

The Times Nature Club

Wild Coons.

It is rather difficult to realize that just outside of the city of Victoria there are coons with their dens and their rather large numbers. Only a short time ago when wandering in the woods I saw a big hollow tree which the coons had adopted as a home. It was a fir and the hole was fifteen or twenty feet from the ground. I did not see the animals but there was every sign that they were present. The bark of the tree was worn with their claws as they climbed up and down and the entrance to the hole was also well worn. It is said that often a whole family of coons will live together in one hole, and it certainly looked as though there were a good many in the hole in question.

Gulls, Shore Birds.

It is not until one crosses the ocean that he realizes that the sea birds that frequent the harbors and shores are not ocean birds, but are as much land as we. They are never seen at any great distance from the land and their food consists largely of those things which are procurable near shore. The gulls have adapted themselves to the changing conditions of the coast. At low tide they live very largely on the refuse that is thrown from the culinary department of the big liners and coasting steamers.

The gulls in the vicinity of Victoria differ very much from those found in the same latitude on the shores of the Atlantic. Anyone who is at all observant cannot but be struck with the difference, and it seems to me that those found here are larger than the others, although in this I may be mistaken.

Feathers in Hats.

There are still some women who wear feathers and wings in their hats. Those who think usually do not so, but those who never think except about themselves continue the obnoxious practice. The Indians formerly had a great admiration for feathers, and they decorated themselves with them on great occasions. The craze for the same by white women seems to be a bit of the savage left in their nature and which it will probably take some years to eradicate. The following extract from the "Gentleman" is rather interesting in this connection:

The Slaughter of Birds.
However much we may be averse to figures, the statistician at times has no entertaining that we cannot but listen to him, although we are well aware that it is impossible for us to verify the truth of all his statements. This time he comes to us with some startling information. Do you know, he asks, how many birds are slaughtered annually to adorn ladies' hats? According to him the Paris milliners alone consume every year about seventy thousand quills. One stylish dealer sold during the last twelve months thirty-two thousand humming-birds, and eight hundred thousand pairs of wings of every description. Our island calculates that more than three hundred millions of birds are sacrificed to the vanity of women in the so-called "civilized" countries, and the results of these fearful hecatombs are already making themselves felt. Some countries are now almost quite depopulated of their winged inhabitants. The Labrador duck is almost extinct. So is the pigeon of St. Martin, the Auckland rail, the bullfinch of the Azores, the white-headed titmouse, and many others. The gentleman might have added that in most cases the wretched little birds are plucked while they are still in the nest, and die in terrible agony. Tears ago there was a movement in England to put a stop to this insane custom of trimming our hats with birds. I recommend this question to the ladies who at the present moment are alighting their grievances somewhat loudly, and I ask them to remember also the little birds' grievances.

Dragonflies.

In reference to the article appearing some time ago about the ant lion, a correspondent asks whether the dragonfly is also hatched in the sand. No, the dragonfly is hatched in the water. Before changing to a chrysalis the larva of the dragonfly is as voracious as the ant lion, but it feeds on water creatures. Just before the fly emerges from the water the chrysalis rises to the surface of the water and the fly steps out upon its old skin, and wings its way off in search of small mosquitoes and midges.

Retaliation.

Everyone has heard of the house sparrows driving the swallows out of the house and home, but word has lately come from England that the little house martins are retaliating and in a number of cases have driven the sparrows from their homes and taken possession themselves.

English Birds.

It is wonderful how many birds there are in England, writes the Nature Editor, who is at present visiting the Old Land. Not only are there rooks and sparrows and game birds, but all kinds of small finches and other feathered friends abound on every hand. They are very tame, and especially is this the case with the blackbirds which frequent every lawn and hedgerow, especially in the vicinity of a farm house. I must say, however, that the birds are in one way a disappointment. I had remembered their singing as a very pleasant memory. On my return after an extended absence I found that there was scarcely as much bird song as in the Canadian woods. The difficulty was, I had arrived too late. There were certainly a few songs to be heard and much twittering, but nothing more than I am in the habit of hearing from my window in the suburbs of Victoria.

