

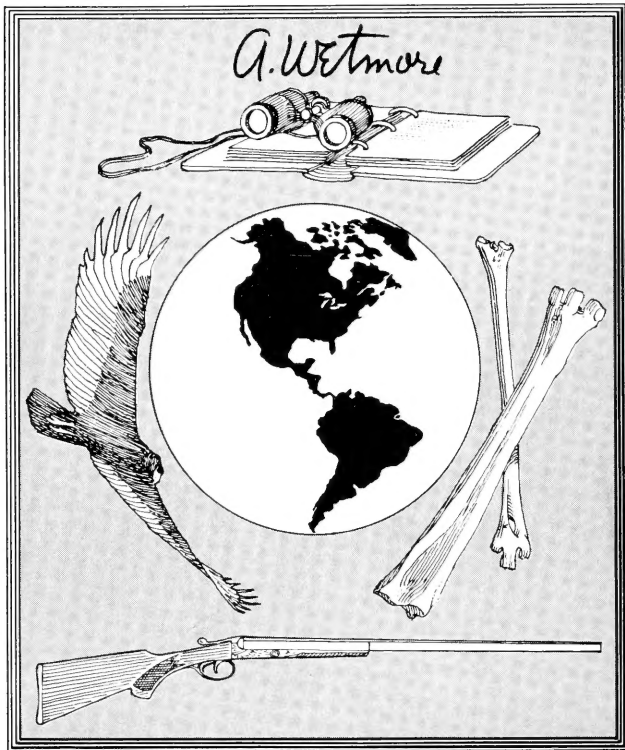


# BIRDS OF THE WEST

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CHARLES E. HOLMES

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Birds

# Birds of the West

AN ACCOUNT OF THE LIVES  
AND THE LABORS OF OUR  
FEATHERED FRIENDS

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BY

CHARLES E. HOLMES

PRESIDENT OF THE STATE AUDUBON SOCIETY  
OF SOUTH DAKOTA

(Illustrated by Bruce Horsfall)

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1907

HAMMOND & STEPHENS CO.  
FREMONT, NEBRASKA

THIS BOOK IS DEDICATED  
TO THOSE WHO READ IT.

## PREFACE.

The author of this little volume is not a scientist, he is only a nature-lover and he would be astonished and disappointed if everyone should agree with all that he has written. He has found a pleasure in tramping about the woods and the streams, in seeing nature at first hand and an almost equal pleasure in reading of what others have seen and loved.

It would be nice indeed to give credit where credit is due but where should I begin and where could I end? A father and mother who taught me to see things and to love them, an old half-breed Indian who in my childhood showed me many a sacred spot of earth, an old shoemaker who now in his ninetieth year and "livin' on borrowed time" still has the heart of a ten-year-old, unnumbered beves of school children who have followed me "up hill and down dale" giving me a thousand eyes with which to see, Audubon Wilson, Nuttall, Thoreau, Burroughs, Seton and many more may claim a share of whatever of worth there may be within these covers.

—*The Author.*

## INTRODUCTION.

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Many a time I have asked my friends the question "What is life?" and have received such answers as "To be" and "To exist", but it was left for a little black-eyed and black-skinned boy in a school where I was speaking, to give to me the answer that has pleased me most. He said "It is to see things, Sir" and so it is if only we see with our mind's eye as well as with our "lamps".

To know

"Of the wild bee's morning chase,  
Of the wild flower's time and place,  
Flight of fowl, and habitude  
Of the tenants of the wood;  
How the tortoise bears his shell,  
How the woodchuck digs his cell,  
And the ground mole sinks his well;  
How the robin feeds her young,  
How the oriole's nest is hung."

To know these things is to add to the resources of our lives, and mightily so, if our knowledge is at first hand. To be sure, most of it has to be served to us and usually it is creamed and sugared for us. Oftentimes it has to be spiced to suit our jaded mental palates. It is for that reason that we should do well to hark back to nature.

Let us get acquainted with the birds. They will take us over the earth, the sea and the sky. They will reveal to us the best of nature's secrets.

We shall learn something of the skunk cabbage when we see the dapper little yellow-throat building her home within it, choosing to endure its horrid odor for the protection that it gives to her helpless little babies.

We shall learn that snakes crawl out of their skins when we find the crested flycatcher working a cast-off skin into her nest to scare her enemies away.

We shall get a genuine pleasure in knowing that the little bird we call a petrel was named after Saint Peter because it walks upon the water.



When we are afield we shall learn of the trees in which the birds spread their tiny couches and swing their airy cradles.

We shall find the sparrow's nest in a tangle of vetch, the deep green eggs of the catbird in the meshes of the wild grape and the leaf-colored lady chewink sitting on her nest, her bright red eye snapping like a spark among the leaves as though she were about to set the forest afire rather than have us intrude upon her solitude.

We shall see a ruby-throated hummingbird building an imitation knot upon a tree-limb and using it as a nest and we shall admire the genius of somebody or of something. Shall we not?

Shall we not wonder which is the cleverer, the cowbird that lays her egg in the yellow warbler's nest to avoid the duties of maternity, or the yellow warbler that build's a false bottom above the cowbird's egg to avoid running an orphanage? I found such a nest in a wild gooseberry bush on the shore of Lake Herman ... Lake county, S. D., a few years ago and it was so deep that I more than half believe that it was a "three-decker", but as there was but one egg buried within it, I shall report it a "double-decker".

The bugs, the bees, the moths, the butterflies, the flowers, everything is to be found where the birds are. One should feel a sense of shame to admit that he cannot tell an anemone from a bluebell nor a grosbeak from an oriole, especially if he is old enough to tell a dime from a penny or stage money from a bank note.

Let us not be worried by the two schools of nature-lovers. One sees only the leaden side and the other only the golden side of the statue and their lances never draw blood. Instead of trying to find human nature in the birds, let us study man a little to see if he has within him something of bird nature. When we see him going up a telephone pole by means of "climbers", we see only a cheap imitation of the method of the woodpeckers that carry their spikes on the ends of their tail-feathers and when we find an old crow hiding tiny and shiny things among the leaves within the hollow of an old tree-stump and visiting his treasury every little while to look over his wealth, can we not recall many a miserly old human crow that is doing the same thing?

If we have never learned a lesson in politeness from the cedar waxwing it is our own fault, for though there were a thousand of them in a single tree-top, he would never jostle his branch-mate,

not for a whole cedar swamp, and he would hardly think of eating as much as a newly found worm until he had offered it to the nearest lady.

I wonder if the brown thrasher did not teach us how to sing, the ovenbird how to teach, the vireo how to preach, the goldfinch how to bathe and the turtle dove how to love? Do you suppose that the wren taught the women how to scold, that the blue jay taught the men how to swear and that the English sparrow taught them to hang around down town?

Now let us discard our conceit and let us give a better character to the lower animals. Let us stop calling our faithful dog a pup and a cur and let us be fair to the birds. The much abused lark always stays at home nights and though the skylark is a high-flier, the poet says that he "sings at Heaven's gate". Why, if a man were a "regular nighthawk", he would retire soon after dark, for the nighthawk never flies at night. The human "jay" is quite different from the bird of that name for the little fellow is a swell dresser and very, very wise. The stork, poor fellow! He has some awful responsibilities thrust upon him.

If a man were not so often as crazy as a loon, if he were half as wise as an owl, if he only had an eye like an eagle's, were less gullible and less of a cuckoo, he would not cherish prejudices that lead him to kill any of our birds, for it is a very rare bird that has a ledger balance in red ink. He would not repeat the hue and cry against every bird that eats anything of commercial value. Of course some of the birds are sinners some of the time, but "let him among you that is without sin, cast the first stone".

Just think of it! In order to get a law upon our statute books to protect our song birds, it has often been necessary to permit the killing of blackbirds. Why? Because the farmer begrudges the little corn he eats. If he were to open his eyes and open also a blackbird's little "tummy", he would find it full of cutworms instead of corn. Of course he eats a little corn now and then, very little, but he buys it and he pays for it. When he follows the farmer's plow from morning till night, what do you suppose he is doing?

Gardeners, who do not know, shoot the rose-breasted grosbeak whose choice of food is the potato bug. A pint of them is short rations for the little fellow. Besides, he is handsome, a dear

little husband, and he sings like a concert tenor. Nurserymen rejoice when they hear the voice of the cuckoo echoing from some hidden corner of their orchard, for they know that the cankerworms are at their last banquet.

We accuse the mosquito of carrying fever germs and no doubt it is guilty. Think how many human lives must be saved by the nighthawks, chimneyswifts and the swallows, yet gunners, I beg pardon, "sportsmen", practice on them because they are swift of flight. The kingbird is charged with eating honey-bees but he eats only the drones except when he guesses wrong. Do you think he is any more anxious to swallow a bee with a stinger than you are? Still people must have their pleasure and if the little birds must be shot, shoot the English sparrows for if there are Mormons in the bird-world, they are guilty, and if feather emblems must adorn your hats, use the goose-quill, for honestly "a bird in a bush is worth two on a hat".

When we begin to appreciate the worth of things rather than their values, we begin to live. Then a frog means more than a pair of edible legs, and I have seen the very human little fellows put their hands over their faces to ward off the blows that were to send them to the market. Is not a quail on its nest better than a quail on toast? Does it not bear the same relation to birds that the trout does to fishes, just a little dearer than most of the others? Neither was made to lie in the market and if they must be taken let it be where the feathered choir is chanting a requiem and the heather bells are tolling.



## ROLL OF HONOR.

### THE BIRDS.

For service in the cause of humanity; for making the fields to flash with color, the lakes to laugh with music and for making the trees the very "peaks of song", for teaching the courage for pioneering, the joy of honest toil, the virtue of happy mating, the spirit of devoted parentage and the satisfaction in an "ever so humble" home; for singing with their work and revealing to us the life in nature that "lifts us to the skies".

### THE ROBINS.

For labor upon our lawns; for stirring childhood's fancies and awakening in old hearts the illusions of their childhood.

### THE LARKS.

For tireless hours of toil upon our farms, clearing them of insects and the seeds of noxious weeds; for singing in every field and from every fence-post; for making morning the beginning of a day and evening the promise of another.

### THE BLUEBIRDS.

For picking up the berries of the ivy and the brier; for clearing our gardens of grubs, our waysides of pests upon the wing and for giving a song to the early winds to tell us that we may rejoice at the bursting of the buds.

### THE CUCKOOS.

For stripping our trees of caterpillars, our gardens of spiders, our fields of beetles and for minding their own business.

### THE HAWKS.

For their restless hunting of rodents and reptiles and for having eyes that see in a half-blind world.

### THE KILLDEERS.

For their fight against the boll-weevil and the Rocky Mountain locust and for the love of their little fuzzy babies.

**THE WOODPECKERS.**

For destroying ants, moths, beetles and weed-seeds; for their tremulous tattoos and awakening calls of springtime.

**THE KINGFISHERS.**

For lessening the swarms of beetles, crickets and grasshoppers and reminding us that ours are "haleyon" days, if we but make them so.

**THE GROSBEAKS.**

For destroying potato-bugs and caterpillars; for one of the sweetest sounds in nature that makes us glad to stop in our hurry that we may look and listen.

**THE SWALLOWS.**

For killing the germ-bearing mosquitoes; for suffering saved to the beasts of the field and for their "cheerful twittering from the straw-built shed".

**THE NATIVE SPARROWS.**

For using thousands of tons of weed-seed that will never choke the grain nor the flowers; for their infinite presence and their unnumbered songs.

**THE UNKNOWN LIVING.**

For working without reward and singing without applause.

**THE UNKNOWN DEAD.**

That have fallen on broken wing during the wild nights; that by unhappy flight have been the prey of natural enemies and men.



## THE FOOD OF BIRDS.

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The problem of bread-winning? It is the same mighty problem for bird, beast, fish, or man. It prescribes to each of them where he shall make his home; whether or not he shall migrate, and if he does, it names for him the very time and place of his migration.

With birds, it largely determines the size and shape of their bills, the shape and character of their feet, the length of their wings, the shape of their tails, the color of their plumage and the number of their eggs.

There is a little bird known as the red cross-bill, and a German fable says that the little fellow twisted its bill by trying to pull the nails from the Savior's cross, and that in doing so, its breast was reddened by the Savior's blood. Science, that so often spoils a pretty story, says that the crossing of its bill has resulted from its fondness for the seeds of the pine cone. I remember the first one that I ever saw. I was so sorry for him because he had twisted his little bill.

Now, the butcher needs different tools from those of the gardener, so it is natural enough that the butcherbird, the owl, the hawk and the eagle that slaughter what they eat, should have beaks that are sharp and curve downwards, so that they can cut and tear steaks out of their slaughtered victims. The avocet and the woodcock are so fond of worms that nature has given them very long beaks so that they can drill into the muddy earth where the worms are crawling. The bill of the avocet turns upward and many claim that the woodcock can turn his upward too, so that he can make a regular hook of it and more easily pull forth the worms.

