

# The Observer

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## THE EARLY BIRD

By ELIZABETH NOLAN.

"Get up, for goodness sake, Beth Moore. This is the third time I've called you. You said we should go on bathing every morning before breakfast, and here a whole week of our vacation is near gone and we have not been in the water once."

"All right," groaned Beth, as she sleepily rubbed her eyes. "I'll get right up. You go ahead and I'll be down in a minute."

"Now, be sure," said Jennie, as she ran downstairs, out onto the beach and to the water's edge, where she comfortably seated herself to await Beth's arrival.

The two girls had planned months past for this big vacation—the first two weeks of August. Hunting through vacation books and time tables they finally had settled upon Salisbury Beach. Of course, the bathing was to be their greatest amusement as both were expert swimmers. Quite contrary to their plans, however, dancing and bowling had occupied most of their time up to the first week's end.

Jennie waited for nearly half an hour and then decided that Beth must have turned over, only to fall as usual, on the other side, as she had so often done before. Knowing that it must be near breakfast time she thought she would take one plunge before returning. At first the water seemed icy-cold, but after a few minutes she was wishing that she had longer to stay, the water was so invigorating. Just one more good swim and then she would go and dress for breakfast, she said to herself. But alas! It was one swim too many for Jennie Dever. Carried out by the mighty waves and held by the strong undertow, she could not swim an inch nearer the shore. To scream would be of no use, as there was not a soul on the whole beach, so courageously she fought the waves, still hoping to be able to make some progress. To her great surprise and relief she could now see the form of someone in the distance hastening toward her. Oh! thought Jennie, will they ever get here?

Tom Hurd, clerk at the "Castle Mona," had been watching the "early bird," and now, convinced that she was in distress, ran down the beach and hastily seized the life-saving buoy, dragged it into the water, and was just in time to rescue the prostrate form from sinking. Others had now gathered round the shore ready to receive them, with all things necessary to make the victim as comfortable as possible. Tom deposited his burden in the great warm blankets and hastily they carried her to the hotel.

Poor Jennie, too exhausted to speak, soon found herself resting comfortably in her own bed, while Beth, eyes brimming over with tears, lamented the fact that she had fallen asleep again almost immediately after Jennie left her.

"How nice that fellow was who rescued you. I've seen him around here all week," continued Beth. "I think he must be employed here." Gaining no reply from Jennie she did not enquire further over the hero of the day. Noticing that Jennie was dosing she quietly took a magazine and tried to interest herself in it. Presently a gentle knock on the door announced the arrival of Miss White, the proprietress, with breakfast for the two girls.

"Gracious," said Beth, "how kind of you. I had completely forgotten that it was past eating time."

Jennie roused herself sufficiently to take a few sips of coffee while Beth, fairly devoured the delicious corn muffins.

A good sound sleep greatly improved Jennie, and the afternoon found her seated in an easy chair on the spacious veranda, while Tom Hurd occupied the chair by her side.

After supper that evening Jennie retired quite early, and Tom found himself wondering how he had spent other evenings. Tonight there seemed to be no place to go, or nothing worth while to do. But tomorrow evening she would be able to stay up, and possibly to go to the dance, too. The thought alone was consoling to him, and in idle dreams he spent the evening until locking up time arrived.

Jennie rested all day, and finally yielding to Tom's coaxing, she agreed to take a short stroll along the beach after supper.

Was it to be wondered at that Dan Cupid completed his errand in that one evening? What more powerful weapons could there be than the "silvery moon," combined with the enchanting "and sea waves" to work successfully on two loving hearts. "Just as soon as I finish medical school," added Tom, "and how glad I am this is my last year."

Arm in arm they returned to the "Castle Mona." Jennie too happy for words, and Tom convinced that he had won the sweetest girl in the whole world.

When Jennie returned to her home how surprised were her friends to see a sparkling diamond on the third finger of her left hand, for as Beth explained to her acquaintances that was the morning that "the early bird caught the worm."

