

# To People Who Want to Write but can't get started

Do you have the constant urge to write but fear that a beginner hasn't a chance? Then listen to what the former editor of Liberty said on this subject:

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Quail

➤ MORE QUAIL fall victim to chilled lead shot each autumn than any other game bird in North America. Hunted by man as well as by dogs, cats, foxes, skunks, weasels, snakes, great horned owls and sharp-eyed hawks, it is small wonder that the bobwhite has an exceedingly suspicious disposition.

When the harvest moon is full over the shocked corn, this plump little field-dweller with the bombshell take-off knows that the season of error has returned.

Yet somehow the bobwhite will refuse again to be exterminated. The survival of American quail through the period of care-free market hunting into the present era of legal protection is one of the biological miracles of the Age of Gunpowder.

Not only in wild and out-of-the-way places does the squail still live, but all along the fence-rows of busy farms, even on the edges of cities. It is almost as if bobwhite knew how important he is to the insect-bedeveled farmers of the nation, and what a boon to humans who suffer from hay fever.

Bobwhites are so valuable as destroyers of weed seeds and insects that they deserve even more protection than they get. At one sitting a bird has been known to consume a thousand ragweed seeds. Another had eaten 5,000 seeds of foxtail grass, and a third fully 10,000 of the tiny seeds of the pigweed.

This is but the starch in the bobwhite diet; his meals contain so many injurious insects that he is worth many a quart of poison spray in a field.

But man, being perverse, continues to reason in this fashion: In the summer, grasshoppers ate our grain. Bobwhites ate the grasshoppers. Now we eat the bobwhites.

Quail are ground-loving birds, and seldom venture very far by air. They have a strong nesting and breeding urge, and when allowed to stick to business, average 14 offspring each year. To keep these large families firmly in tow, they have a wide repertoire of calls, shifting from tenderness to belligerency according to their mood.

By means of the familiar whistling "bob

... white" they attract their mates. The ringing "scatter call" keeps the coveys from wandering too far. A sharp "toil-ick, ick, ick" sounds the alarm when danger is near.

In escaping an enemy, bobwhite relies more on camouflage and the cover of tangled brush than upon breaking for the wild blue yonder. He would rather run than fly. But when discovery is imminent, a covey will burst from cover with a great "whirr" of their wings, scattering in all directions at 30 to 40 mile-an-hour speeds.

By the suddenness and noise of their take-off, they often startle the hunter and leave him waving the muzzle of his gun in hapless confusion. It is the bobwhite's last resort.

Even he, the king of upland game birds, cannot outfly modern high-powered lead poisoning.

Science News Letter, October 16, 1954

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lies beneath. Such simpler anatomical charts are used in hygiene instruction in schools.

More gruesome is the type of exhibit that shows artificial parts for the human body. Almost three dozen replacement parts are now in current use. Skull plates made of metal; artificial eyes; plastic balls, sponges and paraffin to fill the chest where a lung is removed; non-corroding metal alloy substitutions for various kinds of bones; tubes to replace damaged blood vessels, and, of course, artificial legs and arms.

If you should come upon a realistic figure, bleeding silent and prostrate, it is not necessarily a murder or a grim accident. It may be another kind of model that is being used for medical instruction.

The Navy Medical School in Bethesda, Md., has a manikin that actually "bleeds" a solution of glycerine, water and vegetable dye. Those learning to apply tourniquets or render other first aid can practice on this dummy. It is made of plastic, reinforced with fibers of glass. It can represent a person suffering from a leg wound, an arm wound, a belly wound, a penetrating chest wound, and a broken jaw causing bleeding from the mouth.

Other dummies of a similar sort are used in police instruction courses by the FBI and other law enforcement agencies. They are also used in civil defense exercises.

Science News Letter, October 16, 1954

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