

THE GALLANT OF THE FENCE ROW

By Nell Womack Evans

ON A SPRING morning when the dogwood is in bloom, the peach orchard a mass of tender pink blossoms and the air fragrant with growing things, the call of the Bob White floods the heart of the listener with a feeling of well-being. Lucky are the farm folk that Bob White dwells among them. And, come autumn, hunters will stalk him through golden fields and briar thickets.

Call him "Bob White" or call him "quail," you cannot really know this gallant of the fence row until you have thrilled to his cheery call. From my childhood I remember him, sometimes atop a fence post, sometimes perched on the low branches of the orchard trees, calling — calling — in spring when he is ready to choose his mate, during nesting season, and late summer after his brood has hatched and flown.

To us, who heard him more frequently on humid days, his call seemed to say "more wet, more, more wet," and we came to depend on him as our rain forecaster.

The call is his love song as well as his challenge. Perhaps a demure hen hears him first from her hiding place nearby and a courtship is begun. Perhaps the ringing reply of another cock may answer the challenge, and a fight ensues — a fight as gallant and full of courage as that of game cocks.

Then Bob White, as a good husband, assumes his part of the home responsibilities, sitting on the eggs, and sometimes caring for the chicks.

Vanity makes it possible to trap the otherwise wary quail. During mating season he can be trapped alive and unhurt by using mirrors inside an appropriate trap.

Hunting for the quail's nest is a favorite pastime of children. The nests are casual, but cunningly hidden. There are some coarse straws which are laid to form a hollow and in this there are from nine to twenty tiny brown-speckled eggs. Those who are fortunate enough to see the nest at hatching time are amazed to note the alert manner in which the chicks almost leap from the egg and begin walking about the nest.

In an astoundingly short time the hen quail takes off from the nest with the chicks following after her in a long queue. They are the most delightful babies in the world, a buff "fluff" with a brown stripe from head to tail.

When a covey is flushed from a thicket by a hunter, the whirr of wings is so loud and so sudden that he thinks the jets are coming; momentary hesitation often loses him his quarry, as our little game birds can disappear like magic. Thus it is that our strutting little gallant continues to inhabit our fence rows.

PROBLEM IN

Panama

BY JULES DUBOIS

THERE IS a monument in the Republic of Panama which honors the French who failed to build the Panama Canal. There is no monument to honor the Americans who *did* build the Canal.

If our National Security Council, our Joint Chiefs of Staff, our State, Defense and other departments of our national administration have never given that poignant fact some thought, it is appropriate for them to do so now.

Negotiations are being held in Washington with special emissaries of the Government of Panama to review the entire field of relations between both countries. Panama took the initiative and practically had to beg the State Department to agree to talks.

President Jose Antonio Remon feels there are many inequities in the application of American policy in the Canal Zone. He has set the pattern for the Washington negoti-

ations with an often-repeated public statement: "We don't want handouts. We want justice."

A very prominent Panamanian has said: "The United States appears to have one foreign policy for nineteen American republics and a special and most distasteful one for Panama. The other American republics are treated as 'good neighbors' and we are treated like a conquered people."

I looked at him somewhat incredulously because Panama has derived, and does derive, many benefits from the mere existence of the Canal. Our airplanes fly mercy missions to every point of the Republic; boats are occasionally loaned for some official trips of Panamanians; and not a penny is charged.

I thought the official was stretching his grievances a bit too much at first. But constant travels throughout the other nineteen American republics have convinced me that he was not.