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All the larger ruins were on the edge of the flood plains or within the alluvium, he found. The rainfall would have been adequate for summer crops of corn, beans and squash without irrigation, and Prof. Sauer finds here evidence that opposes the prevailing view of how American agriculture started. The current theory is that it began in arid regions and with irrigation to make a crop possible, he stated.

Whether different stages of culture can be traced will not be known until the different levels of soil and the ruins can be thoroughly probed. Some of the finds, such as terra cotta figurines and crude stone gods carved out of boulders, suggest the archaic forms of Mexican art. These appear to have been the manufactures of a people older and with more primitive ways than the Indians found by the conquerors.

"The thirty-odd ruins that we visited are an unknown, but probably minor fraction of those that exist in the area," Professor Sauer stated.

Science News Letter, November 22, 1930

A new lubricant, planned especially for marine engines, gives off a warning odor when there is danger of overheating the bearings.

ORNITHOLOGY

Nature Ramblings

By FRANK THONE



Grosbeak

THERE is hardly a part of our country that is not blessed with one species or another of grosbeak. And when the rose-breasted grosbeak goes south to Mexico or Central America for the winter, we may be favored with a glimpse of a pine grosbeak from Canada, come south from too much snow.

Grosbeaks differ in color and pattern, but they are all beautiful. The pine grosbeak is red all over, except for his brown-and-white wings and brown tail; the rose-breasted grosbeak has red only on his upper breast, and has black-and-white wings, black back and head, and white underparts; the evening grosbeak is gay with yellow high-lights. And so on down the line. In shape, however, they are all very much alike: "average" sized birds, running about eight inches in length; and all bear the same family sign, a heavy, strong, blunt beak.

This beak marks the birds as seed-eaters and kin to the finches. The name "grosbeak," in fact, is a reference to it. This seed-eating habit is one thing that makes the birds able to get along in winter weather, when insects are scarce. It may be, too, that the gentle manners of the grosbeaks are due in part to their vegetarian habits. At any rate, it is edifying to watch the conduct of a grosbeak family during nesting season, or of a little flock of them when family cares are over and they are free to indulge in social pastimes. The only thing that ever sets two grosbeaks to fighting is the question of the favor of a lady; that settled, everything is peaceable again.

Science News Letter, November 22, 1930

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