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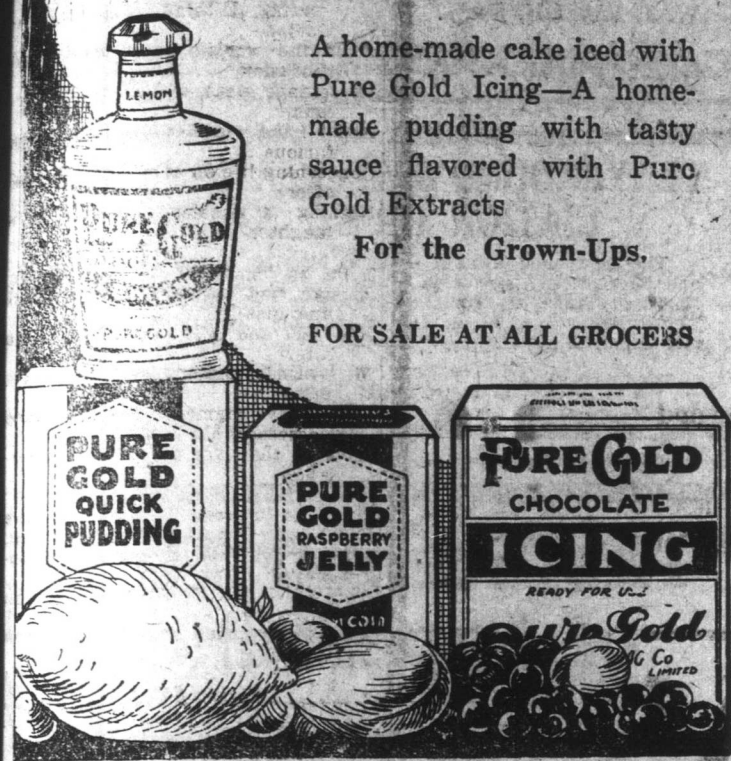
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## "Jack Miner and the Birds."

A Peep at a Canadian Sanctuary.

By ARTHUR MEE.

Editor Evening Telegram.

St. John's, Nfld.

My dear Mr. Editor:

In your issue of Sept. 30th, I notice an article re Jack Miner and his bird sanctuary and have received many letters from Newfoundland regarding the sanctuary from people who are interested in such. So great have the letters come in, I am enclosing an article which is well written by a Mr. Arthur Mee, which you are at liberty to reproduce in your paper if you see fit.

Yours very truly,

MANLY F. MINER.

Oct 31st, 1925.

"JACK MINER AND THE BIRDS."

A Peep at a Canadian Sanctuary.

(By Arthur Mee.)

It is good to hear of a fine man's

memory, but how much pleasanter it

is to hear about him when he is still

alive. Therefore, let it be known be-

cause we go a step farther, where

Kingsville, Ontario, Canada, is it

the most southern town in Canada in

Essex County, nestled on the north

shore of Lake Erie, with a population

of two thousand people, but, during

the migration season of the year, the

town grows from two thousand in

population to ten thousand by sight-

sees who motor to see the birds

at Jack Miner's Bird Sanctuary. Thus Jack Miner has not only been made famous by the birds, but they have also made the town of Kingsville known all over the world.

At fourteen, Jack was a woodsman helping his father, a poor English emigrant, to fill twelve hungry mouths.

Yet they were only poor financially. Jack was richest in the love of his brother Ted. Whenever their father said they had earned a holiday these two would go off hunting in the wild woods. They could make camps, and follow a trail like Indians. They could imitate the calls of bird and beast so as to bring even the cunning wolf up to a gun. They were more curious than cautious, and once Jack crawled down a hole on top of a bear.

They were first-rate shots, and supplied the market as well as their homestead with game.

When these two boys were grown men they consented to take a friend moose-shooting. Jack was driving the game towards the others when a shot rang out, and immediately afterwards a cry, "I've killed Ted!" Jack had to master his great anguish and act alone, for the other man was almost out of his wits. They were miles from another soul. First Jack had to bury his brother in snow, lest the wolves should smell the blood; then

he ran twelve miles to a cabin for help. A man and boy returned with him, but a great snow storm came on, and they had to cut a way through the drifts while Jack carried his brother across his shoulders like a deer carcass. Thirteen terrible miles brought them to a lake where the body was placed in the bows of a rickety punt, and Jack paddled it home through the storm. The whole journey took him twenty-four hours, and changed him forever.

There came another black day when Jack Miner saw his own little child's deathbed. And now all life became precious to him, and the thought of taking it was abhorrent. He had always been a warm-hearted, bluff, witty fellow, but now there rushed up in his heart a well of pity which surely came from the same divine source as the tenderness of Saint Francis. The hunter became the protector of the hunted.

Hard work had brought him into possession of a little tile factory and two hundred acres of unlovely land. He dug ponds and planted mulberries, Scotch firs, lilacs, and scores of roses, turning all he possessed into a bird sanctuary. Birds of every sort flock to him. He feeds them through the winter, though he can ill afford it. So great in numbers has the flock increased that he has had to accept donations from his millionaire friends to help feed the poor starving birds. It now costs him nearly \$5,000 per year to maintain feed for them. Last year one good friend promised him \$1,000 per year. Such gifts are very acceptable to Jack Miner and I would suggest to anyone interested to the extent of helping Mr. Miner that they send their cheque direct to Jack Miner for the bird feed fund. Jack Miner feels it is the Government's place to provide food as they spend tens and tens of thousands of dollars in game warden's salaries and he challenges them to show any man as many birds as he can at any one time. They tell their friends, and each year the number of guests at Safety Inn is greater than ever.

