

clings to it until joined by a male which may be almost immediately or may be delayed for some days. The males fight violently for the possession of individual females and their melees often cause injury to eggs or young. With the seals the case is similar. With both seals and penguins, after domestic relations are well established, there begins a period of excursions to and from feeding areas at sea. During this period much time is spent in playing in the water directly in front of the rookery. The sheer joy shown by fur seals when they return to the water after an enforced stay on land is evidenced also by the penguins which are said to go through many of the same antics as the seals, shaking and rubbing themselves clean, rolling and tumbling about, chasing each other, "porpoising" in small schools and having a general good time. The game of "joy riding" on ice floes, which seems to be a favorite with the penguins, is not possible for the seals, but otherwise their "fun" is much the same. Like mother seals, the penguins remain away from the rookery several days, sometimes nearly a week, while on their fishing excursions. During the interval the temporarily orphaned young await their return collected in groups which may number 50 or more. The pup seals in such groups, or "pods," are left largely to their own devices, although the presence of many adult seals, which are always near them, guarantees them against serious danger. The same result is accomplished by the penguins, but in their case there is perhaps a more definite guardianship of the young by certain of the adults which remain with them. Dr. Levick's account of the way the food-laden, returning mother penguins are successively importuned by various hungry youngsters not their own, and the way these are scornfully repulsed until the rightful one is found, could be applied almost to the letter to the Fur Seal.

Possibly the most interesting parallel in the habits of the two animals is that relating to the enforced fasting. In the seals, this is largely confined to the males, which go without food for six to nine weeks. With the penguins, both sexes fast, but the female does so longer than the male, her minimum being about four weeks. In both cases, the fasting takes place while vital demands are at the peak during a time of great sexual and general physical activity.

Further resemblances, especially those of minor character, are numerous, but these need not be noted.—WILFRED H. OSGOOD, *Field Museum of Natural History, Chicago, Ill.*

**A Bagworm Plague.**—When I first came to Bowling Green, Kentucky, in 1908, the great knob now the site of the Western Kentucky State Normal School was covered except for a small space on the summit with a rank cedar thicket, once the rendezvous of bands of outlaws in the unsettled times following the Civil War. This knob and several similar cedar brakes had long been the nesting places of the Bronzed Grackle, the Robin, the Brown Thrasher, the Cardinal, and the Chewink. In winter hundreds of White-throated Sparrows, Golden-crowned Kinglets, and

Purple Finches found food and protection there. Twined about many of the hoary old cedars were rank growths of poison ivy, furnishing food for a host of birds. In the spring of 1912 I found in one day on this hill 75 nests of the Bronzed Grackle. Some trees had as many as ten of these large, bulky nests and literally "you could not hear your ears" when all the birds were talking or gossiping. On one of the snowiest days of the winter of 1916-1917 I found 24 species of birds on this hill in a little over an hour and in the height of the migrating season that spring I saw 52 species there in a single afternoon.

But all this has radically changed, making a bird lover sigh for "the good old days." The bagworms, which had been steadily growing more numerous for several years, took on plague proportions in the summer of 1917. The poorly-nourished trees fought along the best they could through the rest of that summer and until midsummer in 1918, when they began to die rapidly. The whole hill soon looked as if it had been burned over. No other visible enemy except the bagworms could be found and I feel sure that this was the real cause.

Naturally, the hordes of birds came back half-heartedly but it was not particularly attractive to them to place their nests in spots unprotected from the sun or from enemies below. However, a few Bronzed Grackles tried the experiment but scolded more even than usual and seemed thoroughly disgusted with one year's experience. The ground birds also found their secluded places suddenly opened up and sought other nesting-sites. I feel quite fortunate now if I can see anywhere on the knob half as many species as I could see before the death of the cedars. So far as I have been able to observe in the past two years there are not so many Bronzed Grackles or Chewinks in my territory, as a whole, as there were before this plague. Probably the breaking up of their old breeding grounds has made them seek other sections.—GORDON WILSON, *Bowling Green, Ky.*

**An Anonymous Work of John Cassin.**—Some years ago it was my privilege to read over the correspondence of Professor Spender F. Baird, at the home of his daughter, the late Lucy H. Baird in Philadelphia and copy such portions as I might desire. I was especially interested in the many letters from John Cassin describing his work at the Philadelphia Academy, and the general progress of ornithology in America.

Under date of March 12, 1851, he wrote "Stephens and I are very busy getting up a lot of the greatest nonsense you ever saw, a 'Comic Natural History of the Human Race.' I will send you the second number which will soon be out." He also adds that his contributions to this work are all signed "C."

Knowing that Cassin possessed a keen sense of humor and did not take his science so seriously as to preclude a glimpse at the more frivolous side of life, I have always been curious to see a copy of this work but none ever came to my attention until quite recently.