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PIED PIPERS OF SANTA BARBARA.

BY

MARTINETTA KINSELL.

THE LAND OF SUNSHINE, VOL. XIII. NO. 4.

SEPT.-OCT. 1900.

at Pomona College, Cal.; then spent a year in Europe, studying museum and laboratory methods in Ethnology and Anthropology; and since 1892 has been at the head of the work in Anthropology at Chicago University. His first field-work was among the Sacs and Foxes. Since then, he has studied in their homes the Cherokees of North Carolina, the Tonkaways of Oklahoma, and the New Mexico

C. M. Davis Eng. Co. FREDERICK STARR.

Pueblos along the Rio Grande; particularly in the Cochiti region. His greatest work, however, has been in Mexico, which he has invaded annually for the last six years, visiting seventeen tribes. Besides the important contribution above referred to, he has written several successful books of "supplementary reading," as *On the Hills* (geology), *Some First Steps in Human Progress*, *American Indians*, etc.

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The 305th meeting of the Anthropological Society of Washington was a memorial to the late Frank Hamilton Cushing (see this magazine for June, 1900). Glowing tributes were spoken by Major Powell, W. H. Holmes, Miss Fletcher, Dr. Matthews, Stewart Culin and others of rank in science; and the mass of praise (recorded in the *Am. Anthropologist*) was such an *in memoriam* as very few scholars in this country have ever received. As we have forecast, the faults and frailties of the dead genius were already forgotten; and he is remembered only for the work none other could have done so well. The tone of the proceedings, while certainly not judicial, was just. As one runs over the list of American Ethnology, even the most

critical will hardly fail to rejoice that this strangely-mingled genius has been so dealt with by his fellow-students.

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Otis T. Mason, of the U. S. National Museum (in the *Anthropologist* of June, 1900), calls the collection made by Dr. J. W. Hudson, of Ukiah, Cal., "the best scientific collection of basketry known to the writer from any people on earth." And Mr. Mason ought to know. C. F. L.

PIED PIPERS OF SANTA BARBARA.

BY MARTINETTA KINSELL.

THE Santa Barbara sand-piper is a Greek in his love for the sea, and, while he is first of all an explorer — taking in all sorts of water-ways, near and far — his homing flights aim true for tidal beaches. In summer one can be sure of finding flocks of these tiny waders about the lakes and fish-wiers of the upper Santa Ynez; the half dried pools of valley streams — swarming with minnows — are favorite picnic grounds for them, while in tadpole season every tule swale on the south coast attracts myriads of sand-pipers, each flock of forty or fifty keeping clannishly to itself and seldom sharing an angling preserve with other water-fowl. When, as sometimes happens, an inland nursery is selected, it is usually some rush-hidden lagoon or forsaken marsh full of nice, lonesome bogs coated with green mire. There should also be fat shallows below, as well as jungles of sharp water-grass and swamp-reeds to hide in. Still, our feathered tramp will make shift with a barranca in the desert if nothing better offers when the whim for tarrying comes on.

But when and where so many young are hatched is a mystery that ornithologists have yet to solve. In all my searchings I have seen but one inland nest that I felt sure was a sand-piper's. This one was hollowed in the mud close to the edge of an ancient arrastra basin in Piru cañon, neighboring the Mojave. It was a delightfully lonely spot, the ruined reservoir — abandoned generations ago by its Mexican owners — holding but a few gourdsful of stagnant water. The bank holding the nest had thoughtlessly started a growth of lusty young nettles, and their pale green betrayed the pipers, which, precisely the hue of the ground, might otherwise have escaped notice. Two birds were sitting upon the nest and they crouched motionless until I was almost near enough to touch them

when they flew away distracted with fright. The eggs were four in number, somewhat smaller than those of a field-fare, clay-colored and disked with blue.

There are endless varieties of sand-piper, the Santa Barbara species being one of the smallest known, smaller than some humming-birds. As units they are hardly to be considered, identity being merged in a swirl of two or three score that, in public at least, keep together. Each is a mite, not unlike a pinch of gray thistle-down, and so atomic that an entire flock would scarcely outweigh a sea-gull.

Once, after a night-gale that covered the sea-shore with up-rooted weeds, I had a chance to examine several drowned pipers that had been caught napping on their favorite roost, the kelp. "Pied pipers" they were and beautifully marked. Each measured about five and a quarter inches from tip of the long, queerly-crumpled bill to extreme of the rounded tail. The males were brownish-black on their heads and upper plumage, with ferruginous disks of deeper hue on back and scapules. Several of these birds were sent to the Smithsonian Institute, and the species has been pronounced unique.