Kingfishers, fish hawks and mergansers catch fishes. The kingfisher has a strong beak and a very, very sharp one so that it easily sinks it into its victim. The fish hawk, when it dives into the water for its fish, trusts to its specially favored feet to hold it, while the merganser has a bill that is like a set of saw-blades and a fish has little chance of escape from its serrate jaws.

You have noticed the sifting machines on the side of the beak of a spoonbill duck. The duck will gobble a mouthful of minnows or snails or a combination of mud and food but he has little trouble in sifting the objectionable matter out.

The woodpecker being more or less a carpenter, is provided with a well tempered, well sharpened, hammer-like bill that enables him to drill holes of almost any size either for the securing of food or the construction of a home.

No doubt the canna, the nasturtium and the trumpet-creeper are as anxious to have the hummingbird work for them and fertilize them as the hummingbird is to have them run a nectary for him, so while the flowers have developed a deep cup to shut the moths out, they have made it necessary for the hummingbird to grow a long bill in order to reach the nectar. It is a pretty partnership they have entered into, the little boycotters.

The swallows and flycatchers have opened their mouths so wide and so much and so long to let the flies in, that their mouths reach from ear to ear.

The food of birds has a direct bearing upon the size and shape of their feet. I called attention to the needle-pointed talons of the fish hawk that enable him to grasp with certainty the fish beneath the water and easily handle him within his native element. What a feat it is! Here is the problem upon which you may ponder. A fish hawk is flying in a circle at the rate of twenty miles an hour while the wind is blowing thirty miles an hour. He is four hundred feet above the surface of a river that is flowing ten miles an hour. Six feet below the surface of the river a fish is swimming with the stream at the rate of twenty-five miles an hour. On account of the refraction of light the fish is two feet away from where he seems to be and it is four o'clock in the afternoon. Don't you think you would rather trust a fish hawk's instinct than your own mathematics? That is just the problem that a baby fish hawk solves as unerringly as its father does.

A woodpecker must certainly have sharp and strong toes to enable him to cling so easily to the sides of barkless trees.

It is a rule of nature to discard the useless things. If you will notice a cow's foot you will see that two of its hind toes no longer touch the ground and are little better than warts. The horse has only one toe left upon each foot. If the nighthawk, the swifts and the swallows don't use their feet more, they will soon have feet as small in proportion as those of a Chinese princess.

Swimming birds are web-footed for they must often pursue their prey even under water. The mergansers can paddle fast

enough under water to catch fishes. The petrel will spread his wings and with his webbed feet will not only walk upon the water as Peter did, but he will run.

Wading birds have very long legs and feet, well adapted to tramping out any delicious morsels that are concealed in the mud beneath the shallow water.

The albatross has a wing-spread of twelve or fourteen feet and I am sure that I should want even more than that if I made such trips as he does over the ocean. The swallows are on the wing nearly all the time and they often have to make very sudden turns to catch passing flies. It is therefore reasonable that there should be little to them but wings, but a quail or a prairie chicken that makes only short flights and does not migrate has little need of very long wings.

Some of the birds make use of their tails to steer them either in flight or while swimming under the water and all birds find their tails of considerable service in making a landing upon a perch.

As to color of plumage and its bearing upon food supply, there is mostly indirect relation, but it is claimed for some of the water birds that they have the power of illuminating their under plumage for the attraction of fishes and it is well known that birds often take the color of their surroundings, for they wish to be inconspicuous both when they are preying and being preyed upon.

You may ask, "What has the question of diet to do with their egg-laying?" Birds have quite a problem to solve when the task of feeding their young is before them. A young bird is an awful eater. An abundant food supply that is available for a long season will mean to many birds an extra family per season, and to many more a larger family. You know how quality and quantity of food affect the domestic hen and I am quite sure that when times are good and living is easily made, our human brothers more readily assume the duties of the Benedicts.





## BIRD-DESTRUCTION.

The great instinct of bird life as of all life is the instinct of self-preservation. It is therefore a matter of great concern to birds just how and where to construct their nests so that they may live with least danger to themselves and rear their families with the greatest certainty. The decrease in bird life during the last few years has been due mostly to shot guns, but there are so many sources of danger to birds that some naturalists doubt that any of them "die a natural death" meaning, of course, a death without violence. At Luverne, Minnesota, a few years ago several acres were found covered with lapland longspurs that had met death by encountering a severe storm during their northern migration. Have you not seen dozens of dead birds lying beneath a line of telegraph wires? Think too of the thousands of chickens, grouse and quail that are frozen or smothered during the cold and snowy winters, and of the havoc wrought to nests by fires and floods, by the prairie wind and the farmer's plough.

Let us see what means are used by the birds for their own protection. Against winds and rain the oriole builds a swinging nest at the extremity of a tree-limb. The robin plasters its nest with mud to give it strength. The grebe builds a nest that will float upon the water. The orchard oriole and the warblers fasten their nests securely to the boughs of bushes and of trees. The red-winged blackbird ties its nest to marsh reeds or the limbs of small trees in western tree claims. Woodpeckers, chickadees, bluebirds, phoebes and house wrens drill holes into trees or make use of holes drilled by other birds. The barn swallow and the phoebe often build under bridges. Eaves swallows, ovenbirds and meadow larks generally roof their nests and many birds go far enough into the forest to get away from the severity of the storms. Sand swallows dig into sand banks and English sparrows often take possession of their burrows. Bob whites and plovers lay pointed eggs and the wind cannot blow them very far away. Mourning doves and nighthawks seem not to have learned how to secure adequate protection from storms but they have ways of their own for self-protection, especially against squirrels, snakes and men, the former often feigning lameness when its nest is approached and the latter removing its eggs to a new location.

Many birds build like the oriole, far out upon the small branches of trees or cover their eggs, as do many of the ducks, with feathers or dry grass. Orchard orioles make their nests of green grass so that when new they are very difficult to find. Blackbirds, phoebes and barn swallows often build above water, taking the risk of drowning their young rather than the dangers from living enemies. Many birds, especially females, grow to resemble in color their nest material or other surroundings. This is true of the che-wink, the indigo-bird, and most of the sparrows and ground-nesters. Birds often trust to the good fortune of being undiscovered but if discovered, like Bob white, the cuckoos and the dove they feign lameness, or like the wrens and the kingfishers they scold, or like eagles and hawks, they fight. Flight is the natural method of escape if the home is not involved, though birds like the loon and the grebe and some of the ducks trust to diving beneath the water.

To protect themselves from other birds is a very difficult problem. Small birds that live in cavities in trees or the earth are naturally protected from larger birds that are unable because of their size to enter their small homes. In that way, even the smaller woodpeckers and the sand swallows are protected. The most practiced method, however, seems to be to select places for homes that are rarely frequented by bird enemies. Birds that come into the city are in less danger from hawks, crows, jays, shrikes and cowbirds, though they must endure the annoyance of English sparrows. The yellow warbler often builds in the prickly gooseberry bush, the swift in chimneys, and the kingfisher in a hole in the ground that he permits to become such a stench that no self-respecting creature would go near it. All in all, it is quite a problem to build so as to be protected against so many dangers and at the same time to be near good building material and a generous food-supply. Surely the little birds have their troubles and are entitled to our friendship.

The next generation will feel and know that all creatures have the inalienable right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness, if they grant the same to others. Do you think that the Creator intended that there should be a penalty for beauty?

Beauty is almost a synonym of "good" and of "true". Yet birds are slaughtered because they are beautiful. Even a throne gained by wading through slaughter no longer calls for the respect



AMERICAN GOLDFINCH  
UPPER FIGURE, MALE; LOWER FIGURE, FEMALE  
(One-half natural size)



of mankind and personal adornment that calls for innocent life will be despised by the daughters of those who think to steal reflected beauty from a pretty bird. It is "Mothers causing the death of mothers" and for the sake of vanity. Public sentiment is fast shaping itself and the woman who jauntily tosses her plumes to the breezes with the vain thought that she has a pretty face, will soon learn that enlightened sentiment is thinking about her thoughtlessness or her heartlessness. Shoot birds if you must but shoot them with a camera or level a pair of opera glasses at them. You will not be violating either a written or an unwritten law by doing so. You will find the pursuit as fascinating and the results more lasting. You will find therein an appeal to your better nature. The days when wild life was valued only for food and raiment have passed with barbarous races.

You should never shoot even the game birds in the springtime. Why? Because your only justification can be that they are needed for food, which is rarely true. As a rule spring shooting is only to satisfy a desire to kill which masquerades under the name of sport. As for song birds they should never be killed.

If any birds are needed for food, it is well to know that those that migrate are thin and tough from long flight, and ducks especially, having had more of a fish diet than in the fall when grains are available, offer a flesh that is at its worst.

All birds are more trustful and less fearful when love warms their little hearts and for them the springtime is the time of courtship and marriage. The loss of a single bird may mean one less nestful of babies and there are enough natural enemies of the mating and nesting bird without the unnatural enmity of man.

It is estimated that during the last twenty-five years, the number of birds has decreased one-half. That would not be so bad if it were not for the fact that the most beautiful birds are the ones that have decreased most rapidly. The scarlet tanager, the passenger pigeon, the bluebird and the egret are fast going while the most undesirable birds such as the English sparrow are fast coming.

## BIRD SPORTS.

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Nearly all forms of animal life have a way of playing. You have seen horses have jolly good times just for fun. Nothing is prettier than to watch a family of foxes at play unless it is to watch the antics of puppies and kittens. Do you think that such cheerful livers as birds have no games to play at?

I have seen sandhill cranes do a mighty pretty cake walk and some very fancy jigs; and a number of tiny sandpipers did what I should call a cotillion, if it were done in a ballroom by common folks.

You have no doubt seen robins play tag upon a lawn and what sport a game of tag would have been to us in our boyhood days if we had only had wings. Did you ever see a cat play with a mouse? Terns (often improperly called gulls) play catch with fishes. A tern will carry a fish high into the air only to drop it, when suddenly another tern will catch it on the fly and go upward with it only to drop it to a third tern and so on until they are weary of the game.

When a gull carries a clam to a great height and drops it, it does so in order to crack the clam-shell, for, if the shell is not broken, the gull will carry it to a greater height the second time and the third time to a still greater height. Pretty fair intelligence?

I shall always think that the redstart turns its many somersaults just for the fun of it and I have seen one turn every minute for half an hour apparently for the principal reason that she had a spectator.

Do you suppose that bitterns have a sense of humor? I fear not, yet they surely would inspire it within you if you should see one standing for hours on one foot trying to fool the frogs into the belief that he is a part of the scenery. He's an unlucky frog who happens to come within the bittern's sphere of influence.

The ruffed grouse drums upon a log with his breast and wings and the woodpeckers drum with their bills upon hollow tree stumps. It is no doubt a means they employ to win their brides, but it is sport just the same. Young men and old men get playful too when they are sparking.

The high dive of the nighthawk, the tossing of a fish into the air and catching it before swallowing it, as the cormorant does, the strutting and puffing and blowing of prairie chickens, the soaring of larks, hawks and eagles are only useful means of bird enjoyment. Speaking of concerts, ask the blackbirds.



BIRD INTELLIGENCE.

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It is not probable that female birds know that they resemble their environment in color nor that they gather materials for their nests that will be inconspicuous. Naturally grass birds use grass because it is most available. White strings and bright objects so often woven into nests are surely not put into them for the purpose of concealing them and as to the former problem we may say that it is part of Nature's plan and let it go at that. We do not know all of Nature's secrets but we may have the pleasure of guessing—half of life is used in that way.

It is not my intention to convey the impression in these articles that birds do much, if any, reasoning, or that they are so wonderful in themselves, but I do wish to show that they are beautiful and wonderful as a part of the great, natural plan and I should rather be guilty of romancing than to rob them of the least bit that is theirs. It will be too bad if the crusade against the "Nature fakers" goes to the extent of robbing childhood of the fairies and of Santa Claus. Our keenest joys in life could be "shot to pieces" by the arrows of reason, and if we should live neither in the past nor in the present, the game of life would hardly be worth the candle, so if these articles are at any point more imaginative than real, no apology need be applied for. The man who is not fooled most of the time is rare and the one who thinks he is rarely fooled is often the one who is fooled most of the time, and if while we are being fooled we are having our sympathies deepened, our loves strengthened and our lives brightened, there need be little worry as to whether the fish-hawk after a dive into the water on a hot day, shakes itself over its nestful of eggs to cool them off or just happens to do so.

The writings of the anti-"Nature fakers", who would be so strictly honest that they would not attribute anything like human reason to the birds, are almost brimming over with unconscious admission of what they so severely condemn. After the pretty story is told it is unhappy that the secret is let out that it probably isn't true. When we are told of two pretty singers having a singing con-



test or two pretty dressers having a strutting contest to win the wing of a female in marriage, it is too bad to tell us that they probably did not know what they were doing.

