

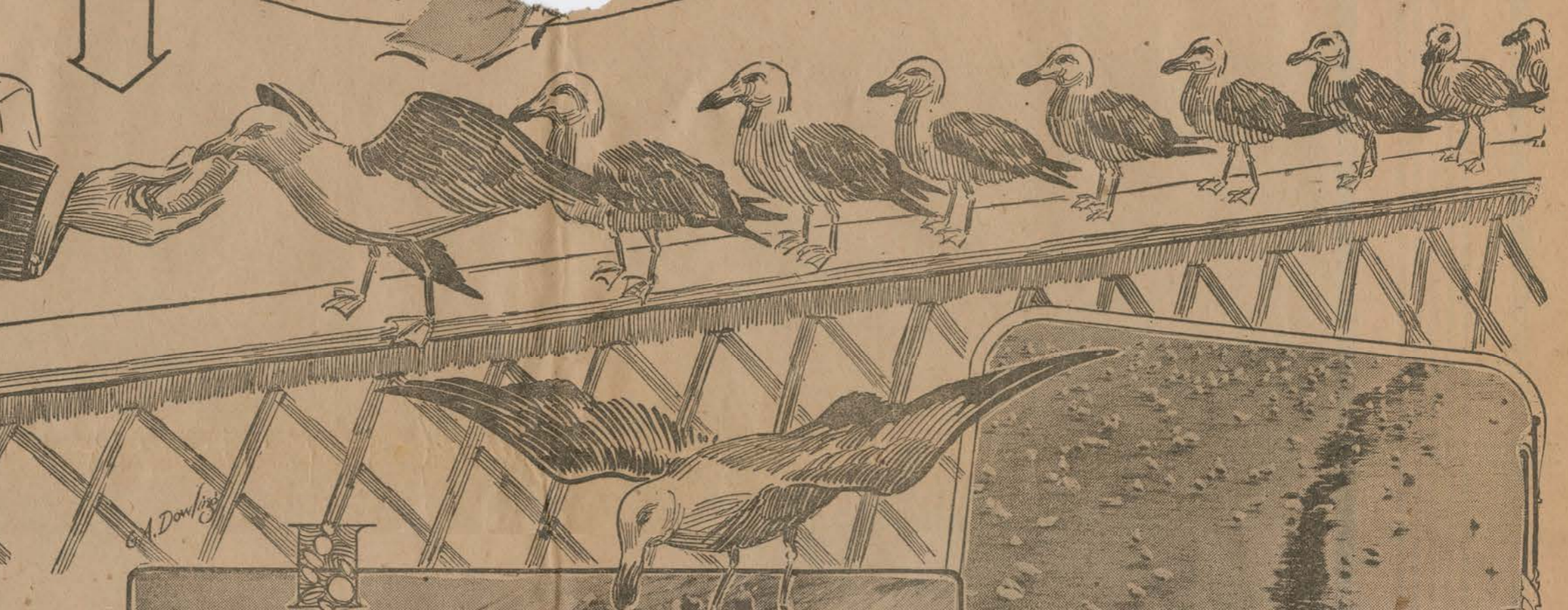
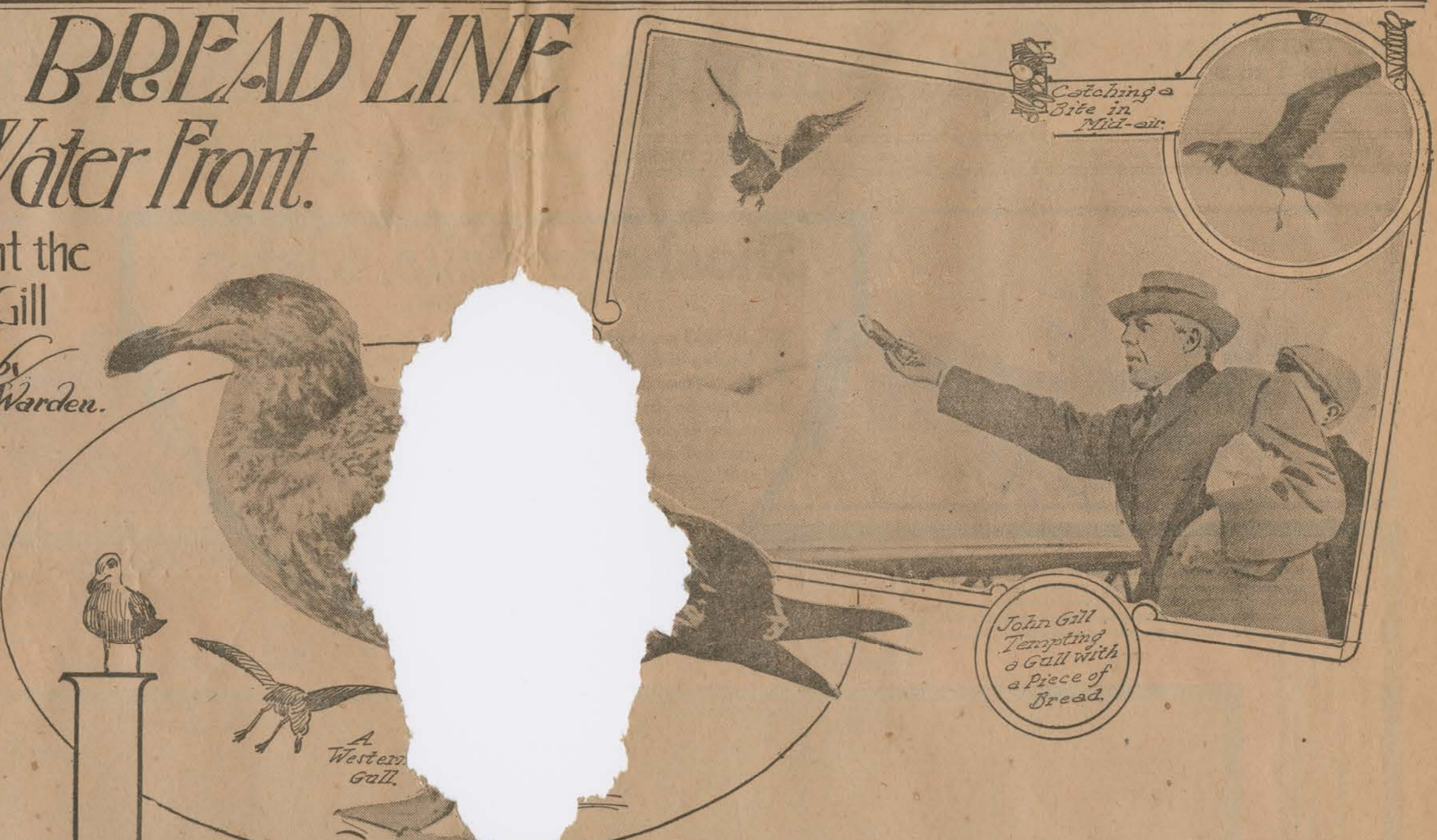
In the GULL BREAD LINE On Our Water Front.

