

Warbler Ways

(1)

During the warm days of June when the mystery of life seems suddenly unveiled in a miraculous manner, I often frequent a woody retreat above the old mill-dam on Fulton creek. ~~A~~ *the water gurgles among the gray rocks as it glides* ~~clump of firs and maples overhang where the limpid water whorls past a clump of firs & maples.~~ ⁽²⁾ gurgling among the gray rocks. White anemones are scattered in ~~the green of the~~ ⁽¹⁾ a carpet green with grass blades and ferns, star flowers gleam from the darker places of shade and Linnaean bells overhang where the moss-covered logs ^{lie.} lay.

As one sits here in the midst of the woods, he fairly ^{lies} feels ~~the gift of~~ animal instinct^s, dulled by long disuse, *The chords of every sense are* spring upward into action. ~~Every sense stretches to the pop-stretched.~~ ⁽³⁾ His heart vibrates with the rhythmic throbbing of the forest pulse. His eye catches the cautious movements of furry and feathered creatures. His nostrils sniff the aroma ^{new growth of lighter green.} of the fir boughs tipped with their ~~greener growth of lighter~~ hue.

not
cat
cat

(2)

One day as I sat idling ~~the moments~~ in this favorite
haunt, a shadow caught in the ~~golden~~ net of sunbeams ^{spread} ~~scattered~~
under the maple. A black-throated gray warbler fidgeted on
the limb above with a straw in her bill. This was pleasing.
I had searched the locality for years trying to ^{find} ~~locate~~ a man-
~~sion~~ of this shy bird and here was a conclusive piece of evi-
dence thrust squarely in my face.

house (2)

The site of the nest was twelve feet from the ground in
the top of a sapling. A week and a half later I parted the
branches and found a cup of grasses, feather-lined, nestled in
the fork of the fir. There lay four eggs of a pinkish tinge
touched with dots of brown.

2
Nest
+
Eggs

a

9

(5)

Of course it showed a pure lack of discretion to try to picture the home of ~~x~~uch a shy warbler during the days of incubation. (We succeeded in getting a photograph however.)

But With our precautionary methods, I half believe everything would have turned out well, had it not been for the prying curiosity of a pair of marauding blue jays ^{who} that buccaneered the patch of fir. The pair of pirates eyed us curiously while we were at work, as they sailed ^wsquaking over the tree tops. Two days later we skirted the patch of fir rather anxiously to see lest the sense of warbler propriety had been shocked to too severe a pitch by the invasion of the camera. Scattered remnants of the nest and the ^{broken}bits of broken egg-shell showed unmistakable blue jay signs.

The ^{chief}~~biggest~~ source of satisfaction in a camera study of

[2] bird life comes not in the odd-time chances of observation, but in a continued period of leisure, when one may spend his entire time about bird homes just as he takes a week's vacation at the sea shore. One cannot take a camera, no matter how expensive it is, and snap off good bird pictures during the spare moments of a busy day. He might, however, fill half a dozen note-books with valuable odd-time observations. To be sure the joy of nature comes to the amateur, not to the professional, but to be a successful amateur bird photographer one has fairly to make a business of lying in wait for his subjects hour after hour, day by day, and maybe week after week. The reward of real success comes not in mere acquaintanceship with some feathered bit of flying life, but in real friendship; there cannot be the formality of a society call, but one should by frequent visits be well enough acquainted to drop ~~around~~ any time with his camera without interfering with the daily affairs of family life.

[3] 1908

The real value of photography is that it records the truth,
~~so it is not without value in present-day nature study.~~ The
person who photographs birds successfully has to study his sub-
jects long and carefully. He is not likely, therefore, to get
only a scanty set of notes and be compelled to complete his
observations when he ~~has reached the comfortable precincts of~~ *is seated in the cushioned chair of his study*
~~his study.~~ For this reason a camera in the hands of some of
the recent nature writers would be of great value to science
if they could picture some of the humanized habits of creatures
they have described with the pen. Of course in the study of
Art we may try to improve on Nature, but in Nature study truth
is the important element. We might as well understand that
a beast or bird is interesting because of its own wild indivi-
duality, not because it is a man dressed in fur or feathers.

Of course it showed a pure lack of discretion to try to picture the home of such a shy warbler during the days of incubation, but I half believe the ^{feathered} owners would have overlooked this, had it not been for ^{the} a pair of ~~marauding~~ blue jays that (2) buccaneered the ~~the~~ patch of fir. While we were getting a picture I saw them eyeing us curiously, but they slunk away among the dark firs screeching jay-talk about something I didn't understand. Two days later we skirted the clump to see if the sense of warbler propriety had been too severely shocked by the camera. In an instant I translated every syllable of what that pair of blue pirates had squawked. The scattered remnants of the nest and the broken bits of shell told all.

These gray warblers, however much they were upset by camera-fiend, blue-jay deprecations, were not to be thwarted .

