

But, say the orthodox ornithologists, "Why need there be any doubt of this kind? All you have to do is to shoot your bird, and carry it home, count its toes, and its primaries and secondaries (whatever they are), examine its beak and its other diagnostic marks, and you will then be able to say with confidence that it is either a woodpecker or something else." Well, I admit that all this is true, and for the systematic ornithologist it is the only way, but for one who merely wishes to know the birds in their native haunts, I submit in all humility it is not necessary, and when we went to work last Spring we decided not to do it. After long and sometimes warm discussions of the matter, we came to the conclusion that when we found ourselves in imminent danger of becoming great naturalists, there would still be time to shoot. Besides we had access to one of the finest public collections in Canada, supplemented by some very complete private ones, belonging to members of the club, which, we felt sure, the owners would be glad to let us see in case of need. Finally, what we most wished to study was the habits of the birds, and a dead bird has no habits in particular.

So we went out, armed with nothing more deadly than a double-barrelled field-glass, a note book, and a copy of McIlwraith's "Birds of Ontario," and, having mastered, to a certain extent, what a recent writer on "woodcraft" calls "the art of holding down a log," we made bags (I mean note-books) which were to us, at least, as satisfactory as if we had come home begrimed with powder, and reeking with the blood of slaughtered innocents.

From the bleak winter day when we first made out, against the dark background of spruce and cedar, the grey uniform with black facings worn by that arch-hypocrite the Northern Shrike, through all our varied experiences of musical thrushes and sparrows, nimble swifts and swallows, and gaily-clad orioles and warblers, till the climax of astonishment was reached when we got our first glimpse of the Scarlet Tanager in all his tropical brilliance, one new delight followed another, only leaving room for vain regrets that we had wasted so many years in ignorance of the wonders about us.

To give you some faint notion of what may be seen in a Spring day's walk, let me ask you to make with us, in imagination, what we