That there is Nature faking goes without saying, but it is to be hoped that the reaction against idealization of the non-human will not cut the heart out of Nature.



CONSTITUTION OF THE AUDUBON BIRD CLUB OF  
 .....SCHOOL.

*Article I.—Name.*

The name of this organization shall be The Audubon Bird Club of.....School.

*Article II.—Objects.*

The objects for which this club is formed are: (1) to study the birds; (2) to protect the birds; (3) to attract birds around our school, and about our homes; (4) to observe with suitable ceremonies some day in spring to be known as Bird Day; (5) to acquire a library of nature books and nature literature; (6) to plant trees and shrubs in school grounds and along highways.

*Article III.—Members.*

All pupils of this school are eligible for membership. All persons who attend the meeting for organization shall be considered charter members. Thereafter members shall be duly proposed and elected. The teachers of the school shall be honorary members.

*Article IV.—Meetings.*

Meetings shall be held at least twice each month, or on the call of the president for a suitable reason.

*Article V.—Dues.*

The dues shall not exceed two cents per month.

*Article VI.—Officers.*

The officers of this club shall be a president, a vice president, a secretary and a treasurer. The term of office shall not exceed three months. The duties of the officers shall be as follows: President, to preside at all meetings; vice president, to preside in the absence of the president; secretary, to record the proceedings of all meetings and to conduct the necessary correspondence of the club; treasurer, to collect all dues and pay all bills authorized by the club.

*Article VII.—Committees.*

The committees of this club shall be: Committee on feeding birds in winter; committee on nesting houses; committee on drinking and bathing fountains; committee on plants to attract birds around our school and homes; committee on protection of birds during the nesting season; committee on law (to post warning notices and to report violations of the bird laws to the proper authorities); committee on preparing a local list of birds; committee on a bird library for the school. These committees shall be appointed by the president, who shall also determine their size. The member first named shall be chairman.

*Article VIII.—Duties of Committees.*

The duties of these committees shall be to collect information on the topics suggested by the name of the committee and to report at the meetings, giving suggestions to the members on the best method of procedure. It shall also be the duty of the committees to assist the members in carrying on their various lines of work and to learn the results of the members' efforts. A report of these results and of the work done by each committee shall be given at the regular meetings of the club.

*Article IX.—Amendments.*

Any amendments to this constitution may be adopted by a two-thirds vote of the members present at any regular meeting, notice of such amendment having been presented at the previous meeting.



# Cuckoos.

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Order, *Coccyges*.

Family, *Cuculidae*.

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387. YELLOW-BILLED CUCKOO. (Rain Crow.) *Coccyzus americanus*. Eleven inches long. Olive-gray above. Ashy white below. Slim, graceful body. Bill slightly curved. White spots the size of your finger-nail on tail feathers. Lower mandible yellow. Nests only a few feet above ground. Eggs pale blue-green.

388. BLACK-BILLED CUCKOO. (Rain Crow.) *Coccyzus erythrophthalmus*. Eleven inches long. Olive-gray above. Ashy white below. Slim, graceful body. Bill slightly curved. White spots on tips of tail feathers, but not "finger-nail" shaped as in the yellow-billed cuckoo. Bill entirely black. Red eye-ring. Nests only a few feet above ground. Eggs pale blue-green.

## YELLOW-BILLED CUCKOO.

"Gulp! Gulp! Gulp! Gulp! Gulp!" will come to your ears from your garden sometime. You will wonder if a tree-toad is getting ambitious to sing a bird note or if a mocking bird is trying to sing frogtime. If you follow the gulping you will very likely see a yellow-billed cuckoo, perhaps a black-billed one. When I was a little boy we used to sing in school a song that started out "Softly the cuckoo is calling now". I want to tell you quietly that whoever wrote that song never heard a real cuckoo but got his bird knowledge from a cuckoo clock.

Cuckoos are usually very fond of concealment and you will very often have a hard time to get a satisfactory view of one. I have approached them while they were sitting on their eggs thinking that they would be less shy at that time, but they actually slide from their nests very much as a fish slides over a dam, and away they go into the underbrush as though they were very, very helpless. They are not half as much afraid of people out here in the west as they are in the east. Probably they see them oftener be-

cause there are fewer trees. However, they are quite a different bird in other ways. They build better nests because the winds blow harder and I believe they lay more eggs, for I have never found less than four in Dakota, but in New England I seldom have seen more than two.

They say that in Old England they don't build nests at all, but lay in other birds' nests as our cowbird does. Sometimes as many as seven eggs are found in a single nest, but it is possible that some other lady cuckoo thought that it would be all right as long as it was all in the family. Whatever faults they have, they have one merit and that is their appetite for tent caterpillars. If you ever have a cuckoo in your orchard you ought to respectfully take your hat off every time that you see him. Don't let anyone fool you into the superstition that he is a bird of evil omen or that he is a rain crow and runs the weather bureau or anything of the kind. He isn't. He's after that bunch of cobwebs that is full of worms that you will see up in the top of your apple tree.

The cuckoo gives us one of the marvels of birdlife. The young ones, twenty-four hours before leaving their nests, haven't a feather on them except long pinfeathers that make them look like baby porcupines, but almost in the twinkling of an eye they blossom forth like a rose and almost in the moment of your talking they take wing and are gone. Isn't it a wonder?



# Kingfishers.

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Order, *Coccyges*.

Family, *Alcedinidae*.

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390. BELTED KINGFISHER. *Ceryle Alcyon*. Twelve inches long. Long crest on head. Bluish-gray above, white below. White spot in front of eye. White collar and blue-gray band across the breast. Large head with long, strong bill for catching fishes. Eggs white. Nests in a hole in the ground near water.

## BELTED KINGFISHER.

This is the famous "Halcyon" that built a floating nest upon the sea and had the power of making fair weather wherever the nest floated. Those were "halcyon days" according to the fable.

Really the truth about its nest is this. Into a hole in the bank by the side of a stream, that looks as though it had been the home of a water rat, our halcyon creeps and there belches forth fish bones and fish scales that were not digested. These are gathered for a nest that would make you think that he has no sense of smell. Possibly with a view to concealing his disgorged pellets so that they will not betray his whereabouts to his enemies, he went within and finally made use of them for nest material.

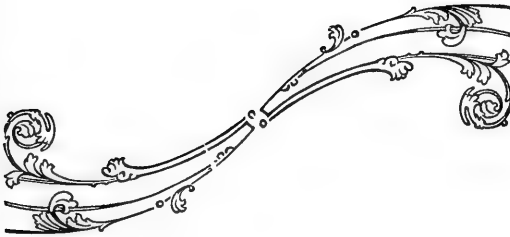
The kingfisher is pretty in the air for he sails along with even flight and has the air of knowing where he is going and of having an errand at the end of his journey. He catches his fish with his strong beak and his presence is an evidence that there are fishes in the stream nearby. They are not necessarily good ones nor large ones, for all fishes look alike to him.

Speaking of fish-tackling, the kingfisher will often tackle one far too large for him, but unlike the merganser, he will throw it out and try it over and over until it goes down. The merganser swallows his as far as he can and lets the end of it digest while his mouth is stopped up for an hour or so with the body of the unswallowed fish.

If the kingfisher's squawk may be called a song or even music,

it would be well for him to wear the sign that was put on the church organ in a wild western town—"Don't shoot the organist! He's doing the best he can." If there is any proper adjective to describe—well, there is none.

Withal they are good parents, thoroughly domestic, love their homes as long as there is good fishing near them, mind their own business and usually have plenty of it.



# Woodpeckers.

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Order, *Pici*.

Family, *Picidae*.

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Family Characteristics: Sharp, pointed bills for drumming or drilling about the trunks and limbs of trees. Red patch on head or throat or both. Alight upon the sides of tree trunks supporting themselves by their tails. They live upon grubs, worms and ants. The sapsucker occasionally injures trees by drilling too many holes into their bark.

412a. NORTHERN FLICKER. (Golden-winged Woodpecker. Wake-up. High-hole. Yellow-hammer.) *Colaptes auratus luteus*. Length 12 inches. Red spot on head. Black crescent on throat. White spot on back near tail. Brownish gray above, barred with black. Black spots on breast. Much yellow on body. Bill slightly curved. Yellow under wings. Black cheek stripes. Tail feathers sharply pointed and used as a support. Nests in holes in rotten trees. Eggs white. Dipping motion in flight.

413. RED-SHAFTED FLICKER. *Colaptes cafer collaris*. Similar to northern flicker but has red feathers under wings and tail and red cheek stripes.

406. RED-HEADED WOODPECKER. (Tricolor.) *Melanerpes erythrocephalus*. Nine and one-half inches long. Head and neck deep red. Plain black above. Belly, half of wings and rump plain white. The three colors are distinct. Eggs white. Dipping motion in flight. A "striking" bird with an awful voice.

394c. DOWNY WOODPECKER. *Dryobates pubescens*. About the size of the English sparrow. Distinctly black and white above in bars or bands. White below. Red feathers on lower part of head. A friendly little fellow and always busy after wood-borers.

393a. HAIRY WOODPECKER. *Dryobates villosus*. About nine inches long. Resembles the downy woodpecker except in size. Outer tail feathers are white. Almost entirely white belly and a white vertical line down the back. Like all woodpeckers they build nearer the ground in the west than in the east.

402. SAPSUCKER. *Sphyrapicus varius*. Eight and one-half inches long. Body black, white and yellow mingled. Yellow belly.



Head and throat red in male, but white in female. It sometimes girdles trees with the holes it drills.

NOTE.—In Sioux Falls, S. D., a beautiful albino flicker was reared in the summer of 1907. Its plumage was spotless cream-white except for the red spot on the head.

### NORTHERN FLICKER.

Almost any day in the early springtime you can hear a shrill-voiced bird rapidly repeating a single tenor note. No, he is not just home from college, even though he does wear that jaunty red skull cap and yell like an Indian. If you can count fast enough you will hear that note as many as fifty times. This peculiar springtime yell suggested to someone, once upon a time, the quivering light of a dying candle and he therefore called the bird a "flicker".

I was once with a crowd in a hotel listening to a wandering minstrel as he was playing Chopin in masterly style upon the parlor piano. Presently a big fellow stepped up to the door, listened a while without rapture, then suddenly lifting his wood-splitting voice, he shrieked, "Aw, play something!" That is the way I feel when I hear a flicker. Your father may have known him by the name wakeup, or yellowhammer, or highhole, for he has more aliases than a crook, but they were given him with the best of intentions, for no bird could have a hundred nicknames, pet names, scientific names and unscientific names that was not a favorite with man. The flicker is certainly a great favorite because he is interesting, for, on the quiet, I shall tell you that all of the woodpeckers have red hair and tempers to match.

When they are drilling a hole for a nest they beat a very rapid tattoo upon the tree that they have chosen for a home and there is good reason to believe that, like many of our human kind, they get great satisfaction from the mere sound of their knocking, and I am told that at Yankton they have been seen drumming on the water-works standpipe. My! It must sound good to them!

When a small boy, I was told that I might go to a nest where the mother bird was laying and take all the eggs but one, and if I should leave some corn in the nest the mother would keep on laying all summer. I was bad enough to try it and carried away about thirty eggs before I tired of the contest. Pretty eggs they are, waxy white in color except as the golden yolks show through them.

The males come north first and I am quite sure that a short time ago I saw the first meeting of a pair of flickers as Lady Flicker arrived from the south. There were many demonstrations of affection, and why not? Were they not together after a long separation and a perilous journey? And were they not just about to start up house-keeping?

With such large families as they raise, a nestful always, it is no wonder that they violate woodpecker traditions and go down to the ground for ants and bugs and worms, and it is no wonder that with so many little flickers in the nest, there is much jostling among them to see which one shall get his little open bill the highest when mama comes with grub or grubs. If you really want to hear a buzz that buzzes, you should listen at a nest that is full of hungry little flickers.

Think of the ants the little fellows will eat! And so fond are flickers of that special diet that nature has given them a specialized tongue to eat the ants with. No lover of trees should ever shoot a flicker. Does he not know that ants bore into the wood of trees and make places in which to herd lice? The lice give nectar just as a cow gives milk, and the ants milk them. Yes, my critical friend, ten per cent of the flicker's diet is fruit, but ninety per cent of that fruit is wild fruit, and the flicker is one of Nature's agents for the distribution of fruit seeds, and since the birds have planted the seeds of most of the wild fruit that there is in the world, the man who never made two blades of grass to grow where one grew before should give up trying to outhammer the flicker.

### SAPSUCKER.

No wonder that Mrs. Sapsucker's hair has turned white for her husband is a wife-beater and there are good grounds for divorce especially on rainy days when the old man hits her over the head with his hammer-like beak that easily drills holes even into wood. The Mrs. meekly gets out into the drenching rain and lets her lord and master climb into the deep hole that has been excavated in the rotten tree-trunk.

