WOMEN PATRONS OF THE RACES

FEMININE BETTORS WHO PROSPER; OTHERS WHO DON'T.

Some of Them Well Known at the Tracks—A Plunger—A Victim of Horse Racing—The Superstitious and the Lucky—Women Who Know About Horses.

To a student of human nature, the women who are regular patrons of the racetrack are especial objects of interest. How they learn to pick winners just like the men, how they come to regard winning and losing with like equanimity, and where they get their money are all topics that are discussed by those who see them at the racetrack day in and day out.

There are many types, from the overdressed, bejewelled woman who carries a roll of money as thick as her arm and drinks nothing but champagne when she goes into the restaurant, to the white faced, hungry-looking, shabbily clad woman who has perhaps seen better days, but whose luck has long since departed.

The women who have plenty of money are as a rule those whose husbands or brothers or friends are either horse owners or bookmakers, or perhaps trainers of something else of prominence at the track. It is from these men that the women of prosperity receive the proper tips or the right information with which they can send their money along to the winners. The women who have little money are generally without friends or information and have to depend upon their own skill in "doping" the horses as best they can. Maybe they know a few touts or broken-down jockeys who loll about the grand stand and upon their words of alleged wisdom they pin their hopes and hard-earned dollars. It is the poor woman who can never get back what she has lost because of lack of capital and lack of nerve.

To a man who goes to the racetrack every day, the women regulars seem to be part of the whole machinery which runs things from the paddock to the betting ring. They are easily to be distinguished from the casual visitors because of their familiar faces, manners, mode of dress and their usual vantage points from which they see the races. Some of them are looked upon as oracles because they seem to be always in the know and they never fail to be besieged for information which invariably considered good.

A walk through the grand stand at Gravesend might disclose the identity of some of the women who figure in this story. It might be possible, for instance, to see a big woman with jet black hair and black eyes, who wears glasses, dresses in black and always sits in a private box by herself. She was once the betrothed of a young California millionaire whose father, in order to break off the match, paid the woman $50,000 to leave the State. With this capital the woman came East and made her first appearance as a player of races at the old Guttenburg track ten years ago. Without the quiver of an eyelash, she could lose $1,000 by a nose or she could win $5,000 by the same margin. It made no difference to her which way the bet went, for she was of an icy disposition and what the men called a good gambler.

It was with remarkable skill that this woman proceeded to beat the horses. From Guttenburg she proceeded to the larger metropolitan traces and has never missed a day's racing since, even going to New Orleans for the sport held there in the winter months. To-day she is rich, they say, and yet she cannot let go of the game that has fascinated her for years.

Quiet in demeanor, always possessing an air of refinement, this woman goes to the track alone and goes home alone. She is known by sight to hundreds of men who follow the races for a living and is never annoyed. The other day she called a betting commissioner and said:

"Put a thousand on Blues for me to win."

The commissioner got 3 to 1 for her money and the woman saw Advance Guard, a 15 to 1 chance, beat Blues by a head. There was not the slightest trace of emotion on her face, not an expression of disappointment or even surprise. She looked at the winning number as it was hoisted on the board, tapped her programme against her chin and then put down a bet on the next race, as if nothing had happened.

Not far from this woman it is possible to see another, also a veteran, but not so fortunate. She, too, in the days of Guttenburg, was a big bettor. In all kinds of inclement weather she went over to the track on the hill, always conspicuous for her beautiful clothing, many diamonds and good looks. Her hair in those days was dark brown and her complexion was as smooth as velvet. No lines of care could be discerned and no indication of worriment could be detected. She was the wife of a prosperous furniture dealer and she was always accompanied by her son, a boy of 17 or thereabouts.

To-day, what a change has been wrought by time and fortune! Though perhaps not more than 40, this woman looks to be all of 60. Husband dead and luck turned against her, she has lost everything, one might say. Hair white as snow, face covered with wrinkles, the once attractive blue eyes now surrounded by dark circles—truly this woman seems to have had her troubles without limit. An old dress of dubious color, that has been made over and retrimmed with bright colors, as if to keep up with the old gayety, a hat out of style, gloves whose fingers have been chewed off, and a faded umbrella go to make this woman's attire.

Anything but prosperous. With trembling fingers she pores over her programme each day and with weak voice she whispers to the busy commissioner, who seems to be bored, that she would like to bet $1 on this horse or on that. Her son, a victim of the fever, too, is not far away, betting money for other women—a precarious mode of living. Whenever this woman wins a bet there is a look of happiness that is hard to describe, while in the event of her losing a wager there is an expression of abject woe that is really pitiful to look at. From wealth and happiness, therefore, this woman has been reduced to what is virtually a state of poverty, but still she hangs on with vain hope.

In another part of the stand can be seen a woman who is conspicuous chiefly because of her lack of beauty and the fact that she is always surrounded by a crowd of men. She wears gold-bowed spectacles, chews gum and has jewels all over her. She is a horse owner, and she has some pretty good horses, too. Shrewd and well informed she knows when a horse has a chance to win and when he has none. Her talk is horsey in the extreme, and as one of her men friends put it the other day:

"She's dead wise, and can shoot the con herself a bit."