They actually went to house keeping again within forty yards of the old home ^{site} ~~sight~~ . The new nest was placed in a fir sapling

very like the first one, but better hidden from ~~piratical blue~~ ^{marauding blue jays} ~~blue jays~~

jays.

64

64

photo of this (2)

jays. It was supremely better located from the camera crank's point of view. Just at the side of the new site was the sawed-off stump of an old fir upon which I climbed and aimed the camera straight into the nest. There instead of four, were only two small nestlings, ^{there} ~~who~~ stretched their skinny necks and opened wide their yellow-lined mouths in an attitude of unmistakable hunger. ^{TP} The moment the mother returned and found me so dangerously near her brood, she was scared almost out of her senses. She fell from the top of the tree in a fluttering fit. She caught quivering on the limb a foot from my hand. Involuntarily, I reached to help her. Poor thing! She couldn't hold on, but slipped through the branches and clutched my shoe. I never saw such an exaggerated case of the chills, or heard such a pitiful high-pitched note of pain. I stooped to see what ailed her. What! Both wings broken, unable even to hold with her claws. She wavered like an autumn leaf to the ground. I leaped down, but she had limped under a bush and

3

Pictures
yours

~~mother
and
chick~~

mother

5

2

17

suddenly got well. Of course I knew she was tricking me!

higher skill in a bird feathered artist
(? But I never saw such a skilled bird artist.)

*Preceded
what comes
next
now*

I found little trouble in getting pictures of the nest and young. It was a very different matter to get the parents within easy shot of the camera. However, by visiting the nest frequently and by gradually moving the camera closer and closer to the nest, the gray mother soon recognised that it was ^{less} not harmful. The click of the shutter scared her into hysterics at first, but she even got used to that. This took time and an unlimited amount of patience but it gave me the best opportunities of studying the bird's habits and in the end was productive of far better results. The green-tent method of hiding could not be used, but I have found this method, except in the cases of very shy birds, far more bother than it is worth.

Repetition
Repetition

JP

The next day my heart was hardehed against all her alluring wiles and crocodile tears. She played her best, but the minute she failed to win, I got a furious berating. It was no begging note now. She perched over my head and called me every name in the warbler vocabulary. ^{when} ~~When~~ she saw I was actually showing that cyclopiian monster right at her children, she broke out in a desperate last act. "Fly! Fly! for your lives," she screamed. ^{in desperation} Both the scanty-feathered, bob-tailed youngsters jumped blindly out of the nest into the bushes below. She outdid all previous performrnnces. She simply doubled and twisted in agonized, death spasms. But not to be fooled, I ^{both} ~~had~~ an eye on ^{one} ~~a~~ nestling and soon replaced him in the nest where he belonged. ^{when} I hunted for over half an hour ^{under every leaf and twig} before I found the second dumpy little fellow sitting ~~close and still as death~~ right before my ^{face} ~~eyes~~. ^{Nature simply waves her wand and her wild children are hidden from me.} Nature always hides such creatures from us by an almost invisible veil of mystery. I've (often) seen a flock of half a dozen grouse flutter up into a fir and disappear to my eyes as ^{mysteriously} ~~completely~~ as (a cloud of) fog in the sunshine.

2

6

Handwritten notes in left margin, possibly "Hatched" or similar.

One Page the ~~begin~~ ~~end~~

(9)

This fidgety bit of featherhood is called the Black-throated Gray Warbler, but it's only the male that has a black throat. He is not the whole species. His wife wears a white cravat and ^{to my thinking} she is a deal more important in warbler affairs, ~~it seems to me.~~ Mr. Warbler seemed unavoidably detained away from home on matters of business or social importance most of the day when the children were crying for food.

4
the mother

The first day I really met the gentleman face to face, ~~was when~~ I was trying to get a photograph of the mother as she came home to feed. She had gotten quite used to the camera. I had the instrument levelled point blank at the nest only a yard distant. A gray figure came flitting over the tree top and planted himself on the limb right beside the home. He carried a green cut worm in his mouth. ~~He had~~ ^{he} sooner ~~had~~ he squatted on his accustomed perch than he caught sight of the ^{Cyclops} one-eyed monster. With an astonished chirp, he dropped his worm, ^{turned} ~~threw~~ a back somers^{ault}, and all I saw was a meteor ~~like~~ streak

of gray curving up over the pointed firs. I ~~don't suppose~~ ^{doubt if he even}
~~he~~ stopped or felt any degree of safety till he reached the op-
posite bank of the Willamette. ~~I'm quite sure he didn't get~~
~~up courage enough to even enquire about the children the rest~~
~~of that day.~~

I met his lordship again the following day

~~The next time I saw his lordship was two days later.~~ The

mother was doing her best to lure me ~~away~~ from the nest by her

deceiving antics. Every visit I ^{had} made ~~to the nest~~, she ^{kept} pract-

iced the same old trick. She ^{just as she was} seemed to be putting on a few

extra agonizing touches. ^{Suddenly} ~~(Suddenly)~~ I saw a glint of gray. The

father pounced upon the feigning mother. I never witnessed

such a case of wife beating. Maybe it was justifiable. I'm

not an expert on bird ethics, but I know I'd never stand idly

by and see such a scandalous performance among my own neighbors.