## A Study in Monogamy

By JANE OSBORNE

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It was just before Philip Lewis' last college vacation that his celebrated old uncle, James Devridge, told him in his blunt, quaint way that he—Philip—was a lazy, loafing, worthless specimen of humanity, and utterly unworthy of being James Devridge's sole heir, as had been that distinguished man's original intentions.

On the charge of never having done anything in life that he had not been made to do, Philip mentioned the fact, not at all boastfully but only in self-defense, that he had brought down various prizes for his amateur photography.

"Yes, but what value has it been—pictures of pretty girls and horses or something of that sort," muttered the old scientist. "If you could get photographs of birds that would do to illustrate this book I've been working over, they might count for something."

"Give me a chance," challenged the nephew. "What sort of pictures do you want?"

"Read the manuscript and find out," was the uncle's answer. "The book is a study of monogamous habits among the birds of eastern North America. It is not a popular work at all. I doubt if you can make head or tail of it. It requires a scientific point of view, and that you don't possess."

"I'll try it," said the nephew, and the day after work at college was over he started off to a little cabin in the northern mountain country of New England, where his uncle had in years past done considerable observation of bird life, there to get the photographs the uncle had assured him he couldn't get.

Philip was perfectly confident of his lenses and his cameras and his photography. The thing that troubled him was knowing what sort of pictures to take. For the first three days of his stay in the woods country he read the duplicate manuscript his uncle had given him. Frankly he was not very much encouraged.

Then he yearned for a letup of his solitude, and with characteristic bluntness asked the old countryman who drove the stage that passed his door twice a day whether there were any nice girls in the neighborhood. "There is only one good-looking," said the old man, who seemed to have made careful observations, "and she's queer. You wouldn't like her and she wouldn't have anything to do with you, neither. She lives alone in the summer in a shack in the woods next to yours. She's awful queer. But she do be good looking."

"How's she queer?" queried Philip. "Powerful queer—that's how queer. She sometimes sets a whole day at a time under a bush in the gully, and one day I seen her setting way up in the tip-top of a tree. Well, she was there when I went down in the morning and still there when I come home in the afternoon. Don't know how she got there, but there she was. And she goes around with opera glasses, just as if she thought there was a show going on, and she whistles and chirups to herself, and—well, there's no doubt but she's queer," concluded the old man with a significant tapping of the side of his own head, as if to indicate where the weakness lay.

Philip needed no further proof. He believed the old man had exaggerated the matter, but he had no doubt of the young woman's dementia. One day—while still reading his uncle's manuscript, hoping to find a clue as to what his photographs should be—he saw the strange young lady, sitting not in the top of one of her own trees, but in the top of one of the trees very near to his own shack. He looked at her from the safety of his shack and then assuming a perfectly confident air and a cheerful whistle, ventured out and began to walk noisily about the tree.

"Oh, please tread softly," said the strange young lady. "I think they are settling here in this tree. If you disturb them they may go off again. Please go away, won't you?" Philip withdrew and did not return till later in the day, when the young lady descended very quietly.

"I think they are located," she told him. "They are in the next tree—two thrushes. I watched them in my own trees and then they came over here. I can watch them beautifully from this other tree that I was sitting in. I hope you don't mind."

"Why, please, were you watching just those thrushes?" he asked her, and she told him that if he would let her stay and eat lunch with him in his shack instead of having to tramp back the half mile to her own, she would take time to tell him. It was in his little cabin dining room over a rustic sort of luncheon that Philip prepared for them—coffee, smoky of aroma, but delicious to the appetite, sharpened by woods air, sliced him, dry biscuits and cheese—that the girl explained.

