

The Rockwood Review.

and I felt satisfied that her secret was betrayed, but not so, the little anxious one was a clever actress among Peeps. There was a bank about twenty feet above the shore, and on this I stretched out at full length with my head over the edge. A crow in a neighboring pine tree saw me, and began a tirade such as a bad tempered crow can alone indulge in. The sandpiper saw me too, and flew up to my side, and made a careful inspection; however I was there to stay, and she began to feel mixed about the state of affairs, but finally disappeared. In about fifteen minutes a silent little sandpiper was to be seen stealing carefully between the rocks and weeds along the shore. Nearer and nearer she came, pausing every few moments to make sure she was unobserved. Her anxiety was evident and her excitement intense, and just as she had apparently made up her mind to run to her nest, some haunting doubt would develop and off she would go in another direction. The heat was terrific, and where she ran the sun's rays struck with violence. Her little bill was wide open, and at last just as she seemed unable to control herself longer, and I felt that she would have to give up her secret, she took wing, and I heard a gruff farmer say, "hello, what are ye watchin'." The hunt was up for the time being, so I marked the spot and again returned in half an hour, coming suddenly to the edge of the bank, but she was too quick for me; but the next time a shaking spear of timothy revealed the nest in a place where none but the most cautious Peep in the world would have dreamed of building, viz. right on the side of a perpendicular sand bank. My curiosity was avenged, and I trust that this little Peep will have no more such curious visitors during the rest of the season.

To return to our excursion. Leaving the Loons Island we pull to some rocks further east, and as

we approach screaming Terns tell us that we are not wanted. Foolish birds are these same terns, giving free notice of their breeding haunts, and laying their eggs where crows and boys cannot fail to spy them without an effort. As the skiff floats near the rock, a small bird darts up from a patch of green, and well trained eyes note the fact that it is not a familiar form. Out come the opera glasses, and it does not take the veteran observer long to recognize the Least Sandpiper. No one expects to find it breeding here, as it has never been recorded in Ontario, although found by Audubon in Labrador, and the Rev. C. J. Young in the Magdalene Islands. Look, there is the second bird, and neither seems to mind the approach of the skiff, and as we drift within a few feet of them; it is possible to distinguish every marking, and positively identify them. It is evident they are breeding, and as the rock is only some forty feet long, and bare with the exception of one small boggy patch, it will not be difficult to locate the nest. Even when we disembark, the little birds do not take fright for some time, and seem reluctant to leave the island, but as we move about, finally take wing and circle near. On a heap of drift rests a tern's egg, the beginning of a set of three—the usual complement. We investigate the boggy patch of grass, and the veteran finds as he turns back the weeds that he has almost stepped on the nest. Three exquisite pyriform eggs, clay colored and splashed with brown, are before us, large eggs for such small birds, but with an identity which enables them to be easily distinguished. The nest is quite different from that of the spotted sandpiper, being carefully made of green ribbons of water grass, and placed in a damp spot, so damp in fact that as you press the nest, water oozes into it from every side. The eggs are decidedly smaller than those of the spotted sandpiper, and proportionately thinner, viz. 1.18