

A RASH JUDGMENT.

Editor Forest and Stream:

In a recent issue a correspondent notes the failure of an attempt to rear ruffed grouse chicks hatched in an incubator. He follows this with a declaration that it is only another illustration of "the folly of attempting to domesticate the ruffed grouse." If it were not for seeming impolite, I should say his declaration illustrates the folly of founding so sweeping a proposition on a single experiment, especially when that experiment begins at the wrong end. Old hunters are common who, having been familiar with the ruffed grouse all their lives, declare that the adult birds will not even live in captivity.

There are some of us who believe the domestication of the ruffed grouse not only possible, but practicable; yet it will not be accomplished through the hatching of wild eggs by an incubator. It will begin with the adult birds which will first be so far tamed as to mate, nest and incubate in confinement, and chicks so hatched will have ten chances for reaching maturity to one for those submitted to the tender mercies of incubators and brooders. But the undertaking will not be an easy one; first, because the general opinion is that it is impossible, and, second, because whoever makes any attempt of this character finds himself utterly in the dark and obliged to depend entirely upon that very expensive instructor, experience. And if your correspondent is not already a long ways past three score and ten, I hazard the opinion that he will yet live to find himself in error. JAY BEBE.

TOLEDO, O., Nov. 27.

FORESTRY IN CALIFORNIA.—The State Board of Forestry of California has prepared for presentation to the next State Legislature a concurrent resolution which reads as follows: "Whereas, the interests of California, like those of all countries, necessitate the reservation of a certain portion of land in forest for the best interests of agriculture; and Whereas, the proportion of land in the greater part of California in forest is already much less than is deemed essential by scientific men; and Whereas, the land laws of the United States and of this State, applying to forest lands, are unsuited to the honestly conducted lumber trade, and fail totally to guard against waste or destruction by fire, and provide no protection for a future lumber and fuel supply, or for the preservation of the water sheds of our State; and Whereas, when these laws are good, the absence of adequate machinery for their execution forms a bar to their utility, and thus fraud, dishonesty and waste are rife, and robbery of the timber of the general government and from the State school lands, is common; and Whereas, these practices and wrongs should cease; therefore, be it Resolved, by the Senate and Assembly of California, that the Senators and Representatives of this State, in the Federal Congress, are hereby requested to use their utmost endeavors to improve the present land laws applying to timber lands, and especially to provide for an immediate withdrawal of all government timber lands in California from sale, until a definite survey shall have ascertained what portion of such lands should be reserved to secure a permanent and continuous supply of timber and fuel for our citizens, and to protect the agriculture of the State from injury and destruction by flood and drought."

"BIRD NOTES FROM LONG ISLAND."—Under this title Mr. William Dutcher has published in the October *Auk* a paper of exceptional interest on the rarer birds of Long Island. Mr. Dutcher has made Long Island his special field of study, and this field, although so often worked over by others, has yielded him very important results. He adds to the Long Island list of birds *Megalestris skua*, its most southern resort; *Sterna fuliginosa*, *Vanellus vanellus*, first record for the American continent south of the parallel of 60°, and *Turdus aliciae bicinelli*. Besides these interesting occurrences there are noted the occurrence of such rare birds as the harlequin duck, the cornrake, the three species of phalarope, the oyster catcher, black vulture, summer tanager and Carolina wren. There are also a number of notes on the breeding of species not before known to summer on Long Island. Mr. Dutcher is to be congratulated on the interesting material which he has presented to ornithologists.

"WEAPONS IN GAME."—Editor Forest and Stream: I am glad to be able to give some information to your correspondent "Sancho," who writes under the above heading to FOREST AND STREAM for Nov. 25. The ivory arrowhead, which he describes as being found in the breast of the wild goose, is undoubtedly one of those made by the Eskimos of northwestern Alaska, such as we have some hundred or so of in the Museum. The natives in the neighborhood of Point Barrow make a slender polygonal ivory arrowhead, about five inches long, for the special purpose of shooting large fowl such as geese and swans.—JOHN MURDOCH (U. S. National Museum, Washington, Nov. 29).

