

ST. JOHN, N. B., SATURDAY, DECEMBER 5, 1896.

## FREAKS OF THE FORESTS.

UNUSUAL GAME TAKEN BY HUNTERS IN CONNECTICUT.

A Ruffed Grouse Unlike any Other—Fate of a Willy Eagle—Honey for Miss Corey—English Pheasant Torviving—A big Rattler—Albinos and Other Freaks.

Connecticut hunters and husbandmen in the past ten days have bagged a number of unique trophies of the chase. One day this week Charles Reeves of Derby, while scaling a thinly wooded knoll in the forests near that town, raised a curious looking bird that bounded into the air like a partridge and hummed down a vale in the peculiar style of that winged projectile. But in some respects it seemed to be unlike a partridge. It was bigger and browner, and plunged along more heavily. Nevertheless, involuntarily Reeves drew bead on the game and with a single shot bowled it over in a thicket. Having recovered it, he was still more mystified on account of its peculiar appearance, for he had never seen anything in feathers exactly like it before. It was of a deep, dark, rich brown, like a weasel seal, while its back, wings, and tail were irregularly and sparsely dotted with clear gray spots. It was as plump and heavy as a full-grown barnyard pullet, and weighed two pounds. A score of veteran sportsmen examined it in Derby, but though all expressed the opinion that undoubtedly it was a ruffed grouse, a freak member of its tribe, none had ever seen a bird that resembled it before.

All the summer and fall a big gray eagle had an eyrie at the top of Great Hill, in the town of Ansonia, in a rocky and almost impenetrable part of the woodland, not far from the farmhouse of Charles Robbins. About all the time he was on the wing, levelling tribute in the way of farmyard booty on the whole region, and he was so ferocious and voracious that the farmers, in order to account for his extraordinary appetite, surmised he must have a mate at home, with a large and growing family of eaglets. Still, no one had seen his nest. He was particularly fond of paying random calls to the rich farmstead of Mr. Robbins on the shoulder of Great Hill, where he helped himself stealthily to the fattest hen or chicken in the yard, and had no trouble at all in lugging her, squawking and fluttering, through the air, to his expectant family in the forest. As often as two or three times a week, not rarely at break of day, he left his eyrie, the old one and little ones egging him on, no doubt, and shooting in a spiral flight up into the sky, so that he seemed to be no bigger than a bee, descended in due time like a thunderbolt into Mr. Robbins' farmyard. He rarely or never missed his plunage, and he operated so craftily and with such swift dexterity that by the time the hired man had slipped into the farmhouse and got his gun the old robber was cleaving the air with his struggling prey four or five hundred yards away.

Several times Robbins secreted himself near the fowl yard, awaiting his exacting caller, but seemingly the latter took pains never to call on such occasions. Later, however, rendered foolhardy, probably by the scarcity of forage in the bare autumn fields, the old eagle dropped into the yard without his accustomed precautions, and three or four times Mr. Robbins or his helpers sent a charge of heavy shot buzzing after him. On one occasion, at least, the old fellow, in order to effect his own escape, had to let go of his booty in midair, a sprightly young pullet, which, after tumbling in a series of inshoots and outcours six feet to the earth, limply rejoined her flock with a travelled look of bewilderment, surprise, and inquiry.

The other day Mr. Robbins got the outlaw easily with a load of duck shot. It was just about midday, a poor time for a call of the kind, for the men folks were all at home and ready for dinner. He came in his usual style, soaring very high until he was poised right over the farmhouse, but without scouting about much he suddenly took a header and came down into the fowl yard like a bar of lead. He never got away from the premises alive. Mr. Robbins had been awaiting his downfall. There was a roar of a heavily charged breech-loader from the kitchen door, and the gay old robber went over on his back, his wings outspread, with a couple of ounces of lead in his breast. He was one of the largest and handsomest eagles ever seen in the town, with a spread of wings of six feet.

