

and which he has no intention of parting with; deriving his pleasure from the faulty attempts of others less fortunately situated, along the same line of study. The mistakes sometimes made from a too hasty acceptance of first impressions seem of small moment compared with what may be endured through the peculiar temperament of this type of student. "It is better to play ball, even if you make a wild throw once in awhile, than it is to sit on the bleachers and carp at the players".

### ALLAN BROOKS—AN APPRECIATION

By WILLIAM LEON DAWSON

WITH PORTRAIT

**B**ROOKS is sitting right now at the great north window of our studio at "Los Colibris", whither we have succeeded in luring him for the winter.

His high stool is drawn up to a large work table, where he is alternately poring over a handful of bird-skins and sketching with swift, deft fingers an imaginary spray full of very real Warblers. He doesn't in the least suspect what I am going to do to him, and I am feeling somewhat guilty as well as very solemn in this most traitorous act of friendship. It is perfectly certain though that I shall catch it when he does find out, for he is, above all things else, a modest man, and would shrink from even the mellow light of *THE CONDOR*'s pages.

Along the east wall of the studio stretches a length of burlap whereon are hung the latest products of the artist's skill, and I slip over once in a while to gloat over them all, or to make *moues* at the latest arrival, with all the easy assurance and something of the honest pride of the family doctor. Just now the Dwarf Hermit Thrush is paying court to a Flammulated Screech Owl, and the Elegant Tern is considering whether the Allen Hummer hard by would not make an elegant mouthful. In my opinion he would, for he is a quivery morsel of fire, alive in every iridescent vane. And it is first of all because these birds live, live and breathe and flaunt their feathers in our faces, that the life story of their re-creator is worth telling.

Allan Brooks was born of English parents on the 15th day of February, 1869, in Ettawah, India. His father, William Edwin Brooks, was a civil engineer in charge of construction on the East Indian Railway. Ornithology was the father's hobby, and young Allan took to it almost from infancy. Although he was removed at the age of five to the home land, as practically all European children must be to escape the unaccustomed diseases of a deadly climate, he remembers vividly many of the Indian birds, and articles in *Stray Feathers*, to which his father was a leading contributor.

Left to the various mercies of seven maiden aunts, the youthful Allan chewed and eschewed the catechism, attended school, robbed birds' nests, and early and irrevocably decided against matrimony. While other boys were playing cricket, he was roaming the hills, and by the time his fellows had mastered hazing he had learned the birds of England.

In 1881 the father returned to England after twenty-eight years' service in India, and almost immediately thereafter conducted his family of six members to Ontario, where Allan's mother died. The next six years were divided between farm-work, school, and the formation of an extensive collection of bird-skins. By rare good fortune there was at hand a full kit of brushes and water-colors, a heritage of the father's really creditable but self-depreciated years of effort. Young Allan

