

until the ends of the primaries swept the ground. For about four or five minutes this prancing dance was continued while he drew nearer the passive female. And now when he was about two inches from and in front of her he picked up a straw, dropped it and picked up a piece of grass which hung from each side of his bill. This seemed to be the signal for the greatest agitation on his part; with ecstatic dance, full song and vibrating wings he moved slowly on beating feet, back and forth before the female; then he rose six inches in the air, poured forth glorious song notes and dropped to the ground at one side of the female. He landed on his feet but instantly took a most dramatic pose by holding stiffly his spread tail to the ground and tilting back on that support with head held high, the raised crest and carmine ruff adding to the effect. Then like a little tragedian he rolled over on his side, apparently lifeless; the song ceased and the straw fell from his bill. Up to this time the female had remained oblivious as far as outward manifestation showed, but now she turned quickly and gave the male as he lay "dead" a vicious peck in the breast, whereat he came to and flew up in the tree, a normal bird once more, and was soon singing in the usual deliberate fashion from a high perch. The female busied herself about the spot where he had just danced and soon finding the straw and grass which he had dropped she picked them up in her bill and flew into the tree where she went searching from place to place for a spot to start a nest.

I have had one other similar experience with a Purple Finch which included the dance and the straw, but without this dramatic ending. The birds which I have described above were already mated. What relation does this dance of the straw bear to the starting of the nest? At first glance it appears to the reason of man to be an elaborate attempt to stimulate the female to start building the nest.—GORDON BOIT WELLMAN, 48 Dover Road, Wellesley, Mass.

**Breeding of the Evening Grosbeak in Manitoba.**—During the week-end of May 29–June 1, while collecting at Gimli, Lake Winnipeg, I secured several specimens of the Evening Grosbeak. Besides the fact that this was a very late date for the birds in this part of the Province, I was interested to note that they all appeared to be paired, with the one exception of a male which was apparently courting a female Rose-breasted Grosbeak. They were present during the whole of the week-end and from their behaviour I judged that they were mating and preparing to nest. Knowing that I should be unable to visit the locality again before August, I mentioned the facts to my friends, Messrs. A. G. Lawrence and Harrold, of this city, asking them if they could run up in the meantime and keep their eyes open for the birds. Mr. Harrold managed to visit Gimli on July 1 and found the birds there as expected. He tells me they were fairly plentiful, but he found no nests as his time was very limited. Early in August I was myself back in Gimli, again found the Evening Grosbeak plentiful, and on August 9 collected a juvenile bird. There is therefore no doubt that they bred here.

Mr. Lawrence visited Pine Lake on the borders of Manitoba and Ontario (actually in Ontario) on July 3. He found the Evening Grosbeak in some numbers but found no nest.

Since returning to Winnipeg, Mr. Lawrence tells me that one of the orchardists at the Agricultural College told him that he had actually found the nest of an Evening Grosbeak near the college grounds. Mr. Lawrence promptly went out to see it, but the man was unable to locate it again and supposed that it had been destroyed.

My own time, from the middle of June to the beginning of August, was spent at the Manitoba University Biological Station at Indian Bay, Shoal Lake, Lake of the Woods. Indian Bay is in Manitoba, a few miles from the Ontario boundary. I saw no signs of Evening Grosbeaks till July 23, when I heard the note on one of the islands in the bay. To my surprise I found an old bird accompanied by a single young one clamouring for food. To my great regret I failed to secure either of them, as they were almost at once lost to view in the growth and were not seen again till leaving the island and out of range. On the 26th, however, on the mainland and not far from the Biological Station, I again heard the note and this time found a family of three or four being fed by the parents. I shot two of the young, but one was lost in the dense growth. Later in the day I came across yet another family of young and collected one of these. There can be no doubt that these birds were bred in the immediate vicinity as the youngest of the two I secured could not have been long out of the nest. They may have been reared on one of the islands, though the forest is so dense that they more probably had their homes on the mainland and escaped observation earlier.—WM. ROWAN, *Department of Biology, Alberta University, Edmonton, Alta., Canada.*

**A Change in the Nesting Habits of the Common House Sparrow (*Passer domesticus*).**—After its introduction into the National Capital, the House Sparrow bred the following spring and summer in many places. Hundreds of them made their nests in the vines on churches and elsewhere; while it was no uncommon thing to observe from three to half a dozen of their big, bulky nests in one of the street maples or other trees. They were all the more conspicuous for the reason that the birds bred so early that their nests were in evidence long before the selected trees had fully leafed out.

Then, in a year or so, followed the "sparrow-war"—a persecution to the death of these birds, carried on in the most merciless manner. Their nests were pulled out of trees and other places more rapidly than they could build them; great nets were thrown over vines on churches, houses, and other buildings after roosting time, and thousands of others fell victims to the law ordering their extermination. Various other devices were resorted to in order to destroy this poor, little, introduced feathered "pest"; but the House Sparrow had come to stay, and, owing to his long, long training in the cities of many countries and among all nations of men,