"Well, you see, I am making a study of monogamy among birds—that is, I want to get a little data that will be of some value in establishing the fact that thrushes—either are or are not monogamous—that is, that they do or don't mate for life. Last year I worked hard all summer. I studied the birds from the tree tops and from under the hedges. No one knows how long I sat silently so as not to disturb them, and I trapped some of them long enough to fasten little bracelets on their ankles. I knew that if the same birds came back to these trees this year and mated with the same mates, then I would have some small fact to contribute to this great study. And now two of the birds with my bracelets have come back and I think they are the mates of last year. Once they get settled for nesting I can get closer to them and find out. You know, James Devridge, the greatest of all bird scientists, and one of the greatest scientists of the day, has made a special study of this. I read everything he writes, and I heard him lecture

He cannot rival the fish. Information concerning the number of eggs produced by various species of fish has been limited mainly to rather rough estimates. According to the Allgemeine Fischerei-Zeitung, some careful counts were made last year at the Bavarian trout hatchery. The first in-

vestigations were in connection with common trout and rainbow trout; 58 specimens of the former and 54 of the latter were striped and the spawns counted. The older and heavier fish were found to have the most eggs (ranging up to about 3,000), but the younger fish yielded a decidedly larger number of eggs in proportion to the weight of the fish. The experiments were repeated with perch (Perca fluviatilis), in this case the females just about to spawn being killed and the ovaries being removed and dissected. The number of eggs in perch ranged from 3,710 for a fish four inches long up to 80,450 for one 10.3 inches long; but in this species, also, the number of eggs per unit weight of fish is much larger in small than in large fish—Scientific American.

Only One Aviator Has Reached Forty. All this amazing science of war flying is in the hands of boys and youths. Rarely do we find a successful aviator 40 years old. Lieutenant Colonel Piccio of Italy, with a score of seventeen airplanes brought down to date, is the only one in the world who has reached this age. On the other hand, fully a score of celebrated fighting aces are under the age of 20. It is a young man's game, and solely by the experience and inventions of these young men will this important arm of warfare evolve and become perfected.—Lawrence La Tourette Driggs in the Century Magazine.

California Sardines. Commercial Bulletin of Los Angeles says that the California sardine pack for this year will exceed that of Maine, which last year amounted to 2,500,000 cases, compared with 1,800,000 packed in California. This paper asserts that the fish packed in California are true sardines, while Maine packs a small herring.

"Duck Boards" to Beat the Mud. When the allied forces in Flanders are not battling with the Germans they are trying to outwit nature. This is the substance of a report brought back from the firing line by Maj. Gen. Charles Clement, U. S. A. Mud was a source of considerable annoyance to the soldiers. So the engineering force of Australia devised what has become commonly known as the "duck board," but which the Canadians have named the "bath mat." Both being terms of derision. The board is made of a number of small strips of wood, 14 to 15 inches in length, which are nailed to stringers placed in front of one another and extending for miles. A step off the "duck board" means a plunge into a sea of mud at least three feet in depth. The "board" was devised to enable the Australians to attack the Germans more successfully, and it seemed to provide a path to victory.—Popular Science Monthly.

A Bergson Anecdote. Like most philosophers, M. Bergson lives a rather secluded life. His house in Paris is as quiet-looking and retiring as himself. Most of his neighbors know him only by sight, and have no idea of the distinction enjoyed throughout the world by this unobtrusive spruce gentleman. A short time ago, when M. Bergson issued forth to go to the French academy, where he was to be formally admitted, the neighborhood was dazzled by a magnificent academician's uniform—green embroidered with gold leaves, a cocked hat and a dainty sword. Then the old conclave of the house opposite exclaimed: "Ah! the little old gentleman has been called up at last. And about time, too!"—Manchester Guardian.

## Ships & Sugar



OVER 75 per cent. of the sugar used in the United States is delivered by ships. There is produced about 800,000 tons of beet sugar and 250,000 tons of cane sugar in Louisiana. The total consumption of the United States is about 4,500,000 tons of raw sugar, which makes about 4,250,000 tons of refined sugar.

