blink with white blinds. The churches—and in a Russian city they are but few—are also of pure white; only the cupolas are green, and the crosses on their summits gold. And white are the private houses of the better sort—except where Norwegians and Germans live, for buff and blue and red then streak and drape the pine walls and edge the gable ends. But street-posts, gates, pillars, walls, fences—these are all white. And in the summer, for every official you see in a blue or gray tunic, you see ten in white caps and white uniforms. Bright color alone is left to the women and children; pink blouses, green skirts, scarlet petticoats, orange aprons, and blue kerchiefs are common enough; while a group of children will always look like a cluster of old English flowers. But otherwise, in summer as in winter, this old city of Archangel, now destined to be the capital of a new Russia in the near west, is a White City, indeed.

Her Legal Privileges.

The following allegation in a bill for divorce against a wife was held by the Supreme court at Washington not to state any legal ground for divorce: "She was quarrelsome, vicious in disposition, murderous in threats against the plaintiff and his parents, hysterical and ungovernable in temper, crazy in her actions, and by her causeless and unprovoked boisterousness, screaming, hallooing, and other wild conduct, by day and night, an intolerable nuisance to all her neighbors."

of time been destroyed and rebuilt repeatedly. It has not been so much a question of building them as it has been of maintaining them and keeping them where they were. Besides protecting the country from the invasions of both fresh and salt waters, the dikes have served to reclaim no less than 210,000 acres, nearly all of which are good, fertile land.—National Geographic Magazine.

The man who has never written a foolish love letter has not yet taken all the degrees.

Rouen's Overhead Ferry.

The American vice consul in Rouen, France, E. M. J. Dollaplane, has written to the state department an interesting descriptive letter on the overhead ferry in use here across the Seine. It is called the Pont Transbordeur, and he says of it:

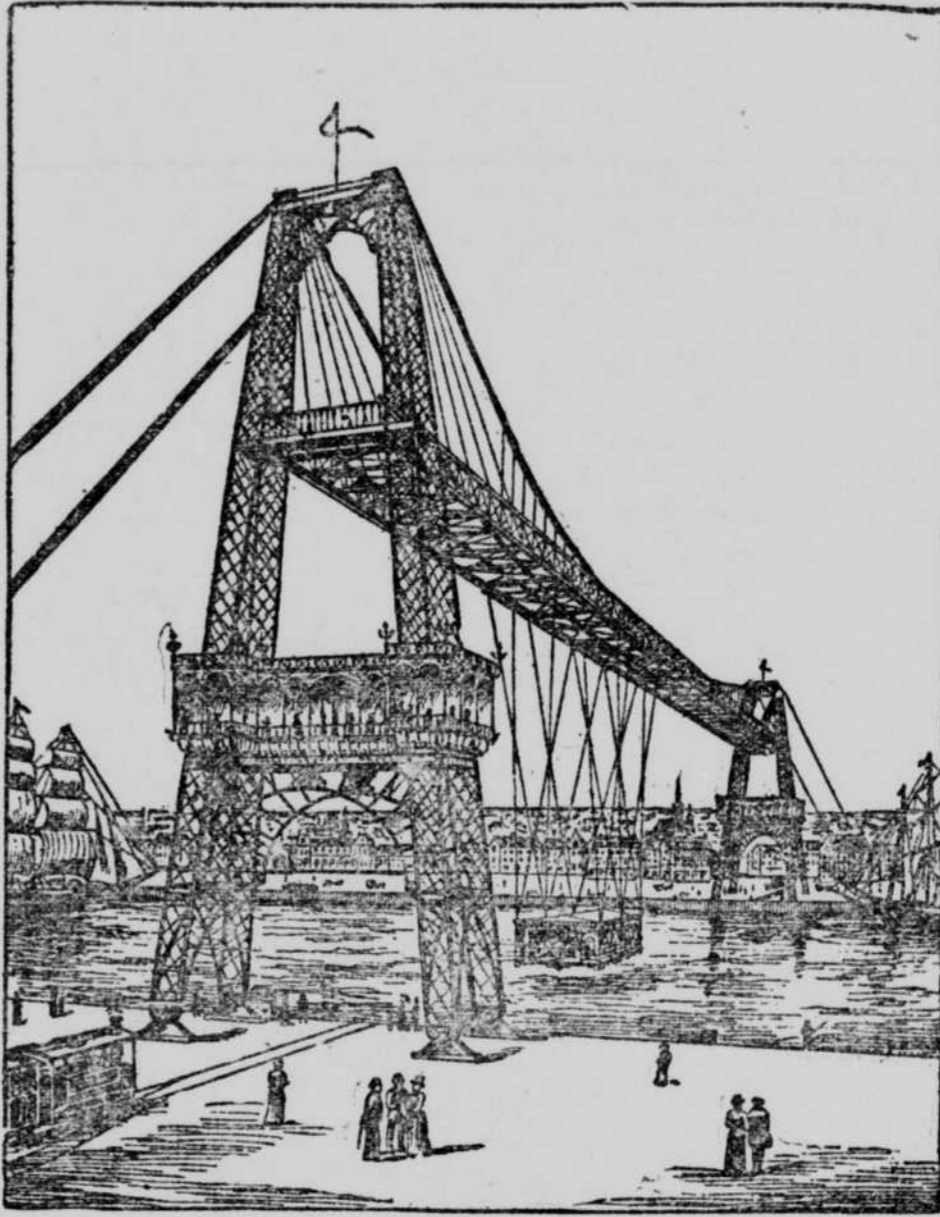
"This bridge, with suspended carrier, or overhead ferry, is of especial interest as being the first of its kind in France, or, for that matter, in Great Britain or America; and to appreciate properly its great importance and worth one has only to call to mind the difficulties experienced by engineers in crossing rivers and channels.