"Has my horse got a chance?" she will say in answer to a question. "Well, I bet $250 on him. Ain't that enough for you?"

A well known trainer comes along. He is hailed at once with a volley of questions.

"Jimmy, is your mare fit to-day?" the horsey woman will ask.

"Yes, Mrs. Blank, I think she is. I'm goin' to put a bet down."

"That's all I want to know," the woman replies, as she sends a commission of $500 into the ring.

A colored woman, always dressed in black silk with diamonds as big as hickory nuts in her ears, is another regular. She is a heavy bettor and has a white commissioner. Most of her information comes from colored stable boys, who get paid well for it.

A woman who is frequently seen with a well-known politician won $3,000 on Decanter last Monday. She was quickly surrounded by other women who shook her by the hand and wished her more such luck and plenty of it. When she got her money from the ring she invited all of the other women into the restaurant, where unmolested they had what in the evening would have been called a wine supper.

A short, quiet-looking woman who might be a grandmother and never fails to wear mourning is still another conspicuous regular. There is an air of refinement about her that causes one to wonder how she ever got into the habit of playing the horses. She associates with nobody, speaks to the betting commissioner in a way that denotes both education and breeding and never bets more than $5. In fact she has a system of her own, she says, which consists in playing horses to run third or to show, never a place or to win.

Then there is the bleached blonde whose cheeks are painted and whose eyebrows are so heavily pencilled that the lead comes off on hot days. She carries her money in a steel reticule which she shuts up just as a jailer clangs the door of a prison.

"Say, you boy!" she cries out to a commissioner, or messenger as the women term them, "What's the price on Wax Taper?"

"It's gone up to 7 to 1 now!" is the reply.

"Well, what do you think'll win?"

"Decanter!"

"Aw, he ain't got a living chance on earth. Eddie told me to play Wax Taper and I guess he knows how to get the goods. Here's $10, go bet it on Wax Taper to win!"

Wax Taper finishes last and the woman cries out to the perspiring messenger.

"Why didn't you put that ten on Decanter? Aw, y'er 'no good at all!'"

A woman with half a dozen gold teeth and dressed in the height of fashion sits in the grand stand overlooking the betting ring. With her may be seen any day one of the best known jockeys. The boy is scarcely out of his 'teens while the woman is old enough to be his mother. The boy smokes black cigars and gives tips to the woman, who plays them to the limit. But the boy doesn't always have a correct line on things.

The women who are superstitious are numerous. When they see 13 opposite a horse's name, or 7, or 11, they immediately put a bet down. If there are seven horses in the race they play No. 7. If horses numbered 1 or 3 or whatever the number may be win the first two races these superstitious women go on playing No. 1 or No. 3 or whatever the number may be in the following events.

Some of these women regulars play nothing but long shots, carefully avoiding favorites or short-priced choices. And they are lucky, too. When Little Gem won not long ago at Sheepshead Bay at 100 to 1, several women had $1 on and were uproariously happy when they cashed.

The knowledge of racing affairs that some of these women possess is remarkable. They know, some of them, just what work a horse has been doing in private, how much weight he can carry successfully, how great a distance he can travel, who is the best jockey to ride him and exactly what chances he may have to win. They are also aware that in some instances a horse does not receive a good ride.

"Did you ever see anything worse than that boy ride on Watercolor?" exclaimed a young woman to a man who was helping her into a Long Island City train after the races one day last week. "He took the colt in behind the others at the start, then ran wide at both turns and pulled him up in the stretch, as if the colt was all out! It was magnificent nerve! He ought to be set down!" Then she told her escort how she had lost $25 on Watercolor.

The first day Advance Guard came out at Sheepshead Bay, a fat woman with eyeglasses perched on the end of her nose stood up behind the press stand and began to shout as Advance Guard showed the way for the first quarter of a mile:

"Come on, O you dear, sweet Advance Guard! Come on, dear horse! Come on, darling Advance Guard!"

Then as the horse fell back, the woman's jaw dropped and when he finished in the ruck she simply moaned:

"You hateful old skate! You never could run and I was a fool to bet $1 on you!"

PROTECTION OF SEA BIRDS.

Good Results of the Efforts Along the Coast of the Eastern Shore.

From the Baltimore Sun.

Frank C. Kirkwood, Secretary of the Maryland Game and Fish Association, has returned from a tour of inspection of the breeding places of the sea birds along the coast of the eastern shore of Maryland and Virginia. Mr Kirkwood made the tour under the auspices of the American Ornithological Union, which has taken up the protection of the breeding sites and stationed nine wardens along the coast for that purpose. He used an open bateau and cruised about 300 miles in eight days among the coast islands. William H. Fisher, a locally well-known naturalist, accompanied him and secured a series of fine pictures of fowls and their summer homes. Mr Kirkwood said:

"There are more birds along the coast this season probably by 50 per cent. than there were last year when I visited the coast. It is extremely difficult, however, to even approximate the numbers. When you stand and look at an ever moving mass of birds flying close to you and one another the eye gets confused by the incessant movement and the ear is dulled by the babel of sounds. While the result of this inspection has been very satisfactory, still an observer who has visited the scene no longer than eight or ten years cannot avoid a feeling of sadness at the fact that there is now not more than one bird to thousands then. But there are enough to reproduce the stock, and the promise is that in a few years the birds may reach the old-time numbers if the present good policy is continued.