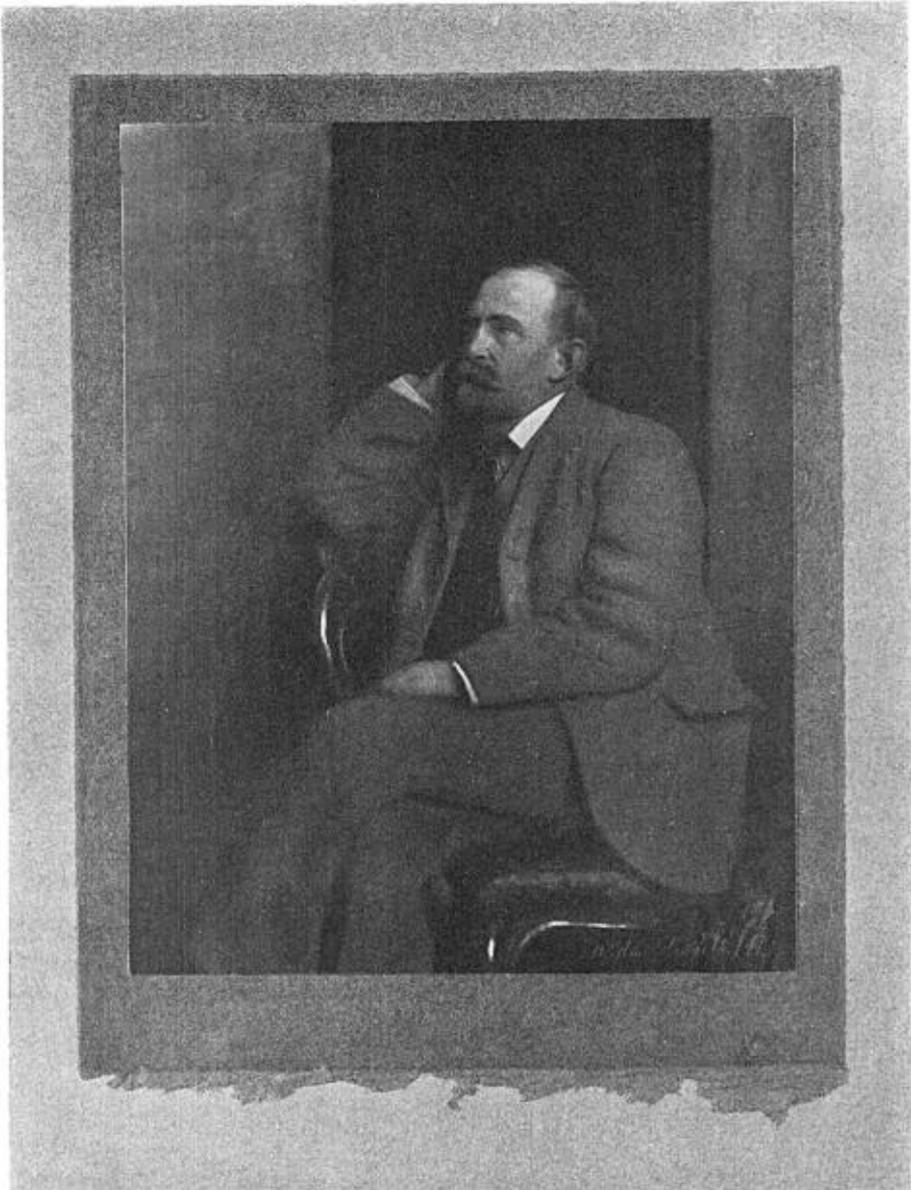


Fig. 19. ALLAN BROOKS  
Photo by W. Edwin Gledhill

was given *carte blanche* with these brushes, although his father would give him no advice, and he painted—nothing but birds—painted day and night, until every species represented in his collection was reproduced in color.

In 1887, namely when Allan was eighteen, the family, then consisting of the father, two older brothers, and a younger sister, and himself, removed to British Columbia and settled on a farm in Chilliwack Valley, on the lower Fraser River. This little-explored region was quite to our subject's liking, and while he hated farm work, he found in bird-study a constant relief which made farm-life endurable.

In 1890 the Brooks home with the outbuildings, including a rude museum, was destroyed by fire. The young man succeeded in saving most of his bird-skins—would have saved them all but for a murderous fusillade of exploding cartridges—but he lost ten years' notes and all his paintings.

Disheartened by this disaster and yet enthralled by the charm of the wilds, the ornithologist practically abandoned both his museum work and his painting, and gave himself over to hunting, trapping and exploring. For ten years he threshed out the mountainous section of southern British Columbia, until he knew it as a man knows his door-yard. As a result he recorded stuff from the general vicinity of Chilliwack which we didn't realize existed in the Northwest—had the skins to back it too—Bobolink, McCown Longspur, Harris Sparrow, Black-headed Jay, Stilt Sandpiper, Gray Gyrfalcon, and a score of others the mere mention of which thrills the nerves of a working ornithologist. To prosecute his studies and to carry on his field work after the family had again abandoned the farm and gone East, Mr. Brooks began to sacrifice his accumulated collections and the cream of his annual take as well.

