



Scarlet Tanager

► FOR THE benefit of any embattled man who finds himself losing ground in the face of wifely objections that his casual attitude towards clothes is in marked contrast to the dandified fastidiousness he displayed during courtship, the example of the scarlet tanager is cited for what it may be worth.

During the mating season, no creature in North America decks itself out in more resplendent finery than the male scarlet tanager. The color scheme is simple but dazzling. The whole body is a vivid red boldly set off by black wings and tail.

With this splendid haberdashery he does not long remain single. On arrival from the South American wintering grounds, around the beginning of April in the South and the beginning of May in the North and Canada, he joins forces with a female of the species and they set up housekeeping.

ENTOMOLOGY

Insect Plagues Build Up

► INSECT PLAGUES, ancient enemies of the farmer, are building up to hit crops already crippled by the record drought. Corn borers and army worms will lead the insect devastation.

The Corn Belt faces an increased attack from the European corn borer, one of the nation's worst insect pests. Corn borer damage in the Midwest will probably be greater this year than last, K. Dorward, head of the economic insect survey section, U. S. Department of Agriculture, has predicted.

Surveys last fall showed 35% more corn borers went into hibernation than in 1952. Unless most of these borers die, the corn crop will be hit hard. Corn borers did an estimated \$125,000,000 damage in 1953.

Most of the increase in borers was noted in the north central part of the Midwest. Weather conditions that kill corn borers, unfortunately, also cut the corn crop.

By August or September, after the couple has accomplished its mission and the fledglings are able to fend for themselves, the male's courting raiment undergoes a familiar post-marital change for the worse. The birds molt, and for the male the transformation is as startling as though a Royal Canadian Mountie were suddenly to exchange his dress uniform for olive drab fatigues.

Actually the bird has no cause for complaint, because when he emerges from molt, he is still a comely bird. The new coat is a light yellowish green, similar to, but yellower than, the year 'round feathering of the female. The black wings take on a greenish edging. These are his traveling clothes, and it is in this sober garb that he spends the greater part of the year.

Scarlet tanagers are rather inept home-builders. Their nest, woven of rootlets and weed stems, is placed on a horizontal limb without too much thought to the whimsies of the wind. Not infrequently a gusty windstorm will pitch it to the ground. When this happens, the female, who seems fatalistic about it, sets right to work building a new one. Sometimes it takes four tries before the chirp of little ones crowns the couple's clumsy efforts.

While the yellowish olive-green female sits inconspicuously on the eggs waiting for her posterity to hatch out, her sportily colored mate is making a crimson flash among the tree tops as he flits busily about, singing in the sunlight. It is the song, not the plumage, that gives him away. For despite the brilliant color, the scarlet tanager is not often observed. He usually manages to keep dense foliage between ground observer and his perch high in the tree.

It is his song which betrays his presence to those who have learned to recognize it. The scarlet tanager's song has been likened to that of a robin with a cold.

Science News Letter, April 24, 1954

Questions

ASTRONOMY—When was the last time Mars was as close as it approaches this year? p. 266.

CHEMISTRY—What compounds mimic living matter? p. 265.

GEOGRAPHY—How do place names give clue to cultural background of the area? p. 267.

MEDICINE—What drug promises to become a lifesaver for burn victims? p. 262.

Why has a nation-wide call been put out for all patients who were treated by radioactive chemicals over 20 years ago? p. 268.

PSYCHOLOGY—How have music interpretation and mentally ill persons been linked? p. 263.

Photographs: Cover, Clifford E. Matteson; p. 259, Fremont Davis; p. 261, Hamilton Standard; p. 263, Argonne National Laboratory; p. 272, Adams Educator Co.

PSYCHIATRY

Future Acts Told Under Hypnotism

► "FUTURE" AS well as past experiences can be "lived out" by persons who are hypnotized, Drs. Robert Rubenstein and Richard Newman of Yale University School of Medicine have discovered.

This does not, however, mean that hypnotized persons can foretell future events, they warn in *Science* (April 9).

The hypnotized person who is told that it is now a day in 1963 will act out only the kind of future events in his own life that might reasonably be expected to occur. He will be extremely vague about events outside his own life. And he probably is making up the future event to please the hypnotist.

A medical student, for example, when hypnotized and told it was an afternoon in October, 1963, sighed when asked where he was and said:

"I'm pretty busy, got an emergency case that just came in—abdominal obstruction," and went on to relate details of the case and describe his findings as if he were actually operating on such a patient.

The Yale scientists think that each of their subjects fantasied, or made up, a future as actually here and now to please the hypnotist. They believe, consequently, that when a hypnotized person is "regressed" and asked to go back to a day when he was 10 years old, he may also be making up the events to please the hypnotist.

This would not be the case, they think, if the hypnotized person starts acting out a day in his past that had painful events, such as the death of a parent or something that had caused a conflict of feelings.

Science News Letter, April 24, 1954