"The money for the work of preservation is supplied by the Thayer fund. When the question of protecting these birds was brought up by some of the members of the American Ornithological Union a doubt was expressed as to whether a sufficient amount could be secured to make protection possible. Mr Thayer took the matter up, and in a short while succeeded in raising an amount which, under the judicious care of Mr William Dutcher of New York, treasurer of the American Ornithological Union, has been sufficient to accomplish the desired result. The confiscation last winter of 2,600 terns under the Lacy act was the first result in the way of actual prosecution after the birds had been shipped from the breeding grounds. Since that time there have been several prosecutions in different sections of the country, and the market being cut off the incentive to shoot the birds upon breeding grounds has been destroyed.

"When I speak of shooting the birds on the breeding grounds alone I speak with a thorough knowledge of the impossibility of shooting them at any other time of the year. If one or more persons were to locate themselves in the centre of a breeding colony where the nests—simply constructed of a hollow scooped out in the sand—are so close together that one has to watch his feet to keep from walking upon them, it would only be a matter of how many shells were in the party as to how much shooting would be done, and at close range, in which the birds come sometimes almost in one's face and in compact bodies of several hundreds or thousands, it is readily seen how terrific the slaughter would be. And the birds killed would not be the worst feature of the slaughter, but the three or four eggs of the dead bird would be left to rot upon the sand, or the nest of young left to die of starvation.

"As soon as the young are able to accompany their parents the birds scatter all over the coast and ocean, and but few are to be found in any one locality. Even when at roost on a sandbar they are wary and difficult to approach, for even if the majority are asleep there are enough sentinels on duty to sound the alarm before the gunner can get within four or five gunshots of them. To see just how close one could get to them I tried various means, walking, riding in a beach cart and stalking them behind bushes, but never succeeded in getting anywhere near them. It is true that sometimes a bird will come near enough to a boat to be shot, and that when they are killed and fall into the water others will come to see what is the matter, but if the shooting had been confined to these methods it would never have made any impression upon the numbers along our seacoast. Almost every citizen of Baltimore is aware that in the harbor, gulls come fearlessly to within a few feet of a boat, but assume their natural wariness as soon as they get below Fort McHenry.

"Many islands were visited and a thorough survey of the main breeding sites was accomplished. The territory covered is with but very few exceptions devoid of any human habitations except those of the life-saving crews and the lighthouse keepers. The most prominent landmarks upon the little islands are the oyster houses—not the oyster-packing houses which are familiar to the Western Shore Marylander, but little shanties built high up on poles like the huts of the Samoan Islanders. In these live the men who guard the extensive oyster beds.

"One of the saddest sights of the trip was the remnants of Tobis's Island, formerly one of the most favored breeding sites of the sea birds along our coast, which was several years ago almost completely washed away. In this instance the elements joined forces with the human sea bird slayers in driving the birds from their natural haunts.

"Strange to say, the beach birds were not in their usual evidence at any time during the trip. I do not understand the cause."

Limburger in a Divorce Suit.

From the Philadelphia Public Ledger.

FRANKLIN, Sept. 22.—The right of a husband to whip his wife because she disobeyed him and insisted upon buying limburger cheese against his protests is one of the points in a divorce case here. The defendant is S. P. Fleming. The wife charges him with cruelty, and the limburger cheese figures as a cause of provocation, it being shown that the odor was disagreeable to him.

CAN'T SHIP LIVE QUAILS NOW.

OWNERS OF GAME PRESERVES AFFECTED BY THE LACY LAW.

Birds Not to Be Procured From the West as Formerly—Difficulties of Quail Raising—Queer Experiences on Game Preserves—Easy Shots for Hunters.

"I have a letter here from a millionaire asking for 500 quails for his New Jersey game preserve and I could get a good price for them, in fact a fancy price, but the laws are so bungled that I can't get the birds," so said a dealer in live game birds who has an office downtown and has for years been engaged in stocking game preserves with American game birds.

"You haven't any idea how great a demand there is for birds, especially quails," he went on. "The game preserve has come to this country to stay and the millionaires who are making them want birds and are bound to have them. I could sell 10,000 quails right this minute and get a good price for them.

"I used to get all I wanted from Arkansas and the Indian Territory, but the Lacy law, which was meant to stop the traffic in birds for table use, is so worded that it puts a stop also to the shipment of live quails for stocking preserves. There are two or three ways of catching the birds. The most successful is that practised by the Indians. They get long nets and arrange them on the rat trap principle, which lets a bird go in but forbids its coming out. There was this difference, however, that the trap takes into consideration the certainty that the birds will rise when frightened.