The career of a collecting naturalist is seldom a prosperous one, and Brooks's was no exception. It is difficult for a distant patron to understand the hardships of the man in the field or to realize the acuteness of his necessities. Collecting for pay, indeed, is endurable only in the case of one who has a consuming passion for the wilds, and who is able to turn to final account the intimate knowledge of nature afforded by those hard-earned opportunities. Brooks had at least this to show for the ten years spent in enriching others, even though he himself would have prized more than most the choice things he had to pass on. He had, of course, himself to thank for habitual under-estimation of his own worth and opportunities. But it was hardly his fault when a wealthy English collector of international reputation offered him a bonus of *sixpence* for every new species of flea he should discover, and surrender. The savant made good too, and sent our supposed humble provincial a cheque for a shilling for *two* such new species. Brooks has it framed as "Exhibit A" of plutocratic munificence.

Toward the close of this decade Brooks resumed the brush in answer to repeated demands for detailed studies of "soft parts" of birds and big game. This led to more pretentious efforts, and sketches from life were submitted to one and another of those eastern customers who had bought skins or eggs of him. His black-and-white work began to appear in *Recreation, Forest and Stream, St. Nicholas* and other magazines, and he came to look upon sketching as a subsidiary means to a livelihood.

When "The Birds of Washington" was proposed in the fall of 1904, I wrote up to neighbor Brooks, whom I had never met, thinking to get a contribution of notes. In replying he enclosed a black-and-white, a sketch of a Black-throated Gray Warbler, asking me if I could use anything like that. My blood leaped at sight of it, for I had not known that anything of that quality was being produced

in the West. We arranged at once for forty black-and-whites, and later were able to stage the color-plates, which have given Brooks a favorable introduction to the world of bird-lovers. From 1906 on, Mr. Brooks has been kept as busy as the irreducible claims of field work would allow. He has thus taken his art seriously for seven years past, and has long since found himself, in confidence as well as in style and finish of workmanship.

Before we pass to an analysis of Brooks' art or to a consideration of the man himself, it may be as well to note his recent activities. Besides fugitive pieces owned by sportsman friends and admirers in British Columbia, Washington, and England, there are to date six principal collections of Brooks' work: Dr. William Brewster, of Cambridge, always a consistent friend of the young artist, has a small collection of his very early work, perhaps a dozen pieces of varying merit; Francis Paget, Esq., of London, has by far the largest and best general collection, comprising a series of ambitious paintings of big game and some of the larger birds, some twenty pieces in all; Colonel John E. Thayer, of Lancaster, Massachusetts, has a representative collection of earlier and smaller pieces, besides a series of sixteen bird-plates contained in his extra-illustrated copy of "The Birds of Washington"; Hon. John Lewis Childs has the finest individual collection of bird-plates extant, some forty pieces, illustrating the summer resident birds of his spacious grounds at Floral Park, New York; Miss Ellen B. Scripps, of La Jolla, has sixteen pieces of more recent work, most of them intended for future publication in "The Birds of California"; then, besides the accumulating store (something over one hundred) prepared for that work and now in the writer's custody, there are here at Los Colibris many originals of "The Birds of Washington" and a small collection of game pieces. Two other collections, since scattered, deserve passing mention—the Inghram Hughes Collection, of about forty earlier pieces, some of them of matchless technique and inspiration, which were scattered when that unfortunate plunger went to pieces in New York City some three years ago; and the Vienna exhibit. By request of the Provincial Government of British Columbia Mr. Brooks contributed nine pieces to the International Sportsman's Exposition at Vienna in 1911. By the conditions of the loan the sale of these paintings was not permitted; but one of the best of them, a magnificent Golden Eagle, was stolen—stolen, too, gossip has it, by one high in official position. (Poor fellow! One scarcely blames him. What else could he do if they wouldn't let him buy it?)