The understanding of the birds is remarkable. Although they have learned to dread a gun, they show no fear if Jack Miner carries it, even when he fires close to them at one of their enemies, stoat, owl, or water-turtle. They fly to him when they are wounded, and one is believed to have come five miles to die near Jack Miner. Once a whole family of wild geese came to the house, making a terrible noise, to tell him that a young one was choking near the pond. He says that he has seen the Chinamen's talk without being able to guess what it is about, but can tell whether a bird is warning the others, saying that all's well, or mourning.

Hundreds of people come each year to visit this humble man's sanctuary, and the Canadian Government have forbidden any shooting within a mile of it. Wild swans, half killed by Niagara, are brought to him.

Some years ago, in order to discover what became of those guests who do not return, Jack Miner started to wrap aluminium tags round a bird's leg, having first inscribed on the tag his address and a message from the Birds.

When a message from some trader that one of these tags has been brought in by a poor Eskimo, Jack Miner feels that his pet has not come to a bad end in feeding the hungry. Often these bird-borne messages have had a strange significance for the finder. It was a young soldier, soon going to the front, who killed a bird carrying this verse: "For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain."

But, Miner does grudge the tame birds which fall a victim to sportsmen who wait for them just over the mile limit, intent on getting the rare ones Jack Miner is trying to save from extinction; and he does grudge the grub-diggers, which ignorant farmers kill as wheat-eaters. To console these people he decided to publish a book. Many educated friends offered to write it for him, but he would not put his name to another man's work, and one day he went off into the woods, pitched his tent, and started to write, he who had never read a book through in his life. His volume is full of wit and interest, but perhaps the most charming thing in it is his vindication of the wild goose.

Why do people say "stupid geese"? Geese are not surpassed by any other birds in intelligence, courage and fidelity.

The Canadian wild goose is a big, handsome fellow, with a black neck, head, tail and feet. He flies about fifty miles an hour, lives as long as human beings, and is faithful to one mate. Jack Miner once had a widowed goose who mourned her mate for four years, until the sight of her misery became unbearable, and it seemed merciful to kill her.

They are wonderful parents, and the gander will let no one, not even Jack Miner, come near the nest. Hear the story of Mr. and Mrs. Johnson. Mr. Johnson put to flight cart-horse, cow, and men who ventured near, but he could not ward off the mysterious illness which fell upon his mate. She left the nest, and while he comforted her, the eggs were given to a broody hen, who hatched them near the back door. For many weeks Mr. Johnson wandered about looking for the eggs, running back to the sick goose from time to time, and then setting off on his search once more. At last the

gallies were turned out in the field, and he found them. All the neighbors heard his shouts of joy, but only Jack Miner saw him putting his head on each gosling in turn, and each baby rising to flap its wings afterwards. Then he saw the sick mother hobbling towards them, falling down from weakness every few yards. The father ran too and fro between his babies and his wife till they were all united.

But now someone else arrived, the foster-mother! As soon as she approached Mr. Johnson gave the old hen a terrible blow with his wing which sent her flying back to the yard. The goslings were not long in following, full of sympathy. When the father saw them caressing her he realized his mistake. From that moment he took her, too, under his protection, and they all lived together like one family.

Even more beautiful is the story of David and Jonathan. They were part of a family of five. One day they were fired upon, two of these geese were killed, and one gander was brought down with a broken wing. Miner persuaded the men to give him the wounded bird, and he did what he could for it. Presently the remaining goose and gander returned, and circled round and round as though they distrusted all men, even Jack Miner, now. But when the wounded gander called, they came down to him at once.

A little later the call of migration came, and the great flock of wild geese which had wintered with Jack Miner went north, the wounded bird's sister with them. But his brother stayed behind. It was a touching sight to see Jonathan making short flights, and returning when he saw David's efforts to rise were in vain. All the neighbors were moved by his devotion, and no more geese were shot in the district, though the Government had not yet forbidden it.

For seven years the faithful bird stayed at his brother's side, championing him when danger seemed to threaten, and denying the strong migratory spirit for his sake. Then, early one morning, Jonathan was found dead on the snow. A huge horned owl had attacked them, and while David had crept to shelter under the bushes Jonathan had faced the owl in the darkness, and had his eyes struck out by its fearful talons. All day long people kept telephoning to know if it were true that old Jonathan was dead, and the whole place was glad to hear that the cannibal was caught when he returned to finish his meal the next night.

A hapless ending came to the defence of two monster eagles by two ganders.

As Jack Miner crept up, gun in hand, he saw these two geese with spread pinions protecting their cowering wives, while the eagles squatted on the snow ten feet off. Every now and then the strangers would take a few steps to one side, and the defenders would follow suit. For some long, strained minutes they faced each other. Then the eagles sprang into the air and sailed away. Jack Miner put up his gun, thankful that it was not necessary, and wishing that men would arbitrate instead of fighting and striking.

One Jack Miner had two Egyptian geese who were bullies. They attacked a wild duck, whereupon an old Canadian gander flew up and sent them flying with two blows of his pinions. He returned to his family at once, but the culprits never dared to repeat their murderous attempt.

It is sad to think that when a flock of wild geese comes wearily over the seas from Scandinavia to England, their welcome is death at the hands of some hunter hidden in the Suffolk Marshes.

Jack Miner's love for the birds seems easier to understand than such blood-lust, nor can we wonder at his saying that he would rather be a gate-keeper in the house of the Lord (that is, a poor friend of the birds) than dwell in the tents of wickedness. Long may he enjoy his life, and soon may he see the realization of his great hope that every golf course may be dotted with groves, and become a bird sanctuary!

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