"Putting out the traps, the Indians would ride around in circles over the prairie. Any one who has ever ridden or driven through the country has seen quails run ahead of his horse at the roadside travelling long distances often before they flew. That is the way they do before the Indian ponies. Riding round and round in an ever decreasing circle the Indians keep the birds running toward the centre, where the nets are placed. The birds run under the nets and then comes a rush from the Indians on horseback. Yelling as they did in the days of scalps and warpaint they rush together toward the nets. At once the birds rise and are caught. Now the Indians gather together the lower edges of the net and proceed to take the birds out and put them into boxes for shipment.

"The other way was not so good but still it answered pretty well. It was practised more in the States where the negro population was extensive and consisted in the old scheme that boys sometimes use to catch little ground birds. A large wire box was made, open on one side. A place was selected for setting the trap and grain was scattered about for several days. When the birds had learned that there was food and plenty of it they would return day after day to eat. Now the screen box was laid on the ground, open side down. One edge was raised perhaps six inches, and propped with a stick. A string was tied to this stick, a handful of grain scattered underneath the box, and then the trapper hid himself where he could watch developments. At the usual feeding time the birds would come and make a rush for the grain. Now the trapper watched for the right instant and when a good part of the covey was underneath he pulled the string and the birds were caught.

"Then came the matter of getting them out of the region and to the preserves where they were wanted. That was of course a very simple matter until the law interfered. Some of us got to thinking the matter over and we came to the conclusion that since the law was designed to prevent the sale of dead birds in the market and since the clause taking in live birds was an obvious oversight it wouldn't be so very anarchistic to violate the law. In fact we came to the conclusion that it was our positive duty to violate it for the Indians slaughter the birds to get feathers for ornaments and we thought it would really be a service to bird lovers if we shipped a few to the North for the preserves.

"We found it surprisingly easy to make an express company believe the same thing. Then began a time when we shipped regularly in defiance of the law and law-enforcing officials. The express company made arrangements with a certain railroad and a certain train used to stop at the edge of a prairie stream whenever an insignificant little red flag appeared. When the flag was there it meant that there were several crates of live birds not far away. For several months this sort of thing went on. Then a Government marshal got a tip and he used to ride back and forth over that road looking for small red flags, and the shipment of quails declined.

"The Lacy law does not of itself forbid the shipment of live birds, but it makes birds shipped from one State to another subject to State laws, and there is only one State in the Union where it is lawful to take and ship the birds away. That State is Mississippi. There are any number of quails down there and some of the dealers, myself among them, went to shipping from that State. But you ought to have seen the row we stirred up.

"We brought the birds in pretty large numbers and sold them for good prices. They were turned loose in spring and summer on the supposition that they would breed and that when the shooting season came there would be thousands of quails. Imagine the wrath of the preserve makers when those quails, not used to cold weather, picked up and at the first touch of frost went straight back to Mississippi, like migrating ducks. Of course we were accused of bad faith and all sorts of wickedness, but we were as much surprised as any one else.

"Some men have come to the conclusion that quail raising is impossible and it is such mistakes as this that have led to the conclusion. One very angry set of men were those who made a preserve in Wisconsin in the duck shooting region. They sent to me for 500 birds. If they had told me the kind of land they were going to put them on I would have told them that their scheme was all nonsense, for quails will not stay in swamp country, for the reason that high water covers the nests and drowns the young.

"Those quails were turned loose and they hardly stayed long enough to say good-by. The sportsmen were angry and thought there was something wrong with the birds. All this just shows that the conditions have to be right. When they are all right quails may be planted on a hunting preserve as easily as trout in a brook. I know a man who has shipped them to France and who says they multiplied and were entirely successful. I sent a consignment to Italy once to stock a preserve and I guess they have lived, for I have an order now for 200 more from the same man.

"The dealer in live game birds has a mighty good chance to watch the schemes to which men resort to make a show of being good sportsmen. There is a preserve owned by a club of millionaires who want to shoot and don't like to walk all day without getting something to show for it. There are two men in the club who are real sportsmen and don't mind tramping several miles for a few quails.

"One day these called on a dealer in birds and said that the majority of the club members were disgusted with the sport on their preserve. They liked to go out and carry silver-mounted guns while they sat about in expensive hunting suits, smoking and waiting for game. There were plenty of quails on the preserve, but these men did not like to do so much walking as quail shooting necessitated, and besides a quail is not so easy to hit as the silver-mounted gun members would like. They wanted to know if there was not some sort of game bird which could be placed on the land and which a man might kill without too much exertion and with only moderate skill in the way of handling a shotgun.

"The dealer advised them to try guinea hens. Now the guinea hen is tame enough so long as it stays in a barn yard, but turned loose in the woods and shot at a few times it becomes as wild as a crow and is really game worthy the ammunition of a thoroughbred sportsman. Several hundred were turned into this preserve and for a week the members who could not kill quail were delighted and would come to the clubhouse with game bags full.

