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BOB WHITE, FRIEND OF THE FARMER.

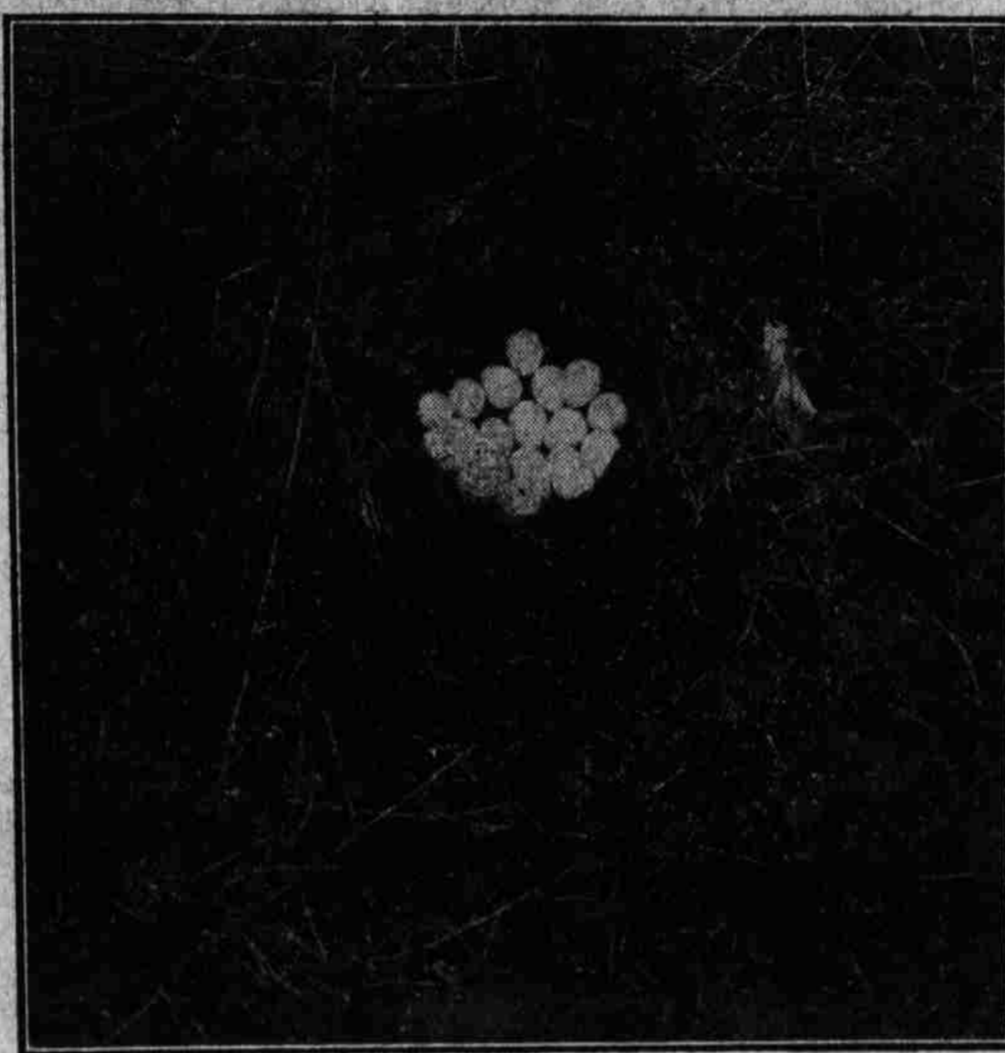
EVERY boy or girl raised on the farm, we feel sure, admires and loves Bob White, our common quail, or "partridge" as he is usually called. He is such a fine-looking fellow, when he flies up on a post or stump and looks at the landscape, so spruce, so graceful, so gallant; there is so much music in his voice as he calls out, "Bob White, Bob White," across the fields in the sunset cool of a summer day; he is such good sport and such good eating that it is easy to understand why he is a general favorite. There is not one of us who would not miss him if he came into the orchards and meadows no more.

It is not only because he is a thing of beauty, and a cheerful and interesting neighbor, however, that he should be regarded with particular friendliness. Every quail is worth good hard money to the farmer on whose land he takes up his abode. As a destroyer of weeds and insects he has few equals. A recent writer in the Youth's Companion tells of some actual meals made by these active and hearty little birds, and the figures are surprising. In a single day one quail has eaten 12,500 plantain seeds. Other records are: 12,000 pigweed seeds or 15,000 of lamb's quarter in a day, and 1,000 of crabgrass at a meal. When it comes to insects his appetite is equally good. One quail ate 5,000 plant lice in a day. At another time the same bird devoured 568 mosquitoes in three hours and then quit only because the supply gave out. They eat all sorts of injurious insects, too, potato beetles, cutworms, Hessian flies, boll weevils, chinch bugs, codling moths, grasshoppers—just anything that comes handy it seems. It is hard even to conceive of the vast number of injurious insects a covey of quail will consume in the course of a year. The destruction of every one of these insects, too, is a positive benefit to the farmer; and for this reason alone, one should always hesitate before killing a quail, or indeed a bird of any kind unless positively known to be injurious. Scientists tell us, and they are doubtless right about it, that if it were not for the birds it would be a matter of only a few years until the insects and creeping things would have the upper hand of us. The crops would disappear from our fields, and men everywhere would be in danger of starvation simply because they would be unable to combat the countless multitudes of insects which would devour and destroy the plants upon which men depend for food.

Every boy, therefore, who wantonly kills a bird, or injures a nest, not only does a cruel and unmanly thing, but also makes it harder for the farmer to raise his crops to maturity. The protection of a quail's nest or of a brood of young ones should be



A YOUNGSTER.



THE QUAIL'S NEST SHOULD BE PROTECTED.

considered a matter of course. There is some excuse for shooting Bob White after he grows up and is able to a large extent to take care of himself, but there can be absolutely none for the killing of any song bird not good for food, or for the breaking up of any bird's nest.

Let us protect the quail, then. If we find a nest, leave it sacredly alone; discourage as far as possible the roaming of worthless dogs over the fields; regulate hunting and insist that never shall a covey of quail be completely killed out. The man who will do this is no sportsman, anyway, but is a mere butcher. The true sportsman, is going to be satisfied with a reasonable "kill." Proper protection of our game birds will be of benefit to both hunter and farmer; but if it becomes a question as to whether the farmer or hunter is to prevail, the farmer's rights must always prevail over the hunter's wishes. No man should be allowed to shoot on another's land without permission, and always the hunter should be under strict supervision.

And while protecting our good friend Bob, let us remember that the other birds deserve the same friendship and care. The crow is a nuisance often; sometimes it is well to use a shot gun on a flock of blackbirds; the English sparrow does harm by driving more useful birds away; it may occasionally be necessary to make an orchard or garden unpleasant for the robins or catbirds; in some sections the rice birds become too numerous; two or three hawks and one or two species of owls are injurious. But aside from these it is safe to protect by any means in our power all the birds with which we meet. It is only because we have not appreciated their value that we have not done all in our power to insure their safety and happiness; and certainly the man or boy who would needlessly injure one of these little creatures is lacking in some of

the finer qualities of real manhood.

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