It was not a gray or bald-headed eagle, not even so much as a partridge, in the way of game, that little Miss Jennie Corey of Exeter Valley, encountered a day or two ago while strolling about a patch of heavy timber near the house on her father's big farm; in fact, she was not looking for game or an adventure of any kind. But the young girl is of an observing turn, and as she was breaking her way through a piece of tangled brush on a hillock in the edge of the wood, she espied a stream of honey bees circling about a decayed stump there. She approached it, the bees buzzing harmlessly about her. In the side of

the stump was a deep, half-spherical cavity, with a rather large entrance that was nearly filled with a swarm of honey makers, which the country girl perceived at once was a runaway one. She quickly returned to the house, and having provided herself with some small tin pails revisited the honey stump in the brush on the knoll. With a hastily prepared smudge, she easily put the bees to flight, pillaged the stump of its stores, and returned home with several pounds of dark-colored, rich, wild honey in the comb. In swarming their bees apiarists not infrequently lose a colony or two of young ones, which, rolling themselves into a lump as big and round as a foot-ball, plunge away through the air to the woods, swift as a meteor, and humming like a cannon shot. In a hollow tree they make their home, sometimes sixty feet above the ground, passing into and out of it by means of a knot hole or crevice in its bole; and they toil like Titans all the season, laying up honey enough therein for twenty bee households. Along comes a bee-hunting farmer or sportsman or woodman in the fall, and by craft or fortune discovers the home of the busy little honey makers. In several instances this season Yankee hunters or country boys have taken a wash boiler full of wild honey from a single hollow tree in the forests of eastern Connecticut, that had been stored there by a runaway swarm. No one recalls another instance, however, in which a swarm had made its home in a wide open cavity in a stump close to the ground.

While hunting about Liberty Hill in Lebanon, in the eastern part of the State, W. P. Jordan, F. D. Jordan, and Walter Bradbury met with a handsome cock pheasant, but were unable to get a good shot at it. A day or two later, though, Jerome B. Baldwin of Williamstown, near Lebanon, bagged the bird, which was large and very finely marked. Still later, two Connecticut Valley hunters fell in with a whole brood of English pheasants in the wild region about Cobalt, but they did not attempt to molest them, for they knew how it was that English pheasants were running at large in Nutmeg State woods. It seems that Frank C. Fowler, a valley sportsman of Moodus, imported a lot of breeding birds from England last season, and introduced them in his woodland preserve down the river. Last spring he liberated about a hundred choice birds, which since have wandered into all parts of the State, and apparently are doing splendidly. Since they are notably hardy and able to endure our severest winters, it is believed that, if hunters will refrain from killing them, they will multiply greatly and speedily populate the partly exhausted Connecticut hunting fields. It is said they are able to withstand more rigorous weather than can even the hardiest native game birds.

Hunting late in the day in the rugged region about Portland, two sportsmen of that valley village came just before dusk upon the slope of Somerset mountain, and one of them, who was a pace or two ahead of his companion, suddenly halted and drew back, for a sharp, alarming, buzzing noise sounded in the path right ahead of him. Without taking another step or speaking a word to his friend, he instantly brought his gun to his shoulder, and fired point blank at a part of the wood track not two yards ahead of him. The other man hardly guessed what his friend was firing at until he saw the huge body of a rattlesnake, hurled into the air by the reflex force of the gun charge, fly clear above the brush and fall back on the earth. It was one of the biggest reptiles of the kind ever killed in the State. It was 5 feet 11 inches in length, and its girth was equal to that of a man's forearm. It had thirteen rattles, and was believed to be not less than sixteen years old.

A Westfield hunter brought into Middletown a day or two ago a remarkable freak, a double-billed woodcock, which he had just shot in the fields of his own town. It had two distinct beaks, though its upper set of bills, which was an inch shorter than the normal one, performed no function, and was not connected with the bird's throat. A number of old hunters who saw it pronounced it the most remarkable freak they had ever seen.

New London has a freak English sparrow, whose tail is marked with a few white feathers, and whose wings are evenly tipped about two inches deep with a pure white color, as if they had been dipped into a pot of white paint. Not infrequently it is seen hopping about the patch of green sward in front of the old County Court House on State street. Possibly it is a descendant of a pure albino sparrow that used to be met with in the same quarters a few years ago and was without a touch of color in all its plumage. In the last six or eight years a number of albino or freak birds have appeared in the country about New London. Both white and brown crows have been seen in the outskirts of the city, and an albino crow was bagged in Lyme last year.

While gunning off the shore, east of New London, a few days ago, Archie Chester of Groton had the rare luck to wing a handsome wood duck and capture it alive. He took it home, shut it in a coop, and it rapidly decomposed it. It has nearly recovered from its injury. It is very intelligent, evincing affection for its owner, and eating food from his hand.

Mr. Chester thinks it may be induced to lay, and that possibly it may rear a brood of young another season.