A. O. U. AND THE AUDUBON.—American Ornithologists' Union, Washington, D. C., Dec. 1.—Editor Forest and Stream: I have the honor to inform you that at the fourth Congress of the American Ornithologists' Union, held in Washington, D. C., Nov. 16 to 18, 1886, it was Resolved, That the thanks of the American Ornithologists' Union be extended to the Forest and Stream Publishing Company for valuable assistance rendered the Committee on Protection of North American Birds, and for advancing the interests of the AUDUBON SOCIETY.—C. HART MERRIAM, Sec. A. O. U.

CONNECTICUT.—Thomaston, Nov. 31.—I add another to the list of albino squirrels, having on the 11th inst. killed one of the gray species, white, with a faint yellow tinge. Ruffed grouse are quite plentiful this fall in this vicinity, and more quail are reported than usual. Have seen but three woodcock this year; shot two of them. Numerous coons have been bagged about here by the aid of Pat McKane's celebrated coon dog, Bangs, a cabinet size photograph was recently taken of the dog with a coon on each side of him, which he captured the evening previous.—PONTER.

OTTERS IN NEW ENGLAND.—Center Harbor, N. H., Dec. 1.—Moses and James Thompson and myself captured two fine otters last Monday. Both were males, weight 19lbs. each, length of skin 5ft. 6in. They were hard subjects to handle without gloves, as Jim can testify.—GEO. H. PIPEE.

WEATHER WISDOM.—Morristown, N. J., Dec. 8.—On Thanksgiving Day a very large white or "snow" owl was shot in the suburbs of this city. It was a female, 5ft. from tip to tip, and having but few spots on the snowy whiteness of its plumage. On the same day another was killed at Denville, six miles above here, apparently a male. In view of the mildness of the weather lately, their appearance so far south created much surprise among our local sportsmen and naturalists, and some of the wise fellows held it to presage the near and sudden approach of winter in all the name implies. They were right. Winter reached the latitude of Morristown Dec. 3.—F. B. D. B.

ATHENS, Pa., Nov. 29.—A party of hunters while after rabbits on Thanksgiving Day, shot a fine specimen of the snowy owl, which measured 5ft. 6in. from tip to tip and was 25in. long. I mounted it for a gentleman of this place and it attracts considerable attention, as it is the first one ever known to have been killed around here.—W. K. P.

A SILVER FOX.—Ferrisburgh, Vt., Nov. 27.—Editor Forest and Stream: In his day, fifty years ago, Uncle Bill Williams of Charlotte was a great fox hunter, and in one season shot sixty foxes. His sons inherited his love of hunting, and in great measure his skill and luck, so that it was always said of the Williams "boys" that they were lucky hunters. The old man's mantle seems to have descended to his grandson, Will Williams of this town, for on Oct. 30 he killed a veritable silver gray fox near the "Cove" in Charlotte. This is a "streak o' luck" such as never struck any other hunter in this town. The other fox hunters here have had a poor season so far, hardly one scoring more than two foxes, and they only reds. Most of us would be glad of a chance at even one of these, which are unusually scarce, and the few appear to have the "biled down cunning" of all the generations of their race.—AWAHSOOSE.

A KANSAS EAGLE.—Paola, Kan., Nov. 26.—Mr. Albert Lyder, of Six Mile, brought into town this morning an immense eagle, measuring 7ft. 6in. across the wings. He brought the huge bird to the ground from a distance of 80yds. Seeing him soaring above the poultry yard, evidently with an eye on some fine Thanksgiving turkeys, Mr. Lyder loaded up his faithful old fowling piece with about five charges of powder and a few buckshot. The bird, on falling to the ground wounded, made an attack upon his enemy, who had to defend himself with another well directed shot.—R. H. C.

Camp-Fire Flickerings.

"That reminds me."
197.