If our coasts were blockaded as Germany's now are, we would have available for the use of the people of the United States only one pound of sugar for every four we use. Under such circumstances there is no doubt that the American people would get along on this limited supply without complaint.

The United States Food Administration is asking every American household to use not more than two pounds of sugar per person each month for domestic use. Reducing our sugar consumption here means that we will be able to help supply the needs of France, England and Italy. Sugar conservation on the American table also means conservation of ships.

The Army and Navy have sent out an "S. O. S." call for ships. "Save Our Ships to Transport Troops and Munitions to France, in order that we may keep the fighting front where it now is and not allow it to extend to our own homes," is the message.

There is ample sugar in the world for all requirements—in fact, there is a large surplus, but on account of the ship shortage it is not available for use in this country.

Java, which produces 15 per cent. of the world's cane crop, is too far removed. It requires 150 to 160 days for a ship to go to Java and return.

He said that he didn't have anywhere near enough data on the subject of monogamy and that anyone who would seriously go about it to collect it might feel that she was making a real contribution to science. So I made up my mind to do it. That is much better than frittering one's time away dancing or loafing at a summer resort. I've got quite a lot of data, and some day I'm going to take it to Mr. Devridge and tell him it is my contribution to science.

"Then—you understand what the old fellow is getting at in those books of his?"

"Oh, yes, indeed. He's just finished a new book on bird monogamy. I am so impatient to read it. It must be wonderful."

"Here is a bargain," said Philip, draining the coffee pot for a last cup of coffee to offer to his companion. "I'll let you read that wonderful book if you'll tell me what it is about." And that led very easily to telling the girl the predicament he was in.

It was in mid-summer that James Devridge came up to the mountain camp to visit his nephew.

"At least you have stayed here," he said. "I don't know what you have been doing, but I thought you would have given up long before this." Philip lost no time in showing his uncle what he had been doing. There were hundreds of photographs that no eyes save those of Philip and Alice Gerry had ever fallen upon before. The negatives had been developed and the pictures had been printed in the shack. Of this detail of the process Philip was a past master. What amazed the uncle was that the pictures were so entirely what he wanted.

"These are the most wonderful pictures I have ever seen," said the old man, tears coming into his usually hard old eyes. "It is as if I had suddenly found you, my nephew. It has always been my grief that no one of my own has been interested in the work I do. But you must be interested or you could not have done these pictures. They are as good in their way as anything I ever did."

A little later Alice Gerry, dressed in her usual tree-climbing attire, slipped into the shack and came straight over to the old man's side.

"I've always longed to meet you," she said with a timidity that indicated her admiration better than any elaborate compliments she might have expressed would have done. "I've been getting together a few notes to give you on my own observations. I have always wondered if you would accept them."

There was just a little disappointment in the old man's face as he took the girl's hands like his nephew's work—and you, like the others who understand my work, will go away from me and leave me alone. I just showed him at first and then he became as enthusiastic as I—"

"And, anyway," interrupted the nephew, who perhaps had never appreciated his eccentric old uncle as much before as he should have. "Alice is going to be my niece. We were just waiting to ask your blessing."

And in truly patriarchal fashion the white-haired old man stood and raised his hands in benediction.

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## SAVED BY MIRAGE

How British Army Escaped Defeat in Mesopotamia.

Turkish Commander Saw What He Believed Were Reinforcements Coming to Aid Enemy and Ordered Retreat.

We went on toward nowhere, intending to make a wide detour and come into old Basra city by the Zobeir gate in the south wall, Eleanor F. Egan writes in the Saturday Evening Post. There was no dust out there; only hard-packed sand, out of which the fierce hammering sun struck a myriad glittering, eye-searing sparks. But it was beautiful beyond words to describe. We spun along at fifty miles an hour with a cool, clean breeze in our faces. Then just over a slight rise in the sparkling plain I saw my first mirage. It was impossible to believe it was a mirage and not really the beautiful lake that I seemed—a lake dotted with wooded islands and fringed in places with deep green forests.

