

the same color, but all so minute and microscopic that they are not worthy of a name, but are merely what the Germans so aptly call "Gelehrtenspielereien." The millennium, however, is still a year or two distant, and up to that time we will have to be contented with merely stating our disappointments and waiting for wiser heads to solve the many problems that vex us and keep us from reaching perfection in our beloved science of ornithology.

W. F. H.

Field Notes

A LITTLE HELP FROM THE CROWS.—It is all very well for the Easterner to saunter out into the grove on a mild April morning and mark down this year's crop of Crows' nests, all smugly outlined against a clear sky. Be the birds ever so secretive, the stark outlines of a Crow's nest in crotch of beech or elm are easy oological marks, especially if set off by a telltale black "handle." But Crows' nests in Western Washington are none of the commonest, and when the birds hide them, as they usually do, in the depths of fir trees (and sometimes at forbidding heights) the inquiring birdman naturally welcomes a little assistance in the search.

On the "prairies" of Pierce County the Douglas firs renounce their Olympian disdain and present heights that may be scanned by frail mortals not yet equipped with flying machines. But even here the quest is not easy. The firs, though dwarfed in height, are of very stocky growth, and afford eye-proof shelter for even a Crow's nest. A certain stretch of prairie, dotted here and there with fir clumps composed of trees from fifty to eighty feet in height, was evidently the breeding haunt of a small colony of Western Crows (*Corvus brachyrhynchos hesperis*). (The place is about ten miles from tide water, and the birds are really intermediate in size between *C. b. hesperis* and *C. b. caurinus*, but their voices are clear and their range is strictly inland).

I had lazily noted the activities of this colony on a previous visit, but I was ill-prepared to hear the insistent hunger cry of a manifest young Crow so early in the season, April 18, 1910, proceeding as it did from the top of a dense fir tree, one of a grove in which I lay watching for Kinglets. The tree was screened from view, but I soon located it by the sound, and eagerly drank in the ancient wail of the youngster while one of the parent birds answered warily from a distance.

It really was not worth while to climb the tree, but Bird-boy (*ornithologicus secundus maybe*) was very anxious to see a young Crow, and I went up. Judge of my surprise when a full grown Crow

flapped off the nest and uncovered a single fresh egg! It was the female, new to her duties, who clamored for food, and perhaps for sympathy, from her dallying lord.

Once discovered the method proved the touchstone of success. A stealthy approach was made later to another part of the colony and three females were heard uttering the hunger-cry, *An(h)*, *An(h)*, *An(h)*. A male Crow detected the ambush and shouted a warning, whereupon one of the brooders promptly subsided. Other birds, presumably males, came hurrying up and a general alarm was sounded, but one female, a spoiled darling, insisted upon having attention from her reluctant mate. He, poor fowl, stood the teasing as long as he could, then yielded at last in a moment of weakness and paid a surreptitious visit to a certain treetop, while the man took notes. When I found that the nest, perfectly concealed at a height of sixty feet, contained a single greenish blue egg, as immaculate as a Robin's, I pardoned the young husband's indulgence.

Never, ah, never, does a man need the prophetic gift as when he is gazing covetously, doubtfully, upon a "short" set. If he takes it he knows he will upbraid himself for his incontinence the rest of his days. If he leaves it he braves a thousand mischances, jays, squirrels, storms, worst of all the jealous owners themselves. Well, I took the latter alternative, and upon returning ten days later, gazed into the emptiest nest I ever saw.

It was notable also upon the later visit that there was no more shouting of "Here am I" on the part of the sitting birds. They had learned their lesson.

Blaine, Wash.

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SOME ILLINOIS CARDINALS.—As far as I am able to gather, the Cardinal seems to be considered a rather rare bird about Chicago. The meager literature at my disposal classes it thus, and I have heard it referred to by collectors as a "Capture" well worth while. In his "Birds of the Chicago Area," Mr. F. M. Woodruff sums up the Cardinals' status thus:

"I have heard of the Cardinal being taken in our public parks, and have myself secured one specimen, which showed, however, unmistakable signs of having been an escaped cage bird. Mr. J. Grafton Parker, Jr., has a specimen of this species which was taken at Kouts, Indiana, on December 11, 1893. Some years ago I found a nest of the Cardinal at River Forest, Illinois. Mr. O. M. Schantz informs me that in the year 1904 there were two pairs nesting at Riverside, Illinois."