If he would confine his drillings to rotten trees he would not forever be persona non grata to the horticulturists, but he drills into the greenest trees just to start the sap and then gets food and drink all at once, for the flies and the bugs come up for a drink and

are snapped up. He then takes a drink of tree juice and often varies his diet with a few mouthfuls of the soft cambium layer just under the bark.

Many a dead tree testifies to the ravages of this slave of the drink habit.

As with all the woodpeckers, he has the habit of tattooing on the dead limbs or trunks of trees just for the fun of it and as he is an extremist in every way, he indulges very largely in all woodpecker sports. I have never heard of a wife ever leaving her husband in spite of his intemperance, inhuman cruelty and incompatible temper. Possibly she has religious scruples, or more likely she never stays in one place long enough to gain a residence.

Woodpeckers are hardy birds and are little afraid of cold for they are tree dwellers and their homes afford them the best of protection. They usually lay a large number of white eggs and except from the gunners they can generally protect themselves. Under such circumstances they come north very early and only the question of food supply causes them to migrate at all.



# Goatsuckers.

Order, *Machrochires*.

Family, *Cuprimulgidae*.

Family characteristics: They fly mostly at eventide and alight upon their perches lengthwise. They have dull gray or brown plumage and lay their eggs upon the ground without making a nest. Their feet are poorly developed.

420c. NIGHTHAWK. (Bull-bat.) *Chordeiles virginianus, sennetti*. About the robin's length but less plump. Wings longer than tail. Dull black and white mottling above, almost a drab. Breast lighter color. White rings on wings noticeable in flight. Utters its note in flight. White patch on throat. Lays two grayish mottled eggs on the ground, often at the ledge of a flat rock. Great insect-eater. Often seen in companies.

416. WHIPPOORWILL. (Chuck-Will's-Widow.) *Antrostomus carolinensis*. Nearly as long as a robin, it resembles a nighthawk but has brown mottling instead of gray and is without the white rings on its wings. Throat almost black, outer tail feathers white at extremities. To most people it is only a voice at eventide, it is so rarely seen. Its only song is "Whippoorwill", "Whippoorwill". Lays two mottled eggs on the dry leaves in the woods. Feeds on locusts and insects generally. Sings "Whippoorwill" until late in the evening.

## NIGHTHAWK.

A relative of the chimney-swift, this is no hawk at all and he seldom flies by night. Neither is he entitled to the names "goat-sucker" and "bull bat" for he is never guilty of the implication of the former name and he is not a bat at all for the bat is not a bird but a member of the monkey family. That such a number of improper names "hang 'round him still" shows how many guesses masquerade as truth. Like the swift he is a wide-mouthed insect-eater and a boon to man.

Watch him as he alternately mounts and floats into the upper air, for "Heaven is not reached at a single bound", and when he has passed almost from your view, you will see him drop like a fall-



UPPER FIGURES—CHESTNUT-BACKED BLUEBIRD

Order—PASSERES

Family—TURDIDÆ

Genus—SIALIA

Species—MEXICANA

SUBSPECIES—BAIRDI

LOWER FIGURES—BLUEBIRDS

Order—PASSERES

Family—TURDIDÆ

Genus—SIALIA

Species—SIALIS



ing star and as soon as the sound can reach you, you will hear a noise like the blowing into the bung-hole of an empty barrel or the bellowing of a distant bull. It is only the rustle of his wings.

Do you think that these airy flights are ever equalled by the bugs and flies? It is doubtful. They go up there for the same reason that a little boy climbs a hill in winter-time, just for the fun of coming down; for the same reason that a balloonist takes to his parachute or the long-haired lady makes the high dive at the circus.

I have seen a bird perch within fifteen feet of me and for fifteen minutes turn little somersaults for no apparent reason but my pleasure. It was no doubt its method of catching insects. I will tell you about him later. He's a sweet little bird, trimmed with orange and his little wife has lemon-colored trimmings but she's just as sweet.

By day the nighthawk sits upon fence-rails as often as anywhere for they are nearly his color and he always sits his mount lengthwise contrary to the custom of other birds, so that both his color and position are nicely suited to prevent detection. They build no nest, but two finely spotted eggs are laid usually at the outer edge of a flat rock, and it is said that when disturbed, they will carry their eggs away to a place of safety by grasping them in their claws.

It is quite a custom among birds that make little or no nest, to lay sharply pointed eggs so that when the wind blows, their eggs will roll about in circles and never be blown away, but the nighthawk does not follow this custom as the quails and plovers do, possibly because she trusts to removing them to a better protected home.

No one should ever kill the little nighthawk (he's only half as big as he looks) for he spends his time eating mosquitos and moths. Why, that's the reason that he flies at eventide. Once in a while he comes to town to gather the harvest of bugs that circle about the electric lights. Pretty wise for a bird.

# Swifts.

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Order, *Macrochires*.

Family, *Micropodidae*.

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423. CHIMNEY SWIFT. (Chimney Swallow.) *Chaetura pelagica*. Five and one-half inches long—English sparrow six inches. Very wide wing-spread. Dark mouse-color. Almost never seen sitting. Cousin to the nighthawk. Twitter as they fly. Glue their nests to the inner walls of chimneys.

The pies that mother used to make were certainly good and the old stone chimneys that grandfather used to make were wonderful. They were large enough for a real Santa Claus to come down and at the bottom of them were fire places with their hanging cranes, their brass andirons and fires all aglow with glory. No rascals were reared within their flickering shadows. The family sat about them in a circle, for there was such a thing as a family circle before the family triangles became so common. How the swallows twittered in those old chimneys! There must have been hundreds of them sitting upon the edges of their nests of sticks and glue, for they glued their nests to the sides of the chimney walls very much as the swallows of China do, that build the edible nests, and every little while a nest of babies would fall down the chimney because they had grown too heavy, for the nest or the glue had become melted by a fire thoughtlessly started to burn up some waste paper or to take the dampness out of the air of an unexpected cold day. Poor little things, there was nothing to do but put the fire out and save the rest of them.

How many evenings I have watched them circling like mad and twittering in their rapid flight as they were clearing the evening air of mosquitos. These winged cigars, for that is what they look like, move their wings so fast that scientists cannot tell whether they flap them together or alternately. And the sport came when they went to bed on the side of the nestful of little white eggs. Like streaks of darkness they shot to a point a few yards above



the top of the chimney, then dropped zigzagging into it as though they were pieces of paper falling through the air. They don't weigh very much more. Company after company would tumble in until you would think that the chimney could hold no more.

Once upon a time they lived in hollow trees and if we cover our chimneys and build them much smaller they will go back to the hollow trees again. Then look out for bugs.

How do you suppose they get the twigs with which to build their nests? They just shoot through a tree and catch a twig while in full motion and when they get into a chimney they support themselves on the side of the chimney by their tail feathers which have spurs on them. If I were to build an airship I'd take a chimney swift for a pattern. Did you ever see one? If not you will recognize him when you do for he is well named and I think he is swift enough to fly around the world in forty days and forty nights.



# Hummingbirds.

Order, *Macrochires*.

Family, *Trochilidae*.

## 428. RUBY-THROATED HUMMINGBIRD. *Trochilus colubris*.

The smallest of our birds. Bright iridescent green above. Chin black. Ruby-colored throat. Gray beneath. Long, needle-like bill. Female without ruby throat. Eggs white.

“Breathes there a man with soul so dead” that he does not exclaim when he sees a ruby-throat? A flash, a humming about the canna bed, a flash to the nasturtiums and away. Gone like a reverie at eventide, a lost chord, an artist’s dream, a bubble on a reed, the evidence of things not seen. Sipping the honey dew while the rosy petals pale before its jeweled throat, wishing to be gone and gone ere the wish were made, the very spirit of the honeysuckle of yesteryear, it leaves you looking at the flower, its silent partner in the little world of miracles. Did it not set you wondering? Did you not feel the mystery of the flowers, the mystery of life? Did you feel that it needed a song other than the song without words that trembled from your heart strings?

Now you stand by the side of its nest, of gauzy lichens, of fluffy plant-down and the spirits of dead flowers. Every tiny bit a miracle of nature molded about the silken breast of the sprightly little mother, so that when she floats upon it, her little heart will warm the waxen eggs to life. You cannot raise a hand against it.

Twice I have seen them, wee, little knots saddled upon the apple boughs, half hidden by the leaves, and twice were days made memorable for life. There was the brook making the merry sunbeams dance as it sped to the silent pool below; the apple trees were opening their myriad pink chalices for the drowsy bees that wheeled among them; the leaves wore the waxy green of the early Maytime; in the garden the lilac buds were bursting; the air was fresh with the breath of lilies; the aromatic trees gave back the spicy odors of a burning censer and a thousand muffled bits of insect music made chorus for the humming of the ruby-throat. And the old house stood there in spotless white and green as though it thought it were the center of the landscape, but not for me—they were all but the settings of that fairy little nest.

# Flycatchers.

Order, *Passeres*.

Family, *Tyrannidae*.

Family Characteristics: Generally drab above and white beneath or dark olive above and pale yellow beneath.

The kingbirds are noisy. The phoebe and pewee call their names plaintively. Flycatchers usually sally forth for insects returning at once to their original perches. Their bills are short and their mouths wide and they generally have small hairs at the base of the bill. Devoted partners, they are usually seen in pairs. They are the greatest insect destroyers known unless it be the swallows.

444. KINGBIRD. (Beebird.) *Tyrannus tyrannus*. Eight inches long. Black above. White beneath. Black tail, edged with white band. Has a concealed red crest. Usually four eggs, spotted with brown. A great bug- and fly-eater.

447. ARKANSAS KINGBIRD. *Tyrannus verticalis*. Nine inches long. Easily known from its resemblance in habits to the kingbird. Brownish drab above, pale yellow below. Black tail. A great chatterer. Its nest and eggs are almost exactly like those of the kingbird and it has also the concealed crest of red. Very common.

459. OLIVE-SIDED FLYCATCHER. *Nuttallornis borealis*. Seven inches long. Olive on sides with light yellow throat. Dark olive above, points darkest, the head, wings and tail being an olive-black. It has strongly the characteristics of its family.

452. CRESTED FLYCATCHER. *Myiarchus crinitus*. Nine inches long. Distinguished by a crest. Olive above and light yellow below except for dark gray throat. Brown points. Two white wing-bars.

467. LEAST FLYCATCHER. (Chebec.) *Empidonax minimus*. Slightly smaller than an English sparrow. Olive gray above, dull white below. Its two white wing-bars and the calling of its name, chebec, serve to identify it.

456. PHOEBE. *Sayornis phoebe*. Seven inches long. Black brownish-gray, darkest on crown. Breast yellowish white. Looks like a pocket edition of kingbird. Record—never did wrong. Pronounces his name often. Nests under bridges. Eggs white. Insect-eater.

461. WOOD PEWEE. *Contopus virens*. About the size of an English sparrow. Dull olive above, dull gray below. Calls its name, "pe-wee", "pe-wee", "pe-wee", at long intervals. Resembles phoebe, but is smaller. Two white wing-bars.

## KINGBIRD.

This king is a tyrant if another bird gives consent. A better name than kingbird would be "the bluffing flycatcher" for he is king neither by right of regal beauty nor kingly manner. He is a tantalizer of birds.

Who has not seen him sally forth from his perch, tap some passing bird upon the head and return? When we see him high in the air in pursuit of a crow or a hawk, we smile to think that those big birds are being whipped by the little kingbird, but they hardly know that he is following them. They have business and regard him about as you would a barking "black and tan."

He always strikes from behind and never fights wing to wing.

If he would only attend to his business of eating bugs and canker worms he would be a much beloved bird. Many people think that he eats bees and he does, but only the drones—except when he makes the wrong guess. It must be quite a trick to tell a drone from a worker when they are in full flight. How in the world do you suppose they do it? Some think it is due to keen sight but I have often wondered if the buzzing of the drones is not on a lower key and if it is not hearing rather than sight that aids them.

The male bird has a concealed crest that is rose-colored and it is claimed for him that he throws the feathers of his head forward when a bee approaches, thus offering him a sort of a milliner's rose as a decoy. The bee makes a bee-line for it and finds a pair of open jaws, thus supplying a dinner rather than getting one.

When I was a little boy, my Sunday school teacher told me that the birds were all called together soon after the dawn of creation and told that the one that went highest into the air should be king of the birds, so they all started upward together. One after another, mud-hen, prairie chicken, sparrow, swallow and the rest fell to the ground exhausted, leaving the old eagle apparently the winner, when suddenly the kingbird that had concealed himself on the eagle's back shot upward and won the title.

The principal inconsistency in this story is that the bee-bird kept still long enough to fool the eagle, for he is an incessant chatterer. However, a little color is lent to the story, for he is forever trying to get upon the backs of the big birds.