"The system exemplified by the Transbordeur here at Rouen remedies many of the defects and drawbacks in trans-channel traffic so apparent in many bridge and boat systems. Its obvious advantages are that it leaves the channel to be crossed entirely clear at

vice much more valuable than if the policeman had to strike the match and apply it to the wick himself, and a comparatively strong wind or rain should not succeed in extinguishing the blaze or preventing the working of the automatic lighter. The inventor also makes mention of a whistle inserted in the grip end of the club.

A Horse's Birthday.

"Did you ever hear of a birthday party being given for a horse?" said Lawyer Isidor Goldstrom to a Baltimore Sun reporter. "Well, I attended one recently, and when I received the invitation I thought it came from some one who was 'daffy' or a friend who delighted in playing jokes. The invitation was neatly got up and signed 'Countess May-Be-Not.' It announced that the party would be held at Rice's livery stable, North and Mad-

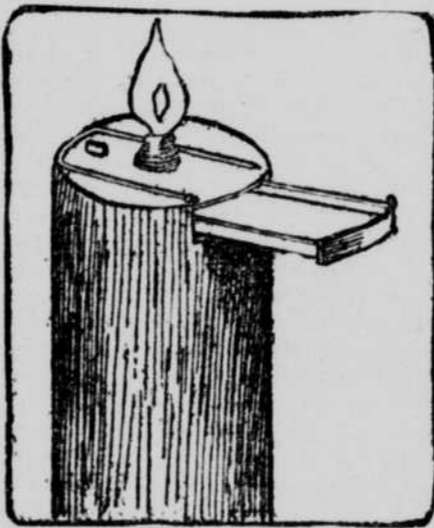


all hours without requiring vessels to make any special signals or modify their rate of speed any more than they would in the case of a cross-channel ferry, and that no increase of distance or ascent or descent is forced on the traffic in order to cross from one shore to the other.

"The essential part of the system may be described as a horizontal railway supported by a bridge spanning the channel and built up at such a height as will allow the tallest masted vessels frequenting the channel to pass beneath. Any kind of bridge may be used, provided the rectangular opening for navigation is left entirely clear, except that the arched bridges, which would reduce the rectangular area, must be excluded. Suspension bridges, however, owing to the facility they offer for spanning wide channels, the great advantage they possess in permitting erection by "launching" without any scaffolding interfering with the navigation, the economy of their construction, the little area they offer to wind pressure, and, lastly, their lightness and elegance, seem to command preference in the majority of cases. This is the kind of bridge in Rouen."

LIGHT FOR THE "COPPER."

A genius of Camden, N. J., has patented an appliance which he thinks



POLICEMAN'S CLUB LAMP.

will be of value to the policeman in making his rounds at night through dark alleys and hallways, the device being a lamp for insertion in the end of the club, with means for opening and closing the apparatus automatically. The flame is produced by either a torch or candle, which is mounted on a sliding disk inside the hollow end of the club, a coiled spring back of the disk forcing it outward as soon as the button is pressed to release the automatic lock. The sliding plate shown at the side is hollow and is provided with a match holder and an arrangement which draws the match head across a roughened plate at just the proper instant to ignite it and light the wick of the candle or lamp as it is presented at the opening in the end of the club. By using this form of lighter the flame can be instantly produced just at the desired moment for use, which makes the de-

WHEN TO EXPECT A PANIC.

Extravagant Speculation in Real Estate Options a Forerunner.