One of the first things that I did on my arrival in England was to go birding. At once I found a flycatcher sitting on a tree, pretty much as in Canada. I saw the sparrows still carrying in feathers for the late broods. I think these birds raise at least two if not three broods of young in the season.

Evolution in Color.

A well-known naturalist once said: "We may have a yellow rose, but it is pretty well agreed that if we ever see a blue one it will be by a process of continuous variation and selection." By this it is meant that if a blue rose is ever produced from a red variety, for instance, the change will not be a sudden one, a leap from one color to the other, but the result of a gradual pro-

gression through a series of steps leading regularly from red to blue.

In fact, it has been found that both plants and animals exhibit a tendency toward a definite succession of colors, and certain colors have been regarded as representing higher stages of evolution than others. The change toward the "higher" colors are usually continuous, and require a series of variations, while, on the other hand, instances of sudden reversion to "lower" colors are not uncommon.

Red is regarded as a higher color in this sense, than yellow. The yellow primrose sometimes varies to red, but the change is never sudden or discontinuous, because it is a change in the direction of progression. But from red to yellow the change sometimes occurs by a jump, so to speak, because it is going backward. The same thing seems to apply in the case of birds. Red and yellow are the two basic colors, and low, but the utmost efforts of breeders to produce canaries from yellow ones have resulted only in an orange hue.

A well-known florist recently started the work of offering hundreds of carnations for sale. After a great deal of discussion had been aroused, he confessed that he created them by sticking them, when cut, in a pot of green dye and letting them absorb the color through their stems.

Although there is no relation apparent between the two phenomena, yet it is interesting, in connection with this subject, to recall the fact that among the stars certain colors appear to characterize different stages of change, or evolution. Red stars, according to the testimony of the spectroscopic, differ widely in their constitution from white or yellow ones, and it has been thought that varying color may give a clue to progressive changes in the heavenly bodies. Thus, for instance, it is said to have changed from red to white, and some have suspected that Arcturus is fading from red toward yellow.

Thus science as it clears up one mystery, reveals another.

What a Bird Can Eat.

The average man, if he had a bird's appetite, would devour from thirty to thirty-one pounds of food a day, which would be a tax on the larder. Recent experiments have proved that the average bird manages to eat about one-fifth his own weight daily with ease. If he can get so much food, and in a wild state, though the bird has to hunt for his daily provender, he is eating a large part of the time during the day, and manages to get his full ration. The smaller the bird, the more voracious seems to be its appetite and its power of absorption. A German scientist recently kept a canary under observation for a month. The little creature weighed only sixteen grammes, but in the course of a month it managed to eat 512 grammes weight of food; that is, about thirty-two times its own weight. The bird must therefore have eaten its own weight in food every day. An ordinary man with a canary's appetite could consume 160 pounds of food a day. But the canary is an extreme case. The ordinary bird, in good health, will be satisfied with one-fifth of its weight a day by way of food.

Shellfish.

Editor Nature Club: Recently I picked up a shell in the lake at the park. It looked just like a clam and was as fresh inside like a clam—though the shell was darker than a clam shell.

People tell me these shellfish are called mussels and are plentiful in lakes everywhere, but as the lake in the park is an artificial one, these mussels must have come through the water pipes. Can you or any of your readers conversant with the subject tell me about this class?

INQUIRER.

ITINERARY OF MINING INDUSTRY
Organization Which Will Hold Session in Victoria Maps Out Plans.

Following is the itinerary of the forthcoming excursion of the Canadian Mining Institute in British Columbia and Alberta, which may be subject to slight modification by local committees: Thursday, Sept. 10.—Arrive Winnipeg 9:45 a. m. Leave Winnipeg 11:20 a. m. Friday, Sept. 11.—Arrive Medicine Hat in the morning, and visit natural gas wells. Leave by special train for Lethbridge, where in the afternoon the train will be at the colliery of the Alberta Railway & Irrigation Company.

