

its image on the retina as with other objects directly viewed. That some birds, with the protection afforded by the nictitating membrane, may be able to look more nearly toward the sun than we, may be true. But focussing the image of the sun with any lens, so far as I know, means burning of the screen on which the image is formed in a very short time, and hence I find it difficult to believe that any bird can do this without injury and pain. Perhaps the author of the article did not mean to imply direct focussing, which is my interpretation of "gaze back . . . upon the parent sun itself."—CHARLES T. VORHIES, *University of Arizona, Tucson, Arizona.*

A Good Bird Blind.—The problem of providing a shelter for photographing or studying birds has long been a rather puzzling one. Several good blinds have been devised but they usually have the disadvantage of great weight or are unnatural in appearance. I have devised a blind which is natural in appearance in most situations and is not bulky to move while the material used in construction is not expensive.

Take a piece of poultry netting five feet high and about thirty feet long. Fold this over so that a double piece is formed about fifteen feet long. Between the two layers of netting spread a thin layer of hay, grass or any other similar material. The two layers of netting are fastened together along the edges and at several points through the middle with hog rings or short pieces of wire. This makes a sheet of hay covered and held in place with the poultry netting. This can be set on edge and fastened to stakes set in a circle near the nest and makes a most comfortable and natural appearing blind. The hay can be pushed aside at any point to make observation holes or by removing one or two of the wires from the netting a hole large enough for a camera lens can easily be made. A cover can be made in the same way and fastened on with short lengths of wire. The hay, when exposed to the weather, will last for several months and can easily be replaced by removing the rings or wire fasteners. The netting itself will last for years in most climates.—FRANK R. SMITH, *Fredericktown, Pennsylvania.*

Another "Three-legged Bird."—In the last number of 'The Auk' there was an interesting note on a Thrush with three legs which called to my mind an abnormal skin of an Eastern Meadowlark (*Sturnella m. magna*) in the collection of the United States Biological Survey. This bird has a rye straw, 0.3 cm. in diameter imbedded in the right leg and belly. The straw, which pierced the fleshiest portion of the leg just below the enomial process of the tibia, extends well up into the abdominal cavity. The projecting part of the straw is 9.6 cm. long, while that contained in the body is 2.6 cm. long. The bird, normal in other respects, was in good condition, with the wound completely healed, when shot at Herndon, Va., January 11, 1911.—PHOEBE KNAPPEN, *Washington, D. C.*

Cavity Nesting Species Descending Chimneys.—In 'The Auk,' vol. LII, page 303, Mr. Olin S. Pettingill gives an instance of an American Merganser (*Mergus m. americanus*) being found in a room in New Hampshire, after having descended the chimney, presumably mistaking the aperture for a possible nesting site. Dr. Witmer Stone has noted this same occurrence in regard to the Wood Duck (*Aix sponsa*) near Philadelphia.

The writer is able to record two such instances in the case of the Wood Duck, one of an Eastern Sparrow Hawk (*Falco s. sparverius*) and one of a Southern Screech Owl (*Otus a. asio*). All of these instances took place in a dwelling on Bull's Island, South Carolina, and all were discovered by Mr. Edward M. Moore, the Superintendent of that plantation. It was quite evident that all of the birds had gained entrance to the