

# FOR FARMERS, STOCK BREEDERS AND GARDENERS

## Jack Miner And The Birds

By Jack Miner Himself—A History of This Notable Bird Lover's Life

### CHAPTER X ROBINS

Now I have tested your staying qualities, giving you the worst first, and we have come to the bright side of what the birds have taught me. After all, I have a lot to thank the cannibal birds for, as there is about thirty acres in this piece of second-growth woods where I am now sitting, and during the summer months I take a stroll down here at least once a week. This is the most perfect place for robins to build that one could find in a day's travel, yet the last four or five years I haven't seen five of their nests down here; but just one-half mile away, at my home, there were seventeen nests last summer, all within one hundred yards of the house, and outside of the thirteen maples that shade our door-yard the shrubbery is very young. All thinking humanly must admit that they come there for protection from their natural enemies, as there is usually a crow's nest hidden away in this or the neighboring woods. But remember a crow knows better than to venture near my house. And the robins know it.

The chief reason the robins leave us early in the fall is because their choice food, the worms, have gone into the ground for the winter; but as soon as the worms start coming to the surface again the robins come back; and the beauty of it is they come to the same homes, and perch on the same limbs of our trees, sounding their cheerful notes to brighten the dark spots in our paths. Between songs they drop down on the lawn and hop and listen; all at once they start pecking at a grub in the grass; as soon as they have pecked him out and turned him into a robin they either listen for more, or jump up and give us another song. By catching so many mothers of the season's grubs they render us tens of dollars worth of service.

Then about July the first the grubs that are not destroyed are under the hard, dry soil, and the robin has its second family to support; and Shame! Shame! Shame! on the man who claims to be intelligent who will slip out and shoot him because he took two cents' worth of sour cherries that possibly were not worth picking. Has this man got a heart? If so, let him go under the trees where the little warbling young robins are calling, "Mamma! mamma! mamma!" That's the exact interpretation of these three chirps that are getting fainter and fainter. Now, my brother, let me ask you again: Have you got a heart? You love your little baby brother or your darling baby boy, and the very thought of King Pharaoh makes you wicked within; but remember, as cruel as he was, he never demanded that a baby boy should die a lingering death as these dear little robins have to do through the fact that you shot their mother. Personally, I hate to shoot a crow or a grackle, as bad as they are, during the nesting season, on that account.

Now it would not be fair for me to pass the robin by without giving you a taste of our enjoyable experience, as while I know that by times robins will annoy fruit growers by congregating there in hundreds, yet to be fair we must consider the most good for the most people. So let us take the average farm, occupied by the cleanest of farmers, with his corn, potatoes, tomatoes, cabbages and other crops too numerous to mention, all coming up through the clean, fertile soil. And now, like a sneaking thief in the night, the annoying out-worm crawls out like a small, cute down the promising plant and then passes on to another and repeats his destructive doings. Then when he

## Spinning and Weaving

Send me in your wool to be spun into Yarn and wove into Blankets. The charges are: single yarn 23 cents doubled 26 cents per pound. Blankets \$2.00, and if unlaundered \$1.35; it takes five lbs. of wool per blanket. Wool must be well washed and all dirt and burrs picked out. The size of single yarn is medium, and doubled yarn fine, medium, coarse and hooking yarn. Put shipper's name on all parcels and owner's name, address and instructions inside. Send by mail or freight. Weight will be paid on 160 lb. lots.

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## The Combine In Britain

"Demonstrations of combined harvest-threshers," said Lord Bledsoe, Governor General of New Zealand, "long associated with North American husbandry and now adapted to the smaller field system and wetter climate of Britain, have recently been conducted by the British Ministry of Agriculture and have gone far to prove that the 'Combine' used in conjunction with a rough and ready dryer, is far from being a mere fine weather machine, and may save many a cereal crop which would otherwise be lost. The first of such machines in the south of England is now in use on my own farm at Telford in Wiltshire and its efficiency and economy of working are being eagerly studied by neighboring farmers. The combine harvester abolishes all operations from cutting to bagging the corn. The cost of the fuel is less than that of binder twine."

## GUARDING CANADA'S BORDER

Some idea of one phase of the work of the Division of Foreign Pests Suppression of the Dominion Department of Agriculture may be gained from the report just issued. During the past year 43,542,712 plants, originating in 27 different countries and valued at \$1,014,071 were imported into Canada, and were inspected by officers of the Division in order to prevent the introduction of pests or plant disease into the Dominion. This work involved a total of 11,160 separate inspections and the issuance of 10,038 permits. Insect pests or plant diseases were found in 1,607 importations, brown-tail moth, European sawfly, pine shoot moth, scale insects of various kinds, bud flies, weevils, greenhouse pests, gladioli and tulip diseases, basal rot of narcissus, hyacinth yellows and crocus fusarium being the most serious menaces. Fifty-two permits were refused in connection with requests to import prohibited material and in twenty-nine instances prohibited stock, entering without a permit, was seized. Proposed importations of potatoes were rejected on three occasions and one importation of potatoes was seized by the inspectors and destroyed. Parcel post importations examined at the various ports totalled 4,299 packages, comprising 468,644 plants for 3,699 consignees. One hundred and twenty-three of these importations were refused entry from 104 shippers on account of irregular certification.

