

probably because no fish cares for them and they have no police to keep them in order. Therefore they cannot be so wholesome for our food as such fish as the cod. It is common for a disease to assume a different form on the different hosts it affects; and only the other day I read that some of our worst diseases are supposed to be secondary stages of those on fish.

The trumpeter is another fish that is kept in good order by the prompt removal of all those that have anything the matter with them. It is very few trumpeter that I catch—perhaps not twenty in a year—and yet several of them will have severe bites on them; and as we may expect that not 1 per cent. of these escapes, and that I do not catch one in a thousand of them, I can guess at the extensive and continual slaughter that is carried on among the fish, and that if it was only stopped for a single year the ocean itself might be sick.

Even when men catch fish they are most likely to take the silly ones first, and silliness often goes closely before or after other defects. It is a long continuance of that sort of selection that has made the trout so clever in avoiding visible fishing-lines; and probably for the same reason all the native fish of New Zealand are much easier to catch than those of Australia, because they have not such long experience of men.

Wounded Duck.

At the beginning of every shooting season it is common to see a single Paradise flying about the sound looking for its mate, which shows that they go over the mountains to the grass country in search of seed or grain.

On the 4th April, 1903, a wounded drake came into my little sandy bay on Pigeon Island, and crawled under the wire netting to get at a bit of grass at my door, so that he must have been starving to be so venturesome. When I accidentally frightened him he flew lightly against the netting, but hurt himself so much that he fainted. I thought he was dead, but while I was looking at him he recovered and toddled away in great straits. He can fly well but walks a little lame, and spends most of his time lying on the beach. He seemed not to recognise oats in that unlikely place, so I peeled big sods of grass out of my garden and laid them down where he used to rest, and when he had plucked them well I laid the oats on them and then he ate it. Of course, I had to be very cautious and only go to his place when he was away, or he would have gone altogether. All wounded wild things like to go away and live by themselves, because their mates will not have them in the first place, and in the second it is their best chance of a rest for recovery. But those beaches are hungry places, and he must have got a great surprise when he came back and found a patch of splendid grass growing on the sand. It would puzzle his head about the power he does not understand. He is probably one of a pair that used to come here, and in his great distress he remembered where there was a bit of grass in a lonely nook, a suitable place for an invalid. I knew that they were very intelligent, but this one showed it in a most remarkable way, for it was only a few days until he knew perfectly well that I was leaving the food for him, and that I was friendly. He would be up at his box in the morning and find it empty, yet would swim back and go straight up to it again when he saw me leaving it. That showed his reasoning. If he will only stay here altogether he will be very welcome, and he may do so, for he flies a little stiffer than when he first came. When I go away in the sound I can always leave him some food, and he is welcome to the grass.

2nd May.—The sparrows soon found the duck's food; also the woodhens learned to eat the wheat, so I flattened a fern-stem and put it upon stakes within shot of the flax. Then I took a fine "rise" out of the sparrows, and have not seen them since. The duck recognised his box up there and flew up at once. He lies there now most of the day, or comes round after me and sits on a rock within 40 yards of where I am cutting wood. The paradise all like the company of men if the men would only have them, and that trait is almost sure to be in remembrance of a friendlier race of men that used to live in New Zealand.

10th May.—Within the last few days the duck has become quite tame. He has plenty of courage, and when he sees the woodhens walking right up to me he appears to say to himself, "If they are not afraid, I am not." So this morning he comes up and has his food in his box between the house and the store, though they are only 40 ft. apart and I am in and out several times getting breakfast. But first he alights on a high stump to survey the situation, and sees me putting down the food.

I write these trifles because it is a rare opportunity of doing so, and the intelligence of all the creatures is really the most important thing about them. It dictates their habits, and if we had been better informed in that department we would not have made so many blunders. See how much we underestimated the ability of the weasels. We thought them fools enough to go struggling with rabbits, but the weasels knew too much for that—and for us too it appears. I had no correct idea of the sparrows' cleverness until I came here; and perhaps all the people in New Zealand are still without the right idea, and therefore make great mistakes in dealing with them. The ability of the creatures to adapt their habits to new conditions has cost New Zealand a lot of money.

Young ducks brought up tame would be no use to study, because they would be ignorant. That is why I value this one so much—in hopes of getting a mate for it.

Sparrows.

There were a few sparrows reared here this last season. The two previous seasons a few of them built nests in a big red-pine near the house, but I believe that a long-tailed cuckoo robbed them, and then all the sparrows went away. This last season I did not hear a single cuckoo anywhere in the sound, though in other years they were very commonly heard. The Maori name of Resolution Island alludes to the long-tailed cuckoo.

When the swarm of sparrows left here last February about a dozen of them remained—probably those that were reared here—and whenever I sowed a little grass-seed they would eat it all, or