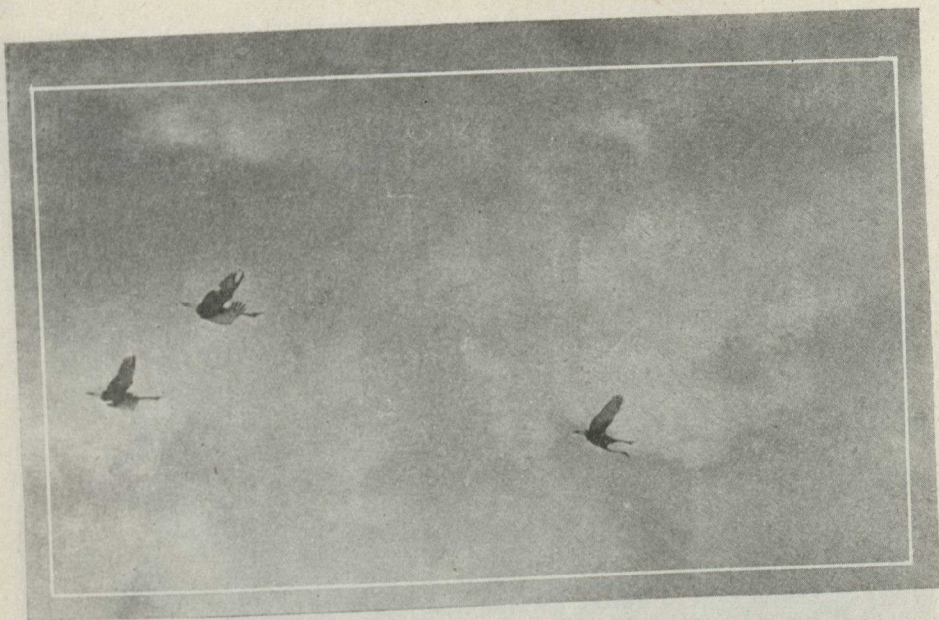




Great sand cranes flying away from the approaching winter

now are hidden beyond reach, and the mice and voles in the field and meadows know too well the value of keeping under their white roof. So the little lark and his big prowling neighbour alike say farewell. The geese and mallard ducks and swans, too, surrender only in the last trench. For days they haunt the last open water-hole, sit upon the ice by day and night and wait apparently in the hope that the south wind will come to their assistance. Even when the water is sealed they sometimes remain for a day or two, while the great whistling swans that come fluting out of the north fresh from some lake scarce known to Boreas himself takes a look down at the ice-sheet and swing on slowly southward. Occasionally they too drop down to take their place upon the chill expanse.

That these web-footed ones do not freeze their feet on such a perch is one of the wonders of nature's ways. Flat-footed and thin-footed are they all and one might be forgiven for thinking that thirty degrees of frost would stiffen their toes and webs in a few moments. Yet frost-bite or chilblains seem not in their catalogue of fleshly

ills. The geese during their last foraging expedition upon the wheat-fields stamp about in the snow without suffering harm and the mallards at times do the same. Similarly they can stand upon the ice and keep their feet from harm. But when they go to sleep they resort to a trick peculiarly their own. They cuddle down upon the ice, but draw up their feet, bending them forward, and bury them beneath the overlapping side feathers. The feet thus housed are snug; but often in the morning when the goose or duck rises, he is forced to leave some of his feathers fast in the ice—a tribute to the warmth of his body as well as to the heroism of his ways.

How late is the coming of these mid-November days. Indeed the day now is but a morning and an evening; noon-day is but a position of the sun, a potentiality rather than a tangible reality. Yet how full of incident are these twilight periods. There was a shouting of deep-throated Canada geese in the night; they were passing low and calling inquiringly down to the lake and listening in spells for reply of comrades there. Their awakening sounded and faded again,