

# The Man Who Knows the Forests and Their Folk

**A**FTER his kind—and it must be admitted at once that it is an especially attractive kind—John Burroughs is unique. There are naturalists enough and to spare, some of them endowed with the birthmarks that proclaim them to be the real thing and others as theoretical that no amount of effort on their part will ever persuade fish, flesh or fowl to accept them as such. Among them all there is but one John Burroughs; he stands alone in a class by himself.

This nature poet is a man of whom it is always agreeable and proper to write and about whom it is impossible to become too enthusiastic. He is doing things constantly that are worthy of record. Nothing that he does is uninteresting. The public wants to know all, absolutely all, about the man whom the creatures of the forest accept as an intimate. Like his hibernating friends of the ancient wood, he may lie hidden during the season of the wintry blast, but it has come to pass that the early spring with its re-established wild animal life always suggests John Burroughs.

## A New Song.

This spring the song birds on their annual migration to the North woods will sing a new song as they fly high over Riverby, their friend's Hudson river home at West Park. The awakened little creatures that peer curiously between the chimneys of Slabsides, the poet's Catskill retreat, to satisfy themselves that he has not yet come will have a new theme. For it is now in the forest that on April 3 John Burroughs will have completed his allotted threescore years and ten.

At the Scriptural limit, but an army of Orders could never convince his friends that he is a man of great usefulness. To these denizens of the primeval shade his silencing locks are but a further evidence of his wisdom—that long and patient delving into the mysteries of animate nature that has ended by making him intelligible to them and has permitted him to know them more intimately than any other man now living.

## A Man of Silence.

Yet this man who holds such unrestricted communion with nature, comprehending its language and wise as to its ways, has long held the American championship for taciturnity. It may be said of him that he has thought much, written sparingly and talked scarcely at all. It is not at all that he is not at home in the art of conversation. No man is more capable of making it what it should be. When the conversational mood is upon him there are few men so charming. He does not, however, see any merit in conventional talk and will on no account make conversation even when it seems awkward not to do it.

A remarkable instance of his predilection for silence occurred several years ago. A bustling and rather garrulous editor of a leading American magazine went to visit the naturalist in his retreat in the North woods, to which he retires for a few weeks in the late summer. This editor and Mr. Burroughs had met several times in a business way, but they were not especially congenial—the literary man liked to do the yeoman's share of the talking, and the poet-naturalist was not sufficiently clever in concealing his lack of interest in the editor's easy flow of words.

Burroughs received his important



John Burroughs

visitor at the door of his hut and invited him to enter. The editor, who was also a poet of considerable renown in certain quarters, was so inspired by the beauty of the spot that he began to voice his admiration in a torrent of appreciative expressions. Burroughs preserved a grave silence until the enraptured guest began to quote from one of his own poems. Then he disappeared suddenly, returning almost immediately with a gourd full of water, which he presented to the great man with a laconic "Take a drink."

The city poet gasped slightly, took a sip of the proffered draft and resumed his discourse. Again, very soon, he found it convenient to introduce a stanza of his own composition. Once more Burroughs rose hastily and left the room, only returning with a bottle labeled "Whisky." Although he was somewhat overcome by this precipitate hospitality the editor did not flinch. He took a generous swig from the bottle and smacked his lips.

But he had by no means exhausted his vocabulary or his list of pet quotations. In a few moments he was gulping away as briskly as ever. Burroughs endured calmly for a time and then rose to his feet and, pointing to a brook that flowed just outside the door of the hut, said in the most matter of fact tone imaginable: "Have a bath. While you're at it I'll fry some bacon and make some coffee."

