

## EXPERIENCE WITH A SICK DUCK.

BY CLAUDE CORNELLE.

On Jan. 14, 1890, I shot a male Merganser, on the Oswego river, about two miles above Phœnix, N. Y. His peculiar actions during the time I observed him before shooting led me to make a thorough dissection after skinning, and to give it to the readers of the O. & O.

As I was pushing my canoe up the river against the heavy current, around a point known as "Flatrock," I saw, about twenty rods above me, a large duck, working around in the shallow water near shore. He moved heavily as though badly wounded, and seemed anxious to get his body behind a small stump. It was impossible to land where I was, on account of the current and high bank. To effect a landing, I was obliged to paddle up within fifteen rods of the duck before I could get ashore.

On reaching shore I took my rifle and worked my way to within about twelve rods; the duck meanwhile endeavoring to get on the opposite side of a stump too small to entirely conceal his body. I saw by his actions that there was something wrong, and sent a bullet through the only part of the body visible to me. No gunshot wounds were found on skinning but the one made by myself.

After properly disposing of the skin, I went to work on the body. No thing was found throughout the body to give me a clue to the actions of the bird until the windpipe was reached. About two inches from the mouth it was slightly enlarged; the same again about four inches down; but by far the greatest enlargement was at the junction of the bronchial tubes. At that point was a large, shell-like structure, (almost fully hardened to bone) which filled completely the cavity between the neck, or back-bone and the two arms of the wish-bone. In length this structure was 1.50 inches; from front to back, 1.15 inches; from right to left, 1.75 inches; at the left a large protuberance, but none on the opposite side. In general appearance it very much resembled a wedge with rounded edges. The surrounding muscles, also the inner surface of the enlargement had a greenish, slightly rotten appearance on dissection twenty hours after death, weather cool. Tissues of the abdomen showed no signs of putrefaction at the same time.

Last Spring, 1889, I took a "Little Green" with a similar enlargement, the parts of which seemed healthy and the surrounding tissues appeared normal; the bony structure being translucent, almost transparent. Nothing out of common was noted in heron.

Now a question: In case of the duck was the abnormal wind-pipe the cause of the queer actions? Is this condition frequent? In case of the heron, would it have passed, ultimately, into a more diseased state, similar to that of the duck? Is this condition progressive?

---

## THE SNOWY OWL.

*Nyctea Nyctea.*

BY E. B. PECK, CLIFTON SPRINGS, N. Y.

This is one of the owls of whose habits very little is known. Few collectors are plucky enough to endure the hardships incident to a thorough study of their habits in their northern breeding place. This bird seldom reaches Ontario, Co., N. Y., and I have never met it here, but I have noted it several times in Monroe Co., whose northern shore is washed by the waters of Lake Ontario.



THE SNOWY OWL.

Dec. 26, 1889, while on a collecting trip up the lake beach in Monroe Co., I came to a point of land jutting out into the lake some little distance. Near the end of the point stood an elm tree. On one of the lower branches I saw an object, which, at a distance, looked like a bunch of white paper flapping in the wind. When almost within shot-gun range, I

saw it was a Snowy Owl. I began to creep toward him, but was disappointed, for he spread out his white wings and sailed over into a lot and sat on a stone-pile. I crept after him but I could not get near enough for a shot. I gave it up in despair, tramped