The strangest freak was a veteran wood-chuck shot by Francis Chapman of East Hampton in the valley. A tusk had grown through the roof of its mouth, piercing the hide and appearing like an incipient horn at the top of an animal's head. On the opposite side of the head a similar tusk had grown outside of the groundhog's upper jaw, nearly as long as the one noted, and resembling a wild boar's tusk. It is believed by hunters and naturalists who have seen the curious beast that he was very old, and all were puzzled, unable to surmise how he was able to eat with his jaws thus pinned. It was greatly emaciated.—Detroit Free Press.

## THE EAGLES OF TENNESSEE.

A Natural Mountain Home for the Bird of Freedom.

There are many eagles in the Tennessee mountains, and there are mountaineers who are expert catchers of the young eaglets, who reap rich rewards in return for their perilous risks and adventures. Eagles make their eyries among the cliffs and crags of the highest mountains of the state. They are found on the Stone Mountain, the great Roane, 6,296 feet high; the Bald, 5,550 feet; the Great Smoky Range, 6,636 feet; the Bullhead, 6,612 feet; on the Unaka, the big stone, and others, none of them less than 5,000 feet above the level of the country at their feet.

The American yacht Defender, which defeated the English yacht Valkyrie II. in the famous international race last year, carried as its mascot two young eagles captured in the Tennessee mountains. Private owners of yachts, captains of big ocean liners and the steamboat men of the big rivers of America are very partial to eagles as pets, and the eagle catchers find this class of men among their best customers. There is a well-grounded superstition among them that the boat or ship that carries the king of birds for its mascot will never go down. The superstition is like the superstition of the old Romans, who, in choosing the great bird as an emblem for their imperial standard, regarded it as the favorite messenger of Jupiter, and that the bird held communion with heaven. Oriental people, too, thought that the feathers of an eagle's tail made their arrows invincible. The Indian tribes among the mountains of East Tennessee venerate the eagle as their war bird, and valued its feathers for head dresses and to decorate their pipes of peace. The eagle upon the American silver dollar seems to indicate an abiding faith in the bird as an emblem.

Young eagles bring forth \$40 to \$80 occasionally \$100. Eagles that are of some age and of a great size (such are rarely captured, however) bring as high as \$300 and \$500. Eagles which have to be killed while trying to capture them are valuable to taxidermists, who always find an easy market for a great stuffed eagle. Their feathers, especially the wing and tail feathers, are sold for good prices.

Away up in the mountains the eagle finds it as hard to gain subsistence as do the grumblers of the plain. The precariousness of his existence and the wild manner in which food is gathered seems to give the bird ferocity as it grows older. They range among the mountains and valleys in pairs, their young never following, but doing the best they can. The stern, unsocial tyranny, beginning with the homeless and outcast eaglet, is continued in later years with their mates.

If the male bird be the stronger the most of the prey belongs to him, and he allows the female to eat a paltry share between fierce thrusts of his beak at her. If the female is the stronger (and she generally is), the male bird cowers and winces under many a fierce blow from his unfeeling wife, no matter how small the morsel he gets. But when danger threatens, no human pair can battle so fiercely for each other as can two eagles. The breeding season begins about March, and each male has but one mate during his entire life. If the female is killed or captured, the surviving male becomes an eagle hermit and fiercer than ever.

They are often seen near their nests together, and when the sun is shining take their majestic flight straight toward that great ball of fire until they disappear from sight. Sitting upon the mountain side, their vision is so keen that they can see far down the valley a sheep or young goat, a big turkey or rooster, a small pig, rabbit, or large bird, and almost in the twinkling of an eye they descend suddenly upon their victim. One mighty grasp and a twist of their talons and the victim is dead, long before the eagle lays it down for a repast. An eagle can live two and three days, and even five days, upon a gorging meal. They prey upon all sorts of large birds, fish, lambs, kids and goats. Oftentimes, when a large calf or goat is to be attacked and carried off, four or six of them will unite and carry off the carcass, when they will immediately begin to fight it out to see

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which of them is entitled to the choicest bits, and it is truly a survival of the fittest in such combats as these.

The eagle builds its nest upon the top of a mighty tree growing far up on the mountain among the myriad of twining vines, or in the thickest and almost inaccessible growth of bushes and shrubs, or in the summit of a high rock. An eagle's nest is a large one always, and is strongly and comfortably built. Large sticks and branches are laid together, neatly flat, and bound with twining vines. The spacious inside is covered with hair mosses so minutely woven together that no wind can enter. The mother bird lays two eggs, which are curiosities. The long end tapers down to a point. The color of the egg is a ground of brownish red, with many dots and spots upon it. The egg itself is proof of the wild and savage percentage.