It was a critical moment, but the editor was a man of excellent business capacity and he did not permit his ruffled dignity to dominate the situation. He had come into the North woods for the purpose of obtaining a promise from the naturalist to furnish a series of popular nature studies for his magazine, and he resolved that he would not return to civilization without it. So he beat his wrath and found his way to the brook, although



On the Porch at Slabsides

he did not avail himself of his host's abrupt invitation to refresh himself in its cooling waters. When he could make up his mind to rejoin Burroughs he found dinner waiting. During his absence his host had made biscuits, cooked bacon and prepared a pot of coffee. A pine stump in the rear of the hut served as a table, and the city man could not long resist the charm of the occasion. A

Slabsides, in the Ulster County Woods

Riverby on the Hudson River



At the Door of Slabsides

last box of zwieback to a family of young partridges on the other side of the brook. "My, but those youngsters have appetites!" But fate was against the city man, and once again he put his foot in it. "I suppose you are counting on splendid returns from that zwieback," he said, with an appreciative smack of his thin lips. "What do you mean?" asked Burroughs suspiciously. "Oh, later on, in the fall—when you get them," returned the other carelessly. At this the naturalist's eyes flashed, and he rose suddenly to his feet. "What do you take me for—a cannibal?" he almost shrieked. The discomfited editor took a sustaining draft of the strong coffee and then began to protest feebly. It was a ticklish moment, but finally the host came to the rescue.

"Let's take a walk," he proposed abruptly. They took a walk—ten miles over the hills and through the woods. Before they had gone far a conversational mood overtook the naturalist, and he began to discourse most entertainingly on various subjects suggested by the animal life of the region. Though which they were passing. He was so interesting that his guest was content to listen, and long before they returned he had recovered his equanimity. At the station that evening, as the editor was about to take the train cityward, they shook hands cordially and both declared that the day had been spent in a most enjoyable fashion. The editor did not accomplish his mission, but he found the inspiration to compose a poem which was quite the best of anything he had done for a long time. He admitted it, and his admirers did not dispute it.

## Sometimes a Humorist.

It has been asserted persistently that John Burroughs is devoid of humor; that he takes cognizance only of the serious side of things as they make their appearance in the daily walk of life. This is so wide of the truth that it smacks of injustice. There was never a man more alive to the humorous side of life than this same John Burroughs, albeit he is reserved in his manifestation.

This was made apparent to the writer of this sketch on the occasion of his first and only pilgrimage to Riverby, the naturalist's charming home on the west bank of the Hudson river. It was on a few afternoon in late summer that I left the West Shore train at the hamlet of Poughkeepsie to find that I should have landed at West Park, the nearest point to Riverby by rail. There was no help for it and no conveyance in sight, so I set out bravely to retrace my steps. It was a matter of an hour and a half, the way was very dusty, and when I reached the bell at Riverby I could not have presented an especially attractive appearance.

## "Beware the Dog."

Although the upper windows of the handsome stone cottage were open there seemed to be no sign of life about the place. I rang repeatedly, but there was no response. To convince myself that the premises were deserted I strolled about the grounds, which consisted principally of vineyard and an old fashioned flower and kitchen garden. At the entrance to the vineyard,

in which the bunches were beginning to show purple beneath the glowing sun, there was set a large doghouse which bore on its front, in very distinct lettering, the legend, "Beware the Dog." Before I had time to "beware" him the dog made his appearance.

Now I have been rather a close observer of dogs in my lifetime, and I am ready to affirm without reservation that the canine specimen that came forth from that imposing doghouse was the most ineffective creature upon whom I have ever set eyes. He was so friendly in his attitude and so loath to part company when, finally, I turned regretfully into the public highway, that I was obliged to resort to coercive measures to restrain him and to dissuade him from his evident intention to follow me. I even doubt if I should have succeeded in convincing him had not a passing lad who was fertile in expetitive and steady of aim come to my assistance.

If I were to see Mr. Burroughs, I explained as soon as our combined salutation of stones had sent the over-friendly canine to the safe retreat of the majestic doghouse.

"He's went to the village—Miss Burroughs too. You'll probably meet 'em," the boy said. "I guess not, though, 'cause they won't start home afore sundown."

Clearly I had failed in my mission. Before I went, however, I remarked upon the lack of harmony that seemed to exist between the warning to "beware," the pretentious doghouse and its weak tenant.

"Mr. Burroughs don't claim that he's a biter," he grinned. "He won't have a dog what bites."

"Why, then, does he need the sign?" I demanded.

"It's for the benefit of the public," the lad explained. "I heard him say so when he put it up. He says it's dog days, and his dog can have the hydrophobic as well as any other."

GEORGE H. PICARD.

