

CONCLUSION.

It is not my purpose to generalize or make further deductions from the evidence collected, but there are some facts and thoughts which appear to me to have not an unimportant bearing on the subject in general. Few species offer greater possibilities and at the same time more difficulties in the way of a close study, than this bird. To deduct the general facts or principles underlying the migration, reproduction, moulting, mode, variation, hybridization, etc., of this one species would in all probability go far toward solving the many vexed problems so important to science and yet so imperfectly understood. The Flicker is both progressive and energetic—a typical American. It may be said to be perfectly fitted or designed to meet the conditions of its environment, but the surroundings are changing, and its habits, food or plumage may alter perceptibly in the not remote future. It doubtless represents a comparatively recent off-shoot of the genus, and is yet undergoing certain modifications of an evolutionary nature. Undoubtedly its comparatively weak curved beak, so like a pick and so unlike the drill-shaped bill of the Woodpecker, would become so less able to withstand the strain of hardwood cutting the less it is used for that purpose, and burrowing in the earth, soft wood and bark become the extent of its capabilities in that line; but it by no means follows that its chiselling power is suffering marked diminution within recent years or the immediate prospect of its curtailment as long as timber is so plentiful. Favorable to the preservation and increase of the species, I may mention an almost perfect protection during the critical breeding time from the inclemency of the weather, and carnivorously inclined beasts, birds and reptiles; great powers of reproduction; abundance of suitable food; hardiness; absence of harmful traits; ease of adaptation to conditions of surroundings; and the possession of the great advantage over nearly all of our Woodpeckers in having a much less con-

spicuous if not mimetic plumage. Its very natural advantages over all other members of the tribe inhabiting the same regions would tend to its preservation, increase and comfort when the less versatile or adaptive species decreased or became extinct under changed conditions; exceptions being made to the Downy (*Dryobates pubescens*), for which there appears a distinctive place, and whose dwarfishness exempts it from persecution by man—Nature's worst enemy.