

STORIES of New Jersey

iousness of English country homes in mind; it had a great living room with a tremendous fireplace. But the staircase led to an unfinished garret, for Herbert's plan far exceeded his father's modest gift. As in England he had the country at his front door. Green Island, just off the shore in front of the house, was a haven for wild ducks and geese, a favorite shooting place for hunters. From his porch stretched a beautiful scene which Herbert described as "the smooth, silvery Passaic, and the upward slope of the farther side covered with rich orchards."

His home and the wild life of America provided Herbert with compensations for the normal society of men and women which he denied himself. On these he poured out the love that he might have shared with human beings. The powerful emotion that fires his nature descriptions revealed to Americans new beauties in heretofore prosaic scenes. For Herbert the autumn woods became lovely places where

the hues of the innumerable maples, in their various stages of decay, purple and crimson, and bright gorgeous scarlet, were contrasted with the rich chrome yellow of the birch and poplars, the sere red leaves of the gigantic oaks, and with the ever verdant plumage of the juncipers . . .

His outdoor writing, however, extended beyond mere poetic revelation. He tamed the wild approach to wild life with accurate descriptions of the living habits of fish, game, horse and dog. In an article, *The Smelt of the Passaic River*, he followed the pattern of description and classification of fish that James J. Audubon had established for the birds of North America. Like Audubon, whose friend he was, Herbert possessed the gift of illustrating his books which enriched the public's appreciation of his work. He made his contribution to natural lore authoritative by supplementing his observations with extensive research. In *The Quail* he not only describes the bird but also recommends methods of gunning, the best time of day for the sport, and the proper role of the dog.

Herbert's arrogant attitude and his habit of affecting the trappings of a hunter on his walks through Newark streets made him an object of ridicule. Despite his irrational behavior, his sporting writing, which was helping to create a new type of sportsman, were models of systematic presentation. The title and subtitle of his handbook for sportsmen reveals the enormous scope of his interest. *The Complete Manual for Young Sportsmen* was subtitled

with directions for handling the gun, the rifle and the rod; the art of shooting on the wing; the breaking, management and hunting of the dog; the varieties and habits of game; river, lake and sea fishing; etc., etc., etc., prepared for the instruction and use of the youth of America.

Herbert's combination of colorful writing and exact information on natural subjects won him a far greater fame than did the dull novels in which he still maintained his hope for true recognition. His example of the gentlemanly sportsman and his ire at wanton destruction of wild life brought many requests from all over the country for him to take the lead in preventing the total annihilation of game. He responded with a charge that the quail-shooting laws of the time were based on a deficient knowledge of the living habits of the bird, and he urged revision of the game laws. Moreover, his monographs on the wood-