In the opinion of Mr. Alexander H. Revel, a writer in the Saturday Evening Post, undue speculation in real estate options is the invariable precursor of the financial panic. The man who takes his cue from real estate speculation and begins to husband his resources and prepare for a storm when he sees this feature of business activity reaching beyond the limits of sound, permanent investment will generally be in time to escape the crash. If he waits for the beginning of the drop in this form of security he may depend upon being caught in the wreck. The earth's surface seems to be about the last thing to which money desiring quick increase, in the form of speculative profit, is inclined to turn. All other forms of security appear more tempting to the speculative instinct because more active and changeable. So long as the main movement of real estate is in the nature of a permanent investment all is well. Then buyers make their purchases for personal use, or on the basis of what the property will yield in rentals or steady income of any nature. They are safe guides. But when men buy this most stable and substantial of securities on a "margin" payment to be sold quickly by force of high-pressure "booming"—the creation of an exaggerated view of values—then the time is ripe for the thoughtful student of affairs to prepare for financial trouble.

BRIDE AT LAST SAID "OBEY."

But It Was Only After the Groom Had Started to Leave.

Being an Episcopalian I always use the formal printed service of the prayer book. In this the greatest stickler is "obey." One day a couple came to me bringing as witnesses the parents of both bride and groom. Everything proceeded smoothly to the point, "love, honor and obey," when the bride refused to say the last. I repeated it and waited. Again she refused, and I shut up my book. Then there was a scene. They talked it over, and the more seriously they argued and discussed the more stubbornly she refused. The parents became angry, the groom excited and the bride hysterical. To humor her he joined in the request to have me leave it out. But I liked the fellow, and decided that a little sternness from me in the present might be a favor to him in the future. So I told them I had no authority to change it, and would not do so. I tried to show the foolishness of her objection, but it was no use. Finally I said to him, "Well, this household must have a head somewhere. I will leave it out for her if you will say it." Then it was his time to refuse, which he did. He gathered up his hat and started for the door, when she sprang after him, led him back by the hand, looked meekly up at him and said it.—Ladies' Home Journal.

Oriental Swearing.

A professor of languages on his return to England from India remarked upon the paucity of invectives used by Anglo-Saxons when compared with the abundance known to orientals. He gives a case which came under his own notice. A Hindoo man servant, whom he had dismissed for dishonesty, sought an interview with his former master. When he found it impossible to gain admission he sat under the window and the "swearing" process began. He cursed the professor along the genealogical tree back to the first ancestor of his race. Then he dwelt upon every detail of his anatomy, from the top of his head to the end of his toes. "For three consecutive hours he sat and swore," says the professor, "without once repeating a phrase." While traveling on the underground railway in London some men entered the same compartment and interspersed their remarks with the commonest forms of "swearing." The professor politely asked them to desist, whereupon he was told to mind his own business. He at once commenced to translate into English some specimens of eastern oaths which he had heard. The men shied from him as if he had the plague, and at the next station sought another compartment.

Poor Lo's Salvation Is Work.

The attitude of our government toward the Indian, in allowing him in idleness to follow his own untrammelled will on the reservation, is a relic of the old French and Spanish original discoverers. Are these wards of the government never to have homes, but be always condemned to tribal relations? Are they never to know the mental uplifting (or side-lifting or down-lifting) of a wife's hands, but be always fated to burden-bearing squaw life? Some day a statesman will arise and point the way for these aboriginal Americans to become men and women among us, and truly citizens of our states. Until that time—until Indians are alienated from their savage surroundings—their treatment is a proposition not reached by any pink-tea standard of ethics.—National Magazine.

Prize Fencer of Italy.

One of the most remarkable swordsmen of the day in Italy, one of those Old World nations in which the knowledge of fencing not only is an accomplishment, but a prime necessity of life, is 12-year-old Signor Attilio Monferrito. This lad has just won the national fencing tournament in Bologna. His antagonists were the most celebrated fencers in Italy, including Sartori, whose assistant Attilio used to be. Now the former employer, who was a prize winner in his day, is beaten by a mere boy.

Oldest Church in the County.

The oldest Protestant church in the United States is St. Luke's, at Smithfield, Va., writes William E. Curtis in the Chicago Record-Herald. St. Luke's was erected in 1632, and was restored in 1894 as nearly as possible to its original condition and appearance. It is a beautiful old structure of early English gothic, with mullioned windows and a stately tower, and has been used for public worship almost continuously for two centuries and a half. The original church erected on Jamestown Island by the first English colonists

in North America under Captain John Smith—the church in which Pocahontas was baptized and married—has all disappeared, except a picturesque, try-clad tower of brick, surrounded by a grove of trees.

Holland Keeps O'd Ocean at Bay.

There are at present about 1,000 miles of sea dikes in the Netherlands. The total length of dikes is difficult to estimate, and even if it could be estimated would mean but little, for it must be remembered that the dikes have for the most part in the course