The kingbird in late summer is very common and his nest entirely exposed. It is a serviceable nest of silver-colored weeds and white wrapping twine and bits of wool, and the four pretty eggs with chestnut blotches are guarded very carefully. If you go near the nest, you will get a fearful scolding for they then become the most demonstrative of birds and trust to defending their nests rather than concealing them.

### PHOEBE.

A translation into English of their bird notes has given us the names of a few of our birds. The chick-a-dee, the whip-poor-will, the chewink, the cuckoo and the phoebe all pronounce their names for you.

The phoebe builds a wonderful nest. It is made of mud, veneered with moss and lined with feathers and bits of wool. Surely no nest is better calculated to keep the eggs and babies warm. Like many another good thing there is often a drawback. Such a nicely feathered nest is in danger of being converted into a bug house and it is not unusual to find a brood of phoebe's babies lying dead within their abandoned home, the poor little victims of parasites.

Once upon a time they built their nests far from the haunts of men and I have found them on the sides of cliffs near the water, but now they come closer to town and build around old mills and abandoned houses. I am almost sorry that they are doing this, for all animals learn bad habits in town. City culture is an awfully bad thing for them.

As you drive along country roads you are almost sure to find a phoebe's nest if you look under the bridges, but do not confuse them with the barn swallow, that also builds his muddy nest beneath the bridge. There will be little trouble in telling them apart if you are watchful, for the barn swallow always wears his purple swallow-tail coat while phoebe dresses like a Quaker.

In climbing to reach a phoebe's nest, I once loosened it so that it would not rest longer in its place, so I set it upon a nearby beam, but the phoebe didn't mind my interference a bit and went on with her household duties. Most birds would have abandoned their nests under such circumstances.

The cry of the phoebe is a plaintive one. You could easily

imagine that the little mother had been killed and that her mate who without promising to do it loves and cherishes her until death parts them, is sadly calling for her. Every springtime the husband comes north two weeks before his wife to look up a location or to busy himself around the old home; then he will sit for hours and call "Phoebe! Phoebe! Phoebe!" drooping his tail and crying as though he were nearly dead from loneliness. What he lives on at that time is hard to tell, for his chosen insect food is still unhatched. You may be sure that all of the flycatchers pay their way and are worth their pay.

Once I saw a hunter level his gun at a phoebe as he sat upon a willow branch calling his mate; I saw it fall and as I rushed to take it in my hand I found it only wounded.

And oh, the silken jacket,  
And the little yellow vest,  
And oh, the little throbbing heart,  
And oh, oh, all the rest,  
And the little eyes that sparkled  
As I took him in my hand,  
And I fear he thought I did it  
For he didn't understand.



# Larks.

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Order, *Passeres*.  
Family, *Alaudidae*.

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474b. PRAIRIE HORNED LARK. *Octocoris alpestris praticola*. Length seven and one-half inches. Black line extending from sides of mouth and black necklace. Back, pale wine-colored brown. Yellowish white throat. Black tail, except in flight when white feathers are visible. Fast little roadrunner. Found by the roadside in the fields especially on the plains.

What do you think of a little bird with horns? Do you think that he must be very, very bad? No so, for they are not real horns, only some long feathers that stick up from the sides of his head like feathers on a lady's hat. The lady lark wishing perhaps, to set the ladies of society a good example, never wears plumes even in her Easter bonnet. It is only the gentleman lark that wears them, but it may be that he belongs to some secret society and the plumes are a part of his regalia and that may be the reason that he got the name of "lark".

It is April now, but they have already nested, not the meadow-larks, for they are too busy giving concerts, but the horned-larks that have spent the winter with us. He's the "early bird", but he's too early for the worm. The sparrow-like nest and the sparrow-like eggs and the sparrow-like bird would lead you to suspect that he is a sparrow, but he is not. He is the first cousin and nearest American relative of the European skylark, of which Shelley sang:

"Higher still and higher,  
From the earth thou springest;  
Like a cloud of fire,  
The blue deep thou wingest,  
And singing still dost soar and soaring ever singest."

Our horned-lark, it is said, often shows the family characteristic by a song-flight, but while I have seen the flight, I have never

heard the music "till the sweet-voiced bird has flown," and then only the spirit of a song.

On the unsettled prairie land west of the Missouri river, it is the most common of all birds, but in the more thickly settled parts of the west it is far less numerous. While you are driving out into the country you may see many of them flying over the fields, but if you wish to get a good view of one, watch the road-ruts ahead of you. When you come upon him he will squat down into the dust, trusting to his similarity in color to deceive you; he will pull in his horns too, hoping (not hopping, he never hops) thus to escape notice. If he sees that you are aware of his presence, he will take to his heels and run up the road like a racer and if he cannot beat you he will take to his wings.

His diet is a prairie diet of bugs and seeds and his book account with man always shows a balance in his favor for there is never a charge against him.





# Crows and Jays.

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Order, *Passeres*.

Family, *Corvidae*.

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Family Characteristics: The crows are black, the jays largely blue. Harsh voices. Mischievous and intelligent birds of large size. They will eat meat, grain or anything else. They are of no great economic value, but as a part of the landscape they could hardly be spared.

488. AMERICAN CROW. *Corvus Americanus*. Seventeen inches long. Black all over with violet gloss. Nests in tall forest trees. A social bird. Can be identified by his cry, "Caw!" "Caw!" Very intelligent.

477. BLUE JAY. *Cyanocitta cristata*. Eleven inches long. Blue above. Black collar. Wings and tail blue with white stripes. Breast dull white. Bill black. Has a crest. A brilliant bird but mischievous.

484. CANADA JAY. (Camp Robber.) *Perisoreus canadensis*. Twelve inches long. Gray above and beneath. Darker tints on wings and tail. Dull black on back of head and neck. Lighter gray on breast. Throat and neck white. Very sociable and even bold.

475. MAGPIE. *Pica pica hudsonica*. Nineteen inches long. Tail long for a bird of its size. Black except wings and breast which have much white. Common along parts of Missouri River and Black Hills. Very intelligent and mischievous. Bill black. Nest very large and contains almost anything. Eats almost anything. It is said to be unlucky if you see only one.

486a. NORTHERN RAVEN. *Corvus Corax principalis*. Two feet long. Resembles the common crow. Not common though seen occasionally along the Missouri River. Color a blue-black. Nests on cliffs and places hard to reach. Most birds of this family have greenish eggs heavily blotched. Eats refuse.

## AMERICAN CROW.

Although the crow is a bird of conspicuous plumage, of bad repute and has had a price set upon his head by many bountiful states, he seems to increase rapidly and to thrive everywhere. He does so entirely because he has the shrewdness so generally characteristic of birds of the black feather.

Whoever has tried to climb up to the rickety old crow's nest in the very top of a tall tree, knows what a job it is, and the very beauty of the blotched green eggs will often stay his hand from robbing.

That expression "an eye like an eagle's" could just as well be "an eye like a crow's" for nothing escapes him. He knows when you have a gun and when you haven't. He can detect poisoned corn better than you can tell mushrooms from toadstools, and you can sneak up on the sentinel-guarded goose better than you can on him.

He is a miser and uses old stumps as safety deposit vaults. Down under the bed of leaves within a hollow stump may be found bits of broken glass, pieces of crockery and tin and many another eye-charmer placed there by this hoarder of wealth. Now and then he will visit his treasures, will kick away the leaves, pick his prizes over and over as though to count them, and then he will bury them again.

Any assertion that the crow can sing should be challenged for "caws"—a bad pun to be sure, but he deserves it.

Among his other deeds that are almost as bad as his croaking song, is his destruction of the young of other birds, his acts of gluttony when he finds a nestful of eggs and his thievery of corn.

On the other side of the ledger and to his credit are the facts that he eats fieldmice, worms, and carrion, and looks pretty at a distance.

For him as for the English sparrow and other birds that have the worst charged up against them, we need no protective laws. Even destructive laws have little effect.

With all his meanness there is a fascination about him and the poets have not been able to forget him.

#### BLUE JAY.

Fine feathers do not always make fine birds, if they did the jay would never be hauled before the court. He has often had to stand trial for tearing to pieces the nests of other birds, of eating their eggs and even their young. There is hardly a bird-crime that has not been charged against him, from larceny, mayhem, and kidnaping to murder, yet he is such an aristocrat that he generally gets acquitted—even the federal court of the biological department

at Washington on final appeal looked so lightly on his misdeeds that it let him out on parole. As a matter of fact he does more good than evil.

A bird with a voice like his would arouse your suspicion at all times. If you should see him get angry you would be sure that much of his talk should not be printed and when he makes love he does it not as a dove would, nor as a gentleman should, but much as a conceited French count might propose to an American heiress. He bows and scrapes and dances and jabbars. You see this refers to the male jay for though the words "garrulous" and "girl" are said to have a common origin, it is not especially the lady jay that is loquacious.

He is conceited beyond endurance and the only two things in his favor are his personal appearance and the fact that he plants seeds, nuts and especially acorns.

It would be too bad to lose him, for we have so few birds in blue. The bluebird, the indigo bunting, the kingfisher and the jay are about all. Nature is sparing of her blue and what is true of the birds is true of the flowers. Perhaps rarity made purple the royal color. Sir John Lubbock says that flowers pass through the stages of green, white, yellow, and often red, before becoming blue.

Like most of the family (crow), the jay builds a bulky nest in almost any kind of a tree and of almost any old thing from twigs to weeds and from roots to rags. Once in a while mud is used and the four eggs are mud-colored and apparently mud-spotted. Minerva would have done better to have made him her favorite bird instead of the owl, and she probably would have done so if he did not have the persistent habit of talking too much. In other respects he is wiser than an owl.

### CANADA JAY.

About fifteen years ago while camping in the Black Hills we had spread our table upon the ground beneath a large tree near a bubbling spring, when to our surprise a number of birds of the above description, swooped silently down upon the festive board and helped themselves with the utmost freedom and good fellowship. We were so astonished and even pleased that we welcomed the coming guest but when they began to carry our lunch away with

them we felt like speeding the parting guest with something less desirable than a Godspeed.

Talk about nerve! And table manners! They were as long on one as they were short on the other.

Campers say that they will even ride down the river with them in their boats and steal anything from a bar of soap to a saddle of vension, returning for bits of it at regular intervals until they are bloody from tip to tail. As they do not care for wind nor weather, often sitting on their eggs so early in the spring that everything freezes but the eggs and themselves, they store up, or lay down, meat for the winter. Their energy and providence are about all the good that is evident in them unless you admire that kind of mischief that is open and above board as his is, for he is a real free-booter—very free.

They are not as saucy as their cousins, the blue jays, and don't really try to steal, for they just assume that the world owes them a living and they take it. A favorite name for them is Whiskey John, a name that sounds somewhat like the name that the Indians gave them. It is a misnomer but doubtless they would drink whiskey if they could get it for they have never been known to refuse anything.

### MAGPIE.

Along the Missouri River and in the Black Hills, magpies are to be found in fairly large numbers. They are possessed by devils if such things are possible, and they can think of more mischief than a crowd of bad boys. They are easily tamed and become interesting pets, though you must be prepared to have your ink-bottles tipped over and your papers scattered about the room. A pet magpie owned by so near a friend of mine that I felt that I owned two-thirds of the bird, had a habit of going to the station as often as a train came in and riding out of town a mile or two before returning by his easy and graceful flight. One day he failed to return and it is probable that having gone inside one of the cars, he became the property of some bird-fancier within. It was a common habit of "Mag" to pester the cat and "Tabby" seemed to submit as though she had to do it.

Magpies build very large bulky nests and have all kinds of strange conceits that lead them to work fancy articles into them.

Glass, old bits of broken crockery and such stuff help to gratify "Mag's" vanity. It would be exaggerating to say that magpies are of very great economic value, but they are mighty interesting and we can't afford to lose them.

Caged canary birds are not very valuable economically, but there are many people who enjoy them and that is the only justification for depriving them of their liberty. It would take some one stronger in logic than I am to justify such a procedure in any event. But then "God made the world for man alone" is the theory and religion of many men.



# Blackbirds and Orioles.

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Order *Passeres*.

Family, *Icteridae*.

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Family Characteristics: Black or black in combination with white, yellow or red. They generally live in colonies. The blackbirds and grackles have rather harsh voices but the bobolink, the meadow lark and the orioles are among our finest singers. They live on insects, worms and seeds and the small amount of grain they eat is nothing compared with the good that they do.

498. RED-WINGED BLACKBIRD. *Agelaius phoeniceus*. Length nine inches. Male entirely black except a patch of scarlet on his wings. The scarlet seems tipped with yellow. Female without red on wings and mottled black and dull drab. Common about swamps and marshes.