Though expert divers and fishers, they cannot swim, which renders the evolutions of a flock feeding from the crests of full-tide breakers wonderful to watch. The only sound they make is a weak, whistling sort of "weet, weet!" But despite their resemblance in main points these little beach-snipe differ a great deal in individual tints and markings — as much, perhaps, as wingless bipeds of larger growth. For one piper may be "light-complected," with tie and waistcoat embroidered in umber crescents, while his nearest friend affects putty-gray sprigged with terracotta.

Their flight is a wavering, serpentine line with simultaneous wing-movement which against a background of waves resembles a long sea-snake, glittering with scales. The Santa Barbara Sea-serpent—advertised freely in 1886—was a string of sand-pipers, seen by witnesses with more imagination than eye-sight.

Santa Barbara fishermen declare that, on certain years only, they have found sand-pipers' nests on the Channel kelp-beds. This is credible to anyone who is familiar with these wonderful sea-hedges which border the shoal for several miles south of Point Concepcion, are well off shore and so thickly massed that steamers are obliged to keep a passage-way cut through them opposite to the pier landing. Great areas of these kelp-fields are left undisturbed to an infinite number of birds and other living creatures that

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THE PIED PIPERS' HOME.

Photo. by Brewster.

thrive in the air and water of such solitudes. The immense water vines are like interlacing cables braided with sea-grasses, weeds and parasitic algæ which form an impenetrable sub-marine jungle, averaging about half a mile in width. From outlook on the distant mountains this kelp-band shines like a ribbon of amber satin dividing the disturbed blue of the outer channel from the mirror-like shoal. It is an admirable storm-filter, and in its meshes the fiercest tide currents lose their force.

When a skiff crosses this miniature sargossa its oars punt against tangled leaves and stems, and its keel swishes over the weeds like sledge-runners over snow. Here and there a frond-latticed window of blue water looks down into bowery depths where strange sea-plants—black, rose, purple and crimson—form groves that literally swarm with life, while the surface above is filmed with insect larvæ, fish roe, butterflies, jelly-fish, brilliant dragon-flies and moored flotillas of the winged nautilus.

Crab fishermen who row along this sea-wall nearly every day in the year—and tell some queer and uncanny tales of it when safe ashore—aver that here in rare seasons when the weather fares to a long lull after the spring tides, the little sand-pipers set their cradles swinging at apex of the kelp-thickets. The nests are cunningly constructed of stems and filaments glued together—cup-shaped canoes, in fact—and by a clever arrangement of the attaching fibers the baby fledgelings float secure, their water-proof hammocks rising and falling like nests on a breeze-rocked bough.

The young are soon hatched and learn to wade and dive before they can fly. The sea-weed floor is as comfortable as a meadow, making an almost continuous buoy for infant claws to cling to, and a varied diet of fish-roe, barnacles, saline scale-bugs and the like cover the kelp from root to blossom with capital bird food.

Still, danger lurks above and below. There are fishes that spring like panthers; sharks of all sizes, from the minnow just wriggling out of its shell to monsters that measure—incredible as it may seem—forty feet in length. There are multitudes of hawks, jelly-fish that snare and destroy little birds, and devil-fish that well deserve their name. Besides, too, an unexpected gale may wrench loose whole acres of the sea-weed and hurl it ashore—thousands of tons in a single night—sometimes with such force that great stones are dragged from the channel bed, lassoed by the vine-roots. So that, although the friendly kelp tries to be an ideal kindergarten for ruffle-toed babies, many little pipers must come to grief.

BY WILL A. WRIGHT

ONE August day while trailing a deer in the Santa Susana mountains of California, I came to a log lying across the trail and started to step over. Just on the other side, partially concealed, lay a big rattlesnake.

I saw a warning in the gleam of his villainous eyes. Going back a few paces I secured a stout stick and advanced again to the log. The reptile started to crawl away, but a blow across the middle of the back stopped him. Then he began a vigorous rattling and kept it going till he was dead. I had no antidote with me, was three miles from my horse and twice as far from any habitation. Had I been looking elsewhere and not on the trail, and depending on the theory that a rattlesnake always gives warning on the approach of an enemy, I should, perchance, never have narrated this.

Just a year after the above incident, while shooting doves in a cañon in another range, I was walking down the side of a gulch, when instinctively glancing downward, I saw poised above the thin grass the horny tail of a rattler. It lay just as it had been crawling when interrupted and in the exact place where my next step would have been. One step more would have been fatal. Walking around him I observed that he was in the blind state. As he would neither rattle nor coil I threw clods of dirt before him; still he would not alter his demeanor. A bullet from my revolver severed his head and ended his sluggish career.

In removing the skin from this snake I found the cuticle—the only part of the skin they shed—almost ready to come off. This I tore off in pieces, then removed the main skin.

All our snakes discard the old epidermis in the months of July and August. During this period they are said to

Illustrated from drawings by the author