"Then the guineas caught on and pretty soon the whole lot were as wild as deer. Before the season was over they were clear beyond the abilities of the sportsmen and the two men who negotiated for the guineas went back to the same dealer, asking if he could not suggest some sort of bird that would offer still easier shooting. This time he advised turkeys. So the preserve became a sort of turkey yard and a few hundred perfectly tame birds were turned loose. These never got so wild as the guineas did, though they did take to running away from men in a way that made the shooters feel as if butchers than they did at first and as a result the birds have proved quite satisfactory.

"We have all sorts of strange requests. Men who have or are making preserves go to the dealer in live game with a request that he devise schemes to remedy all the ills that beset their places. There is one preserve that takes up a whole island off the coast of Georgia. It was a fine island with duck shooting and excellent fishing. But there were lots of rattlesnakes and the members drank antidote for snake bites till they saw snakes everywhere. They consulted a dealer in birds, under the impression that some bird might be found that would exterminate snakes.

"The dealer was honest and so instead of selling them a consignment of geese warranted to kill snakes he told them to turn a few hogs loose on their island. They did so and the snakes began to disappear. But the hogs soon grew wild and multiplying rapidly, overran the island. There were big fellows with long tusks that would attack a bird dog and when the dog ran to its master for protection, the master had to shoot the pig, or if he had no gun he had to climb a tree.

"After one or two had shinned up palmetto trees they began to wonder how the hogs could be exterminated. Now they went back to the dealer again. He asked why they did not hunt the animals and have some fun while they were accomplishing their extermination. This suggestion was acted on. Dogs trained to chase pigs were taken to the island and the hunters had great sport following and shooting the hogs.

"Most men who handle birds handle rabbits, too. Rabbits are very hard animals to catch and save. It is an easy matter to buy or to breed Belgian or Italian hares and sell those, but the great demand is for our common cottontail. We take an order and then send out orders to have the animals caught. This is mainly done by small boys in the country who take them in box traps that work on the principle of the figure four. When one is caught it must be sent away at once, for the animals are restless in captivity and will butt the side of the cage incessantly. If they are not released within a few hours after the trap springs, they are pretty certain to die."

GREAT FLOCKS OF WILD DUCKS.

Slaughter of the Birds in the Southwest—One Bag of 3,800 Ducks.

PHOENIX, Ariz., Sept. 25.—Wild ducks from the Northern lakes are swarming southward and in such numbers as have never before been known in this part of the Southwest. Hunters who have shot the mallard, the teal and the canvasback in the South declare that never have they seen elsewhere such flocks as are settling down along the lower Colorado River and the upper Gulf of California.

Beginning a few miles below Yuma, and extending down the river and below its mouth, lies probably the finest duck country in the word. Below the international line, where game laws are unknown, in such quantities are the birds found that, from a true sportsman's point of view, shooting loses its enjoyment, and becomes a mere slaughter. Every fall and winter, millions of ducks are killed there, by white hunters, Mexicans and Indians, but each year there is an apparent increase in the flocks. Hardened by their long flight from the North, the ducks fatten quickly in the lowlands, and are easily approached, owing to the comparatively small number of hunters that go into that region.

Each year, however, the hunting ground is becoming better known and there are few Eastern sportsmen who get into southwestern Arizona during the winter and late autumn that do not try their luck at the Colorado River ducks. Last December a party of New York and California hunters made a trip from Yuma down the river an the gulf in a small steamer, and brought in what is believed to be the largest bag of ducks ever known.

In a two days' sail down seventy-five miles of the river, they killed more birds than could be packed in the hold and on the deck of the steamer, and before they reached the mouth of the Colorado, eight of the ten men in the party were nursing shoulders which were so badly bruised by the recoil of the breechloaders, that they were unable to shoot again for days. When Guaymas was reached, and a count of the birds was made, it was found that 3,800 ducks were on the boat. For two days the population of the Mexican port revelled in a great free banquet of duck meat.

The duck season, in Arizona, does not open until Oct. 15, but already killing has been begun along the Colorado and the irrigated lands to the east and north. Game laws, in Arizona, are usually considered mere matters of form, and the wardens spend little time in enforcing them, except in regard to deer, which are closely guarded from the outlaw hunter.

In the alfalfa and grain fields ducks can be shot after every irrigation, the water driving insects to the surface of the ground and providing food for the hungry birds from the north. Frequently ranchers are able to shoot ducks from their door-yards, and last winter a large flock of canvasbacks settled down along a canal which passes through the heart of Phoenix, and for a week kept uptown residents awake by their noise during the feeding hours of the night.

Down along the Gila River, the Pima Indians kill the ducks in large numbers, using clubs as weapons. Creeping through the thick brush, which grows close up to the banks of the stream, or its bayous, three of four Pima lads, will emerge suddenly and simultaneously, upon the bank, within a few feet of a flock of ducks. Each Indian carries a half dozen short heavy clubs, and these are thrown as the frightened ducks rise. Sometimes a two-foot mesquite stick brings down two ducks.