My sympathies go out to the sorrowing parents of the children who met so hapless a fate from fungus poisoning and the more so that when I first came to P.E. Island, my two youngest children narrowly escaped the same fate. They had been to the back fields and had picked and eaten some fungi which they took to be mushrooms, and had developed symptoms of fungus poisoning in their walk, etc. I was working away from home that day, and my eldest daughter at once harnessed up and drove across to inform me. I found that she had induced vomiting by means of tickling the throat, which was the best thing as first aid; so I hurried her off for the doctor, and went home as soon as I could get. The children were then out of danger, but were stupefied, and did not recover "normalcy" for two days after. The little girl in trying to describe her symptoms, said she felt as though she were flying, and this "light-headedness" seems to be characteristic of mild Amanita poisoning, and would account for the erratic walking.

Dr. Gussow, in his book on "Mushrooms and Toadstools" especially warns his readers against two species of Amanita. The first is Amanita muscaria L., the Fly Toadstool, which gets its popular name from its use by the early settlers in poisoning flies. This fungus is large, the cap being sometimes as big as a dinner plate, of a pale lemon yellow shading to reddish in the centre, with whitish warts scattered irregularly over it. The stem has a kind of ruff round it, called the annulus or ring. The poisonous principle, an alkaloid known as muscarin, is an extremely toxic substance, which has also been found in putrid fish, so that its action resembles "pomarine poisoning" as it used to be called. Notwithstanding this evil reputation I have sometimes observed cattle eating these fungi and without any ill effect, as far as I could judge. Squirrels also eat a great variety of toadstools with impunity.

The other Amanita is A. phalloides Fr., which is branded by its common name of "Death-cup" or "Death Angel," the latter because of its whiteness, perhaps. At least, it is usually white, though it has been found with a yellowish, dull green, olive-grey, or greenish-brown

## NEWSY NOTES

BY AGRICOLA

### A GARDEN IN MOUNT ALBION

A correspondent sends an account of a garden which makes me long to visit it next summer, if all goes well. He says: "Through the summer was one of exceptional drought, just at a critical time in flower growth, it was a great pleasure to visit the flower garden of Mrs. Lloyd Ballum of Mount Albion, in that particular part of it known as Birch Hill. This is the old Ballum homestead, beautiful for situation, with its stream of water running the full length of the farm, but now more beautiful than ever; and plans are under way for still more improvements! Such a wealth of beauty and bloom as were to be seen when the writer had the pleasure of a visit there, would be hard to duplicate. Special mention must be made of the carnations, stocks, snapdragons, and gladioli, but almost all the old favorites as well as many new ones were there; in fact it would be hard to name a flower that was not. Tulips, daffodils, Japanese lilies, Iceland and other poppies, Balsams, peonies, Regal and other lilies, polyanthus, dianthus, blanket-flowers, foxgloves, honeysuckles, jarkspurs, cockscombs, Canterbury bells, and roses with dahlias in endless variety, as well as pansies and ground almonds. More whose names cannot now be recalled, were there in profusion, and were well worth going a long distance to see; and Mrs. Ballum's never 'too busy' to find time to welcome a visitor and to show him (or her) round, whether friend or stranger, or to give some seeds, or to dig up a plant or two that one desires to have, or to pick a bouquet for a sick friend, a church service, or a wedding, or in fact to do anything else to spread the gospel of beauty and help to make this life a little more worth while."

### POISONING BY FUNGI

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### THE BIRD'S WINTER TABLE

Now is the time to attract the birds round your home, by providing a supply of food at a given point. If this is done, and the supply regularly replenished, they will "catch on" and will be certain to visit you during the dark days of winter. Some of my readers will remember the pamphlet on "Bird Houses," which was distributed by The Guardian last spring; and will be glad to hear that there is another, equally interesting, on "Attracting Birds with Food and Water" which is to be had by writing to the Commissioner Canadian National Parks Branch, Department of the Interior, Ottawa. It is distributed without charge.

