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side of me to the other, tapped protests on the sounding bark, and behaved in general like true woodpeckers. Differences in birds are what we think of most in studying them; but after all, their points of similarity, especially when these points hint strongly at the identity of the origin of species, are quite as instructive, and worthy of serious thought. Leaving the three-toed inquisitors, I walked on through the woods skirting Indian Brook, and within a quarter of a mile flushed a woodcock and several ruffed grouse. Of the latter I saw a dozen or more during my rambles near Baddeck and Ingonish, but of spruce partridges I failed to secure even a glimpse, although all the local sportsmen declared them to be abundant, and as tame as barnyard fowls. At the point where the highway between Englishtown and Cape Smoky crosses Indian Brook there is a long and very deep pool. As I emerged from the woods above this pool, I saw three red-breasted mergansers swimming slowly across it. A prettier spot for them to have chosen for their morning fishing could not have been found on the Cape Breton coast. High ledges overhanging dark water, and overhung in turn by spruce and fir forest, formed a beautiful setting for the still pool across which they swam in single file, with their keen eyes watching me suspiciously. Many are the young salmon and speckled trout they cut with their ragged jaws. Had my visit to northern Cape Breton fallen during the period of the autumn migration, I should have seen wonderful flights and fleets of sea fowl. As it was, the species which I saw and the individuals which I met were few, save in the case of Wilson's tern, which was ubiquitous, and the least sandpiper, which in numerous flocks swarmed upon the sands. I saw also solitary and semipalmated sandpipers, greater yellow-legs, herring gulls, dusky ducks, old squaws, and golden-eyes. Blue herons were plentiful near Baddeck, as they had been on the Annapolis Basin. They formed a striking part of every evening picture, where sparkling water, tinted sky, purple hills, and gathering shadows were united under the magic words "Bras d'Or." In Loch o'Law, as the sun sank over the Margaree, a mother loon swam and dived with her chick in the placid water; but the bird which impressed itself most strongly upon my memory, during my trip, was the lonely shag, or kormorant, which I saw on the outer end of a line of rocks projecting into Ingonish Bay from the side of Middle Head. Dark land slimy, melancholy and repulsive, its head and neck reminded me of snake or turtle more than of any genuine feather-wearer. When at last it saw me, it was to the bay that it turned for escape, and upon the waters, almost out of sight, that it settled down to rest among the waves. There is more community of interest between this creature and the fish which swim under the waves than with the swallow which flies above them. All told, I think that I saw eighty species of birds during my two weeks' wandering in Cape Breton. Had I taken my tame owl Puffy with me, I should doubtless have seen more, for he would have drawn many shy birds round him which found no difficulty in including themselves from me. The island is certainly remarkably good ground for bird study; species are many, and individuals numerous. The combination of ocean, bay, inland lake both salt and



fresh, forest, and mountain is one which favors diversity and stimulates abundance. Common Loon and chicks Our thanks to Nimbus Publishing Ltd. for permission to use the line drawings by John H. Dick. They are taken from Robie W. Tufts' Birds of Nova Scotia, the premier book about Nova Scotia's birds since 1961. The 1986 edition, co-published by Nimbus Publishing Ltd. and the Nova Scotia Museum, contains the original colour illustrations by Roger Tory Peterson and John A. Crosby, and includes revisions by members of the Nova Scotia Bird Society under the coordination of Ian A. McLaren. Paperback: \$19.95. Hardcover: \$29.95. ASHBY MEDICAL SUPPLY We Rent, Sell & Repair Hospital Equipment: wheelchairs, commode chairs, walkers, beds, canes (WALTER'S RENTALS) 4 SHERIFF AVE., SYDNEY (539-9616) J.D. SMYTH LIMITED Plumbing, Heating & Ventilating Contractors SALES and SERVICE FREE ESTIMATES "No Job Too Big or Too Small" 564-8140 110 Reeves. SYDNEY 530-6094