

## ORNITHOLOGY

## Eagles Did Not Fight When Nest Was Invaded

See Front Cover

**E**AGLES do not always fight fiercely when a stranger approaches their nest. When Frank and John Craighead, authors of the new falconry book, *Hawks in the Hand*, climbed into a bald eagles' nest in a big sycamore tree on an island in the Potomac, this is exactly what happened: "We took several pictures of the young eagles, and while doing so we noticed that the parent birds were circling much closer to us and occasionally swooping almost to the nest. Their plaintive cries became louder and more excited. Finally one of the eagles perched on a neighboring tree."

That was all. Not until the Craigheads left the nest did the mother attempt to return to her young.

The Craigheads are twin brothers, now graduate students at the University of Michigan, who took up the ancient art of falconry as a scientific hobby while they were high school boys. They captured and trained their own hawks, and even trained owls. In their book they tell of their adventures, as far afield as Yellowstone National Park and the Canadian forests, in search of new species of hawks to study and photograph.

*Science News Letter, December 9, 1939*

## BACTERIOLOGY

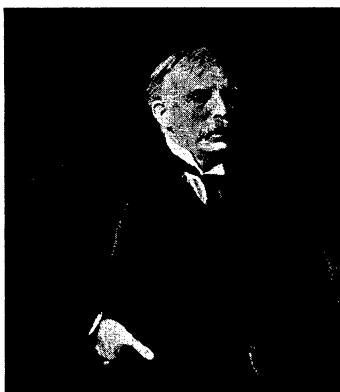
## Bacteria and Fungi in Soil Help Prevent Erosion

**S**OIL erosion prevention is not a matter of grass planting and reforestation alone. The microscopic "forests" of bacteria, fungi and other microorganisms that live in the soil also play an important role in holding it in place, it has been demonstrated in experiments by Drs. Selman A. Waksman and James P. Martin of the New Jersey Agricultural Experiment Station.

Microbes can bind the soil in several different ways, they explain (*Science*, Sept. 29). Fungi and some bacteria form subterranean networks of thread-like growth, that have considerable mechanical holding power. Bacteria secrete slimy substances that glue soil particles together. All the organisms of decay act on dead leaves and other plant parts to change them into humus, which has a recognized high value in soil conservation.

*Science News Letter, December 9, 1939*

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