## SOME TEETOTAL ROYALTIES.

Queen Victoria of Spain does not know the taste of alcohol. Her special "tipple" is made from oranges—the fresh fruit squeezed into a glass, which is filled with aerated waters. Oranges are her favorite fruit. For years Princess Henry of Battenberg was a teetotaler, but of late she has suffered so much from rheumatism that she has been ordered a little whisky, which she regards as a penance. Both royal "Christian's daughters" too, are teetotalers. All the children of the Prince and Princess of Wales are being brought up strict teetotalers, and they know nothing of alcohol. Princess Patricia of Connaught and her married sister also abjure wine. Another royal teetotaler is the Duchess of Argyll, and the two daughters of the princess royal, their highnesses Alexandra and Maud, have never in their lives touched wine.

## "QUEEN KRUPPS" KINGDOM.

Bertha Krupp, the heiress of the great German ironmaster of Essen, who was recently married, has received a new title, "Queen Krupp." Her income goes on increasing, as do her state and power. Bertha Krupp is absolute owner of her kingdom. In Essen alone she has 40,000 workmen toiling for her, who, with their families, make more than 300,000 persons dependent upon her. If other concerns be added, we have a total of 500,000 dependents.

## PAN ISLAMISM MOVEMENT WILL BEAR WATCHING.

London, April 3.—In his report on the progress of the various administrative departments of the Egyptian government, issued by the foreign office today, Lord Cromer, British agent in Egypt, deals at length with the anti-British movement, known as "Egyptian Nationalism." This Lord Cromer describes as a plant of "exotic rather than indigenous growth," and "deeply tinged with Pan-Islamism," thereby meaning a combination of all the Moslems throughout the world to defy and resist the Christian powers. "Viewed in this aspect," Lord Cromer says, the movement requires to be

watched carefully by all European nations, as it may possibly lead to serious and important parts of the world. He adds:

"We were within a very measurable distance of such an outbreak last spring, when the European inhabitants of Egypt looked into the town. Their alarm was not at all unreasonable." Lord Cromer believes that cohesion between Egyptians and foreigners can be secured only by the creation of a local international legislative council composed of 26 members, 16 nominated by the government and the remaining 10 elected by interested prominent foreign residents.

Lord Cromer declares the present system of legislation by diplomacy must be abandoned, and his report contains many recommendations for the better government of Egypt. It

concludes with a warning to British officials against speculating in land and other ways, in spite of the temptation.

## BUTTE RAILWAY.

It Will Pay Its Conductors and Motormen More Wages.

Butte, April 3.—Conductors and motormen in the employ of the Butte Electric company are receiving two and a half cents an hour more than they did last month. Senator W. A. Clark, owner of the street railway system of Butte, has ordered an increase, which went into effect on April 1. The raise follows an increase of wages granted Jan. 1, when motormen and

conductors were given two and a half cents more an hour than they had previously been receiving. The first raise was granted on the request of the men who asked for five cents additional pay.

## TAFT EXAMINES THE WORK ON THE ISTHMUS.

Colon, April 3.—Secy. Taft reached Colon from the other side of the isthmus at 11 o'clock this morning. After lunch he met a deputation of the house-owners of Colon and other citizens, who protested against the alleged unjust hardships imposed by the sanitary authorities and asking relief from the "unjust and intolerable conditions imposed in the carrying out of the sanitary improvements here."

Secy. Taft made a thorough examination of the sanitary conditions on the isthmus. At the Colón, the operations of the steam shovels and the other machinery were explained by Supt. of Excavation Little. The work done was thoroughly inspected, and from Empire the secretary went to Gatun where he was met by W. G. Bird, general manager of the Panama railroad. Secy. Taft then examined the site of the future lock and visited each pit. He watched Representative T. E. Burton as he was lowered into the large hole that goes to the bottom of the lock.

When Mr. Burton came to the surface Secy. Taft surprised every one present by taking off his coat and stepping into the bucket. He was lowered to the bottom of the test pit in the center of the middle lock. F. B. Matby, first assistant engineer on the canal, and William Griest, who is in charge of the Pacific division, accompanied the secretary on his descent, and explained to him every aspect of the soil and work in hand.

