

15

### THE RED, PINE OR DOUGLAS SQUIRREL

The red squirrel of the east, often called chickaree, and the red, pine or Douglas squirrel of the Pacific Coast, with their near relatives, live in most of the wooded country of America north of Mexico. Wherever there are forests of pine, fir, spruce or hemlock, from the seashore to timber-line on a snow-capped peak and beyond the trail's end in the forest, you may find the red squirrel with a jerking tail at one end and a chatterbox at the other. He flashes from branch to branch with an outburst of energy. His playground is the trunk of a tree. Dashing up, he circles, then swings around the rough bark, stands on his head and jumps into almost impossible positions.

On the Pacific Coast, Chickaree is a sleight-of-hand artist in the matter of his clothes. He changes with the climate. In the humid, heavily wooded region bordering the Pacific he wears a coat that is rich, dark brown, but underneath it changes to a beautiful orange tone. A day's travel from there to the eastern slope of the Cascades, and his dress changes to grayish above and tan instead of orange below. Another day's travel to the east, and the little fellow is paler gray with white under parts, more like the chickaree of the Atlantic.

John Muir called the Douglas squirrel "Pillillocceet," an Indian name. Pronounce it rapidly, with the first syllable heavily accented, and it is not unlike the call of the squirrel when he is excited. The typical note is his explosive, musical whistle - clear and emphatic. He sings this for his own pleasure and amusement. Sometimes it has a pleading tone. His rapid, trilling song is often drawn out with longer or shorter cadences. At times he gives a peculiar note that is very birdlike in character, quite enough to deceive one into thinking that he is about to meet a strange feathered friend.

"He is the mockingbird of squirrels," sums up John Muir, "pouring forth mixed chatter and song like a perennial fountain; barking like a dog, screaming like a hawk, chirping like a blackbird or a sparrow; while in bluff, audacious noisiness he is a very jay."