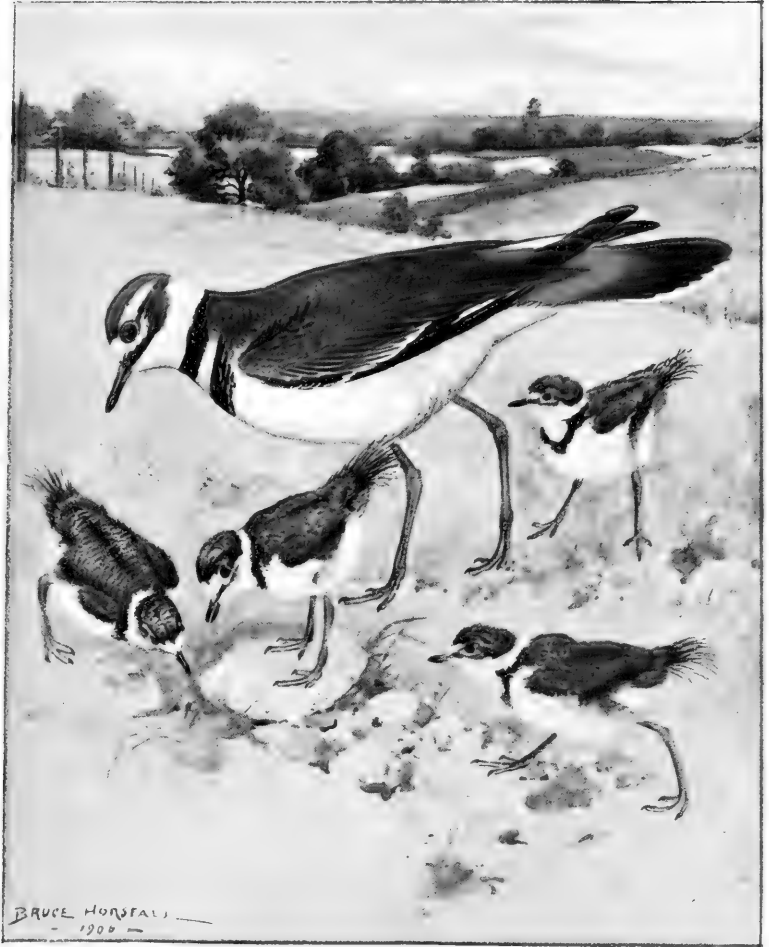
509. RUSTY BLACKBIRD. *Scolecophagus Carolinus*. About nine inches long. Rusty black with bluish reflections on neck. No special color markings as with most blackbirds. Light yellow eyes.

495. COWBIRD. *Molothrus ater*. Seven and one half-inches long. Black all over. Copper-colored reflections on neck of male bird. Female brownish-black. Eats eggs of other birds.

510. BREWER BLACKBIRD. *Scolecophagus cyanocephalus*. About nine inches long. Entirely black with strong purple reflections. Yellow eyes are a noticeable characteristic. Apparently a small-sized grackle. Common in the Black Hills.

497. YELLOW-HEADED BLACKBIRD. *Xanthocephalus Xanthocephalus*. Somewhat larger than the more common red-winged blackbird and usually found in company with them. Entire head bright yellow. Wings with white patches. Hoarse voice when it tries to sing. Nests are fastened to rushes like the red-wing's. Very common.

511b. BRONZED GRACKLE. *Quiscalus quiscula aeneus*. Twelve and one-half inches long. Entirely black except for a purple and bronze luster, strongest on body. Yellow eyes. Called "crow blackbird". Nests in colonies. Has a harsh voice. Bulky nests of mud and dry grass. They walk much of the time and steer themselves in flight by their tails. Their voices are bad but their services give them a credit balance.



KILLDEER

Order—LIMICOLÆ  
Genus—ÆGIALITIS

Family—CHARADRIIDÆ  
Species—VOCIFERA





511. PURPLE GRACKLE. *Quiscalus quiscula*. Twelve and one-half inches long. Entirely black with purple luster. Yellow eyes. Called "crow blackbird". Harsh voice. Nests in colonies. Bulky nests of mud and dry grass. Differs from the bronzed grackle in having indistinctly barred plumage.

501b. WESTERN MEADOW LARK. *Sturnella magna neglecta*. About the length of the robin but a little larger. Brown and yellow above. Yellow throat. Black collar. Two white feathers in tail, very noticeable in flight. Good singer. Nests often roofed over and hard to find. Very common on the prairies.

507. BALTIMORE ORIOLE. *Icturus galbula*. Nearly eight inches long. Black head. Wings black and barred with white. Body bright orange. Tail yellow and black. Female yellow and brown instead of orange and black. Builds a high, hanging nest, most often in elms.

506. ORCHARD ORIOLE. *Icturus spurius*. About an inch longer than the English sparrow. The smallest of the blackbirds. Mostly black above with black head, throat and tail. Orange-chestnut below. Chestnut on wings. Would never be thought of as a blackbird but as an oriole. Nest is made of green grass. A valuable insect destroyer.

494. BOBOLINK. (Swamp Blackbird, Rice Bird, Reed Bird.) *Dolichonix oryzivorus*. Seven inches long. Mostly black. Yellowish-white hood. More or less white on wings and tail. Female mostly yellowish-brown. Sings while flying.

### RED-WINGED BLACKBIRD.

As you wander about a marshy place where the cat-o'-nine-tails grow, you will almost surely see a number of red-wings. They are sociable birds as are most birds of black feather, sociable among themselves, but they will lose no time in letting you know that you are not a welcome visitor. Their cry at such time is as full of fear and sorrow as an earthly note can be and much in contrast to the piping of his "Co-ka-lee" as he sits above his nesting mate. When you approach his nest that is carefully fastened to the reeds he will hover above you and almost betray its location. The chances are that you will have to wade to see it, as they know how to cheat the squirrels and almost everything else except their arch-enemies, men. What a shame that they are so often put upon the list of birds that may be killed with impunity!

When you have reached the nest, leave it alone, but notice

the peculiar marking upon the eggs. They look as though a three-year-old baby had been given the little pale blue eggs and a fine brush full of black paint and told to decorate them. Of course no two are alike. If you don't find a cowbird's egg in every nest it will be a wonder for the redwing is so amiable that she never objects.

If you could see the tons of bugs and worms that they eat in a season, you would never kill one of them. Why, chinch-bug salad and cut-worm pudding are always on their menu in season.

For some reason every farmer wants his "four and twenty blackbirds baked into a pie" or worse than that, wants to see how many of them he can kill at one shot, for they often are in very large flocks as they make the valleys ring with their choruses. If you never heard a blackbird chorus in which the redwings, the yellow-heads, the rustys and the grackles join, you have missed the prettiest melody of bird music.

Mr. Farmer, please stop shooting them. Don't you remember how, while you were wearily trudging behind your plow, they followed in your furrow and ate the bugs and the grubs and the worms, keeping you company and cheering you with their songs? Is corn so dear that you will not give them a very little share of what they earn?

### COWBIRD.

Did you ever see a lot of small birds hanging around where the cows are, now sitting on their backs, now if the sun is hot, walking in the cow's shadow eating flies and bugs that are bothering them? They were cow birds.

There are sacred birds of Egypt that walk into the very throats of the crocodiles and eat the bloodsuckers, and the crocodiles never harm them. Doubtless the cows would never harm their faithful little friends the cow birds, even if they could, for that would surely dissolve the partnership. The cow says to the bird "I will let you use me as a perch, I will let you keep cool in my shadow, I will decoy bugs for you and scare hoppers out of the grass with my nose; all that I want you to do is to eat 'skeeters'." "All right" says the cow bird in an undertone—and that is about all that he ever says.

But let me tell you the bad things about him. True, we should never speak ill of anybody, but I'll tell just you, for I know that you will never mention it. He is a very lazy bird. He and his wife never build a house. When nesting time comes lady bunting goes about until she finds a suitable nest belonging to another bird, and she lays her eggs in it; the next egg she will very likely lay in another nest. In that way she imposes upon the red-wing blackbird, the yellow warbler, the vireo, the lark bunting, the chewink and the sparrow. So you see she does not always seek the nest of a smaller bird as many people think, though she generally does that very thing. The reason for choosing a smaller bird's nest is that her baby would crowd the smaller babies out if there were not room in the nest for all. She seems to me to use even a better method. She is quite sure to get her eggs into the nest fairly early and her eggs hatch sooner than those of the larger birds and her babies mature faster and in that way are quite able to hold their own. The eggs of some birds you know, will hatch in a week while others require as long as three weeks.

She has another method of making sure that her young will get an even start and that is to kick the other bird's egg out of the nest.

They say that the reason the cowbird never builds a nest is that she lays her eggs so many days apart that the first will spoil by the time the last one is laid. You may believe that theory if you wish to; I think that the tendency to get lazy is as strong among birds as among men and that the cow bird, a member of our smartest bird family has found this labor-saving method, for being fairly lazy she probably built a poor nest that was easily blown to pieces; then when she wanted to lay she found herself with no nest of her own, so made use of the nest of another.

In the fall when the blackbirds flock, the cow birds join them but they take little part in the splendid choruses that come from the tree top that holds a thousand blackbirds, for they have only a little far-away note and I fear a real song would be too hard work for them.

## MEADOW LARK.

Nothing in bird life seems more certain to me than that our meadow lark sings with a clearer and a fuller voice than its eastern brother. He sings more and oftener too. Every morning bright and early the voice of the lark is the first to reach my ear, for there is a splendid specimen that starts in with its favorite song, "I'm a pretty creature" and sings it almost under my very window. I should miss it more than the striking of the clock that tells me it is time to "arise and shine". As often happens this particular lark has a song of his own not sung by others of his species, a very rich song that at first fooled me into the belief that a mocking-bird was near.

I have often seen one of them take his place on the top of a telephone pole and start in upon his repertoire, singing each song seven times at short intervals then changing to another song and so on until seven songs were sung. Of course there was not always perfect accuracy in the count for you must remember that the lark is an artist and not a scientist.

Of course if you "know a hawk from a hand-saw" you know the meadow lark with his yellow shirt-waist cut V-shaped and edged with black at the top of the corsage. You have seen one walking about on almost every acre of our western prairies, but you have never seen many of their nests, for they use the dried grass with which to build them and arch them over so that the exit is on the side. They even build at times a sort of covered run-way so that they may sneak without detection a few feet away from the nest before flying.

There are many of them shot every year by "sports," none of course by sportsmen, for they are constantly rising before the hunters and their flight is wonderfully like that of the prairie-chicken, so they make good birds to try the gun on.

Who would ever think that he is a blackbird? That's his family. Why not? He walks; he flocks; he sings; he loves the meadows; he eats worms and larvae; he is sociable and has almost every habit of the blackbird.

Though useful beyond measure and perfectly harmless he has many enemies and must lay six eggs at a nesting and must nest three times in a season. What are his enemies, do you ask?

Oh, squirrels and owls and hawks and snakes and men—about in that order I should say.

### BALTIMORE ORIOLE.

When Lord Baltimore established his colony in Maryland he was much impressed by the number of bright plumaged birds that he saw. The one, however, that wore the colors of the Baltimore family (orange and black) soon became the "Baltimore Oriole".

The word Oriole means "golden". Perched upon one of the outer branches of an elm tree the oriole will attract you at first by his song that has both volume and melody. You will glance up at him and you will feel at once that an aristocrat has appeared among the birds.

His less conspicuous mate is working a miracle. She is building a castle in the air. Far out on the tip of a swaying branch she is weaving horsehair, strings, yarn and plant fiber into the prettiest nest imaginable. It is a swinging nest, narrow at the top and very deep, for it must exclude the rain and keep the hawks and jays from getting at its contents. What enemy but a winged one can reach it?

Of all the birds this one seems to me to have attained the greatest perfection in the construction of its nest. Squirrels cannot run to it, snakes cannot crawl to it, boys cannot climb to it. It looks almost like a wasp's nest and I doubt that the birds care to fly to it.

It is woven thinly enough above to be airy and thickly enough below to be warm and, swinging like a cradle, it makes poets of the baby birds.

There are few moths, worms and caterpillars around where the orioles are.

I am sure that when you first saw the male bird in full plumage you agreed with Lady Oriole:

"For good Mrs. O. who sat hatching her eggs  
And only just left them to stretch her poor legs,  
And pick for a minute the worm she preferred  
Thought there never was seen such a beautiful bird."

## BOBOLINK.

A man would have to be pretty small himself to shoot so small a bird as Robert o'Lincoln just to gratify his appetite, but a mouth that will moisten at turtles and tripe, eels and frog-legs and possum and skunk will fairly water at the sight of a plate of bobolinks.

No doubt he is a dainty morsel especially when he has grown fat in the rice fields of the south where he is known as the rice-bird and the reedbird, but how absurd it is to want to eat everything that is dainty.