An eagle lives from 80 to 160 years. The young birds are driven forth by their savage parents to scratch for themselves as soon as they are able to fly. No training is given them by the old bird. That is left to their wild instincts, which hunger and necessity develop. There is no going "back to the old home" for the young eagle. The mother bird tears up every vestige of the nest where they have thrived since birth, and while they emit plaintive shrieks the old bird darts at them and pulls them off the crags or rocks, and to prevent falling they must take to their wings, and this is how they learn to fly. It takes three years for a young eagle to gain its full and complete plumage and strength.

An eagle is always fully confident of his strength, and rarely overreaches himself in his rapacious desire for prey. The minuteness of his vision, for they can take in at a searching glance the presence of desirable prey in a radius of many miles on mountain, valley, forest, swamp, or field, humanity cannot comprehend. With this wonderful power of sight is combined a swiftness of flight equally as wonderful. In a single night and in a day a full-grown eagle can fly 1,000 miles. The flight of an eagle after prey is like a flash of lightning, and he rushes past like a falling meteor, descending with fearful force upon his victim, which is staggered at the blow of his cruel talons. Oftentimes the visitor in the Tennessee mountains can just see him like a little speck in the sky, moving in majestic curves about the crest of a far away peak. The sightseers and mountaineers who love to watch them always choose the break of dawn or a calm sunset. They wheel in circles and glide about in horizontal sweeps just before starting out on a day's hunt or in settling for the night.

When lingering by the mountain rivers watching for ducks or geese, or even fish, a pair of eagles will display their natural shrewdness. They swoop from opposite directions upon the low, which tries to escape by diving, and could outwit one eagle, but suddenly, as the low comes to the surface of the water, the second eagle seizes him.

Eagles are captured by expert mountaineers, who spy upon the parent bird building her nest, and wait for the breeding season. After a due time they scale the mountains, and, well armed for the inevitable fight with the parent birds, go to these mountain eyries. Oftentimes four men are required to let one of them down a steep precipice or cliff, while two of them, dead shots with the rifle, shoot and kill the old birds upon their first approach for it fares ill with the daring robber who attempts to secure the young birds with none to protect but himself. In this way are many of the old birds killed for the taxidermists or for feathers, while the eaglets are borne away and caged for a good sale. An eagle captured at first is an uninteresting prisoner. Frequently they utter coarse cries, sullen and savage, breathing heavily and fiercely all the while. Their eyes dart fire and their low brows and flat foreheads are contorted into hateful expressions. They will dart fiercely at the bars of their iron cages, and, finding themselves unable to reach their hated captors, draw themselves and utter terrific plaints and whines. They are always restless while in captivity, due, of course,

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to their natures. Rarely an eagle is captured in a huge trap baited with a small lamb. Attempts have been made, too, in the Tennessee mountains to capture them in nets, but this is impracticable, or else mountaineers prefer to capture them when young by visiting their nest.—Cincinnati Enquirer.

## THE ART OF KLEPTOMANIA.

How an Alient of Rich repute Paid Dear-ly for Further Information.

Not so many moons ago there lived in Turin a physician noted far and wide as a specialist of brain diseases. Men and women from all ends of the earth came to him with their troubles and ailments, with lost memories, hallucinations and mental vagaries as varied as the materia medica or the penal code. Uniformly courteous and graceful of manner, he afforded them such assistance of consolation as his skill or sympathy prescribed, and waxed rich and popular as his fame expanded. With the development of fortune, for his fees were in proportion to his prominence, he cultivated a pleasing taste for those precious relics of antiquity in which millionaires alone are privileged to indulge. He had in his library a collection of costly objects of art—invaluable coins, rare jewels, costly statuettes, inimitable trifles chased by the chisels of great artists of antiquity. The fame of his treasures was loud in the world's ears with note of his skill, and among collections his was as great a name to conjure with among alienists.

One day there came to the residence of Dr. A. an American gentleman of dignified address and that portliness of mien which is presumed to reflect lofty position and wealth admitted to the great man's office, the visitor introduced himself as a banker who had come all the way from Chicago to consult him about the condition of his wife. At considerable length he explained her misfortune—she was a kleptomaniac. His life was a burden to him, following her from store to store, continually guarding her reputation against the encroachment of her fingers. Though it cost him thousands his wife knew nothing, suspected nothing of her own weakness. Nor should she ever know it he could prevent it. To consult Dr. A. they had come thousands of miles, and on his skill and learning the hopes of the husband were pinned. The great physician asked a few questions and expressed deep interest in the case, and demanded that the patient be brought to him.

