

BIRD-NESTING A PERNICIOUS PRACTICE.

National and Educational Import Outlined.

The evils in the train of bird-nesting and egg-collecting should be emphasised in the homes by parents and in the schools by teachers.

The matter on this page is reproduced from the annual report of the Scottish Society for the Protection of Wild Birds. Every word of it is applicable to New Zealand.

Nest Robbing.

We treat too lightly the practice of nest robbing. It is an injury to the bird, to the nest robber and to the nation. This evil practice affects our resident birds and also migrants who come in Springtime. They, as well as our resident birds, add incalculably to the charm of the countryside, give immense joy and delight to thousands of people, and contribute services of inestimable benefit to the agriculturist, the fruit grower and the arboriculturist.

Egg Stealing and the Bird.

Let us think what this means to the bird. The climax of its year's existence is to mate, to select its nesting place, to carry and weave its nest, deposit its eggs, incubate, to hatch its young, and thus to add fresh elements of beauty and service to our country. In the course of its going through this wonderful experience, its eggs are stolen, and its nest destroyed. The cruelty and brutality of it is unthinkable.

The bird is the most constantly active of all creatures to whom swift movement is of the essence of its life. Great must be the overmastering power of this impulse, which compels it to remain on its nest for days, and even weeks, on end, still and motionless as a stone, conquering its normal impulse for movement! What must it mean to a creature of this kind, to find its labour in vain and this all-powerful urge thwarted?

Its long migration, its mating and nest building, have all been leading up to this great climax which has been frustrated. The pain and suffering involved must be intense. It is all the more intense that the cruelty is not physical, but psychical. The whole scheme of this beautiful creature's life is meantime, for it, destroyed. The

suffering of the bird in this cycle of its life is comparable to the suffering of a human being who sees his life work destroyed.

What this means to the Culprit.

It not only inflicts cruelty on the bird; it injures the boy or youth or egg collector who engages in it. Such actions are only possible by inhibiting and restraining the operation of the mind and of the imagination. It prevents the expansion of the mind in many beautiful directions. The destroyer, in thus inflicting pain, further develops in himself a hardness of heart and an unresponsiveness of feeling which automatically shuts him out from purer and finer pleasures. He has also destroyed a thing of beauty which he cannot replace. Thoughtlessness concerning the suffering of living creatures is a step towards degradation, and sows the seed of brutality in the character.

Egg Collecting.

Most of those bird lovers and ornithologists who have in their boyhood "collected" eggs agree that their real interest in bird life did not commence until they had entirely given up the idea of collecting. This is so, because these two interests are incompatible. Egg collecting, indeed, is more responsible than anything else for diverting the mind at a critical period into wrong channels and preventing the development in the boy of a real and living love of bird life and of Nature.

The Nation's Loss.

It is likewise an injustice to the nation, as it deprives the countryside of an essential element of beauty. It prevents thousands from enjoying the sight and sound of the bird. It prevents that increase of bird life in our country which would make it a place of still greater interest and pleasure for all. It deprives the agriculturist, the fruit grower, and the forester of the services of valuable allies whose activities are of immense benefit to the economic life of the nation.

Parliamentarians, educators and parents must take a stand and stop this pernicious practice.