Of the critical judgment of Brooks' bird painting the writer is perhaps least capable, for he loves every line and shade as it falls away from the facile brush. But these characteristics at least are distinctive in Brooks' work:

The authority of intimate knowledge. The artist is first and always the scientist. He is by far the keenest observer of nature I have met. He is not only quick at field recognition, but he has an apparently inexhaustible store of exact information as to plumage changes, evanescent colors, scutellation of tarsi, and all else that pertains to the external appearance of birds. Add to this a memory photographic in its accuracy, and you have a sure foundation for authoritative painting.

This accuracy of knowledge is sustained by accuracy of method. Bills and feet (where human judgment is most fallible) are drawn to scale, and all the problems of light and shade, balance, texture, contour, and perspective, are thought through to a finish. When to this is added the artist's sympathetic imaginativeness, it is little wonder that we have living images instead of pale copies of birds.

It is always to laugh how promptly the casual bird-student criticises a bird-painting, especially if it is a bit unusual. It is trebly amusing if the artist is by, for he is able to sustain his position by exact citations and conclusive examples. The average bird-student finds that he is psychologically inaccurate in his observations, and his flimsy defenses go down under the merciless fire of question to which Brooks subjects his pretensions—not, indeed, to confuse the student, nor to justify Brooks, but to develop the truth. Fidelity to nature is instinctive with Brooks, but accuracy of drawing is as sedulously cultivated as are scales and appogiatura by a prima donna. It is basal. Much of his work will bear the microscope and all of it the telescope. Work which will bear both is rare, indeed, but painstaking accuracy of detail is united with depth, roundness, and life-like appearance, to a unique degree in the work of this artist.

Perhaps his chief distinction is a feeling for plumage. Brooks's birds are clad in *feathers*; fluffy, dainty, fimbriated feathers, which you would like to trowse in your fingers for the sake of seeing them fall back into place with almost sentient precision. We have all of us seen the other sort—coats of mail, or scales, and we hail with delight a man who *feels* a bird's definitive mark, feathers.

Naturalness and repose also characterize all of this self-taught artist's work. His birds are not doing stunts after the discarded fashion of Audubon, but they have the imperishable quality of repose, and this whether at rest or in action. There are bird portraits in the older style which fill you with a sense of disquiet. You want to quit their presence after a momentary glimpse, but you cannot so easily be rid of them. Their manifest discomfort haunts you forever after, and as often as you recall their strained attitudes, you are distressed. Not so with a Brooks. Be the bird flying, climbing, or standing, he is balanced. He can abide your absence, and you will return for another view as to the sight of a beloved pool.

Softness is another characteristic of Brooks's work, and it shows not only in his matchless feathers, but in his charming backgrounds. Brooks hates to do backgrounds with his birds, because he contends that we cannot see birds *and* scenery at the same time. And of course he is right. If the eye focuses on a bird, the scene goes out. But we have to compromise here. We can get enough fuzzy backgrounds with the camera. What we want to see, often enough at least, is the bird in his setting, even if we do violence to nature. What we get is really symbolism; and Brooks handles his backgrounds with so delicate a touch that we get the *sense* of the bird in his surroundings even if we have to admit, upon analysis, that the bird itself is too large or too well defined to pass for a photograph.

Bird paintings are for the most part necessarily illustrations, and as such they have abiding values. We want to get our friends at close range, arrayed in their best, and we want to see them with definitive distinctness in a clear light, together with such an investiture of appropriate surroundings as may be thrown about them. Bird "pictures" in the strict sense are possible only in the case of the larger species, where the subjects may be placed at a sufficient distance to be brought into focus along with trees and fields and mountains. They must appear, namely, beyond the hundred-foot, or universal focus, distance. The only exception possible to this rule is in the selection of appropriate floral or local setting, pitched to the same scale of magnitude as the subject. But this is not a critique on art, only a plea for honest judgment and discrimination in a field which has its confessed limitations, its impassable boundaries.

