

FRONT PAGE

THE Constitutional Prerogatives of the Lieutenant Governor have been so badly damaged during the last session of the Assembly that it is a question with some people whether it will ever again be fit for active service. Of one thing the public can rest assured, and that is, that the interesting invalid is in careful hands, and that neither His Honor nor the chairman of his Advisory Council will spare any efforts to set him on his feet once more.

OCTOBER WITH THE GUN.

BY CAPT. CLARK-KENNEDY, F.R.G.S., F.Z.S. ETC.

(Continued)

Then, too, in this delightful month of October we are on the outlook for the "early woodcock"—not, indeed, that unfortunate individual who figures every August under that title, and has a place of honor given it in the county papers (but has really been bred and brought up in the parish, in the deep recesses of the big fir plantations!)—but we mean the first "flight" of our ever-to-be-welcomed woodcock, which hail from Swedish forests, Danish woodlands, or from old "Norway over the foam." Towards the end of the month, particularly if there is a full moon and a continuance of easterly winds, we may expect some largish flights of cock, and they will be very welcome wherever we are lucky enough to fall in with them. Many a tired-out woodcock have we picked up amongst the short herbage, or perhaps gorse, not a hundred yards from high-water mark on the sandy, low-lying coast of Norfolk and Suffolk, hardly able to rise from the ground; and what wonder, after a flight over the North Sea of many hundred miles perhaps? We can recollect, on several occasions, our dog catching them amongst the turnip fields near the shores, early in the morning after those moonlight nights of their arrival. And when one gun has brought a good fat cock to bag, did you ever examine that wondrous bill with which Nature has provided him? If not, pray do so next time you take him up in your hand. We came upon the following description of this bird's habits lately in Montagu's "Dictionary of Birds," in which the old colonel truly remarks that the woodcock is a remarkably shy and retiring bird, and having rested in the woods throughout the day, they will, "with common consent, quit the wood nearly at the same instant, and wander over the meadows in search of splashy

places and moist ditches for food, retiring to their hiding places just before dawn." Thus, when most other land birds are recruiting lost nature by sleep, these are rambling through the dark, directed by an exquisite *sense of smelling* to those places likely to produce their sustenance, and, by a still more excellent sense of *feeling* in their long bill, collecting it. The eye is not called into use, and, like the mole, they may be said to feed beneath the surface; and by the sensibility of the instrument which is thrust into the soft earth, not a worm can escape that is within reach. The large eyes of the woodcock, like other nocturnal birds, are particularly formed for collecting the faint rays of light in the darkened woods during their nocturnal excursions. The nerves in the bill are numerous, and highly sensible of discrimination by the touch. The enormous quantity of worms these birds eat is scarcely credible; indeed, it would be the constant labor of one person to procure such food for two or three woodcocks." We have ourselves endeavored to keep these birds in captivity, but never succeeded in doing so for more than a few days, though we have managed well enough with tame snipe, and owls, hawks, curlews, various gulls, plovers, and other birds. At this moment in our garden we have a pair of great black backed gulls, a curlew, a herring gull, five doves, two pigeons, and a green plover, all living happily together, though it is feared the poor curlew has a rather rough time of it from the large gulls, who will eat anything, from bread and milk to a rat, from a mouse to a bit of cheese, from a rabbit to a gooseberry; and no doubt some day will make a meal of both curlew and peewit.

We have neither space nor inclination to write about the interesting, but so often discussed, topic of rearing pheasants, and of the "battue." Of course, everyone must form their own opinion, but, for ourselves, we enjoy a day by the hedgerows with a steady old pointer or a brace of good spaniels, and picking up a stray pheasant now and again, or getting

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