How Hundreds of Birds Haunt the River Bridges Where John Gill Feeds Them.

By William L. Finley, State Game Warden.

Photographs

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WAS hurrying across Morrison-street bridge. Everyone was in a rush. As I neared the draw I saw the crowd as I have often seen it against the rail. It wasn't a fight nor even a man overboard. I hastened up and pushed in to get a glimpse of the fun.

"Look at him grab it on the fly," said the boy with the papers. "Wasn't that a good catch, mister? This is better'n a movie show."

"Hello, John," I said, as I reached in the sack for a crust of bread. "I see they are coming closer and getting more friendly every day."

"Yes," said the man with the sack, "that big gray one has taken bread four times from my hand."

And the crowd jostled and smiled as John Gill cast his bread upon the water, and they watched the gulls return tenfold.

These things happen every day. These pauses in the rush and the hurry, these smiles on the faces of the people are significant factors in the life of our city. The interest in wild birds and animals, the sharing of outdoor life is adding thoughtfulness and simplicity to our lives.

"Men are too busy to feed the gulls," added John. "Even the boys are more interested in something else than in watching these serene children of nature as they gaze at you with level eye and rebuke the pomp and madness of our hurried days."

"It isn't so much a matter of time, John; the business man finds time to do the things that lie nearest his heart. It is the lack of inclination, John; that's the pity. Here are the un-anxious sons of nature at the door-step of our city, these guests of the second table, our winter pensioners."

