



## Small Worlds Around Us

By Lynn M. Watkins

**Every Bird Has to be A Perfect Specimen**  
Every bird you see flying is just about a perfect specimen, otherwise it would cease to be. Competition is so keen and dangers so many and great that any bird other than an athlete would perish before the sun went down.

men and women, out of hundreds of millions, are perfect enough to be Olympic contestants. The overwhelming majority of us are pretty poor examples as far as physical powers are concerned. We would have trouble combating the forces of nature. Few of us could survive.

When a bird needs a hearing aid, glasses or a cane, he ceases to be a bird.

### Has Strength

The living bird must be gifted with endurance, strength, speed, and an alertness that must never lessen for a single moment. He must never be a profound sleeper or day dreamer, for danger and death can come at any time. In consequence, the birds you see flying or singing from a tree branch have adjusted themselves to their environment. They have, thus far, lived through the dangers that make their lives a precarious balance between life and death. Remarkable that so many of them are able to make it.

Most birds alive today have survived because of their promptness in adjusting themselves to changing conditions. They have learned to live with us, accepting what we have offered or tolerating our presence. Even their feeding habits have been varied to change to meet the changing times.

### Rearranged Lives

As the forests have been destroyed, the land cultivated or the swamps drained, the birds have moved closer in and rearranged their lives. They have so far survived in a world that tolerates their presence. Among the many accomplishments possessed by birds, one of the most unusual is the sixth sense of direction which enables them to know and continue in a course of flight without guide posts or knowledge of previous trips.

Birds exercise a mastery of locomotion over their most important muscles, those which control the wings, when they fly or dive. These wings tend to move downward, forward and backward in ordinary flight, and then upward in a complicated curve. The down stroke keeps the bird in the air, enabling him to soar higher.

The backward stroke keeps it flying ahead. Coupled with these remarkable powers of flight is their highly developed eyesight. The eyes must alter their plane of vision quickly, or collision would result.

The birds and we, however, have one thing in common. We both walk upright on two legs.

(Released by The Register and Tribune Syndicate, 1960)

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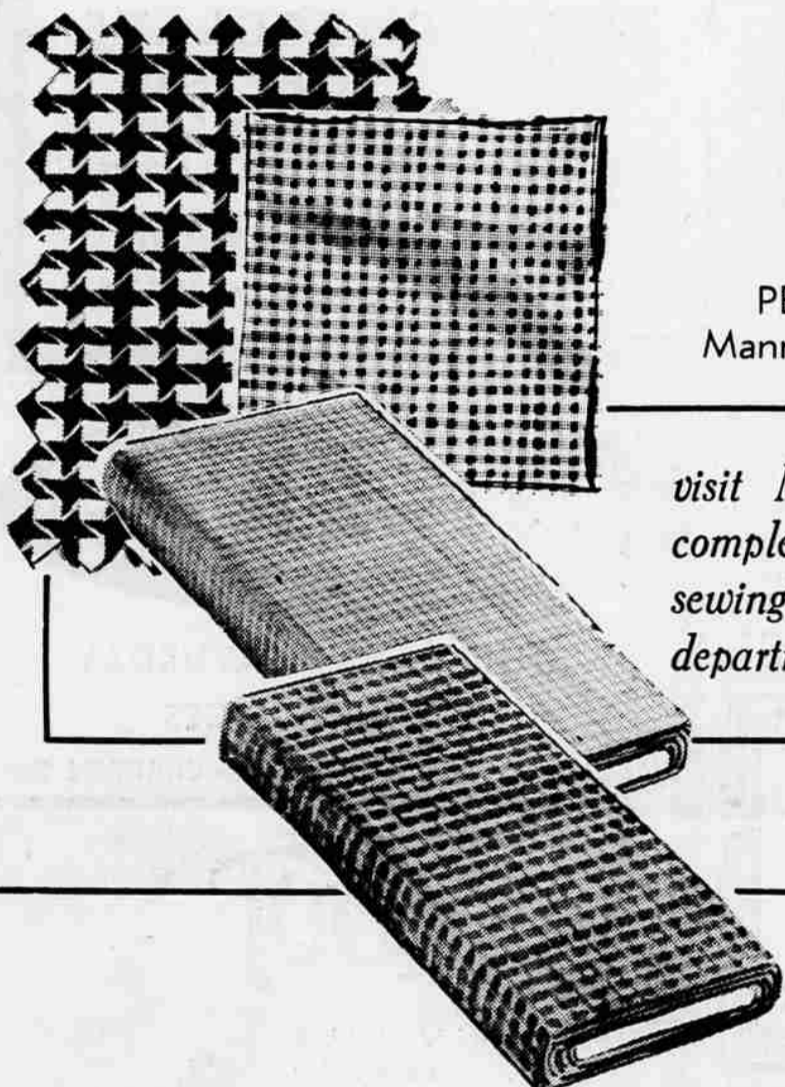
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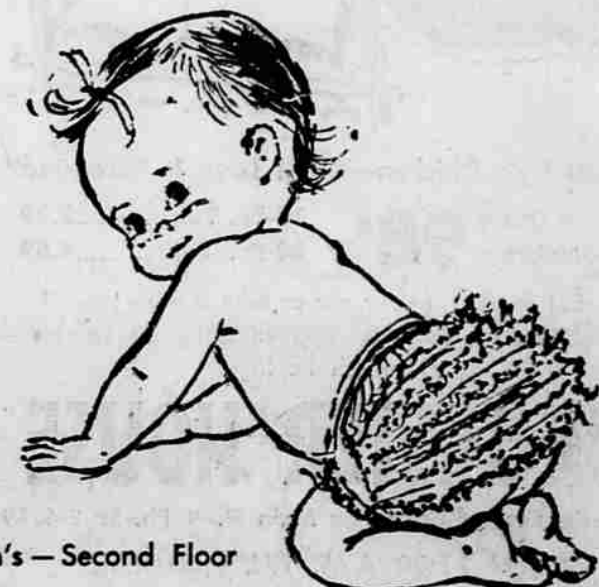
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