

THE OCTOBER TIDES

The gulls were drifting up the main when we crossed the wet sands towards the beacon-crowned islet, the smallest of the three islands of Hilbre, but the tide had not yet begun to fill the two shallow gutters which are seldom emptied of water. Away seaward a line of foam marked the advancing waters which were breaking on the East Hoyle, and the red and black buoys began to lean over towards the land in Hilbre Swash; the big tide was coming, but there was time to cross comfortably from the mainland. Borefooted amateur cocklers trudged back to West Kirby, and two visitors to the little colony on Hilbre raced, knee-deep, through the rapidly filling gutter between the two larger islands, and we were left in sole possession of the turgid sandstone rock of the Eye. Then the sport began.

Our weapons, no deadlier than field-glass and telescope were at hand; our coats, fortunately unnecessary, were spread below a sandy rampart. Then we peeped over the bank and levelled glasses on the noisy crowds which were lining the ever-swelling Swash. The oyster-catcher, better known to Dee fishermen as the sea-pie, has a single note described as "peep" or "keep" in books, which is shortened to a sharp angry "pic" when the bird is disturbed on its breeding-ground. When twenty or thirty of these beautiful black and white birds fly past, calling in harmony, the combined peeps are very musical, but feeble and of little interest compared with the concert of three or four hundred individuals singing together over their meal on the edge of the tide. No word-picture can adequately describe the thrilling music of the sand-banks; the curlew's wild, clear call, the triple note of the whimbrel, the sharp bark of the godwit, the liquid whistle of the grey plover, the purr of the dunlin, and the call of the redshank were mingled continually with the music of the sea-pies, whilst the laugh of herring gulls and the rook-like complaints of black-heads introduced harsher though not discordant notes. Hour after hour the sounds swelled or died down, but the birds were never silent; the difficulty was to pick out the cries of individuals.

High tides in October are perhaps the best of the year from the bird watcher's point of view, for the hosts from the north have arrived, and the majority of the birds, though many come for the winter, are of double passage, here for a few weeks in autumn and spring, but in winter far away to the south, and in summer on remote breeding grounds in the far north. Many of the various species—countless thousands of individuals—only arrived late in September, and some had not been noticed before in the district, but a greater tide than that which was fast surrounding us was steadily flowing south; the tide of migrants sweeps along our shores, marked by a marvelous increase in October of birds which seldom or never nest within the limits of our islands.

A few yards away, on the red rock, a single knot, grey-backed, black-billed, and olive-legged, was dozing unconcernedly, and shortly fifty or sixty of these birds, which puzzled the zoologist for so many years, swept past, a grey party. Then a small army, how many hundreds who can tell? lighted on the sand and ran in a close grey little cloud along the edge of the water, calling their sharp little note, "knut, knut." Fanciful writers connected the bird which wades and runs back from the advancing waves, with the tradition of Canute, but the longshoreman who first gave the knot its name knew more about its note than Camden or Drayton, and perhaps had never heard of King Canute. The knots, fresh from the north, were in great force, though not so plentiful as the pies. Curlews, easily distinguished by their note and size from the whimbrels constantly passed in little parties, their long, curved bills outlined against the skies; as the water covered bank after bank they gathered on the grass of Little Hilbre, until at high water the top of the island was grey with their crowded masses. From the Eye it looked as if the grass was occupied by a flock of diminutive brown sheep, or as if some volcanic upheaval had strewn the island with brown stones.

When the sand-browned water lapped the red rocks below us the sea-pies began to settle; first a single bird and then a score, then a hundred or more would alight upon the rocks, crowding the others into the inflowing waves. Then nearly all, nervous because of our presence, would take wing and wheel round and round the islet, only to alight again with much clamor a few moments later, or be joined by a fresh lot which had been swept of the fast-vanishing Red Noses. With them came the bar-tailed godwits, barking as they flew, looking like straight billed whimbrels until they passed near by. Then one could see the slightly upturned bills of those which came near or settled with the pies, and note how they jump out of the waves on to the dry rock; the sea-pies often allowed themselves to be washed off and swam easily, though we read that the bird only swims when wounded. Party after party of these northern birds, which though common last autumn and winter were hardly seen two years ago, so capricious are their visits, swung round the Eye and passed on up the river or crossed to Little Hilbre. With one lot came five much rarer birds, which by their larger size and longer, darker legs, as well as by their note and the colour of their tails, were easily distinguishable as the very occasional visitors, black-tailed godwits. This is one of the species which is known as a lost British bird, for

