

bird left its eggs while the dog was some distance away, but with cattle it waited until almost touched before moving, so that its sudden appearance was more startling.

It would, of course, be a fatal mistake were the latter method employed to drive away a dog, or coyote; while the former would prove useless as a means of preventing cattle from treading upon the eggs. Hence, two habits to gain the same end.

It might be asked how a bird had acquired so much wisdom in being able to distinguish between an enemy which would eat both bird and eggs if opportunity offered, and a generally harmless cow from which the only danger would be of accidentally treading upon the eggs. And also, how it had learned to employ methods of defence so totally different. I believe the answer is this. Before the advent of civilization the prairies were inhabited by countless numbers of buffaloes, while coyotes as well as foxes were also more numerous than they are to-day. The Killdeer is a bird that nests in open spots, usually on dry low hills not far removed from water. Consequently, the eggs and young would often come in contact with these mammals, and if the parent bird did not resort to some artifice, their offspring would often suffer. The parents which contended most successfully with enemies would naturally rear more young. Thus, by the "survival of the fittest" the instinct—I believe it is an instinct—has been acquired. I have observed these birds practise both methods with success when contending against crows, but man, they rank with coyote and dog and only feign injury. They consider—unfortunately rightly—that we are not to be trusted.

The American Goldfinch, often wrongly called Wild Canary, nests very late in the season, in spite of the fact that in some parts of the country, such as at Ottawa, it is a permanent resident. I remember puzzling over the reason of this late nesting until it occurred to me that the young were fed principally upon the seeds of wild sunflowers and similar plants such as *Gaillardia*, burdock, thistle, etc. Then the reason became plain: these birds waited until the seeds were ripe so that they would have an abundance of food both for their young and for themselves, during the breeding season. In Manitoba the sunflowers are much preferred, and I believe this is due partly to the birds' plumage harmonizing so remarkably with the flowers. Earlier in the season they feed to a large extent upon dandelions and *Gaillardia* seeds, both yellow-flowering plants.