

THE INTELLIGENT CORMORANT.

A common sight in China to-day is the fisherman with his boat of cormorants, ready to go over at the owner's word. This practice was followed in England in former times, and the master of cormorants was a prominent officer of the royal household. The birds are taken from the nest when young and easily trained, and so rapid are their movements under water that rarely a fish escapes them. When taken out in a boat they are generally kept hooded by a wire mask, having also a leather collar about the neck to prevent their utilizing the catch for their own benefit. In China this bird is one of the daily sights to be seen on the canal or inland streams, especially in the neighborhood of Ningpo. Here on the lake the boats congregate, each propelled by a single Chinaman, with three or four cormorants, roosting either on the rail or a platform made for the purpose. So perfectly are they trained that they obey the slightest word of the master; and when he gives the order over they go, and with remarkable speed begin a search under water, seizing the fish, rising to the surface and bringing the victim to the owner just exactly like a dog. If a large fish is captured, these intelligent birds go to each other's assistance, and with a combined effort bring it to their master, after which they are repaid by the entrails—to them, insatiate gluttons, the choicest parts. Other noted localities for cormorant fishing are the waters between the towns of Hang-chow-foo and Shanghai; also on the Mia River near Foo-chow-foo. So important are these fisheries that many persons are engaged in raising cormorants and training them for the fishermen. One of the largest of these bird-schools is situated, or was a few years ago, and probably is there yet, about forty miles from Shanghai, between it and Chapoo. Concerning the method of training them the owner gave the following reply to the questions asked by Mr. Medhurst, interpreter of the British Consulate at Shanghai:

"The fish-catching birds eat small fish, yellow eels and pulse jelly. At 5 p m every day each bird will eat six tael (eight ounces) of eels or fish and a catty of pulse jelly. They lay eggs after three years, and in the fourth and fifth month. Hens are used to incubate the eggs. When about to lay, their faces turn red, and then a good hen must be prepared. The date must be clearly written upon the shells of the eggs laid and they will hatch in less than twenty-five days. When hatched, they take the young and put them upon cotton spread upon water, and feed them with eels' blood for five days. After that they can be fed upon eels' flesh chopped fine, and great care must be taken in watching them. When

AN ANCIENT VILLAGE OF THE ONONDAGAS.

This village was in the present town of Fenner, some miles north-east of the Onondaga Valley, New York. It was situated upon the edge of a small lake, and covered about six acres of land. It was enclosed with strong quadruple palisades of large timber, 30 feet high, interlocked the one with the other, with galleries in the form of parapets. This village was attacked by Champlain in 1615 with a considerable force of French and Indians. And although the French had fire-arms, then for the first time heard by the Onondagas, and the help of a tower overlooking the place, they were unable to capture it.—*Presbyterian Home Missionary.*

As soon as the one birding of the family appears, both parents address themselves to tenderest nursing, sharing mutually all responsibilities.

Very often, however, these happy household plans are seriously interfered with. Early in the season brave-hearted hunters go in search of the much-prized eggs—rare dainties they as table luxuries, and commanding fabulous prices; but what fearful risks the intrepid egg-hunters run! Comrades lower them by ropes from dizzy heights, sometimes many hundred feet. Slowly, slowly they go down, realizing, as only such can, that only the strength of a hempen cord and the power of two human hands are between them and sure death.

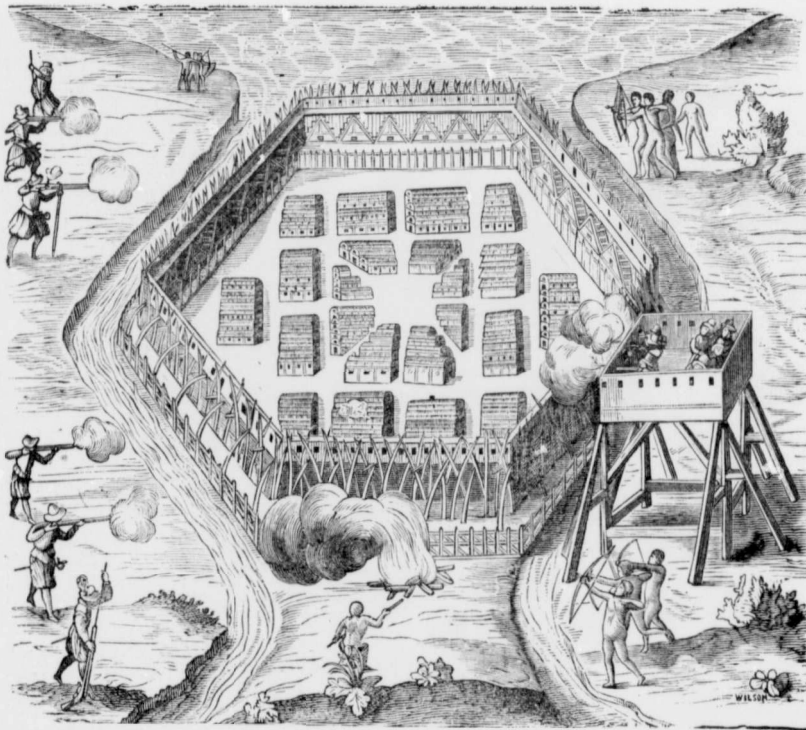
The eggs of the great auk are about five inches long and three in breadth, and very curiously marked are they. Upon a silvery-tinted ground are characters resembling those upon Oriental wares. Outlined in green, purple, blue, and brown are these quaint traceries, with occasional interrupting patches in which various shades are blended. Sometimes one finds black lines irregularly crossing each other.

Should an egg of yellowish tint come to the hunter's hand, it may be called a "red-letter day" in his calendar, since such are esteemed of "royal lineage" in auk-land regions—as rare as gold itself. Upon this faint amber-tinted ground the wonderful hieroglyphics stand out in strangely beautiful relief.

Forty years ago only about thirty auks and forty eggs were recorded belonging to public and private collections. At one time fifty dollars were paid for two auks and two eggs; a little later half that sum for one egg; and not very long since we read that five hundred dollars were given for one egg.

By the time a child enters his "teens," his habits of life are formed. By force of will or of circumstances they may be modified, but they cannot be wholly swept away.—*Examiner.*

If YOUR path is smooth;— watch and pray.



ONONDAGA VILLAGE, N. Y., A. D., 1610.

fishing, a straw tie must be put upon their necks to prevent them from swallowing the fish when they catch them. In the eighth or ninth month of the year, they will daily descend into the water at 11 o'clock in the morning, and catch until five in the afternoon, when they will come on shore. They will continue to go on in this way until the third month, after which time they cannot fish until the eighth month comes around again. The male is easily known from the female, it being generally a larger bird, and in having a darker and more glossy feather, but more particularly in the size of the head, the head of the male being large and that of the female small."—*N. Y. Post.*

AUKS' EGGS.

No wonder the eggs of the *Alca impennis* are such costly treasures. No wonder either that Icelanders, hunting for auks' eggs, have a custom of uniting in singing psalms, and with bared heads reverently commending themselves to God in silent prayer just before entering upon the perilous task.

Emphatically is the great auk a ledge-dweller during the arctic summer; enticingly pleasant is it to them along ice-rimmed shelves; and happy couples, many thousands of them, settle themselves contentedly, exchanging the snowy garb of winter for a summer suit of glossy black.