TWO civil engineers employed on the levee in Coahoma county, Mississippi, are quartered at the residence of Mr. Simpson, who is by the way a very hospitable gentleman. A few days ago as they came in from their work they noticed fresh deer tracks in the vicinity of the house. This stirred up their ardor as sportsmen, and having heard much about the abundance of deer in that locality, their inflamed imaginations were not much shocked at the sight of a real live deer in a cotton patch a few yards from the house. They hastened into the house and procured a gun. Selman with the gun approached the deer and fired at short range with No. 6 shot. The deer dropped instantly and appeared to be gasping his last gasp. Kent rushed up and jumped on the deer, threw his hat up into the sky and shouted. They called William, the colored man, to fetch a butcher knife. William came, and after looking sadly at the deer for a few moments remarked in sepulchral tones, "Dar now, you done kill Mr. Eldridge pet deer. Dat deer been in dis yard most every day. He come in de house if you had er let him."

Let us draw a veil for a few minutes while the two engineers recover. The silence was broken by two simultaneous exclamations, "We've played it!" The funny part was that Kent thought he had killed the deer and was disposed to take all the onus on himself. Selman had some trouble to assure him that he (Selman) had done the shooting. After some consultation they told William to cut the deer's throat and take the carcass over to Mr. Eldridge. But when William essayed to inaugurate the second act, the deer got up and quietly proceeded to browse around, and seemed as well as ever. The two engineers retired to their room and indulged in a thinking spell, during which they overheard the following observations by William in the adjoining room: "Miss Simpson, ain't I better put up dem turkeys? Dem white gentlemen shoot mighty wild 'round dis yard. Dey shoot dem turkeys sho if dey ain't in de hen 'ouse."

COAHOMA.

198.

A few days ago McLaws, the levee contractor, had an Irishman plowing up the ground preparatory to building a levee. Barney plowed up a torpid snake which he carefully stepped over without any remark. McLaws, who was just behind, exclaimed: "Barney, didn't you see that snake?" Barney stopped his plow and looked back: "An' is it a snake, Mister McLaws? I wasn't goin' to say a worred; sure thin I'm jist affther having a two weeks' drunk, and I didn't know if it was a snake or not."

COAHOMA.

MEMPHIS, Tenn.

199.

In your paper of Nov. 25, I enjoyed reading "First Lessons." The rabbit stew at the evening meal "reminded me" of the well-worn story of the preacher and his rabbit stews. A preacher who, for the sixth time, had dined on rabbits with the same family, said grace in the following words:

Rabbits hot and rabbits cold,
Rabbits young and rabbits old;
Rabbits tender and rabbits tough,
We thank thee, O Lord, we have rabbits enough.

G.

OVID, Michigan.

ERRATA.—In "Canadian Back Lakes," Nov. 25, for farm of Lindsay read town of Lindsay; for wasting pan, roasting pan; for suspect, I suspect; for thence make a portage, and make a portage; for greater part of an hour, quarter of an hour; for fly into in the evening to roost, morning to roost; for when skiff was hauled out, where skiff was hauled out. In "Lake St. Francis," Dec. 2, to paraphrase Hood should have been printed to paraphrase Moore.

Game Bag and Gun.

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SUMMER WOODCOCK SHOOTING.

NEW YORK, Nov. 2.—Editor Forest and Stream: Have you within the last five years noticed the yearly decrease of woodcock? Not only have they become fewer and fewer every year, but they have actually become scarce, and at this rate within the next decade they will certainly be practically exterminated. The cause of this is very simple and easily traced.

Of all the game birds, the woodcock is the most hunted. During the summer and fall months it is hunted and shot in our Northern, Eastern and Western States; during the winter months it is killed in our Southern States; in fact it is a wonder there are any left at all. It has really only three breathing months, during the months of April, May and June, and even then it is killed by the pot-hunter. It is a delicacy for which the marketmen and hotelkeepers pay a good price, therefore it is sought for by the market shooters. Let the sportsmen think of this seriously, and they will not wonder any more why woodcock have been so scarce. There cannot be a total stop put to this extermination, it is really only a matter of time. Woodcock will have to disappear before the progress of swamp culture and civilization. But the evil day can be put off quite a length of time through a combination and union of sportsmen. Let all summer woodcock shooting be stopped north of Maryland and east of Ohio. Let there be no woodcock shooting before the middle of September or the first of October.