Saturday, Sept. 12.—Arrive in Frank early in the morning, where a short walk will be made to enable the party to see the land and coal mine. Arrive before noon at Coleman, where the remainder of the day will be spent in inspecting the mines and plant of the International Coal & Coke Co. Special side excursions to Lillie, Hillcrest and Bellevue collieries may be arranged by the local committee (the Lillie mines are equipped with a new power and coal washing plant and the only set of Belgium ovens in the west).

Sunday, Sept. 13.—Leave Coleman early in the morning, arriving at Humber about 9 o'clock. A short stay will be made here to enable the party to inspect the extensive and thoroughly modern colliery established at this point by the C. P. R. After arriving at Humber, where in the afternoon the train will immediately leave for a visit to the mines at Coal Creek. Leave Fernie at midnight for Moyle.

Monday, Sept. 14.—The train will arrive at 3 a. m. and the morning will be spent in inspecting the St. Eugene (the largest silver-lead mine in Canada) and concentrator. The train will leave at midday to connect with the steamer leaving Kootenay Landing and arriving at Nelson at 7 p. m.

Tuesday, Sept. 15.—Leave Nelson at 6:30 a. m. by special train and arrive at Smelter Junction at 8:30 a. m. Here the party will be permitted to inspect the well-equipped smelter and refinery plant of the Consolidated Mining & Smelting Company of Canada, Ltd. The remainder of the day will be spent at Roseland and visits will be made to the

Le Roi, Le Roi Two, Centre Star and War Eagle mines.

Wednesday, Sept. 16.—A special train will leave Trail for Greenwood, arriving at 1 p. m., where arrangements will be made for visiting the very complete copper smelting works of the British Columbia Copper Company, the Mother Lode mine and the smelter at Boundary Falls, owned by the Dominion Copper Company.

Thursday, Sept. 17.—Special train will leave Greenwood early in the morning for Phoenix, where several hours will be spent in visiting the important mines, including those of the Granby Company, the Brooklyn mine, owned by the Dominion Copper Company, and the Snowshoe, operated under lease by the Consolidated Mining & Smelting Company of Canada, Ltd. In the afternoon the important smelting works of the Granby Company at Grand Forks, will be visited. At midnight a special train will leave for Nelson.

Friday, Sept. 18.—The day will be spent at Nelson, and arrangements will probably be made for a day's visit to the Boundary Falls power plant, at Boundary Falls. At midnight the train will leave to connect with the steamer, which will take the party across the Kootenay river, with its buoy and light, to Revelstoke in the evening.

Sunday, Sept. 20.—Arrive at Victoria in the evening. Three days will be spent in Victoria and excursions will be arranged and reception given by the local committee.

Thursday, Sept. 24.—Arrive at Vancouver in the morning and visit Stanley park leaving by the east-bound train for Banff in the afternoon.

Friday, Sept. 25.—Arrive at Banff at night.

Saturday, Sept. 26.—Visit Banffhead collieries near Banff. Entertainment at luncheon or dinner by the government of Alberta in the evening.

Thursday, Oct. 1.—Arrive Montreal.

IRRIGATION WORK IN KEREMEOS DISTRICT

Tracklaying by Great Northern to Hedley is Not Yet Commenced.

Grand Forks, Aug. 1.—Martin Burrell, who has been making a two weeks' trip through the Similkameen country, returned home yesterday. Interviewed by your correspondent Mr. Burrell said:

"A healthy progress in the fruit industry is evident around Keremeos. The Messrs. Armstrong, of Vancouver, are placing some 2,000 acres on the market in this section, which will have already been made up of the waterworks and a marine boiler consigned to J. H. Greer & Co. for the tug Albion.

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SPALLUMCHEEN PIONEER.

Vernon, Aug. 1.—Full of years and looking the respect and esteem of a large circle of friends, one of the early settlers of the Spallumcheen passed away this week in the person of F. Augustus Schubert, sr. He is survived by a wife and several children, including the sons Augustus, James and Charles and Mrs. H. Fraser and Mrs. H. Swanson, daughters.

DEVELOPMENT IN NORTH.

Vancouver, Aug. 3.—John T. Phelan, superintendent of Dominion government telegraphs, has returned from a six weeks' tour of inspection of the line along the coast shore and as far into the interior as Hazelton. He reports that there is some trouble in rearranging the course of the line on account of the clearing of the G. T. P. right-of-way, as the two at many points come into conflict. Apart from this the line is in good working order and everything satisfactory.

