

I was sufficiently interested by what I had seen to wonder if the snake would repeat its successful ruse; and so I overtook it once more at a little distance, stopping when within a foot or two of it. It stopped as before, drawing back its head, and throwing its body into considerable curves. What followed was substantially the same as I have already described, but was if anything even more cautious, and longer in accomplishment. The markings of the snake were admirably suited for harmonizing with its surroundings and in doubling from side to side, the body's motion did not greatly break the homogeneity with the waving grass. The creature's self-possession and apparent confidence in its tactics, impressed one particularly, whenever the peculiarity of its mode of travel compelled it to direct its head almost squarely toward the quarter from which it sought to escape. Needless to say, its well-earned liberty was gladly granted; and, I suppose, if it succeeds in running the gauntlet of human persecution until a like occasion again presents itself, it will all the more instinctively rely on what has once proved safe wood-craft, and if the next intruder also witnesses the little drama of which he is the cause, will furnish him with another instance of the marvels of animal sagacity.

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BIRD NOTES.—In the Montreal Witness of February 13th, 1909, a note reporting the appearance of a solitary robin in the vicinity of Montreal, called forth another from Ottawa. Quoting from the Ottawa Journal this correspondent says, that small flocks of robins have been frequently seen at Ottawa during the winter.† This is so unusual that we should be pleased to learn something more about these wintering robins; particularly as to their feeding habits and whether they were immature birds or not.

Pine Grosbeaks and Redpolls have been unusually common here this winter, the Grosbeaks feeding on seeds of Mountain Ash and apple trees. Prairie Horned Larks were first noticed on the 28th of February, when I saw four birds; a week later saw six, apparently mated.

On February 21st, my attention was attracted by the grating notes of a Northern Shrike. It was unusually tame, permitting a near approach to its perch in an apple tree, though becoming very nervous and excited, whilst emitting a series of cries, one of them a good imitation of an alarmed Catbird and yet another reminding me of the Blue Jay's cry. At intervals it also indulged in its customary warble, suggesting that of the Purple Finch. The body of a Redpoll impaled on a twig of the

†See also Ottawa Naturalist, March 1909, p. 265.—Ed.