

of some unfortunate deer in the forest or homeless dog by the wayside, or struggling together in the gutters of the city or town for the refuse matter left there for them.

The construction of the birds are in every way suited to the work they have to do. Having acquired the fondness for carrion they have lost most of the grasping powers in the foot possessed by the other families of Raptores, as well as the dash and courage which is characteristic of all these forms which catch their prey alive and kill it. They have, however, acquired a very heavy, strong foot, tarsus and bill, the end of the latter being exceptionally strong and sharp pointed, while both bill and feet are especially adapted for tearing apart the tough skins and other portions of the deceased creatures they frequently feed upon. They are very sociable, but exceedingly voracious, frequently gorging themselves until they are unable to arise from their feasting grounds, at which times, if one is not overcome with the very unpleasant odor which is characteristic of the birds, they may be captured with little or no trouble, as they seldom show fight, and only express approval or disapproval of anything by feints or passes and low guttural grunts or hisses. They are possessed of exceptional wing area and power of flight, being one of the most remarkable soaring families in the world. They rise from the ground with a few lazy beats of wing and scar off with or against the wind, turning, rising or falling at will without any perceptible muscular exertion and are able to continue this performance for hours without a beat of the wing.

The head and neck are usually bare of feathers and sparsely covered with short fine hairs, the skin hanging in wrinkles on the neck, like that of the turkey.

The only Manitoban, and, in fact, the only Canadian species of this family is the Turkey Vulture (*Cathartes aura*), frequently designated the Wild turkey by many intelligent persons, on account of the resemblance of the head and foot of the bird to that of the turkey. The Turkey Vulture is strictly migratory with us, and ranges over the whole province. They are to be found usually in the vicinity of slaughter houses or other places where refuse animal matter is deposited, and are usually difficult of approach, particularly on their first appearance in the spring. They arrive here about the middle of May, and breed, no doubt, in the less frequented districts. The nest is placed in a prostrate hollow log or stump, or on the ground under bushes. The eggs are either one or two in number and are a

creamy white, blotched or spotted irregularly with dark brown. I have in two seasons received two and observed five other specimens in the vicinity of Portage la Prairie. They leave us some time during September.

A peculiar habit of playing 'possum by feigning death when wounded and captured is credited to this species by Dr. Cones, who says, "the first is admirably executed and frequently long protracted."

## II. FALCONIDAE.

Of this family more may be said of local interest, as we have some 17 species locally represented, which according to their various peculiar characters and their



Red tailed Hawk.

(*Buteo borealis*)

economic relations to agriculture, I propose to divide into three groups, which shall be known as Wholly Beneficial, Mostly Beneficial and Harmful species. I will endeavor to point out the means of distinguishing one group from another, in order that the innocent may cease to be punished for the guilty.

In the Wholly Beneficial class I place two species of the genus *Archibuteo*, viz.: *A. lagopus Sancti Johannis*, and *A. ferrugineus*. The former is a common species with us, the latter only an occasional visitor from the south and west, and the strongest proof of their beneficial qualities is the fact that in all the stomachs examined no trace could be found of poultry, game or small birds, while 92 per cent.