The Seri and Cocopah Indians, along the lower Colorado and the gulf, have a more interesting method of getting their game. The older bucks, who have bows and arrows, secure the birds by shooting, but the younger boys use a plan which is more difficult and less certain. Early in the morning, before dawn, they arrange in the water of the bayous, horse-hair riatas, weighted and buoyed, until they float about three inches below water level. Then, attaching to these traps long and strong lines, the boys lie in weight for the coming of the ducks. When the birds settle in the water, and finally congregate about a buoy, there is a sharp and hard pull, and one, two and sometimes three ducks are hauled to dry land and then to the stew-pot.

An Indiana Mail Tree.

From the Indianapolis News.

TRAFALGAR, Ind., Sept. 19. The inhabitants of the village of Chetwynd and others nearby have a unique way of receiving and sending mail. Recently orders were received to discontinue the post office at Chetwynd because of rural mail delivery passing within half a mile of that place, and so a large elm tree at the cross roads was utilized and made to serve as a post office. There are seventeen boxes attached to the tree, besides the government mail box, which is used solely for money orders, registered letters, &c. Chetwynd gets all of its mail in a large box on the left of the tree, and full 120 people receive mail at this tree. The elm is a magnificent specimen of its kind, rising fully one hundred feet, without a limb within thirty feet of the ground. It is three feet in diameter at the bottom.

DUCK SHOOTING IN CANADA.

RARE SPECIMENS TO BE FOUND NOW HIDING IN THE WOODS.

The Beautiful Wood Duck—Seven Black Ducks Shot in a Row—Redheads Hard to Kill—The Exasperating Gray Diver—Resorts in the Far North.

KNOWLTON, Canada, Sept. 28.—Duck shooting is on now, where the raw material is to be had. In a fortnight hence the ducks which have been in retirement in the nurseries of lakes and creeks to the north, will be bringing their progenies out into civilization. And then shooting upon the open lakes will be the sport.

Just now the birds must be sought in creeks or still stretches of back water, where the parents are putting the finishing touches on the education of the almost full-grown ducklings. And unless the broods have been spotted beforehand, it is not easy to locate them. One party would have made a blank day of it the other day but for a quiet little chuckle which drew attention to the green head of a drake who was hidden amid the leaves of an overhanging alder, and was congratulating himself and his two followers upon being undiscovered by the occupants of the passing boat.

The knowledge the ducks have acquired of tiny tributaries to creeks and mud holes more or less remote from the streams is thorough, and in many instances the bush alongside is so dense and the mud so deep as to make it impossible for a considerate man's setters to continue their smelling-out work long at a time. And since waterfowl are notoriously hard to kill and when wounded have wonderful powers of hiding themselves, the birds are about as good as lost if shot so that they do not drop into the water. So that a boat large enough to hold a good retriever and to make rowing hard work, is a necessity. Take it altogether it is no wonder that bags are small at the beginning of the season.

It is at this time, however, that the sportsman in love with the beautiful goes along the creeks, and lake sides after the loveliest of all the American aquatic birds, that ornithological puzzle the little summer or wood duck. About half the size of the black fellows, with a bright green head like a glorified mallard, a snow-white necklace, body spotted and barred with rich crimson, brown and white, darker wings, with wide green light edged bar, crested and pert, the dendronessa, from *dendron*, the Greek for a tree, for so has science named it, is the dandy of the large family to which it belongs.

People used to laugh at the hunters' tales of weished footers nesting in trees, and to inquire scoffingly how they grasped the branches. But the wood duck is rightly named after all. It does make its nest in trees and that sometimes at the height of thirty feet from the ground. Generally the eggs are not easy to get at either, and even yet authorities differ as to how the youngsters leave the nest. Probably when they are unable to drop from that tree into the water, the little things have to lie still for a few days, until their stubby wings are strong enough to break the fall of their fluffy little yellow bodies. There are some who still stick to it that the mother bird carries her babies to earth on the back, under her wing, or in her bill.

These dainty little ducks threaten to become scarce, owing to the drain the taxidermist makes upon the always rather limited supply of them. Not every one knows that there is also a tree goose of similar habit to the dendronessa.

Another beautiful game bird well worth searching for is the harlequin garrot, which breeds to the north of the St. Lawrence, and from all accounts is to be had anywhere along the Labrador coast, and occasionally near Lake St. Peter below Montreal. This duck has the appearance of being painted up for some aquatic circus ring, the blending of the colors—warm brown almost red, white and purple, black about the head and neck of the drake, being very like a joke, though in manners, as gunners soon find, it is by no means a fool.

