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THE EASTON GAZETTE.

THE WORD "GAZETTE" SUGGESTS BEST JOB PRINTING AND THOROUGH ADVERTISING.

VOL. 89, NO. 11. EASTON, MARYLAND, SATURDAY, MARCH 3, 1906. $1.00 PER YEAR

DO YOU NEED

HIGH GRADE Smoking Jackets, Bath Robes, Allegator and Sole Leather Satchels and Suit Cases, Fownes' Gloves, Neckwear, Handkerchiefs, Etc.,

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Stetsons brand is the great representative of our peerless assortment of Fashionable Soft and nobby Nobby's.

Call in and C Jump before you make your purchase.

C. B. JUMP.

HEAD-TO-FOOT OURFITTER.

A Long Married Life.

The 55th wedding anniversary of Mr. and Mrs. John Barber was passed pleasantly at the home of their son, Dr. Isaac A. Barber, on South Washington St., Tuesday last. Distant friends gave Mr. and Mrs. Barber a most delightful 'letter surprise', and it is an interesting coincidence that they should have received exactly 55 letters of congratulation—one for each year of their wedded life. They were the recipients also of many beautiful flowers. Mr. Barber is the only survivor of a family of nine children, Mrs. Barber the last of a family of twelve. Of the 35 persons who signed their marriage certificate, but one is living beside themselves.

Piano Durability.

A piano may be ever so charming in tone and appearance, but unless it has that lasting and staying quality it will finally prove a disappointment. If you pay a little more for a genuine Weaver Piano, which is both attractive and lasting, you will congratulate yourself on the wisdom of your selection in after years.

J. W. WHEATLEY, Easton, Md.

Trausfers of Real Estate.

Mrs. Wm. B. Price and husband to Daniel H. Cook; deed of trust.

John S. Noble and wife to Sarah E. Corkran; lot in Bruceville; $175.

Mrs. Charles E Johnson and husband to Belle Green; lot in Trappe district; $100.

Christopher C. Butler to Thomas J. Trott; lot on Fremont street, St. Michaels; $75.

Margaretta Hubbard and husband and others to Hugh T. Harris; lot near Royal Oak.

Ralph E. Swartz and wife to Luther M Covey; lot on Railroad avenue extended; $900.

Sarah H. Andrews to Richard T. Morgan; farm near Chapel, containing 62 acres; $3145.

Mary F. Gardner and Daisy C. Buckstine and husband to John Howell Gardner; lot in St. Michaels; $1667.

Finest prunes, peaches, apricots, evaporated apples, figs, raisins and dates at Martin M. Wright's.

Have you See the

OSTERMOOR MATTRESS

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N.E. CLARK'S

The Regular $15.00 Mattress in two parts is a beauty.

The regular $30 Mattress during February only $18.50 is a BARGAIN YOU CANNOT AFFORD TO MISS.

MR. J. E. TYLOR'S PLEA

FOR CROWS, HAWKS, AND OWLS, AND HIS REASONS.

Proves By High Authority That They Do Far More Good than Harm—Warning Much Needed Just Now.

To the Editor of The American: In your issue of February 8 my attention is called to an article relating to proposed game legislation in Maryland Under the heading 'Would License All Gunners,' the first paragraph is as follows:

A feature of the game bill proposed by the Maryland Game and Fish Protective Association is that the revenue derived from the licensing of gunners and dogs shall be used not only for restocking with partridges, but as a bounty for the killing of hawks and crows, 50 cents to be allowed for hawks and 10 cents for crows as long as the fund lasts

As a citizen interested in the preservation of game and as chief warden of the League of American Sportsmen for the state of Maryland, I earnestly dissent from the enactment of any law which would place a bounty indiscriminately on hawks, crows and owls. Such a law would, in my judgment, be a step backward and prove more harmful in effect than the existing condition which it is designed to improve.

I am a member of the Maryland State Fish and Game Protective Association. If that organization, so zealously trying to do the right thing, recommends the above, a lamentable lack of information in regard to hawks, crows and owls can be the only excuse.

The power of such an organization for doing harm is quite as potent as that for good, and I am satisfied could the gentlemen of this association know the truth they would not indorse a measure so fraught with mischief, injury and harm.

A Good Word for the Crow.

In this state the most important charges brought against the crow are:

1. That it pulls sprouting corn.
2. That it feeds on the eggs and young of poultry and birds; and
3. That it destroys cultivated fruit.

As there appears at this time to be no general outcry among the farmers against the depredations of this bird, it is more than likely that under charge No. 2 may be found the primary reason for advocating the proposed bounty. That the crow, thus arraigned, is often guilty is conceded. But whether the sum of the harm done outweighs the sum of the good, or the contrary, is the important question.

Several years ago the Department of Agriculture, at Washington, examined about a thousand stomachs of mostly Maryland crows, and decided that in agricultural districts only 3 per cent of the total food of the crow consists of sprouting corn and corn in the milk; that the loss to cultivated fruits was trivial, and that the same is true of the eggs and young of poultry and birds, the total of the year for these amounting to only 1 per cent. of the food.

As an off-set for these depredations, the same authority credits the crow with the destruction of many noxious insects. Cut worms, May beetles, grasshoppers and other injurious pests formed over one-fourth, or 26 per cent. of the entire food of the bird. The letter transmitting these investigations to the Secretary of Agriculture, concluded with this significant paragraph: 'In summing up the benefits and losses resulting from the food habits of this bird, it is clear that the good exceeds the bad, and that the crow is a friend rather than an enemy of the farmer.'

In regard to bounties the letter also said: 'It seems probable that in most places the crow is neither so harmful nor so valuable as to render special laws necessary for its destruction or protection, but from a purely economic standpoint the attempt to rid a state of crows by bounties or any other means must prove either a complete failure or a most expensive success.'