He sings a very pretty song while on the wing, something that few birds ever do, though of course many of them shout a characteristic note or two. But the bobolink starts upward with his song and as he reaches his climax, he floats away to earth again as lightly as a flake of falling snow. In New England he is thought to say "The devil, the devil is in all people for putting in Bill Prentice as justice of the peace". I fear that Bill was beaten by the bobolinks the next time he ran.

In the west the bobolink is often confused with the lark bunting which is smaller and wears no hood.

Though our cheerful little friend has many names, Robert O'Lincoln, nicknamed bobolink, is his real name, more aristocratic than "skunk-black-bird" which is given him because of his seeming fondness for that malodorous plant of the marshes. Perhaps he often places his nest near it with the hope that his enemies will keep their distance.

It is hard to find the nest of Lady Bob for she will sneak away to quite a distance before she will take to her wings and if you come upon her while she is sitting upon her eggs she will very likely crouch and trust to luck for a moment for she wears her feathers to match her nest.

How strange it is that man is the greatest enemy of the birds! Squirrels and snakes are not in the same class with him for he destroys in one way or another as many as are destroyed by all other causes. How many nests are turned under by the plow! How many go up in smoke at the burning of the fields in spring-time! How many fall when man, arm in arm with death, goes forth in search of food or feathers! They are going. The scarlet

tanager, the tricolor, the cardinal, the indigo bird, the bobolink, a million billion beauties and a billion trillion songs! Forty per cent decrease in twenty years! Let us have peace!



# Sparrows, Finches, Buntings and Grosbeaks.

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Order, *Passeres*.  
Family, *Fringillidae*.

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Family Characteristics: They have very short bills for seed-eating. Those grouped as sparrows vary little from the English sparrow in size and color. Those grouped as finches vary largely as to size and color. The grosbeaks as their name implies, have remarkably heavy bills and the bunting group are sparrow size but darker in color. The finches are generally good singers and nest low either in the grass or in bushes. They live largely on the seeds of noxious weeds, such as thistle, fox-tail grass and sorrel and are therefore of very great value to gardeners and farmers. Though awkward about catching insects, they often vary their bread diet with a little meat.

ENGLISH SPARROW. *Passer domesticus*. Six inches long. Came to America in 1851. Our ever present street gamin. Too well known to require close description. Constantly working and chirping. Builds bulky nests in awnings, trees or any old place. Male has black upper breast as most conspicuous marking.

560. CHIPPING SPARROW. *Spizella socialis*. Called also the social sparrow but he is less sociable in the west than in the east. Nearly an inch smaller than the English sparrow it can be told by its chestnut crown, white line over the eye and dull ash-colored breast. Its note is "Chip", "Chip", repeated at long intervals. Its nest is always lined with horse hair and placed higher above ground than that of any of the sparrows.

563. FIELD SPARROW. *Spizella pusilla*. About a half-inch smaller than the English sparrow. Brown above with chestnut crown, white below. Wings barred with white. Bill brownish-red. Long tail. Fond of fields and low bushes. Often mistaken for the chipping sparrow which, however, has a black bill.

585. FOX SPARROW. *Passerella iliaca*. Nine inches long. Cinnamon color on back. Darkest on wings and tail. Grayish-white beneath. Two white wing-bars.

581. SONG SPARROW. *Melospiza melodia*. The size of the



English sparrow. Loves the small bushes by the roadside. Dull brown in streaks above. Gray with dark streaks below. Noticeable black spot on upper breast. Special tail motion in flight. Sweet singer.

540a. VESPER SPARROW. *Pooecoetes gramineus confinis*. About the size of its English cousin. Brown in streaks above. White with dark streaks below. Shoulder patches pale russet. White tail feathers noticeable in flight. A roadside and grass bird. Often sings in its upward flight. Loves the roadside.

558. WHITE-THROATED SPARROW. *Zenotrychia albicollis*. Nearly an inch longer than the English sparrow. Generally seen in flocks during migration. Top of head with two black stripes separated by a white one. Throat noticeably white. White wing-bars. Called "Peabody Bird" from its song "See, see, Peabody, Peabody, Peabody." Quite common in early spring.

554. WHITE-CROWNED SPARROW. *Zenotrichia leucophrys*. An inch longer than the English sparrow. Crown not white but with several black and white stripes. Resembles its white-throated cousin but is without the white throat.

559a. TREE SPARROW. *Spizella monticola ochracea*. The size of the English sparrow. Streaked brown above. Dusky white below. Chestnut patch on head. Black spot on center of breast. Has two white wing-bars.

546a. GRASSHOPPER SPARROW. *Ammodramus savannarum bimaculatus*. Five inches long. Called grasshopper sparrow because its song resembles the buzzing of that insect. Perches often on wire fences. Brown above with varied sparrow-like markings. Drab below. Top of head rusty black. Sits quite erect and often sings from weed stalks. Does not often fly when startled but hides.

#### FINCHES.

536. LAPLAND LONGSPUR. *Calcarius Lapponicus*. Nearly an inch longer than the English sparrow. Generally seen in flocks. Brown above with black markings, gray below. Given their name because they nest so far north and because their hind toe-nail is so long. Has white wing-bars. Sings on the wing.

567. JUNCO. *Junco hyemalis*. The size of the English sparrow. One of the snow birds. Slate-colored above. Males almost black on head and neck. White beneath. A winter bird. Seen in flocks.

517. PURPLE FINCH. *Carpodacus purpureus*. About the size of the English sparrow. Not purple except on head but raspberry red. Brown above. Dull white below. Usually seen in flocks as a winter visitant. Tail indented.

534. SNOWFLAKE. *Passerina nivalis*. An inch longer than the

English sparrow. Streaked brown above, white below. Wings white. Tail, black and white. Bill yellowish. Distinctly a snow bird and lover of the storm. Winter visitant. Usually seen in flocks.

529. GOLDFINCH. *Astragalinus tristis*. (Called wild canary and thistle bird.) Length five inches. Mostly bright yellow. Head and wings of male black. Flies with a dipping motion. Fond of thistles and sunflowers. Nests in August.

#### BUNTINGS.

598. INDIGO BUNTING. *Cyanospiza cyanea*. Six inches long. Size of English sparrow but more graceful and slender body. The color of indigo. Female brown with yellowish-brown breast.

605. LARK BUNTING. *Calamospiza melanocorys*. About the size of the English sparrow. Entirely black except on wings which have white patches. Often mistaken for bobolink but has no yellowish-white hood and is smaller. Flies a short distance into the air singing, then almost floats to a perch.

604. DICKCISSEL. *Spiza Americana*. The size of the English sparrow. Often seen on fences and telegraph wires with tail hanging. Pale yellow below with black mark on upper breast. Brownish above. Sings a great deal.

528. REDPOLL. *Acanthis linaria*. A little smaller than the English sparrow. Redpoll means redhead but the redpoll has only a reddish head. Grayish breast and lower back. Black chin. White below. Winter birds in this latitude usually seen in large flocks.

521. AMERICAN CROSSBILL. *Loxia curvirostra minor*. English sparrow size. The crossing of the bill is a sure mark of identification. Throat and breast reddish and wings brown. Fond of the seeds of the pine cones.

587. CHEWINK. (Towhee.) *Pipilo erythrophthalmus*. Eight inches long. Black above. Breast white. Sides chestnut. Tail feathers noticeably white in flight. Eyes red. Female brown where male is black.

#### GROSBEAKS.

595. ROSE-BREASTED GROSBEAK. *Zamelodia ludoviciana*. Eight inches long. Male, black above. Breast rose-color and rose-color under wings. White markings on wings and tail, very noticeable in flight. Bill strong and very thick. Excellent singer.

514a. EVENING GROSBEAK. *Coccothraustes vespertinus montanus*. About eight inches long. Greenish-yellow is the principal color especially below. Bright yellow forehead and above the eyes.

Wings and tail nearly black. Bill strong and very thick. White patches on wings and more or less brownish on sides.

593. CARDINAL GROSBEEK. *Cardinalis cardinalis*. About nine inches long. Cardinal except around the beak which is black. Very thick and strong beak. Well crested. Rare in this latitude.

515a. PINE GROSBEEK. *Pinicola enucleator montana*. About eight inches long. Red with brown extremities. Wings tipped with dull white. Has a strong beak which is the distinguishing mark of grosbeaks.

### ENGLISH SPARROW.

He does not require six months in which to establish a residence, for he is at home anywhere and everywhere. If he should increase as rapidly during the next fifty years as he has in the last ten years it will keep him busy finding a place to roost. He seems to have unlimited resources. He will build a nest in a little less than no time and often one cock sparrow will have two new nests under way before his first one is finished. If lady sparrows were hens there would be millions in the poultry business for they are regular little sleight-of-wing performers when it comes to producing eggs; and very likely they could produce eggs from your hat or your pockets if they wanted to.

They were introduced into this country to eat the worms and bugs from the trees in eastern parks. They have done their work, and done it well, but the question remains unanswered "What can now be introduced to eat the sparrows?" The remedy seems almost as bad as the disease.

You cannot help admiring this little disciple of Roosevelt, for, first of all, he is a fighter from Scraptown and is bound to have peace if he has to fight for it. He will kill his brother in a duel and he will fight as many as eight others at a single time. Once I saw a little sparrow fight his shadow through a window glass until his face swelled up so that his eyes were nearly shut. I afterwards heard that he returned every day, for two weeks to renew the fight. He is a worker from Busyville too. Let down an awning and often a nest with eggs will tumble out. It makes little difference to them, however, for work will begin at once on another nest. They will build in trees, barns, vines, in a deserted woodpecker's hole, in a hole in a sandbank and in a multitude of other places. They have no fear of wind nor weather and dur-

ing the coldest days of winter often go down chimneys to spend the night and keep warm. Possibly you may have seen a flock of the little fellows playing in the snow and showing evidence that they have slept the night before in the coal bin.

He is against race suicide. Different forms of life use different means of preserving their species. Some do it by producing a multitude of young of which many survive just because their enemies cannot kill all of them; some regard life as a battle in which the fittest will survive and therefore they prepare to fight their way through it, while some live in localities not inhabited by their natural enemies. Which method does the English sparrow use? All of them and several more besides.

Bird-lovers concede him to the gunner to satisfy the love of carnage, that element of savagery still left to man, but it is too bad that they so often have to throw the blackbirds to the tigers, too. You need waste no sympathy upon the sparrow, however, for he can take care of himself and a wife or two and a dozen or more children and if there is a creature on earth that looks out for number one any better than he does, you would do well to find him. He hasn't many friends, but he doesn't care.

#### CHIPPING SPARROW.

In the east a little bird used to come regularly to the doorstep when grandmother shook the tablecloth and with a constant "Chip", "Chip", "Chip" between bites, gathered every little crumb. It was the commonest bird of all until its English cousin arrived. It is a far less common bird in Dakota.

It gets up at a very early hour and sits up pretty late for such a little bird but only to sing its song over and over again for it is a musical little fellow and often wakes up in the night and trills a dreamy song or two.

What a delicate little nest it builds! And it always lines it with horse-hair. I used to watch them come to the wooden hitching posts and tug at the hairs that had been pulled out of the horses' manes. Some of them came pretty hard too, but they had to have them.

Every little bird has a choice of material for its home. I have never seen an Arkansas flycatcher's nest that did not have white wrapping twine in it, nor a kingbird's without cotton or

wool, nor a phoebe bird's without moss, and the only time that the great crested flycatcher's nests have been found without cast-off snake skins in them, they had onion peels and fish scales as substitutes.

Probably there are no more indulgent parents than chipping sparrows. They would make you think that they feed each other if you did not see the look of youth upon the face of the big booby bird who opens his wide mouth to receive the crumb from his little mother, and when she flies away for more, he tags on behind to be sure of getting the next morsel that she finds, and he will coax for it just as hard as a real boy will coax for a piece of bread and butter.

Every bird has a certain food which Nature has provided and in the gathering of which it has become an adept. When you first ate macaroni, you did not do it as an Italian would; you probably made a mess of it. So when a chippie eats moths, it is in strong contrast to the phoebe. It had better stick to seeds and crumbs if it cares at all for manners.

The nest that holds the four dotted blue eggs of the chippie is built very often in apple trees which are pretty high for sparrows, and chippie is the only sparrow that goes to the trees to build his home and it is usually so far out among the leaves that it is hardly visible, but the lazy cowbird finds it, the polygamous loafer.

### FOX SPARROW.

Arriving at the Milwaukee station a few days ago to meet a train, I learned that it was twenty minutes late, so I slipped across the track to the island to see and hear. At once I heard the drumming of a hairy woodpecker who had found a very resonant limb and he was sounding his love tattoo to a maiden of his kind who very soon came fluttering to him. I saw the newly sprouting gooseberry bush that last year was the home of my yellow warbler; I noted that the redwinged blackbird had not yet returned to claim the little circle of marsh near by. A grackle and his mate spread their keel tails and sailed away from me with a murmur of disapproval. A flicker watched me suspiciously from a rotten tree and countless English sparrows fluttered busily about. Soon a bird song burst upon my ear—a

sparrow song I was sure. I stood in silence for a while fearing to take a chance of missing it by intrusion. Presently I glanced before me and there sat a beautiful fox sparrow. We looked each other over, stared deep into each other's eyes. If he thought as well of me as I did of him, he has been thinking of me almost ever since. He was the singer of the wonderful song.