I know it will be very hard for some of our best sportsmen to acquiesce in this, but we will have to come to it; and the sooner the better.

For the last twenty years I have not missed one single opening day of woodcock shooting, either in New Jersey or New York, and sometimes I have carried the war into Pennsylvania. I have braved the heat and the mosquitoes, and I have enjoyed it immensely; but after a good deal of reasoning with myself, I have been obliged to come to the conclusion that, although the law has been on my side, I have been doing wrong. There are hundreds of good sportsmen who have been doing as I have, and to these, most particularly, I now appeal.

Let all true sportsmen rouse themselves and use their influence, no matter how small, against summer woodcock shooting. Let all game clubs memorialize their legislatures against summer woodcock shooting; but by all means let us pull together and unite. Let us be wary, and let us not be beguiled by a few politicians or demagogues, calling themselves sportsmen. They are either pot-hunters themselves, or the representatives of marketmen or hotelkeepers. Do not let us compromise on a half-way law, but let our motto be, NO MORE SUMMER WOODCOCK SHOOTING. Then within a very few years our fall shooting will be something like what it used to be.

A MEMBER OF THE BROOKLYN GUN CLUB.

NEW ENGLAND GAME.

THE gunners in this section are not very well satisfied with the late fall shooting. The drought was followed by successive rains that have precluded outdoor sports to any but the most hardy. The shore bird shooting has been almost a failure, and now the gunners are waking slowly up to the necessity of abolishing spring shooting if they would have any birds in the fall to shoot. The birds that have come into the bays and inlets of the Massachusetts coast have never been so shy as this fall; so the gunners say. There has been an abundance of snow in many parts of New England for nearly half of the month of November, but it could not be improved for tracking in many places, because it has been followed by crusts. Still there has been some partridge shooting in Northern Maine, as witness the few boxes that have been smuggled through from Maine and New Hampshire. But the game dealers of this city have got but very, very few grouse this year. Indeed the sight of that bird in this market has almost been rare this fall. The dealers say that it is because they have been very scarce, but the reports of Maine gunners, who formerly shot for this market, prove to the contrary. They have killed their fifties and hundreds of birds, but the non-exportation law has prevented the sending of their trophies to Boston.

I have a few reports of deer killed since the snows, but the universal verdict is that it has been very poor tracking owing to the crust, though the deer are very plenty in some parts of Maine. In Dixfield, in that State, several have been killed, some of them not far from the town; so I am told, at least. Some of the real sportsmen of Maine have also been into the woods on their annual deer hunt. It gives everybody pleasure to hear that they have been successful. They are ardent workers for the protection of game in the close season, but in the legal time they hunt for the genuine pleasure it gives, and there is no game killed to go to waste. A deer a piece is enough. I learn that one of them has missed his deer this year—a magnificent buck, that he had spent days in tracking, but at last brought within easy range, and that too of buckshot. It was a dead miss, and the deer trotted away as though nothing had happened. This was in the vicinity of Lake Molechunkamunk, but the hunter won't let me give his name, though it was in the midst of the open season, and he had not killed his three. The damage to his reputation as a dead shot at a deer would hurt him.

I saw two carcasses of venison in the market to-day, the first I have seen this year that looked like Maine deer. The cutting of the flesh looked like that freshly done, and those deer never came from the West. I asked the marketmen in charge where those deer were from, and one or two of them referred me to the other one, but the other one did not know. He would look at the invoice, but the man with the invoice winked to the other man; and "Behanged if the invoice shows where they come from." Singular, was it not? They would have answered me almost any other question correctly. They had just unboxed a lot of mutton from Aroostook county, Maine, and the venison lay just beside the mutton and the boxes. The Boston marketmen won't give away the methods by which game illegally reaches them, but they are watched; let them rest assured of that. SPECIAL.