little more than fifty years ago it nested in small numbers in the eastern counties; now it is only known as a rare visitor on migration. The five birds separated from their more abundant relatives, and swung round and round us, but unfortunately did not settle. On the same day, I learnt later, a keen observer was watching one feeding on the beach at Hoylake.

Few wader notes are more beautiful than the liquid "tluieh" of the grey plover, known to the coastwise gunners by the more expressive name of silver plover, distinguishing it from the golden plover and the lapwing, which to them is always the green plover. Far up on the marshes green and golden plovers are abundant, but here the silver plover is the representative of this group. One or two small "wings" passed, but no bird settled; the silver plover, even in winter dress, is one of the most beautiful of our many waders.

Away over Little Hilbre great flocks of dunlins and other small waders—"little birds" the shooters call them—flashed in the sun as they wheeled and exposed their silvery breasts, but only a few dunlins and no sanderlings, though there are many in the river, came near



KOLINSKI SABLE, SQUIRREL AND POINTED FOX

the Eye. Now and then a cormorant, going as if on business bent, flew by on strong wing, and when the Red Noses were lapped by the full tide the gulls, six different species left the flooded rocks and flew up the river or took refuge amongst the pies and curlews on Little Hilbre.

At high tide there was a lull; the last bank of empty cockle shells was covered in the tiny mud inlets between the red rocks; the last sea-pie deserted the refuge below us, and we were left birdless except for one active little rock pipit which was engaged in fly-catching almost at our feet. Then we rose and looked seaward. The tide had turned, and with it common, herring, black-backed, and black-headed gulls were drifting seaward, and the telescope revealed in the main a scoter and a guillemot, birds of the open sea which had come up with the tide. As the water fell, leaving patches of mud, full of animal life that had been stirred to activity or left by the tide, a few noisy redshanks came to feed, and stood bowing in little jerks with bright eyes upon us. Then the gulls came down the river and settled on the wet sand to hunt for cockles or lob-worms, and little parties of dunlins spread themselves over each drying bank, wading until the water lapped their breasts in their pursuit of crustaceans. But the sea-pies, curlews, whimbrels, godwits, knots, and many other waders distributed themselves over the freshly exposed banks in the estuary and left the islands until the next tide should drive them once more to seek refuge on the rocks.—T. A. C., in the Manchester Guardian.

Groom—"I hate to tell you, dearest, but that palmist says I have a very short life line." Bride—"Oh, George, do take out some more insurance."

WHAT MY LADY WEARS

As one sits in the big establishments of the Rue de la Paix and sees filing past the young women who wear the new models for the season, the principal thought that comes into the mind is that fashion takes no count of any woman over forty or of any woman who has a greater weight than nine or ten stone. And this does not only apply to the styles for the present season—all the styles for the past two or three years have been for the young and the slight. What is prettier than the princess dress outlining bust and hips without a crease—but what youthful grace and slenderness it takes to carry it off. Now we have the long, pointed waist on some gowns, and the vestment arrangement on others, and both are for the young and the slight. They really only look well when worn by the slender girl.

