

stale

If the American woman could once follow in the trail of the plume hunter, she could find little pleasure in the use of our wild bird plumage. The hunter seeks the birds in the midst of the breeding season because they live in colonies. The birds are hunted and killed more easily about their nests. With some birds it is the nuptial plumage that is sought.

It is a hideous sight to visit one of these bird colonies after the plume hunter has been at work. Once while spending the summer in the lake region of southern Oregon, we were told <sup>where</sup> that the plume hunters had been at work. We poled our skiff out through the tules till we came to a small island where they had camped. A hundred feet ~~away~~ beyond where the camp fire had been, was a gruesome sight. The stench was sickening. The bodies of dead grebes were scattered about, thrown aside after the plumage had been stripped from their breasts. Each was marked by a buzzing throng of flies that swarmed up at our approach and settled back. I counted a hundred carcasses <sup>in</sup> about one place, then turned away to meet a sight that was even worse. ¶ As we poled out through the tules, we began to find the deserted nests. There were many <sup>homes that contained</sup> eggs that were never to be hatched. ¶ Beside two nests <sup>were</sup> with the young grebes that had climbed out in search for food which the parents could never bring. Most of the gray chicks were dead and others dying. I saw two starving in one nest. It was a whole village of babies and we saw but two parents to feed them. ¶ I thought of the human mothers all through our land, they who spread this suffering and starvation among the homes of the wild fowl. This is the price that fashion asks. The grebe skin, the tern wings, and aigrette plume is a mother's life blood. Your hat plume is the badge of starving babies.

Improve  
Make it  
strong and interesting  
use actual facts

what beauty is a hat when

(4)

ineffectual

What can be said of the man who seeks out the bird  
homes and kills the parents <sup>birds</sup> to leave <sup>ing</sup> the young starving in the  
nest? Condemn him if you will. But <sup>if you</sup> ~~do not~~ blame the man in  
the backwoods who makes his living by killing the natural  
things he finds, <sup>what think you of</sup> Consider the fashionable woman, <sup>the</sup> so-called  
woman of society, who lavishly spends her money in creating  
this demand for the plumage of our native birds.

Notes on Photographing Grebes

(a) Explain how they make the noisy noise. The noise has been done by the water.

A grebe is one of the shyest of all birds to photograph, for at the slightest sound or motion it disappears like a flash. He stays under water for quite a while, and the next time he appears he is probably fifty yards away. ~~But~~ for three different days we sneaked about at the edge of the water in the high tules and tried for pictures of these birds. We had to part the reeds and build them up about us so that we were completely hidden and had only a narrow place out of which we could aim our camera. It took patience to sit there in a squatted position for hours at a time. The chances for pictures were often few and far between, but we had good opportunities to study these wild and wary birds. We could see many things with the eye by watching through the thick reeds that could not be caught with the camera.

The first day as I lay hidden in the tules waiting for a picture, I saw a pair of grebes swimming along only twenty feet distant. I could catch glimpses of them as they passed just beyond their nests. One of the birds carried a chick on its back. The grebes have a way of taking their young with them, for the little fellows lie on the back just under the wing-coverts with only the head sticking out. At the slightest alarm the mother raises the feathers a trifle and covers the chick completely. One can readily tell when a grebe has a chick on her back even if it is not visible, because she appears to swim higher in the water.

As I was lying low in the reeds, another pair of grebes swam past. The back of one bird was high out of water. She was carrying two young, but at the time neither was visible. But soon one of the youngsters got anxious to crawl out, as it were, on the hurricane deck. Each time his head appeared, the

Method of M. Estlinson for Collins

use sparingly

(2)

mother would reach back and cover him up. Finally one of the little fellows crawled clear out in full view, and she let him sit there for a moment. But I could see this was not the customary way of riding, for she soon raised her wing and covered him. Occasionally she picked up bits of something from the surface and reaching back, fed her babies. A little later while the father was swimming near by I saw one chick slip off the mother's back and go paddling toward him. He seemed to lower his body slightly in the water and the youngster floated aboard.

The old grebes dive and swim readily under water with the young on their backs. But occasionally when they are frightened, they often lose their chicks. Several times while we were rowing about the Lake, we came unexpectedly upon old grebes that were carrying young on their backs. At such times when the old birds <sup>are</sup> ~~were~~ scared, it seems very difficult for them to hold the chicks in place when they dive. In most cases the young birds come to the top of the water after the mother dives. When we approached the little fellows, they tried to dive, but could not stay under long or go very deep, so they were easily caught.

Shung Grebes  
Paulson & Watson - June