I don't know whether the pater familias blamed his spouse for

my presence and interference, or whether he was determined to

have all her time and attention devoted to ^{the} care of the children.

~~There was no more fooling and feigning on the part of the wife.~~

the wife never practiced deceit after that

a

one child from the other?
(12)

I could not tell one nestling from the other. As I sat watching the mother the question often arose in my mind: Does she feed them in turn ^{"Does she recognize"} she reason as I would reason or does she poke the food down the

first open mouth she sees? ^{one child from another.} (Does she recognize each child in-

dividually as the human mother?) Here, at least is a good chance

to experiment, ^{thought} I said. So with a good supply of 5x 7 plates

I watched and photographed from early in the morning till late

in the afternoon for three days.

At the end of that ^{or rather four pairs} time I had eight pictures, each pair of which were taken in order as the mother fed her young.

nothing
was
seen

insects

The warblers foraged the firs for ~~bugs and worms~~ of all sizes and colors. The mother often brought in green cut-worms, these she rolled through her bill ^{as} like a house-wife runs washing through a wringer, perhaps to kill the creature or be sure it was soft and ^{villainous} digestible. This looked like wasted energy to me. The digestive organs of those bob-tailed bantlings seemed capable of assailing ^{almost any insect I had ever seen.} ~~most anything I had seen in the insect~~ ~~line.~~

the

(2)

5
found
of
gurg

In the days I spent about the nest, I never saw the time when both the bantlings were not in a starving mood, regardless of the amount of dinner they had just eaten. The flutter of wings ^{touched} ~~was~~ the ~~magic~~ (button) that seemed to automatically open their mouths. At the slightest sound I've often seen disputes arise while the mother was away. "I'll take the next," said one. "I guess you'll not," screamed the other. The mother paid no more attention to their quarrels and entreaties than to the ceaseless gurgle of the water. How could she? I don't

C

(14)

believe she ever caught sight of her children when their mouths were not open. The fact that the mother fed them impartially appealed in no way to their sense of justice. The one that got the meal quivered his wings in exstacy while the other always protested at the top of his voice.

A1
The first pair of pictures in the series was taken while the young were still in the nest. ⁽¹⁾ The mother fed the nearest nestling. Changing the plate and adjusting the camera again, I only had to wait three minutes. The bird at the edge of the nest surely had the advantage of position but what was position? For all his begging ^{the nearest} he got a knock ^{head} (on the ear) that set him bawling while his brother took the bug. ^{gulfed down} ^{HP} Soon after one ^{fat 5 birds} of the bantlings hopped out on the limb and the gray mother rewarded him with "a mouthful that fairly made his eyes bulge." On her return "she remembered the hungry fledgling still in the nest."

A2
B1
B2
C1
C2
Again I tried the same experiment of having the mother light between her two clammering children. First "the right received a toothsome morsel ^{"in spite of" not with delay} ~~contrary to~~ the impatient exclamations of the chick on the left. Soon after I ~~saw~~ ^{"hungry"} the crying babe on the left ^{babe} got a juicy bite ^{"in spite of"} ~~against~~ the vociferous ^{chips} appeals from the right. ^{insisting}

"This way I'll surely baffle the ingenuity

"This way I'll surely baffle the ingenuity of the mother,"

Q1 I thought, as I perched both bantlings on a small limb where

they could only be fed from the right." This looked good to

the first little chick, for he seemed to reason that ^{when he opened} by opening

his mouth wide, his mother could not resist his pleadings. He

reasoned rightly, the first time. On the second appearance of

his mother, position did not count ^{for much,} ~~him much~~ for it was his

brother's turn. ^{Such} ^{emphasize position}

Such a series of pictures might be conclusive, for, to be sure it is very evident proof that Mrs. Warbler recognized her children ^{as} ~~as~~ a human mother. She knew Tommy because of his blue eyes, his higher pitched voice and his more violent temper.

She knew Billy because his mouth was larger, his tail more stumpy and he had a crooked middle toe. But such was not the case, she recognized them according to her bird instinct. She

like other birds had a highly developed sense of position and

she knew that after ^{she had fed} feeding the one on the right the other

needed food as well. Whatever conclusions might be drawn, it
still remains that a bird is a bird regardless of all the
humanistic qualities that the recent school of nature study
may read into its actions.

End

Later in the day, as I watched
the gray mother coat her two
banthings from the fir into the
thick protecting bushes below.
I was impressed with the impartial
care she gave each child, not with
her keenly developed bird vision
of protecting them.

Her world Jefferies.

Bird motherhood