### A SAFE RAT POISON

There are a number of good commercial rat poisons sold, but their great drawback is that they don't distinguish between friend and foe! There has lately been put on the market in Canada a preparation of a plant known as the Squill (*Scilla maritima*) which is fatal to rats and mice, yet harmless to "man and domestic animals, chicks, cats and dogs." The squill was first cultivated in England, at the Oxford Botanic Garden, in 1648, the root, which is the part used, is bulbous, like the rest of the species. This root was known to the ancients as a medicine, and has been employed one way or the other, down through the ages. To prepare the drug the root is slowly dried, but not overmuch, and then reduced to

cap, which makes it puzzling to the botanist: the cap has no warts, but is smooth. The stem has an annular furrow. This plant is quite common throughout Canada, growing in the same habitat as does the mushroom, and undoubtedly is responsible for most of the deaths which have occurred from poisoning by fungi.

There are a few other harmful toadstools, but out of the hundreds of species known to science, it would be hard to find a dozen really poisonous. It would, however, be easy to make out a list of fifty (or even more) which would be readily accepted as delicious food-plants: the majority being unacceptable merely because of their woody texture, nitrous smell, or repugnant appearance, and not because of any harmful properties. Nevertheless, it is better for children, and especially for those of tender years, to be taught to look on all with suspicion and so help to prevent such tragic occurrences as we sometimes read of.

Dr. Gussow, in his book (a copy of which is in the Public Library) gives the clinical history of two cases of poisoning, one in Canada, and the other in Germany. The clinical detail of Dr. Weismann's case is well worthy of study.

### THE "HONEY AGARIC"

Of all the fleshy wood-destroying fungi, it seems to me that *Armillaria mellea* (vahl) Fr. is the most abundant. This fall wherever one looks, the old stumps (generally of spruce) are covered with the clusters of the "Honey Agaric" as it is called. It seems a misnomer so to entitle it, as it neither smells nor tastes like honey, and the colors generally are only distantly alike. This plant is easily recognized. It grows in clusters on decayed wood or stumps, and frequently at the base of dead or dying trees. The cap is variable in color, running from light buff to dark-tawny, and this year it ranges up to six inches in diameter. The gills are lighter in color than the cap, and the stem (which is tough) is reddish brown, and has a sort of ruff or ring round it, a noteworthy feature.

### ROMAN BRITAIN, A.D. 355-368

With all their sagacity in ruling the conquered races, the Romans never succeeded in creating a stable central government and the later history of the Roman State is a long list of civil contests for the "purple," and assassinations of those who had attained it. These civil wars and revolts wasted the man-power of the Empire on a great scale, and the barbarian nations on its borders, sensing this, harassed the dominions of the Caesars on all sides. It required all the courage of Julian (355-363) to keep the Fructians at bay on the northern frontier, while the Saxons were becoming more formidable, day by day, on the western seas. The Empire was fast approaching dissolution.

The governor of Britain on the accession of Julian, was an officer named Alypius, who was recalled by the emperor and entrusted with the rebuilding of the walls of Jerusalem which Julian had determined to restore in a spirit of hostility to the Christians. Nothing is said of the state of Britain in this reign, but soon after the accession of Jovianus there was a joint attack of the Picts, Scots and Attacots from the north, and of the Saxons from the sea. They seem to have met with feeble resistance till the reign of the next emperor, Valentinianus (304-375). Giving up the Empire of the east to his brother Valens, he concentrated his energy in restoring security and order to the West. In the year 368 as Valentinianus was on his way from Amiens to Troyes, he had news of a new and terrible irruption of the barbarians into Britain; they had defeated and slain the "count of the Saxon Shore" an officer in charge of the maritime districts of the south-east. An official named Fullofaudes, whose title was "Duke of Britain," had been ambushed and was either captive or slain. In the first heat of indignation the emperor despatched one Severus "the count of the domestics," to take command in the Island; on reflection he cancelled this appointment, and sent Jovianus in the count's place. Further consideration seems to have opened Valentinian's eyes to the magnitude of the disaster, and the appointment was changed again, the command of Britain being entrusted to the celebrated Theodosius, the ablest general in the imperial army.

We are told by the historian Ammianus Marcellinus, the brief narrative of these events, that Theodosius hastened to Britain and soon landed at Rutupiae (Richborough in Kent) with a strong force of Batavians, Eburians, Jovii, and Victores. We can understand the gravity of the crisis when we are assured that at this time the enemies were plundering the country round London, then called Augusta. The Roman commander immediately marched against them, subdivided his forces to meet their numerous predatory bands, and defeated them, with great slaughter. A large quan-

## Forage Crop Investigations

The study of forage problems has been engaging the attention of the Dominion Department of Agriculture for some considerable time. Range investigations, in which native vegetation is being studied with special reference to changes which take place under different systems of grazing, are being conducted at the Dominion Range Experiment Station, Manlyberles, Alberta. The principal forage plants of the range areas of southern Alberta and Saskatchewan have been identified, their palatability, nutritive value, and response to different methods of grazing have been determined. Many different species of forage crops also are being studied at Saskatoon and Ottawa, the most important work being done with reference to alfalfa, red clover, timothy, western rye grass, corn, soy beans, mangels and swedes. With the grasses, effort is being directed towards developing strains which are adapted specially for pasture purposes. Alfalfa is being bred for increased seed production by making use of certain mother plants which have been found to be self-fertilizing and independent of insect pollination.

