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JACK MINER AND HIS WILD FOWL



The Story of a Remarkable Experiment in Attracting the Birds of the Air.

(From Mr. Miner's Address given at the Annual Meeting of the Commission of Conservation)



I assure you it is a privilege for me to meet with so many bird lovers. We love out-of-door creatures, or we would not be here this morning.

Now, you will have to pardon my lack of education. I am one of those men who are born bare-footed and educated out-of-doors. However, I was my father's favorite. Perhaps it is not just the proper thing for fathers to show partiality, but mine did. He always called me in the morning to build the fires; possibly in that way I got out a little earlier than the rest to hear the birds singing.

Outside of unavoidable sadness, my life has been one continuous round of enjoyment; the failures and disappointments and the dark storm clouds have been wiped out of existence by success, by out-of-door life—a light which has brightened my path right up to the present and given me a faint glimpse of the beyond. I have heard people say that they have read that there was never a tribe of heathen discovered on earth who did not worship some kind of god. No intelligent man can live out-of-doors without being compelled to believe that there is an overruling power.

The Domain of Man.

God created the fowls of the air, and so on, before He created man, according to Genesis 1st chapter and 21st verse. Then in the 26th verse we find these words: "And God said, 'Let us make man in our image, and after our likeness, and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth.'" Does that mean that we are to have dominion over these big flocks of wild geese, so far away that you have to look twice to see them? You know how high they sometimes are; you can

hear them. That is what it says, gentlemen. Then we read further in Deuteronomy chapter 22, 6th and 7th verses: "If a bird's nest chance to be before thee in the way in any tree, or on the ground, whether they be young ones or eggs, and the dam sitting upon the young, or upon the eggs, thou shalt not take the dam with the young; but thou shalt in any wise let the dam go, and take the young to thee; that it may be well with thee, and that thou mayest prolong thy days". But, if a duck lit in one of the rivers here, all of us educated people would rush down—there would be ten guns out there to shoot it. Reading in the book of Job, we find these words:

"No doubt but ye are the people, and wisdom shall die with you. But I have understanding as well as you; I am not inferior to you: Yea, who knoweth not such things as these?"

"But ask now the beasts, and they shall teach thee; and the fowls of the air, and they shall teach thee."

His First Experiment.

When the first barn swallows came to our tile shed, on our little farm at Kingsville, Ont., they nested 300 feet away—as far away as they could get from where we were working. We protected the swallows from their deadly enemy, the sparrow that man brought to Canada—the English Sparrow; not the one that God put here, don't forget that. They destroyed the first brood, but we protected the swallows, and consequently the sparrows didn't destroy any more. Remember, the shed had stood there for ten years, equally as inviting. The second year there were two nests; the fifth year there are twenty nests in the tile shed, and, instead of being as far from us as they can get, fifteen out