Take, for instance, that light tabac line serge frock. It is cut in the form of a very wide pleat reaching back and front from shoulder to knees—rich chenille embroidery with touches of black give the vestment touch, a black satin sash is worn tied round the knees in an enormous bow at the side, and under this sash the lower part of the skirt falls in thick pleats. Or again, there is the very elegant costume in ash-green woollen cachemire. It has a tunic in princess style, open at the sides and cut V-shape to the waist back and front. This tunic is worn over a fourreau of green and black spotted silk. The sleeves of the tunic are covered with embroidery, and the

THE SIKH RELIGION

The report recently published of the committee on the Organization of Oriental Studies in London, and the discussion thereon in the House of Lords on September 27, have again drawn emphatic attention to the imperative need of a much better knowledge, on the part of all concerned with Oriental races, of the languages, the literatures, the history, the religions, manners and customs of the East, if our administrative, commercial, and social relations with our fellow-subjects in those countries are to be successful and hold their own against foreign competition. Lord Morley of Blackburn touched the real point when he said that sympathy—much talked about—with the people of India, to be effective and genuine, meant a knowledge and comprehension of their ideals and traditions. For this purpose nothing could be more timely and significant than the publication of Mr. Macauliffe's elaborate, erudite, and sympathetic work on the Sikh religion, to which he has devoted sixteen years since he retired from the Indian Civil Service, after thirty years spent entirely in the Punjab, the home of the Sikhs. He has resided chiefly in India in order to collaborate with the few surviving gyanis "those who know," the interpreters of the Sikh scriptures, at their headquarters at Amritsar and Lahore; and has submitted his translation of the "Granth Sahib," as the Sikh scriptures are reverentially designated, to learned Sikhs, by whom its literal accuracy has been acknowledged, with their authoritative remark: "The greatest care has been taken in making the translation conformable to the religious tenets of the Sikhs." His sympathy has thus been manifested thoroughly, he has gone to the fountain-head and has spared no pains to arrive at the truth of the facts and traditions, which he has now published in readable narrative form.

A few words will suffice to explain who the Sikhs are. Sir Alfred Lyall has written, "The rapid expansion of the power of the Sikhs, who are Hindu sectaries, illustrates the almost invariable process by which in Asia every great proselytizing movement tends to acquire political and militant character." Nanak (1469-1538), one of the great reformers of the world, the founder of Sikhism, was preceded by a number of Ghagats, saints and thinkers who were dissatisfied with the superstitions and religious vagaries of the Hindus. The belief in one God was gradually evolved, and culminated in Nanak, who proclaimed his creed and formed a band of followers. He was their first Guru or spiritual teacher; they were his Sikhs, his disciples (from the Sanskrit word shishya). He taught the unity of God and the necessity of general toleration. He made no distinction between Hindus and Muhammadans. There were ten Gurus, including Nanak, the first, to the last and greatest, Guru Gobind Singh, who died in 1708. The fourth, Guru Ram Das, founded Amritsar, where the Golden Temple, constructed in the middle of a tank, provides a holy place for the Granth Sahib. The fifth Guru Arjan compiled the Adi, or first, Granth, made Amritsar the religious centre and accumulated wealth. In his time commenced the Muhammadan persecution of the rising power of the Sikhs: Har Gobind, the sixth Guru, was a warrior. The ninth Guru, Teg Bahadur, was captured by Aurangzeb and executed. Under Guru Gobind Singh the character of the Sikhs, who had arisen as a quietist sect of a purely religious nature, entirely changed. He established the Khalsa "the pure," "the elect," repudiated the attack on the institution of caste, and taught the equality of all men. He ordained the Pahul, or ceremony of initiation, through which all Sikh recruits for military service have still to pass. He instituted five outward signs of the faith (including their unshorn hair); to denote their military calling he named his baptized followers Singhs, or lions, and he preached undying hatred against the Muhammadan persecutors, at whose hands he and his family and predecessors had grievously suffered. This hostility still prevails.

When Gobind Singh felt himself dying he opened the Granth Sahib, and, placing five copper coins and a cocoanut before it, solemnly bowed to it as his successor, and addressed his disciples as follows: "O beloved Khalsa, let him who desireth to behold me, behold the Guru Granth. Obey the Granth Sahib. It is the visible body of the Guru. And let him who desireth to meet me diligently search its hymns." So there is no longer a personal Guru; the Granth Sahib is now the Guru. The Sikhs, therefore, resented with great warmth the alleged translation which Dr. Trumpp, a German missionary, made at the instance of the Secretary of State, of about an eighth of the Granth, published at Munich in 1877. They declared it to be altogether inaccurate, full of slanders and insults, and prompted by religious bigotry. Professor Max Muller has recorded that "Dr. Trumpp was by no means a trustworthy translator." Mr. Macauliffe's work is therefore a tardy reparation.