## Beefbreeders Start Operations for Winter

The Canadian beekeeper has to start operations early in order to protect his bees during the winter. The bees that are to live through the winter will be reared principally in August and September, and the best way to get them in large numbers is to have in the hive a queen reared the same season, this queen to commence laying about August 1.

This means that she must be reared during June or early July, during the honey-flow from clover, and, says the Dominion Apiarist, no better conditions for the rearing of queens exist than those found in Canada at this time. By having a good prolific queen in the hive by the first of August, ample time is given for her to produce a strong force of bees before normal brood production ceases in the fall. Not only will the colony containing a young queen raise more bees for the winter than one containing an old queen, but the young queen will be more prolific and profitable for the following spring.

Bees do not hibernate in the true sense of the word. When it becomes cold, they form a compact cluster, and the bees in the heart of the cluster generate heat by muscular activity. This activity of course, necessitates the consumption of stores in proportion to the amount of energy expended. The bees on the outside of the cluster act as insulators to prevent the escape of the heat generated. As soon as the temperature falls to 57 degrees or lower a cluster is formed and heat generated. The colder the hive becomes, the greater will be the amount of heat required to keep up the temperature of the hive.

Should the cluster be a small one, there will be fewer bees for heat production and these few will have to work harder. Excessive heat production is apt to start the bees producing brood, which is usually fatal to a colony during winter when the bees are unable to fly. The greater the number of bees within the colony, the smaller the amount of work required from each individual bee, provided that stores and protection are equal. It is, therefore, impossible to get a colony too strong for the winter. By strong colonies is meant plenty of booty fell into his hands, much of which was restored to those from whom it had been taken. Naturally the citizens of London, joyfully opened their gates to their deliverer, and the general's first desire was to rest his troops in the city and to consider the difficulties still ahead." He questioned both deserters and captives and soon learned the character of the enemy with which he had to deal. To his astute mind it seemed that they might be conquered as much by policy as by force of arms, and to that end he issued a proclamation promising pardon to all who would desert from their ranks, and "on this promise a great number returned to their duty." Evidently there had been an insurrection of the subject population combined with the invasion. Theodosius then sent in a report on the state of Britain to the emperor, and advised that an officer named Civilis, an honest, brave, and energetic man, should be sent over as governor of Britain, and that a distinguished military commander Duke Duleitius should accompany him.

## Bulbs

We have just received our fall stock of BULBS direct from HOLLAND for fall planting and early Spring Bloom. All first size Bulbs.

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ulous colonies of young bees. Young bees are those that have done little or no field work, but they should have had at least one good flight before winter sets in. Bees emerge from their cells with a given amount of energy which, if used before entering on their winter's rest, they are not likely to survive the winter, much less to live long enough to be replaced with young bees in the spring.


## Harvest in Tibet

An interesting picture of harvesting in Tibet on the south western border of China beyond the Himalayan mountains is given by F. Kingdon Ward in his Eleventh Expedition of Asia. "The corn (wheat) is now being built into stooks," he writes, "but the weather was so bad there seems no prospect of drying it for some time. The harvesting operations were interesting. Before anything else is done, the weeds are pulled up, tied into bundles, and carried away for fodder. Needless to state, they form a large proportion of the cornfield. Next, the wheat is reaped with sickles, and the stems pulled through a large wooden comb, which takes off the ears, these being thrown into baskets. Finally, the ears are flailed, and the grain winnowed, every process being done by hand. Ploughing is done by yak (the Tibetan ox), and sowing is, of course, by hand. Agricultural machinery has not yet found its way into Tibet, and as the country could not support a large population, it is not likely for the present."

## CATTLE IN WINTER NEED EXTRA CARE

With the coming of winter, farmers should make sure that the barns in which their stock are to pass the cold months are clean and free from possible infectious diseases or parasites.

Such diseases as ringworm, scab or mange, lice or warbles, are dangerous because humans may contract it through handling or contact with curries-combs and brushes. A mixture of iodine applied daily following washing with soap and water will cure ring-worm, but scabbies or mange need to be dipped in or sprayed with special solutions such as crude petroleum or equal parts of kerosene and cotton seed oil, which mixture is also recommended for lice. No animal can give its best milk production or put on flesh when feeding such parasites.



Take a tip from Jimmie

## FEED IMPERIALS FOR FINE PELTS

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