Mr. Phelan reports that the catch of salmon on the Skeena has been very satisfactory the canners stating that he is early in the season in this respect. The pack was as great as the entire pack last year. The developments taking place in the north are also reported by Mr. Phelan as being very rapid with every promise of good times in the near future.

The above from a photo taken by H. Fleming near his cottage at Shawigan Lake shows the late George P. Weiler and a party of old residents and visitors to that popular resort. The late Mr. Weiler is standing to the right of the picture with "Old Man" Gile also standing. In front is Frank Partridge and "Old Man" Gerrow. The snap shot was taken by Mr. Fleming only a few weeks ago and shows what were four of the most familiar figures about Shawigan.

In the Lake district the death of Mr. Weiler is lamented quite as much as in Victoria. Every week-end and holiday was spent by him at his pretty home at

OANFA MADE SMART PASSAGE

CAME FROM YOKOHAMA UNDER THIRTEEN DAYS

Capt. Lyett Reports Passing Strange Black Ribbed Object Yesterday.

(From Saturday's Daily.)

Yesterday morning at 9 o'clock, when the Holt liner Oanfa, which arrived from the Orient this morning, was about 120 miles west of Barclay Sound her officers sighted a black-ribbed object, approximately 60 feet long and rising 20 feet out of the water which appeared to be either an upturned small vessel or a large buoy.

Capt. Lyett, who commands the smart blue-funnel liner, to-day sent a report to the marine department at Port Townsend describing the object which is set down in the Oanfa's log as being seen in Lat. 48.51 N. Long. 128.48 W. and described as an object resembling a black-ribbed buoy or small vessel upside down.

A derelict schooner with a stump mast is reported by the barquentine Archer, which was in company with the hull for three days forty miles southwest of Cape Flattery. There is practically no possibility that the object sighted by the Oanfa was the same derelict and Capt. Lyett's opinion that the object seen was a large acetylene buoy which has broken loose from its moorings on the coast appears the most probable theory.

The Oanfa, which came into port replend in new paint, presenting probably the smartest appearance of any vessel entering the port for a year or more, made her record passage from Yokohama. Leaving the Japanese port on the 10th of July at 5:30 a. m. she arrived here at 3 a. m. to-day, completing the passage under the weather conditions, in 12 days 21 hours, an average speed of 13.7 knots. This is 20 hours behind the record of the Teucer, Capt. Barwise, which occupied but one day's trip, arriving here on April 16th.

Altogether the Oanfa brought 5,000 tons of cargo of which 2,300 tons will be discharged here when the steamship returns from the Sound at the end of next week. The local freight includes a large shipment of pipes for the city's waterworks and a marine boiler consigned to J. H. Greer & Co. for the tug Albion.

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have for the past few years devoted a great deal of their attention to the fruit growing industry and its progress along the west arm towards Proctor, but a very small portion of the population has been aware of the fact that along the Granite road between Nelson and Bonnington Falls a steady influx of settlers has been rapidly transforming the wilderness of early days into one vast orchard tract and farm area.

A drive from Nelson over the wagon road to Bonnington Falls will show that that section of country is keeping pace with the west arm of the lake in the matter of clearing and settling homesteads.

Between Nelson and the old Poorman mine there are no less than from 25 to 30 settlers who have houses built, areas cleared and planted of from one to ten acres, and in the vicinity of Granite there are at the present time no less than seven dwellings in the course of completion, and many acres of land are being prepared for planting.

All of these newcomers are in direct touch with the business firms of Nelson and will, as years roll on, be an added asset of immense importance to the city trade.

Apart from the satisfactory signs of settlement, the drive in itself offers one of the prettiest pieces of scenery to be found in the vicinity of Nelson, as at all times one is in sight of the Kootenay river, with its swiftly running rapids, and the magnificent Kootenay falls, which in themselves will repay the time and expense of the drive, and it is safe to say that when the public becomes better acquainted with the possibilities of the Granite wagon road