The big black duck is the hunter's all-round favorite. A grand target it makes in its rapid but steady flight. Always to be depended upon to circle around like other varieties at least once, if flushed from a pond or small lake, it sails straight away on a large body of water, as fast as it can, but not faster than the shot will travel, if the hand is steady and quick which directs it. Sometimes, not often, the black duck is to be taken unawares, as when a native of Cawood township sneaked along until he rested his elbow on the brush-covered end of a log, on the floating part of which he saw a duck sitting. To his surprise, when he had recovered from the knockdown blow which his overcharged muzzle loader dealt him, he heard a tremendous fluttering on the water, and, swimming out, retrieved seven full-grown magnificent birds which must have been sunning themselves strung along on the log.

The writer can give *ex post facto* evidence of the deed, since in honor of a visit he paid next day to the marksman's shanty, all seven ducks were stuffed with pudding raisins, and roasted in a closed oven in the sand for his special delectation. And though he has never been able to have the recipe duplicated in his own home, he deposes that the effect was most savory, and—it was after a twenty-mile ride on horseback—exceedingly satisfactory.

On Brome Lake here, these birds will be found in flocks from fifty to several hundred by the middle of next month. With watchful sentinels properly posted, and with their senses all on the alert for possible foes, they are not easy to get at, however. And although decoys, usually dummies, are used and occasionally artless blinds are constructed, the hunters are reckoned to have done well who secure three or four ducks in the day.

The ardent duck hunter who has time at his disposal would do well to arrange to spend a few weeks in the northern districts. From Ottawa he will find four or five railways to carry him to the Mattawa, Lake Temiscamingue, upper Ottawa, or Gatineau regions. Wherever there are lakes along these lines, ducks will be found, and generally guides to give directions or to take charge of the party. The flocks will not be so large as, but will be much easier of approach than those found further south. A duck call properly used at the right time, and a few decoys, will bring the birds near to the natural covers whence execution may be done. Or with care an experienced canoeist can creep along near the shores and get a good shot at the unbroken families, which so long as the marksman is not too conspicuous a figure and progresses evenly and quietly will usually remain on the water until the gun rings out. Even then if it is the parent birds which are picked out, the others scatter over the lake and after their short flight may be found hiding in twos and threes in tiny bays or near the rushes.

The fine redhead, one of the American teals, is also a common duck at the North, and may be easily recognized at a distance by reason of its partly white attire. As its deeply serrated bill shows, it is somewhat of a vegetarian, and is often found near weed beds, or where the wild rice thrives, though it occasionally visits grain fields. It is, according to some good judges, the best of all the *anatidæ* as a table bird, there being little suspicion of fishiness and a mild gaminess about the flavor of its meat.

Perhaps the redhead is one of the most difficult of all the ducks to secure if not killed outright. It is amazing how quickly a wounded bird will get out of the way, and how much lead one will carry off. Conscientious duck hunters sometimes spend hours in trying to secure a wounded and crippled straggler.

Two Boston fishermen had a curious experience in Lake Deschenes on the Ottawa last week. A teal which had fallen to dead from a passing flock was observed to be floating away from the approaching punt, though without any visible effort on its part. After a chase, the bird was overtaken, when a good sized pike let go of the head by which he was towing it, the hard bill being scarred by the shark-like teeth of the fresh-water scavenger.

It is not uncommon to find the bodies of ducklings in the stomachs of muskallonge in the early summer season, along with such trifles as five-pound white fish and well developed muskrats. But a full grown duck, feathers and all, would be a large mouthful for any fish not more than twenty pounds in weight. Fish as well as men occasionally bite at more than they can get away with.

Of all the varieties of ducks the gray diver is the most exasperating, or most amusing, according to the temperament of the gunners. It is as a rule granted that the great Northern diver, or loon, holds the record for wariness and ability to dodge shot, but this little grebe duck is not far behind in the latter respect. Three men and a fine Norfolk retriever were seen to spend more than half an hour and about a score of cartridges about a river pool, upon one insignificant looking specimen, whose diving powers after one wing had been damaged were wonderful. In fact it was almost easy to believe the fiction of the country, that its breast is so well feathered as to turn the shot, as one witnessed the escapes of this topsy-turvey.

No matter how quick the snapshot, the disappearing tail would be seen where the head had been, by the time one looked for the effect of the discharge. And like many another thing on sea and land, greatly desired and difficult to obtain, the diver is worth about nothing when at last it is bagged. If patience holds out long enough to pluck it, which operation is something like the emptying of a conjuror's hat, the wretchedly small body is found to be tough and dry and ill-flavored, as might indeed be expected of the carcass of so finished and highly trained an athlete.

THINKS HE SHOT AN ELK.

A St. Lawrence County Farmer May Be Liable to a Fine of $500.

UTICA, Sept. 28.—Willaim K. Barbour, who lives in the southwestern part of Pierpont, St. Lawrence county, has shot an animal which seems to be an elk. As elk are protected by law in this State Mr. Barbour is liable to a fine of $500.

Mr. Barbour is a farmer and the animal had been seen about the place several times. He was informed by his brother of the presence of the strange animal and taking a rifle, he went on a hunt. He saw the animal, knew that it was not a deer, but fancied that it was a freak of some sort. So he opened fire and at the second shot the elk fell to the ground.

