

betook myself to a little hill at the edge of the clearing about half past six or say six p.m. My lorgnette was of course in its case, in my pocket. This hill, I made it my business to visit every day, and from sitting quietly there and watching around me, I was able to discover some facts in pigeon life, I have seen noted by nobody before. There was a peculiar odor of pigeons diffused through the whole atmosphere, and pervaded it even where I was now sitting on this hill, nearly one hundred yards out in the clearing. A bush circled round to the west, in which were several very tall and dead elm trees. To the right of these, was a solitary pine towering skyward, also dead, or nearly so, with a long, dead limb almost at its top, sticking abruptly out. On these trees a considerable number of pigeons were seated, and my lorgnette told me, they were all red breasted cocks.

The quantities on the wing, all around me, were prodigious. Occasionally a bunch of a thousand or so would rush past my head with a roar, and after arriving at their destination, perhaps a mile or two, would descend into the bush and disappear. And this had a very strange look. It seemed as if the forest swallowed up the myriads of birds that came in flocks over it.

As night approached, the heavens in all arcs to the north, south, and east, were literally a mass of flocks of pigeons, winging their way to their roosts. I remained this evening till the grey cold sky with stars twinkling over head, and all over the blue vault proclaimed the reign of night. I was fascinated, I could not leave the spot, and kept watch till I felt my eyelids turn heavy and had to make for "Home."

A few heavy chunks and small logs were thrown on the embers; a fire soon shot up in ruddy beams, and I consigned myself to my buffalo robes, and the sweet scented sapin and soon forgot this wicked world and all belonging to it, wrapped in the arms of repose. Sleep in this manner is most refreshing, as I know from experience, yet one is very easily aroused if any unexpected sound floats to the ear.

Dash as usual, on such occasions lay beside my boots at the foot of the bed. Suddenly he leaped up and began to bark savagely and then dashed at something I heard grunt. In a moment there was pandemonium. Somebody's pigs had strayed hitherward, and their grunts and squeals as they ran for their lives towards the concession, told me that Dash was driving the enemy ahead of him,—victorious over the foe.

Presently he returned in triumph, his tail erect, and himself rather blown. My watch told me it was half past eleven, and yet there was a continual buzz, and a loud roaring sound all about me.—A continual flight it seemed to be, yet I saw no birds in flocks. There was no moon. The night was clear and warm, and thousands of pigeons were calling all over, and fluttering around me. Limbs seemed to be falling all around, and I thought I heard the voice of some mighty tempest shouting through the forest with all its might. But the air was perfectly stilled.

Again I sought my robes and was very soon in the land of dreams hushed to repose by the notes of thousands of doves.

And this was only twenty years ago, yet

there are scores of youths and maidens of eighteen and twenty around me, who have not the slightest idea of what a passenger pigeon is like, so completely have they vanished from this land!

I slept soundly, and was not disturbed again till the grey and distant streaks of morning began to glimmer in the eastern sky. A growl from Dash, followed by a savage charge at something as yet invisible, and a fierce tussle informed me that a battle royal was going on.

Then came another heavy shaking and I heard the familiar squeaks uttered by an expiring raccoon. Still he continued to shake that coon, even after it was dead. On getting it from the dog I found it was a two years old one, and pretty fat for the spring, and the fur, although faded in color, yet thick and good.

Sleep being now out of the question, the fire was trimmed, and the pot placed ready for warming up for breakfast.

Anxious to be on the hill before referred to, I soon was there, wrapped in my overcoat. The mornings at this season of the year are, always chilly. Even then the birds were making considerable noise, and you might see one here and there in the middle of the surrounding dimness, darting over your head or any where near, and returning at great speed to the bush.

About half an hour, more or less, after I sat myself on my accustomed stump there was a mighty noise of wings as if every bird on the ground had suddenly taken wing.

The light was as yet uncertain, and the stars in the clear sky were nearly invisible, that is, stars of the first magnitude, for the lesser luminaries had long disappeared in the blue ethereal vault. And this noise which at first resembled smothered notes of thunder, suddenly swelled louder and louder, till it became a deafening roar, and a mighty mass like a black cloud came right over my head within half gun shot and made the atmosphere quiver, as if the rush of tens of thousands, aye hundreds of thousands of rapidly beating wings. For fully a minute this swiftly moving, cloud of life, made every thing around me, intensely dark, as the morning light was intercepted.

In truth, I was completely bewildered. I had seen such a cloud the first morning, as it were in the distance, and I really had but a small conception of the vastness of the innumerable numbers of birds in this flock, birds so numerous as to be beyond the powers of the human mind to grasp the reality of those numbers. And they rolled away like a cloud before the wind, scattering abroad, as it seemed, as they receded from the range of my glasses.

Had I had my gun, I could not by any means have used it. I saw two other masses rise from sections of the forest to the south, and although the farthest must have been two or three miles away, the roar of rushing sound was perfectly distinct and loud, though subdued by distance. As to the nearer ones, I could see the different birds with the lorgnette, and they made the air tremble where I was sitting, as they winged their way to some distant feeding ground. It is a curious fact, and to me unaccountable, that they never stopped near home to feed; except for a few days after they first settled down, and not a farmer I heard of, ever saw one of

them pick up one grain of their spring sown wheat, oats, or peas. Where they went to feed, I do not know, but most undoubtedly it was not within scores of miles of their breeding grounds.

The sun had risen and small bunches were seen winging their way all about. A meadow in which there was a brackish muddy spot, with a shallow supply of water, was visited by thousands of them daily. This was about two miles from the breeding ground.

It is a strange fact in the natural history of all these birds, as well as many others that the place where their water supply is found, is often very remote from that where they obtain their food.

Travellers in many lands have noted this point. Gordon Cumming relates, that, by watching and following the flight of the little African doves and grouse, he was enabled to discover a pool in the desert for his sorely distressed oxen, horses, and dogs.

The little hill on which I was seated, commanded a magnificent view of the forest, of which the birds had taken possession. I tired watching these birds passing by in an endless maze, so I took my way home, and let me assure you I enjoyed my pigeon stew, and a cup of tea amazingly, that morning. Dash also enjoyed it, as he had to have his share along with his master.

The guns began to crack away in good earnest on the distant outskirts, especially in the vicinity of Kintail where there was a large bunch of pigeons located. I was glad that as yet nobody was within a mile or two of my habitation, for being well known to all the neighborhood, far and near, I was well aware that I was likely to have visitors.

After breakfast, I took my gun and returned to the hill to especially note the flights, and any thing else worthy of entering in my diary. In fact this description as given here is strictly true. Any one reading it, can rely on the signature of "Gaspereau" as being trustworthy in all and every point of natural history, as recorded by me.

I had not been long in my place, pencil in hand, when I saw a little pig-on hawk, (*Falco Calumbarius*) strike down a pigeon, and like a flash strike another, and go off with it in its talons, see-saw, from side to side, till he landed it, seemingly quite dead on a log, some fifty or sixty yards from where I was sitting.

"Bravely done, little fellow," I thought, but surely one is enough for breakfast for a person of your size. I picked up the first bird he struck. It was a cock, and perfectly dead. Blood was on its back, and a gash an inch or more long.

How had he struck it? Had he struck it with such force, as some assert with his breast bone, the force and concussion must have been absolutely so strong as to kill both him and his victim.

I took this pigeon to my seat and plucked it, the better to inspect the cause of death, and the depth of the wound. I found one of the ribs over the region of the heart bare and broken, and below it was a small clot of blood, and as I carefully examined the heart and lungs about it, there was a tear in the lung, and puncture in the heart.

This conclusively satisfied me, the hawk

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