

The Unexpected

By FREDA M. CLAUS, Raymore, Sask.

I enjoy walking and have sometimes, on still, clear evenings, encountered the unexpected in mother nature's fields and woods.

One lovely July evening I had strayed a little farther than usual when I suddenly noticed some shrubbery being pushed apart. In a moment it completely divided and a round, quilled animal nosed his way into the clearing. He stopped when he saw me and we examined one another in quite obvious curiosity. He did not move again and when I had observed all his characteristics I continued my walk. This was the first time I had seen a porcupine.

On another occasion, in late fall, I was thoughtfully exploring some brushwood when I heard anguished screaming nearby. I hastened in the direction from which it came and saw a large weasel grapple with a panic stricken rabbit. As soon as the weasel saw me he disappeared and the rabbit hopped uncertainly into some brush in the opposite direction. I did not see either again, but have no doubt that the weasel waited his chance to recapture his prey. Poor rabbit!

On still another occasion I was walking through high slough grass when a mother partridge suddenly flew up and, with a terrific series of warning cries, winged in an opposite direction from which I was going. At almost the same time I saw her brood scamper and flutter in all directions in the high grass and felt something soft and yielding under my right shoe. I looked and at once realized I had stepped on a baby partridge hidden in the grass. I picked it up when it was breathing its last.

At another time I had just rounded the bend of a long slough when I heard a loud flapping of wings in water and a series of alarmed "quacks." I was just in time to see a flock of ducklings swim, with one parent, to the farthest corner of the slough. The other parent continued to follow me until I had reached the end of the slough. He never for a moment stopped flapping his wings, or filling the air with loud "quacks." A true family relationship this, based on the fine principles of unselfishness and thoughtfulness.

I could go on, and on, for nature is full of the unexpected, and full of wonders.

The Moon

M. Brooker, Grassy Lake, Sask.

No other part of nature can rival the beauty, intrigue, and mystery of the sky. Its ever changing cloud formations, colours, bright planets, winking stars, and nearest and most dear to us, the moon.

The moon, according to our fine old-timers, rules the weather, tells us we must not do this now, and when to do that. But most fascinating to us, was when she hung shrouded under the earth's shadow on January 18th.

For those who did not see the eclipse, the moon appeared a rosy tinted globe, heavily shadowed on the north side, and rimmed with gold on the south side. Usually the moon appears flat, except for the shadowed craters, but under the earth's shadow she became a round globe, as a globe on a classroom desk.