

Jack Miner, Philosopher and Bird-Lover

By Norman S. Rankin

**"He prayeth best who loveth best
All things both great and small."**

"GEESE are the most wonderful intelligent creatures in the world", said Jack Miner, "an' the man who said 'Silly as an old goose' didn't know what he was talkin' about. Year after year they come back to this old farm, pickin' out my old ponds from the thousands of other ponds an' bringin' new families with 'em. I figgers they just went back an' told the others about it and that they'd be perfectly safe, warmly welcomed an' well fed at my place—they know Jack now an' Jack knows them too, and loves 'em."

So spake old Jack Miner—old in experience and philosophy only—to a group of some thirty visitors, who, from Montreal, Ottawa, Toronto and intermediate points, had come up to visit his bird sanctuary near Kingsville, Essex County, Ontario, and to help him celebrate his fifty-seventh birthday. We stood in the sunroom of his newly finished house—a beautiful and artistic one—looking over the big pond which literally teemed with wild geese. Here, in countless hundreds, year after year, with the first buds of early spring, the wild geese in great and small flocks, muster from the winter feeding grounds in the sunny south for their annual northwards flight to the shores of James and Hudson Bay, there to feed and breed in the rich marshes of the eastern coasts. Here, without fear of molestation or sudden death by trap or gun

or snare, in absolute protection and security of feed, carefully tended and nourished by their friend, Jack Miner, they rest and recuperate for a month or six weeks, preparatory to winging their way on the last leg of their long migration. Ten acres on the farm has been set aside as the sanctuary and though the balance of the property is given over to farming

The robins had not yet made their appearance but in the toy-like bird houses and along the hedges, other tiny feathered creatures, twittered and hopped and preened themselves expressing in every movement, their fervent joy in the coming of spring.

"What work", said some one, gazing out at the myriad rows of spruce and pine and cedar, "What work!"

"Work", replied our host, warmly, "work. It was no work. I've done no work. Work consists in doin' somethin' you don't want to do—an' yet, I'm always busy—as busy as a cow's tail in fly-time. To do the things you want to do, fellas, to put infinite patience, keen enthusiasm and unflaggin' perseverance into it—that's not work fellas, that's the joy of livin'—the very joy of livin', and thank God, the Almighty give me strong arms and good health to do it".

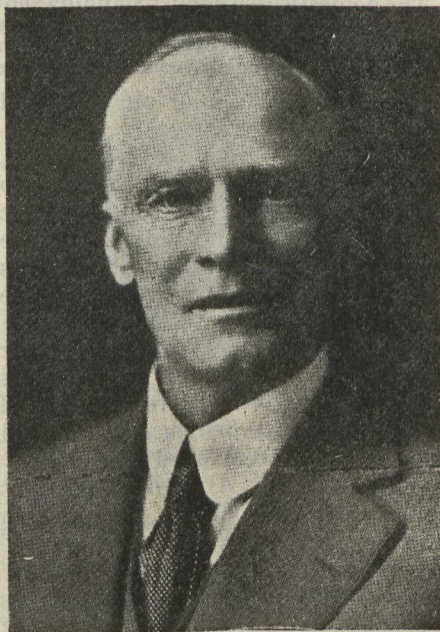
"Yes, and infinite kindness, too," added some one, and that some one was right.

Jack Miner made a picturesque figure in his brown corduroys and long gum boots, as he stood there talking to us. Fifty-seven years young, tall and robust, with a face tanned by the sun to the color of an old saddle or a sorrel horse, and muscles hardened by constant out door work and exercise, he was the very epitome of rugged health and strength. Blue eyes twinkled at you under gray over-hanging brows and a kindly smile betokened his entire harmony

Some "Jack Miner"-isms

"Geese are the most wonderful intelligent creatures in the world, an' the man who said 'silly as an old goose' did'nt know what he was talking about."

"'Genius', people says to me, 'twas genius done it'. Nothin' of the kind. I got no genius; I got nothin' to boast of. Back of Jack Miner's been the powerful hand of the Unseen—that's what done it."



JACK MINER

"I've done no work. Work consists in doing something you don't want to do—an' yet I'm always busy—as busy as a cow's tail in fly-time".

"Did you ever notice, fellas, that when you begin to work for others an' things go right, you get all kinds of encouragement and help? You

find everybody working for you and with you."

and the manufacture of brick and tile, within the designated area, on artificial ponds and mudbanks and shrubbery, wild life reigns supreme.

Providence had blessed us with a perfect day—clear, bright and balmy. A warm spring sun shone from a cloudless sky while a gentle breeze ruffled the surface of the ponds and stirred the branches of the miniature forests which like encircling arms, completely surrounded the sanctuary.