It isn't that John Gill, bookman, fisherman, naturalist, the friend of the gulls, has more leisure time to cast bread on the waters than James Smith, lawyer, or Alexander Jones, dry goods merchant, or Clayton Brown, physician. John Gill is a busy man, too; but where John Gill has it over James Smith, Alexander Jones and Clayton Brown is that he has the inclination to do the simple and wholesome things of life. Some people live and others save their living done for them.

You see, it is as Dallas Lore Sharp tells me. The trouble of living in the city is that the person hires it done. He hires the baker, the milkman, the butcher, the grocer and the dump cart to haul off the remains. He eats, he works a little and he sleeps—but he does not live at all. His living is all done for him. He gets the pumpkin pie the baker makes, but it tastes of tin. He gets a can or bottle of milk, but he never sees the cow even when he gets up early. He gets his vegetables nicely tied in bundles with the first washed off, so he has no indication whether they were grown or made by some machine. His fruit is all nicely boxed accompanied by a colored label.

This label is an important part of

city life; it is the commercial way of making things taste of the country; it is a reminder to the man in the city that he lives without roots and does not even touch the earth to draw from the real source of power.

"Consider the gull," says John Gill; "he toils not, neither does he spin. We are concerned about our clothing; his wardrobe is always on his back, always well-fitting, seasonable, correct. We are worried about the increased cost of living; the gull fares fat on what we squander and yawns contentedly after a meal of choice 'seconds.'"

"It's more sport today than yesterday," I said. "The gulls are hungry. Look at that white one—he missed, but caught himself, turned and snatched the bread in midair before it touched the water! That's the quickest piece of work I've seen."

"The next biscuit John doled out was attacked by seven birds. In the scramble that followed, the biscuit reached the water. Every bird dove for it. One of the gulls mistook his neighbor's foot and grabbed it for the biscuit and started away in a hurry. It was taken for an intentional mistake, for a fight followed."

"After all," says John, "gulls, men and children are very much alike. We fight over very small things at times."

The hungry mood had passed. The treasure chest of stale biscuits was empty, and John and I turned from the white-winged pensioners of the waterfront to the surging, pushing breadline along the city streets.

"One of the functions of nature is to persuade us that traffic is not life," I shouted in John's ear to drown the clamor of the cobblestones.

"It's not so much for our sakes I'm thinking," yelled John in reply, "as for our children."

"Yes, this trying to make a home in a big city is really a serious problem. In a modern city flat, one is dumped in by a hoisting machine at night and dropped out again in the morning. He has a floor over his head and one under his feet. It is a good burrow, but not a home. It is hard to make a home of a place three flights up with nothing but a wooden backyard and a ladder to climb down. Flats are not made for children. As a rule, the janitor doesn't allow them. But even if he did, what's the use of having children if you can't run and romp with them and yell and have a good time."

The next day when I took John by the arm and walked from Alder street along Front, he stopped at the lunch counter to get his sack of bread crusts. The man behind the counter always knows when he sees John walk in the door. The order is always the same. The breadline is always waiting on the draw.

"Come on, fellows; here he comes!" yelled one of the white-winged loungers.

"Gill! Gill! Gill!" screamed another,



And the cry spread over the water across the river and down the long line of wharves. If the gulls were voters, Gill would be Governor. I hadn't noticed but three or four gulls, but in a few minutes there were half a hundred. It went like wireless telegraphy along the waterfront. In gull life, as in human life, the competition is keen. When the gulls first come up from the sea they are fat and satisfied and rather timid, as a rule. When food is thrown out, they light on the water and feast. As the winter advances and morsels become scarcer, the bread hardly touches the water before it is snapped up. Those birds more expert on the wing snap the bread before it reaches the water. They become expert at this. Then, if one is patient, as John Gill is, the gulls become so friendly that they will take a crust from the hand.

Even here in the heart of the city, with the rumbling of wheels on the cobblestones and the crunching of the steel rails, one can study Nature in the odd moments of a busy day. It is worth one's while to scrape acquaintance with the gulls. I love to watch them. There is no finer poetry of motion than these gulls. As I cross the bridge on windy days, I see them move straight in the teeth of the wind. The noise almost motionless on outstretched wing. It is a difficult feat. A small bird cannot do it except by the rapid beating of his pinions. A gull seems to hang perfectly still, yet there is never an instant when the wings and tail are not constantly adjusted to meet the air currents, just as in shooting the rapids in a canoe, the paddle must be adjusted every moment to meet the various eddies, currents and whirlpools that are never the same at different instants.