The Sikhs became the ruling power in Upper India, after the Afghans had crushed the Marathas at Panipat in 1761 and retired to Kabul. There is no need to dwell upon the later history of the Sikh nation, which Ranjit Singh (1780-1839) consolidated as a monarchy and raised to eminence. He never failed in maintaining terms of friendship with the English, whose power he had gauged. But after his death and the English disasters in Kabul (1841-42), the Sikh Army revolted, becoming uncontrollable, like the Praetorian Guards of old. The Sikh wars of 1845-46 and 1848-49 resulted in the annexation of the Punjab to the British Crown. Since then the Sikhs have been amongst the bravest and

most loyal soldiers of the Indian Army, as the Mutiny, the Tirah Campaign, and Somaliland have testified. In the present day an injunction is added at the time of their baptism to be loyal to the British Government, which the neophytes solemnly promise. Lord Kitchener himself stated at Simla in 1903 that they numbered thirty-four thousand in the Burma Military Police, and other detachments. There are more than two million Sikhs in India, three-quarters of them being in the Punjab and half a million in the Sikh Native States. The tendency of Sikhism to relapse into Hinduism has not prevented their nominal increase by some 342,000 in twenty years. It is clearly desirable to foster the loyalty of so important a race. There is documentary evidence to prove that seditious attempts have been made by Hindus and others to tamper with the loyalty of the Sikh regiments, but Lord Kitchener proclaimed that such attempts had failed.

Mr. M. A. Macauliffe in a recent work has compiled from recognized sources exhaustive lives of the Gurus and Bhagats, and interspersed many of their sacred hymns in suitable places. He has avoided repetitions, and, with the advice of Sikh scholars, selected passages for translation. "They have decided that there is no omission of anything necessary to faith or morals, but that the whole substance of the Sikh sacred writings is here presented, and that, if any Sikh shapes his conduct accordingly, he will be in no danger of failing to secure absorption in the Creator or a dwelling in the Creator's heaven." This is important, as in the hymns (which are all in metre and verse) Nirvan, or absorption in God, is proposed as the supreme object of human attainment, but a paradise called Sachkhand is also promised to the blest. Mr. Macauliffe sums up some of the moral and political merits of the Sikh religion thus: "It prohibits idolatry, hypocrisy, caste exclusiveness, the consecration of widows, the immurement of women, the use of wine and other intoxicants, tobacco-smoking, infanticide, slander, pilgrimages to the sacred rivers and tanks of the Hindus, and it inculcates loyalty, gratitude for all favors received, philanthropy, justice, impartiality, truth, honesty, and all the moral and domestic virtues known to the holiest citizens of any country." He has also reproduced, in thirty-three pages of print, the analysis of the Sikh religion recorded by Bhair Gur Das, who was a contemporary of the fourth, fifth and sixth Gurus (1574-1645). One or two precepts only can be quoted: "The Supreme Being, the All-pervading God, is the divine Nanak's Guru." "The Supreme God, the Perfect God, the Primal Being, is the True Guru." "Take not arms against thy Sovereign." "From a temporal and spiritual point of view woman is half man's body and assisteth to salvation."

The Adi Granth Sahib, in its complete form, contains the hymns of six of the first nine Gurus, with additions, such as a couplet of the tenth, panegyrics of bards who attended on the Gurus or admired their characters, and hymns of not arranged in the Granth according to their authors, but according to the thirty-one Rags, or musical measures to which they were composed. The compositions of each Guru are distinguished by malolols, or words. Guru Gobind Singh's Granth, compiled after his death, contains a large variety of his hymns on a number of subjects. All these Mr. Macauliffe has translated from various difficult dialects with enormous labor. His work will be highly appreciated by all students of Indian theology and history, will be most valuable to the officials connected with the Sikhs in military or civil life, and will, it is hoped, help to produce sympathy between the Sikhs and the English.