The animal was a female measuring eight inches across the head and about two feet through the flanks. It weighed about 400 pounds. Fully 1,000 people saw the animal, which hung in the barn for some time. One of the visitors was Special Game Protector O'Brien, who took several photographs of it.

As no elk have been released from any of the private preserves in the Adirondacks the only way in which to account for the presence of the elk in the North Woods is the theory that it was one of the twenty released on the shore of Forked Lake in Hamilton county by the State last spring.

COREAN POMP.

An Elaborate Ceremony at Seoul in Honor of the Ruler's Ancestors.

From the Pall Mall Gazette.

The Emperor recently passed in procession from the Imperial palace, which adjoins the British legation upon its south wall, to the newly erected Temple of Ancestors, whose eastern wall is the dividing line between the grounds of the legation and the area covered by the buildings necessary to ancestral worship. The procession moved from the palace about 10 A. M., revealing in the first phase of its development the elements of a spectacle strangely suggestive of burlesque, romance and the humors of a pantomime.

Statesmen in their official robes gave place to others in winged hats or lofty mitres gleaming with tinsel; the Commander-in-Chief in modern uniform with decorations flashing in the sunshine on his breast, followed by his staff in red coats covered with gold lace, while aigrettes waved in their hats, passed marching proudly at the head of the imperial bodyguard. A final dash of color, nobles in blue and green silk gauze, imperial servants in robes of yellow silk, their hats decorated with rosettes, more mediæval costumes of original color and quaint conception, a greater multitude of waving flags, a group of yellow silken-clad imperial standard bearers, heading the imperial yellow silk flag, the imperial umbrella and other insignia of the Emperor.

Then a final frantic beating of drums, a horrid jangling of bells, a fearful streaming of pipes, a riot of imperious discord, intermingled with the cries of officials shouting orders, the curses of eunuchs, and the van of the imperial cortège appeared in a blaze of streaming yellow light and amid a sudden silence in which one could hear the heartbeats of one's neighbor. The noise and the voices died away, the scraping of hurried footsteps only was audible as the imperial chair of State canopied with yellow silk, richly jewelled and screened with delicate silken panels and bearing wings to keep off the sun, was rushed swiftly and smoothly forward, borne aloft upon the shoulders of thirty-two imperial runners clad in yellow with double mitres upon their heads and bearing the sacred and august person of his Imperial Majesty the Emperor Li Hsi to his place of sacrifice and worship in the temple of his ancestors.

The business of the day had now arrived, and presently the progress of the Emperor stopped as he alighted at the entrance of a tent of yellow silk which had been erected at the angle of the palace and legation wall within the shade of trees from the legation gardens. It was here that his Majesty had given us permission to watch the passing of his court, and it was here that, within the moment of his own arrival, the retinue of his son, his chair of red silk borne in midair upon the strong shoulders of sixteen bearers, stopped to discard its princely burden. The Emperor and the Crown Prince passed within the tent, changing from the imperial yellow and crimson silken robes of State in which they had first appeared into the sacrificial robes of yellow, emerging a little later to make obeisance to the passing of the tablets of their ancestors. The character of the procession now changed. Soldiers and nobles and dignitaries of court gave place to priests garbed in the yellow robes of sacrifice, who chanted in solemn tones words of benediction. The screaming pipes took a fresh vigor, rising and falling in shrill screaming until the air vibrated with conflicting discords. Men, solemn of face, their yellow skirts swaying with the frenzy of their movements, swept past the throne, a surge of song rising to their lips in the passionate despair and lamentation which should have filled their souls.

One tablet came, moving in a burst of solemn song, and the Emperor, his son, the Crown Prince and a baby prince, the offspring of Lady Om, the reigning concubine, dropped to the earth, resting momentarily upon their bended knees, and crossed hands in reverent attitude with pious mien—humbly sinking to the dust their own proud heads before the gilded burdens in the sacred chairs. Twelve times they passed before the imperial group, and twelve times each humbled himself, the circle of supporting nobles and attendant eunuchs the while assisting them. It was the first appearance of the baby prince, who, scarce old enough to toddle, was of necessity aided in his devotions by the chief eunuch, who pressed him to his knees, placing a guiding hand upon his head, a restraining hand upon his shoulder. The emotion of the Emperor was plainly manifest, he paled visibly as if his whole being were centred upon the object of his prayers and veneration, and there can be no doubt the suggestion should not even be permitted—of the integrity of his belief.

The ceremony concluding, the twelve chairs moved toward the ancestral temple and as the Emperor ensconced himself in his yellow chair of imperial state, the Crown Prince followed the example of his father, mounting to his seat of crimson silk, the babe riding upon the back of the chief eunuch and crying with boyish and infantile delight. Once again the flourish of the musicians' drums and fifes and pipes broke upon the harmony, and the priests and nobles, courtiers and servants, wearing the costumes of their style and dignity, followed in the train of the Emperor. The procession moved forward to the temple, the tablets halting before the Temple of Ancestors, the Emperor and the two Princes proce