After coming to the surface the secretary's party took a steam launch on the old French canal to Mindi, whence they came in a special train to Cristobal, where the dry docks and the dredges were inspected.

## A CUBAN ASSASSINATION.

Havana, April 3.—Jose Ayala, ex-chief of police of Guineá, Havana province, was assassinated in Guineá this morning. The crime apparently was political, as the victim led the government forces in the vicinity of Guineá during the Agrarian revolution, thereby incurring so much enmity that he went to Mexico, from which country he was just returned. The assassin, who was a member of the late rebel army, escaped.

## THE PAUL JONES INJURED.

Charleston, April 3.—The gunboat Paul Jones from Sabine Pass, bound for Morris Hook, Va., came into port today seriously damaged by the storm. The captain says that the schooner Thomas W. Lawson, which was in tow, parted the hawser during the height of the gale and had not been seen since. The Lawson is a schooner of 4,000 tons, registered, was loaded with oil and had a full crew and equipment.

## WELLMAN'S EXPEDITION.

He Expects to Start for North Pole Some Time in July.

New York, April 3.—Walter Wellman, who arrived today from Paris, said he was well satisfied with his arrangements for the proposed Wellman-Record-Record airship expedition to the north pole. He informed the friends who met him at the pier that he would start in July.

"I am informed," said Mr. Wellman, "that Commander Peary thinks my plan is not practicable. He thinks it will not be possible to reach the pole in a balloon, by reason of the weather conditions. In answer, I want to say Peary has no idea at all about ballooning."

"My balloon is constructed to meet

all of the Arctic conditions and I have full confidence in my ability to reach the pole in it. When I set out from Spitzbergen in July I shall think of nothing but success for my undertaking. My balloon has a resisting power of 500 pounds to the square inch, and that surely will be sufficient to turn all of the icebergs to which Peary refers.

"The surface is just about as treacherous as the ordinary sheet of metal roof. I am not in the least superstitious. If I were I would not be launching my balloon on this expedition to the unknown north from the very spot where Andre took his departure, never to return. He was not properly equipped as to mechanism in his ship and I am convinced that he fell into the Arctic sea."

"I shall carry with me 7,000 pounds of gasoline to supply gas for the bag and 3,000 pounds of rations. I shall take with me about 12 Eskimo dogs for possible use. If I do succeed in finding the pole, I fully expect it to be nothing more than the center of the open sea."

## DETWEILER LOCATED.

Battle Creek, Mich., April 3.—A. K. Detweiler of Toledo, indicted for burglary at San Francisco, was located in a private house here this afternoon, but escaped arrest by leaving the house by a rear door and being whisked away in an automobile, five minutes before the detective called at the house to effect his arrest.

It is thought Detweiler's destination was Belle Isle, 12 miles north of here, where he could catch a Grand Trunk train for Canada.

San Francisco, April 3.—Special Agent Burns, Sheriff O'Neill and Chief of Police Dinan have joined forces to find and arrest Abraham K. Detweiler, the Toledo, O., millionaire, who has been indicted on 13 counts by the grand jury, charging bribery of supervisors in behalf of the Home Telephone company. Detweiler has been declared by Superior Judge Lawlor to be a fugitive from justice. Burns today furnished O'Neill and Dinan with a description of Detweiler which, with a picture of the indicted capitalist, has been mailed throughout the United States. O'Neill will make his return to Judge Lawlor tomorrow morning on the bench warrant for Detweiler and will report that he has been unable to find him.

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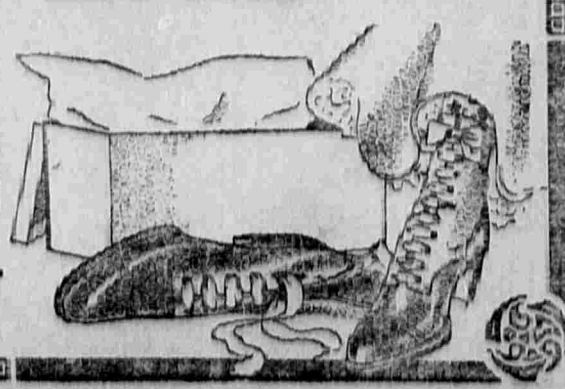
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