MOVEMENTS OF MUSICIANS

Mme. Gadske begins immediately a tour of concerts covering a month's solid bookings prior to her operatic season at the Metropolitan Opera House, for which she is this season engaged for twenty weeks. In addition to the concerts which Mme. Gadske will sing before and after her operatic season, she will be heard in recital, as usual, in New York during the height of the season.

Fritzi Scheff's popularity in Toronto was given emphatic demonstration recently when she sang before a large and fashionable audience, including many persons prominent in society and official life. Frequent applause greeted the star and her company in "The Prima Donna."

Miss Scheff is starting on one of the longest tours which has ever been arranged for any star. She will travel in a special train of ten cars from Toronto to the most southerly point of the United States, and from the Atlantic to the Pacific Coast, a distance of more than 30,000 miles.

SOLID ALCOHOL

Alcohol briquettes, small tin boxes filled with a dough-like combustible material, can be carried in the gripsack and used as a spirit lamp at any time until exhausted. Putting on the cover extinguishes the flame. The briquette is prepared by heating denatured or ordinary alcohol to 140 deg. F. over a water-bath, adding 30 parts of grated and dissolved Venetian soap and 2 parts of gum lac, and stirring until the added substances are completely dissolved. The solution is at once poured into the boxes and the covers closed. When cool the mixture is solid.

IN THE COILS OF A CO

"Do constrictors bite?" The traveler, just back from a trip through the wilderness Valley laid down his cigar and ed at my question. When the black cigar had resumed, however, I ventured further to know a lot more about it. How long do they ever grow that it's all the way from five feet?

"To begin with, you must not be a constrictor, for it enables him to crush his prey one that I saw measured and brought into Para. Asleep on the floor, it measured half feet, and looked about inch stock-pipe. I have no tent its length, or contract between the figures you mention a constrictor can coil about obtain an anchorage, and teeth, curved slightly backward that purpose, and that only. "Dangerous?" Yes, just gerous.

"The anaconda?" It is even larger than the boa; British Museum measures in length, and much larger been killed. The naturalist H attain at least forty feet. T part of the time on land, the tepid waters of the rivers as they may sometimes be in water, either at play, or in wild creatures come to drink will see one as quickly as a bull in a pasture. Only loss of a human life by one came under my personal deed, I did not even hear of in vague rumors.

"The victim in this instance Irish sailor, Jimmy O'Dowd, ed his ship at Para, and w river to the plantation I w he worked in the cane field until attacked with chills a partially recovered, but at able to work in the hot sun. "One day he went fishing a road ran along the side house stood, and he had a which was heavily wooded. In order to reach that side cross by boat, or walk a long pond's end, Jimmy took tied it up in plain sight of down near it to fish.

"I was reading on the the ladies of the household me, doing some fancy work busy in the fields or the m. "The first intimation v was trouble were terrified Help! from across the p we looked to where O'Dowd near the boat. He was n arm stretched upward, and he continued to shout. Som seemed to pinion his right held to his side. A moment his cries ceased. "I had no idea what the the men who had been at rushed out, shouting 'Co Assou!' (great snake) and cue, most of them going r pond, while three plunged swim across. These, how in the sunken tree-tops, at reach the victim, who w arrived.

"I waited until I had s despatch the monster, by whose jaws still kept their der where the creature ha his victim; then I called to come and take me over in

"When the creature w relaxed so that its victim drawn from the encircling describe the boy's appear forget it. With the excep doubt if there was a bone r and no one part of the diameter than another. C short man, but this thing ured fully six feet in leng

"I have read that the victim by covering its mo its coils, so suffocating t the face was not covered a terrible compression must breathe from his lungs, and ing refilled; perhaps as a way as death could com Cobb, in Outdoor Life.

COCK AND SNIPE IN

Pembrokeshire is an rough shooting, and it is wandering amongst the g January with golden gorse red-brown fern, and wood stream whistlers among rose-tipped branches of t a wet and stormy night the tiful old Welsh mansion, Clydau River, well shelter where we used to take pigeons on windy evening to roost. We had waited, so it was nearly noon wh