Beyond this realm Brooks can pass, and does pass in his delineation of big game; but he carries with him still, truth to tell, something of the spirit of his

other field. His interest centers first in the animal. He cannot avoid painting a portrait, whether of Caribou, Antelope, or Cougar, and his subject dominates or overrides a scene of immortal beauty. If we could spare him from the field of illustration, he could speedily escape from this mannerism. But can we so spare him? Speaking selfishly, we certainly cannot until "The Birds of California" is completed, for the task has become a sacred responsibility which no one else can so well meet as he.

In making strong claims for our western champion, I do not mean to overlook or disparage the work of that veteran bird-artist, Louis Agassiz Fuertes, of whom Brooks himself has the very highest opinion. These men are of the same "order of magnitude." Fuertes' work is bolder and more masterful, as he is undoubtedly the better draughtsman. Brooks's work is, perhaps, more subtle, restrained and finished. The former inclines to hardness of treatment, especially in his backgrounds, while the latter errs, if at all, in vanishing delicacies. Both of them so habitually amaze and delight us that we exclaim ten times to once we criticise.

Of Brooks the man I shall find it difficult to speak with a restrained enthusiasm. In the first place, our artist is thoroughly English, not atrociously, but naturally and delightfully so. In physical appearance he is a trifle under the average stature, but well-set-up and elastic withal. His hair is light and tends to baldness, while his countenance, which rather inclines to the florid, expresses at once modesty, geniality, and an innocence which is absence of guile rather than lack of *savoir faire*. A few wrinkles about the eyes show that the man has been much out of doors as well as that he is past forty.

Truth to tell, I had pictured my lion with a little more of the stamp of the woods upon him (we met him for the first time in Seattle in December, 1909), and was quite prepared to pardon a little ignorance of the conveniences, some degree of uncouthness even, but it required but a moment to perceive that Brooks was a perfect gentleman. His courtesy is no studied attainment, but is based alike on native generosity and the careful breeding of many generations. The soul of courtesy is unselfishness. The self-forgetful man is better equipped to appear in society than the carefully drilled person whose mask-strings are likely to break under unexpected strain. Brooks was born to the purple, and thirty years of woodcraft have not unsettled his claim.

As I had known by long correspondence, modesty is Brooks's most conspicuous trait. Modesty such as his may be a handicap, undoubtedly has been in the way of business success, but it is a grace of character of the rarest sort. There is no affectation about Brooks's. It reacts spontaneously, gushingly, whenever self is touched. Such a mental state is fortunately unconquerable. It simply refuses to believe half the good words said of it, and humbly tries to be worthy of the other half.

Brooks's modesty, however, will bear analysis. It is no mere fear of men on the one hand, nor unreasoning self-distrustfulness on the other. It comes rather from a clear vision of high ideals, high ideals of art, of conduct, and of scientific attainment, before which those who are wise are always humble. Brooks knows what he can do, and he does it rapidly, unassumingly, and unerringly. Or if he makes mistakes, he is the very first to acknowledge them.

All the more surprising is the man's unfailing modesty, in view of his breadth and versatility of interest and accomplishment. I knew Brooks was up on birds, and I presumed that he was somewhat versed in mammalogy, but when some one asked him how many mice there were in Chilliwack, and he rattled off

a dozen scientific names glibly, we were more than pleased. In like manner, a crab dissected at luncheon (with mayonnaise) was noted as so and so *major* or *principalis*, as the case might be. Casual mention of a butterfly led to quick inquiry as to species, a question I was helpless to answer.

A local bird-man, Rathbun, having been called in by the customs authorities for consultation in reference to a seizure of Japanese birds, mentioned the matter afterward in Brooks's presence. He pricked up his ears at once and there was soon an animated discussion on as to whether so and so of these absent exotics might have been *gordoni* or *japponicus*.