I have seen mirages in other deserts in other lands, but I have never seen anything like the Mesopotamian mirage. We drove straight on and it came so close that I was sure I could see a ripple on its surface. Then suddenly it went away off, and where it had been our skidproof tires were humming on the hard-packed sand and I saw that the wooded islands had been created out of nothing but patches of camel thorn and that the trees of the forests were tufts of dry grass not more than six inches high.

Off on the far horizon a camel caravan was swinging slowly along and the camels looked like some mammoth prehistoric beasts, while in another direction what we took to be camels turned out to be a string of diminutive donkeys under pack saddles laden with bales of the desert grass roots that the Arabs use for fuel.

The mirage has played an interesting part in the Mesopotamian campaigns. In some places it is practically continuous the year round, and it adds greatly to the difficulties of an army in action. It is seldom mistaken for anything but what it is, of course, but it does curious things to distance and to objects both animate and inanimate. Incidentally it renders the accurate adjustment of gun ranges almost altogether impossible.

One of the most curious incidents of the whole war happened in connection with a mirage and on the very spot over which I drove that first day out in the desert.

The battle of Shaiba was one of the hardest-fought battles in the whole Mesopotamian campaign and victory for a while was anybody's. It was going very badly for the British, their losses being heavier than they could stand for long. And though the Turks were in overwhelmingly superior numbers it was going very badly for them as well. This the British officer commanding did not realize and he was just on the point of giving an order for retreatment—which would have been fatal to the British in Mesopotamia—when to his astonishment he discovered that the Turks were in full retreat! What a moment!

The desert was full of mirage and the Turkish commander—who really ought to have been more familiar with local phenomena—saw approaching from the southeast what looked to him like heavy reinforcements. It was nothing but a supply and ambulance train magnified and multiplied by the deceptive desert atmosphere! When he ordered an immediate retreat his already unsteady troops stampeded and his demoralized rear guard was bounded and harassed by great bands of nomad Arabs all the way to Khamsisayeh, nearly ninety miles away. He learned the truth a few days later and committed suicide!

Oliver Goldsmith Memorial. At Auburn, County Athlone, Ireland, the poet's birthplace, a memorial is being erected to Oliver Goldsmith. It will take the form of the restoration of the church where the poet's father ministered—so many years. Oliver Goldsmith was born in 1728 at Ballymahon, County Longford, and two years later his father, Charles Goldsmith, became rector of Kilkenny West and settled in Lissoy, which is now known as Auburn. It is a village on the road between Athlone and Ballymahon. Auburn of Goldsmith's "Deserted Village" in some degree represents Lissoy, and the story of an old eviction by General Napier was probably in Goldsmith's mind when he wrote the poem, although it is intended to apply to England.

Died at Post of Duty. During the storms the early part of the year, which marines say were the severest known on the coast, the United States navy suffered the loss of the big ocean-going tug Cherokee. This vessel was named entirely by members of the naval reserve. Caught in a terrific sea the tug foundered and was lost. It was at this time on an important duty for the Washington navy yard to get guns to an Atlantic sea fort. Among the men who met a heroic death at this time was a lieutenant (junior grade), E. D. Newell, U. S. N. R. F., commanding officer.

Grand Army of Ministers. Over 60,000 ministers of the Gospel of various denominations are with the allies in France. About 20,000 are with the Red Cross; the rest are in the ranks—People's Home Journal.

Heroes Who Don't Like Worship. That kindly, admiring and enthusiastic visitors to hospitals in the war zone constitute a nuisance and added trial to the wounded is the complaint of the New York Medical Journal. The patients don't want to be bothered with glorification, still less with the dear, helpful souls who come to entertain them during the wearisome hours of convalescence. "We know of patients dodging behind tents when they saw certain ladies coming to 'amuse them,'" comments the Journal laconically.

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