

the goose that lays the golden egg' for the rail-shooting season.

"In general, the game and quasi-game birds are killed for sport rather than for gain or for their intrinsic value as food; exception, however, is to be made of the 'professional' or 'market' gunners, by whom the ranks of the water-fowl are so fearfully thinned, and who often resort to any wholesale method of slaughter their ingenuity may be able to devise. But the slaughter of birds in general is doubtless largely due to the mere fascination of 'shooting.' Many song-birds are killed 'for sport' by the 'small boy' and the idler, whose highest ambition in life is to possess a gun, and whose 'game' may be any wild animal that can run or fly, and wears fur or feathers. Some slight depredation on the small fruits of the garden, or on field-crops, is ample pretext for a war of extermination on robins, catbirds and thrashers, jays and chickadees as well as blackbirds and crows, and the birds so unfortunate as to fall into the category of hawks and owls, notwithstanding the fact that every one of these species is in reality a friend. Yet the slaughter is winked at, if not actually encouraged, by those who are most injured by it; while the 'general public' of the districts where such practices prevail are either too ignorant of the real harm done, or too apathetic, to raise any serious protest.

"Among the important agencies in bird-destruction is the 'bad small boy'—and in the ornithological sense his name is legion—of both town and country. Bird-nest robbing is one of the besetting sins—one of the marks 'of natural depravity'—of the average small boy, who fails to appreciate the cruelty of systematically robbing every nest within reach, and of stoning those that are otherwise inaccessible. To him the birds themselves, too, are also a fair target for a stone, a sling, a catapult, or a 'pea-shooter'; to the latter many a sparrow, a thrush or warbler falls a victim. Says a recent writer on the subject of bird-destruction, 'Two ten-year old lads in that quiet and moral hamlet [Bridgehampton, Long Island] confessed this autumn, that with pea-shooters they had killed during the season fifty robins and other birds which frequent the gardens, orchards and