The gull is a master of the air. A sailboat can only tack against the wind. A gull, by the perfect adjustment of his body, without a single flap of his wings, can make headway straight in the teeth of the wind. Yesterday I saw one retain a perfect poise, yawn and then reach forward with his foot and scratch his ear. How many have seen the trick?

"Here, slip one of the gulls this

side to side as if making some very uncomplimentary remarks on the depraved tastes of a man who would spoil good fish with such high seasoning. Then, picking up the bite, he flew down to the water, shook his head from side to side, violently "sozzling" the meat for several seconds. Back to the wharf he flew, where the bite was carefully inspected. This time it was not bolted, but held for a moment in the mouth, only to be again rejected, and carried back to the water, where it was more roughly "laundered."

This operation was repeated several times and the piece of fish, which must have weighed four ounces in the beginning, was reduced to half the size before it suited the palate of the bird.

Web-footed and equipped for life on the water, the gulls may follow in the wake of a vessel for days at a time in order to satisfy their appetite for scraps. Then, during the winter, they leave the sea and take up life on the bays and rivers. If bread is not forthcoming along the waterfront, I have seen these gulls strike out overland beyond the city to the fields and follow at the heels of the plowman, fighting with the blackbirds for a meal of angleworms.

Further inland, through Southeastern Oregon and Utah, the gulls are an economic factor worth considering. Skirmishing in the fields, they pick up a living of grasshoppers, rid the beet crops of harmful insects and clear the alfalfa of pestiferous mice. The method in the case of the mice is unique, combining, as it does, the labors of gulls and farmer. As the water is turned on in the field for irrigation, it seeps into the burrows, driving out the mice, which then fall victims of the waiting gulls.

Another incident of gull intelligence was told by A. W. Anthony. He was watching some of these birds a few yards away from the wharf when a piece of salted fish was thrown out from an adjacent bathhouse. It had hardly struck the water when it was seized and swallowed by a hungry gull.

The surprised actions of the bird showed that the salt-encrusted morsel was not to his liking. It did not reach his stomach until it was ordered out again. Dropping the fish on the wharf, the bird eyed it, turning its head from

mans and Spartans laid special stress upon the value of exercise for both mother and babe.

Baby needs exercise, but he does not need violent exercise any more than he needs a hearty meal of beefsteak and potatoes. The one would be as injurious as the other. It is no uncommon sight upon entering a home in the evening to see the father "playing with the baby," bouncing him up and down, totting him on his knee and in innumerable other ways tending to overstimulate the excitable and unstable nervous system of the immature child. The object of such a course can be demonstrated, in a manner, by the parent himself, if he will go through a series of violent exercises such as running, jumping and laughing heartily in the late evening hours, and then go to bed and try to calm himself for a quiet sleep.

Among the chief requirements for the growth of a baby, are plenty of rest and quiet, intermingled with a moderate amount of gentle exercise. For the greater part of the day a young baby should lie in its bed. For the first few weeks it receives sufficient exercises at the regular periods of feeding and bathing. When the baby is given its morning bath, the little body should be rubbed gently so as to exercise the tired muscles. That this rubbing is appreciated and restful is shown by the fact that baby always sleeps the best after a bath.

After the baby is a few weeks old, it exercises its own muscles by kicking, reaching and growing contentedly. For this reason it is not harmful for a baby to cry a moderate amount every day. Of course, violent crying should be avoided if possible, as there always is danger from an overstrain. When the baby is a few weeks old, it begins to throw its arms and legs about. Then it should be allowed to lie on its back when awake and exercise as it desires. The clothing should be arranged so as not to interfere with its movements. There is no more perfect picture of health than that of a growing baby lying on its back kicking and growing contentedly. An occasional word from its mother or other companion helps to keep it happy, for babies become lonesome as well as do older people. However, it is not necessary to take the baby up in order to talk with it. As a rule babies are handled too much. The baby should be taken up and its position changed every time it is fed, but it seldom should be held at other times.

After Dinner Hours On the Sand.