"But she has no idea of all this," exclaimed the husband passionately. "If I have brought her to consult you as a physician I fear she would suspect something and it would kill her. If you will permit it I'll take her to call on you as a collector of antiquities. She is deeply interested in ancient jewelry, and the ostensible object of her visit will be to discuss archaeological remains. Do not be disconnected, however, if during the interview you find her pilfering, slipping your relics and coins into her umbrella or pockets. That is the ailment, and, of course, whatever she takes will be returned to you at once. My references are So and So, bankers." This with much dignity and the production of documents.

Dr. A., much flattered, made the appointment and bowed his patient to the door. Next day the unhappy husband and a stylish and handsome young woman presented themselves at the physician's residence. They were formally ushered into the library, where the gems of the great man's collection were enshrined. The conversation was turned at once on the objects of art, and Dr. A., with wonderful subtlety, conversed on antiquities while obtaining material for his diagnosis. He brought out his treasures—wonderful coins with strange inscriptions, a bracelet of gold curiously wrought and inscribed, a silver statuette modeled by Benvenuto Cellini historic rarities on which he dwelled with much graceful learning. Every now and then the lady slipped into her pocket or dropped into her parasol a coin, a jewel, a vase, and as she did so her hus-

band winked at Dr. A. to draw attention to her theft. When the physician finally gave the signal that he had learned all he required he had accumulated the rarest of his possessions and yet prepared to depart with an inimitable assurance of manner. "I'll be back within an hour," said the Chicago banker, "with those things my wife has taken. Poor, poor girl!" he burst out. "Doctor, my fortune, my life are yours if you can but cure her." He fled after his spouse's handkerchief in hand, and the alienist, with prospects of a big fee in mind, returned to his patients.

Two hours passed, then three, then the interval lengthened to five. Dr. A. rather alarmed, sent his servant to the American's not to give him the trouble of returning the missing jewels. The servant returned. No persons of the name stopping there. The police were called in, description given, detectives went forth. They identified the culprits, who had time to make their escape. They were London pickpockets, two thieves whose characters and depredations were notorious all over England.—San Francisco Wave.

## THE IDEAL HEAT.

Neat Electric Appliances for Room Warming.

The increasing number and variety of design of different types of electric heaters placed on the market each year betokens an increasing demand for and a growing appreciation of this ideal form of heating whether for housewarming or cooking. It dispenses at once with all odor, dust, fire, ashes and labor. There is no denying the many advantages of electric heaters, the only disadvantage being the greater cost of heat obtained in this way and the inability to always obtain electric power.

One London theatre last year was heated by means of electric heaters with great satisfaction, and one of the large office buildings at Niagara Falls is also heated in this manner so that there can be no doubt as to the practicability of the system. Two new and artistic forms of electric heaters are shown herewith. One is a bracket heater designed for suspension on a wall bracket, such as that used for gas lighting, the heat being turned on and off in the same manner as the gas ordinarily is. The desirability of this form is that they may be placed around a room thus insuring absolutely uniform temperature all over. They are quite small, 2½ inches in diameter and 8 inches in height, nickel plated and highly polished. They are especially adapted for use in store windows, to keep the glass clear from frost in cold weather.

Another illustration shows a modified form of electric heater designed for household use. The cut represents a bank of five heaters 24 inches high, 28 inches long and 10 inches wide. Any number of heaters may be grouped together and connected with an electric circuit by means of a flexible cord so as to be readily moved about from place to place as desired. In apartment houses and hotels, where electric current is usually available, electric heating is particularly advantageous, since there is no dirt or labor, and absolutely no waste of power when not in use, and simply turning a switch starts the heat. The heaters may be grouped so that, in connection with a suitable switch, various degrees of heat may be obtained by varying their electrical connection.

In the kitchen electricity is also superior in cleanliness and convenience to other methods. The cut shows a boiler, the top plate of which is of white enamel, so that no grease can be absorbed. What can be easier or more convenient than placing the article to be broiled on the broiler, turning a key and having the desired degree of heat available immediately, and when the broiling is completed the heat just as easily stopped? The wires that furnish the current and heat are imbedded in the coil, so that the plate may be washed as often as liked, and thus kept perfectly sweet and clean at all times, and without the possibility of the flavor of one food being tainted by another.

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