The farmers in Pennsylvania some years ago found it a most expensive success, as in some sections the cutworms and May beetles destroyed the entire crop of corn. Or, if it should take the other turn and prove a complete failure, have the taxpayers of Maryland no other use for this money than to thus waste it?

Hawks and Owls.

The smaller hawks, known as the Cooper hawk and sharp shinned hawk, but slightly smaller than the Cooper, and often known among farmers as the 'pigeon hawk,' should be killed. But if a bounty is to be paid, the scalps of such hawks should first be submitted to a competent authority for identification. These two species are the only out-and-out harmful hawks in Maryland, and no other should be included under any general bounty law. The large, so-called 'hen hawk' may be either the red-tail or the red-shouldered hawk. Either of these may catch an occasional stray chicken. But they do much good on the other hand by destroying rodents, bugs and all kinds of injurious pests. Would you kill all dogs because an occasional dog slaughters a sheep? The marsh hawk or 'skimmer' is more intently looking for bugs, a small snake or a field mouse, than a covey of birds. The quail is constantly the prey of the cooper hawk, however, and the little sparrow hawk feeds its young on bugs and other young birds taken from the nest. But that does not make it so harmful that a bounty on its scalp should become necessary.

And the owls. In a bounty law would you not make an exception of the little screechowl? The short and long-eared owls? Can any person knowingly accuse these little owls of feeding on a thing of value to mankind? They subsist altogether on mice, moles, young rats and bugs. The barred owl, like the marsh hawk, is a terror to rodents. I enclose a picture showing two young barred owls and one spoiled egg, and the remains of a breakfast, all of which was taken from a nest last spring. I was sorry to see the squirrel had been sacrificed, and this was the first time I ever saw indications of a squirrel having fallen a prey to this bird. But it was a young squirrel, but little over half grown, and it possibly fell an easy victim to the watchful eye of the owl. But this, with the rodents, were all warm and freshly killed that morning. Of these rodents we have two moles, one woods rat, two white-bellied field mice and two field mice of another variety. The old owls must have swallowed three mice that morning for their own breakfast—at a low calculation—which would bring the morning repast up to 10 highly destructive pests to the farmer. If this is an average of one morning, the 365 days of the year would bring it up to the surprisingly large number of 3,650 mice and rats thus destroyed by one pair of owls. And in all that time I seriously doubt if the barred owl would destroy one live chicken.

What Examinations Showed.

Owls of both large and small species when eating tear the victim to pieces and swallow skin, hair, bones and feathers without regard to the indigestible feature of such food. But nature has made a wise provision for this. The strong, muscular pouch or stomach quickly rejects all material which should not enter the digestive canal, and rolling this into a clean, smooth ball, it is at once disgorged from the throat of the bird. These balls are commonly called pellets, and their examination will invariably furnish unmistakable evidence of the character and kind of food from which they are made.

I have examined scores of owl pellets in the woods frequented by these birds, and while the teeth, hair and small bones of rodents were always to be noted, I never found a chicken feather or quail feather. But the two visits to two different nests last spring, other than the one referred to above, I found the remains of a fresh-killed crow in one and a fresh-killed, big, common house rat, with its head eaten off, in the other. As these rats are not found, like field mice and moles, in outlying sections, the assumption is that the owl made an early morning visit to some barnyard or grain stacks near the barn and secured the rat, a thing he was after, but did not disturb chickens at roost, a thing he was not after.

So, why should the barred owl be made to suffer a penalty through the ignorance or prejudice of mankind for sins it does not commit? The great horned owl, however, not very common in Maryland, does 'take in' a pullet or half-grown turkey occasionally. It frequently catches rabbits, and if it must suffer for such natural depredations, let it alone, of all the Maryland owls, be thus designated for a bounty.

An Expensive Law to Talbot.

Some years ago a bounty law on 'hawks and owls' almost bankrupted Talbot county. Thousands of dollars were thus spent for the destruction of many hawks and owls which belonged to a class which should have been protected by law rather than otherwise.

Schoolboys scoured the meadows and orchards looking for the little screech owl nest, that the young when hatched might be taken, together with the old bird, if found in the hole, and the 50 cents a head be realized. I once protested of the late Squire Nicols, of that county, to some boys receiving a certificate for the heads of a lot of young osprey. The Squire held that the law said nothing about the kinds, and that the fishhawk came within the provisions of the general statute on the subject.

Then, again, there frequently occur unaccountable migrations of some of these birds. One afternoon last September while fishing near the mouth of the Choptank River, off against Benonis' Lighthouse, I observed sailing very high up a long, irregular string of red-tailed hawks. They were going north, and were the greater part of an hour in passing. Where the hawk convention was being held I do not know. But suppose these birds, numbering 500 or more, had stopped to roost over night on Talbot soil and a number had been shot, think that would have materially benefited the taxpayers of that county?

It is a singular coincidence that Mr. Thomas H. Jackson, a student of bird life and recognized authority on such subjects, living at West Chester, Pa., states that he observed a long continuous line of red-tailed hawks flying over West Chester at a very high altitude about the same time last fall, also going north.

During the hawk and owl bounty period in Talbot county above referred to, the pine woods, or 'strip of pines,' down in Miles River Neck, where owls were rarely, if ever seen, were literally alive with short-eared owls one morning. They had arrived in the night from some quarter unknown. The gunners soon got to work on them, and they were scattered in all directions. One acquaintance of mine said he killed 17 before dinner, which netted $8.50

No cat was ever a better mouser than the short-eared owl. Was the above slaughter right?

Do the taxpayers of Maryland wish it repeated? Very truly, yours,

(Signed) J. E. TYLOR.

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