Nor is it in the realm of nature alone that our artist shows a keen interest and a retentive memory. Art, music, literature, are alike familiar grounds, and one wonders where a single gentleman very much devoted to sport out of doors, ever found time for all these things.



Fig. 20. HIGH TIDE: LONG-BILLED DOWITCHERS AT REST

From a photograph, copyright, 1913, by W. L. Dawson

The only accomplishment in which Brooks will frankly admit a proficiency is in cooking. This is evidently a legitimate subject for bachelor pride, in view of the inevitable thrusts aimed by us over-confident family men. But Brooks is humorously boastful of his triumphs in the culinary art, and to judge from his account of the swarms of visitors, prospectors, amateur sportsmen, and the like, who share his bachelor hospitality at Okanagan Landing, there must be a good deal in it. In fact I gathered that one reason for his willingness to quit the Okanagan country for the winter was a desire to shake some of these fair fodder friends and devote himself more assiduously to his art. And really, the amenities of human intercourse, however sweet, must give place at times to family cares, with the man who is wedded both to art and nature. When the claims of friendship become too exacting, there is nothing for it but to take to the woods, and this Brooks does for at least two months in every year. Of course he takes a friend with him, if one can be found who will hold up to his

pace. While excessively fond of the wilds, he enjoys a boon companion and dislikes absolute solitude, especially that of the lonely bivouac.

A keen sportsman and a crack shot, Brooks knows guns as a pianist knows his keyboard. He has killed every kind of big game in British Columbia save Cougars, which have curiously enough eluded him, and the walls of his lodge on the shores of Okanagan Lake are covered with trophies. He is also "leftenant" in the Canadian Militia and instructor in rifle shooting. One shudders to think how our artist might have been a mere globe-trotting game-killer, or even a dapper officer in the English army, a cock among guinea-fowls, if the scientific instincts had been less carefully schooled, or if the seeds of the ornithophilic passion had not found early lodgment in prepared soil. Artist, bird-lover, scientist, sportsman, explorer, genial host, and loyal friend—this is a very pleasant combination: and that it is embodied in a single unassuming personality, and a highly efficient one, is a matter of sincerest congratulation to those who know Allan Brooks. It is to him we look with confidence for a series of bird paintings, the most elaborate and beautiful which have ever been produced in America.

### *LEUCOSTICTE TEPHROCOTIS DAWSONI*—A NEW RACE OF ROSY FINCH FROM THE SIERRA NEVADA

By JOSEPH GRINNELL

(Contribution from the Museum of Vertebrate Zoology of the University of California)

WHEN judiciously employed, "geographical reasoning" proves of positive help in guiding the student towards the ascertainment of the results of speciation. Experience has taught us to expect that geographic differences of great or less degree are to be found in any animal of wide range, particularly if this range includes two or more areas each of which has marked faunal peculiarities. In other words, we are often able to anticipate the existence of a distinct new race of animal in a given region, on the basis of our knowledge of other animals in the same region, without ever having seen a specimen.

In spite of frequent aspersive comment directed towards those who have employed it, this is a perfectly good application of inferential reasoning. Needless to say, however, only the establishment of the concrete facts in the case, based upon conscientious study of actual specimens, can be regarded as adequate grounds for publishing a new name.

For many years students of North American birds have known that a certain species of Rosy Finch (*Leucosticte tephrocotis*) existed both on the high mountains of east-central California and on the northern Rocky Mountains of British America, even to eastern Alaska. But, notwithstanding critical attention from several keen systematists, no differences deemed worthy of separate naming have been published. In fact, this species of *Leucosticte* has been remarked upon as a Fringillid of relatively great range, and yet one in which geographic variation is notably lacking.

The present writer believes these conclusions to have been faulty, due in major part to lack of sufficient series of specimens in the various seasonal and age plumages. For he is now so fortunate as to have at his disposal for study the practically ideal material indicated beyond, and this study leads to an opposite view.