Just a little sparrow! I wonder where he is to-night while the snowy blizzard is raging. Poor little minstrel! Tucked away in the hole of a fence post? Perhaps he turned his back upon the storm and on swift wing is riding on its breast to southern sunny fields. Perhaps bewildered and blinded he has crushed his little life out against the tower of some tall building, or lies with broken wing beneath a network of wires.

“There have been souls,  
 Children of heavenly song  
 That have been stayed in their wild dreamy flight  
 And fallen unseen, unknown  
 As silently  
 In the dark night.  
 Yet someone pities them  
 And someone loves  
 Them for the simple tribute that they bring  
 To Him who marketh  
 E'en the sparrow's fall  
 On broken wing.”

He is less sociable than most of the social sparrow family, yet he was in company with a flock of tree sparrows at the time I saw him. I fear that you think ill of the sparrows because you are so familiar with the little gamin of the streets but he is quite alone in his unpopularity, as other members of his family are entirely respectable.

I wanted to see the little fox sparrow get down upon the ground and scratch for he doesn't do it as other birds do with first one foot and then the other but he digs in with both at once, really gets there with both feet.

He is called also the foxy finch, not that he possesses any unusual shrewdness but just because he is the color of the red fox. As a fact, I judge from the meek expression of his face that he

could easily be imposed upon. All he wants is to be left alone while he helps the other sparrows to keep the weeds from possessing the earth.

Just as I was about to start him from his perch, his mate came flying to him and I fear that she whispered something about me for they both flew hastily away. Then the whistle blew.

### JUNCO.

These little "birds of a feather flock together" and are rarely seen except in flocks for they go farther north to break up into pairs for their nesting. They have a reputation for shyness, yet they flit about the roadsides flying as though in fright, in and out of the brush and the smaller trees. Many birds like the meadow lark, the vesper sparrow and the junco have two white feathers in their tails that are not visible except in flight when they become quite conspicuous. Did you ever hear the expression "showing the white feather" meaning to turn your back and "light out"? I imagine that I have suggested to you the origin of it.

Especially when the juncos wear their little black cowl they look like the monks and nuns of bird land and their little backs are just the color of the clouds on a winter's day and their breasts the color of the snow.

If you would see them, you must look closely and watch for the flash of their white feathers as they flit about you as though you were a human hawk. You have doubtless seen thousands of them but have glanced at them only as you do at the sparrow for which you have probably mistaken them.

They will soon take wings for a colder clime, to Manitoba or somewhere across the Canadian border to build their nests around the fallen trees, but when our summer friends, our fair weather friends, have gone to their sunny winter homes, the tireless little juncos will come to us again to spend the winter and gather the weed seeds from our roadsides and, if very hungry, even the crumbs from our doorsteps.

The notes of the juncos are as sweet as they can be. They have a quality like that of the bluebirds, a sort of far away, almost ventriloquial note that suggests the dreariness of the winter and early springtime. It is a whistle, a trill and a warble that

makes you feel that the bird is singing for its own delight and not for yours, for if you come too near, the bushes will soon be untenanted and the music stilled.

### INDIGO BUNTING.

There are fortunately some birds that require only to be seen to be identified. The indigo bird is one of them. You would never make a mistake in him, but his mate hasn't an indigo feather. She's done in sepia and is an indigo bird only by courtesy. Her husband is the blue-feathered aristocrat and he's something of a snob too. As he is a cousin to the sparrows that are such common birds, he no doubt feels that he is the swell member of the family and looks down upon his relatives.

Nearly everyone that I have ever seen was posing upon a telegraph or telephone wire. That is about as high as they ever fly and that is higher than sparrows generally rise.

The male is a rather pretty singer but disappointing. He starts out with his song as though he were going to make the valleys and the woodland ring with his rapid warble and then it frazzles out and fades away and you feel as though he thought to himself "Oh, what's the use of singing to common people!" He always acts about his singing as though he were just home from conservatory and wanted to be coaxed.

Emerson says that the theory of compensation runs through everything and it is true that while Nature is lavish enough with her gifts she keeps a pretty nice balance after all. The birds of brightest plumage are rarely those of sweetest song. Your flicker with his fancy vest has a voice like an auctioneer and your blue jay with his loud clothes has a gambler's voice as well. The wood duck is probably the best dressed bird in the country, but he has a poor ear and a poor voice for music. When it comes to solo work with its tone placing and phrasings and tremulos give us the brown thrasher or the plain gray catbird and for choruses give us the blackbird.

The indigo bird seems to have a well trained voice.

He is one of the birds that make you feel that he is a long way from home, for he is rare in Dakota and very unlike any others of our birds. He really shows royal tropical colors and you





RED-WINGED BLACKBIRD

(UPPER FIGURE, MALE; LOWER FIGURE, FEMALE)

Order—PASSERES  
Genus—AGELAIUS

Family—ICTERIDÆ  
Species—PHŒNICEUS



would almost suspect that he had escaped from the cage of the King of the Isle of Spice.

I have always noticed him by a roadside and his nest is always low rather than high up in the branches, and I have no doubt he chooses such a place for his nest because his worst enemies are the birds of prey. All of them except always the blue jay, who is not really a bird of prey, but only a degenerate, spend their time and build their nests away from the haunts of men. Thus the little song birds frequent the thoroughfares. If we could only get the butcher-bird to move to town, away would go the English sparrows. However he comes to town only occasionally but when he does he has a high old time cleaning up the sparrows.

### CHEWINK.

In Connecticut where it is more common than in the west, this was my favorite bird. As a child there were many fancies that clung about the bird and it seemed to me that the "chewink" was making love to the "towhee" for his mate, to a novice is an entirely different bird.

Rarity makes almost anything a prize whether it be diamonds, charity, books, sweetbreads or the *rara avis*.

Last summer I searched a long time for a nest. The birds betrayed by their anxiety that it was near and it is a wonder that the nest and its eggs were not crushed for it was on the ground among the dry leaves that were in abundance in the little thicket. In fact it was made of them. If it had been stepped upon, several cowbird eggs would have disappeared too, for the little nest was packed full of the eggs of both birds. As it was, the cowbird eggs disappeared mysteriously and the chewink was the gainer by my visit.

There is always a special fascination for the birds among whom the females are wholly different from the males as is the case with the chewink, the indigo bird, the grosbeak, the redstart, the oriole, the goldfinch and most of our very conspicuous birds, and there is a reason or an instinct in nature for the female to be less conspicuous, for they spend so much time upon their nests that their enemies have a far better chance to detect and secure them.

If the man behind the gun had been a part of nature's plan I have no doubt that all birds would have had more somber colors. What a life it must be to be in the enemy's country all the time!

By the way, the chewink is the bird that Thomas Jefferson discovered upon his farm and became so much interested in. He wrote with great interest to the scientists of his time about it and it became his special favorite.

### ROSE-BREADED GROSBEAK.

In a little while, as soon as the buds have burst upon the maple trees, you will be startled at the song of the grosbeak which will fall upon your ear with an amazing sweetness. You will never forget the day. That song is as full of music as its little heart is full of love.

Follow the song and you will find it coming from one of the prettiest birds that ever spread a wing. If you say "Handsome is that handsome does", and "Is not the bluejay pretty and pretty bad too?" the answer is "The grosbeak is pretty and pretty good too".

As he sits high up in the tree-top trying to fill the world with music, he looks as though his throat had burst from the fullness of his song and his heart's blood had stained his throbbing breast. Not so with his modest mate. Never a red feather in her trousseau, just a brown and yellow to catch her fellow.

As though it were not enough to be pretty and to sing sweetly, the grosbeak is handy about the house. He helps make up the nest. He helps to get dinner. He even does his share in the nursery, sitting part of the time upon the eggs or singing mamma and babies to sleep in their little cradle of straw.

Yes, even at midnight when the reflected light of the rounded moon sheds a radiance upon his cradled loved ones, he will watch above them and warble to the night the echo of his day-song. If you must shoot him, shoot him then.

He has been called the potato-bug bird because of his diet, however, his gross beak tells us that he cracks nuts and seeds for food as well.

He may be plentiful in some localities but it is doubtful, for millinery "has marked him for her own" and "Death loves a shining mark". His presence in gardens creates the farmer's

suspicion but he would no more eat his filthy garden truck than he would sing rag-time.

It is wrong to charge too much against the milliners. Let it be said that the slaughter of birds for hats is ceasing, but the reports of the National association show that it has not wholly ceased. It will cease when high-minded women refuse to wear as badges of cruelty the nuptial plumes of the bride-grooms of the air.

### GOLDFINCH.

They say that all blackberries are red when they are green, so too, many members of the blackbird family are without black plumage. Neither is every bird a yellowbird that is yellow.

You should have no trouble in knowing the goldfinch when you see him for he wears a golden jacket with black sleeves and a tiny black cap. Little Mrs. Finch goes around bareheaded like all the girls and is very modest in her dress.

In birdland you know, the boys dress better than the girls. Domestication seems to upset every thing. And why shouldn't they dress better? In birdland the boys are always the ones that propose and they must look their best and they always get a nice new spring suit in preparation for their May or June weddings. You ask if it is not necessary for the girls to dress prettily to attract them? Oh, no. They all get married anyway. There are no such things as bachelors and old maids among them. Alas! There are widows, and widowers and very many little orphans because boys and men and women and girls are not all dead yet. It is not a part of Nature's plan by any means.

You will find goldfinches in flocks except during the short nesting season, for they are regular little gypsies. You can never tell when you will see them, the little nomads! Last December a flock of them hung around Pierre for a few days even while the snow was on the ground. That made no difference for they wallowed in it or clung to the sides of weeds to gather their favorite seeds.

They are the greatest little bathers you ever saw. After a rain, sometime, you may see a puddle of water with its outer edge just trimmed with yellow and black and a real wreath of spray will enclose it. They will come and go, rising and dipping,

dipping and rising and chirping a succession of sweet little notes all tuned to your ear and to your heart.

They brood in August. Why? Because the prickly weeds don't have their seeds ready for the goldfinch babies until then. And they must feed them on thistle seeds and they must line their little nests with thistle down, the very soul and spirit of the flowers.



# Swallows.

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Order, *Passeres*.

Family, *Hirundinidae*.

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Family Characteristics: Five and one-half to seven and one-half inches long. Wide wing-spread. Nearly always seen on the wing. Live in colonies and twitter rather than sing. From dark gray to purplish black above with breasts from white to buff.

They live on mosquitoes, moths and insects of nearly all varieties and work without ceasing. No birds can be of more value. They are real pest-destroyers.

613. BARN SWALLOW. *Hirundo erythrogastra*. Six and one-half inches long. Blue-black above, russet beneath. Large wing-spread. Forked tail. Very common. Nests in barns and under bridges.

611. PURPLE MARTIN. (A swallow.) *Progne subis*. Seven and one half inches long. Male black with purple luster. Wings longer than tail. Tail forked. Female gray beneath and faded above. Seen in town where it nests in boxes or under cornices.

612. EAVES SWALLOW. (Cliff Swallow.) *Petrochelidon lunifrons*. Length of English sparrow. Wide wing-spread. Bluish-drab above. An inconspicuous gray crescent about the neck. Soiled white beneath. Best identified by gourd-shaped, mud nests built under the eaves of barns or on the sides of cliffs. Tail without forks.

616. BANK SWALLOW. *Riparia riparia*. Somewhat shorter than the English sparrow. Its wide wing-spread makes it look larger than it is. Gray above shaded to brown. White below. Tail not swallow-tailed. Nests in holes dug in sand banks and railroad cuts.

614. TREE SWALLOW. *Tachycineta bicolor*. Nearly English sparrow length. Wide wing-spread. Bluish-green reflections above, white beneath. Tail slightly forked. Nests in hollow trees when it can and, therefore, is rare on the prairies.

CHIMNEY SWALLOW. This is not a swallow but a member of the swift family.

## BARN SWALLOW.

“One swallow does not make a summer”, but he does what he can, for when he begins his “twittering from the straw-built shed”, you may know that summer is in the making. You can tell him by his bluish broadcloth coat with its swallow-tails and his russet colored velvet vest which he never forgets to wear. As usual in bird-land the ladies are more quietly dressed than their husbands, so I am not describing them in these articles, leaving you to judge them by the company they keep.

The first thing that you will notice about the barn swallow will be his poetry or motion. With light body and large wing-spread, he can dart and skim and circle as though he possessed a magic charm that baffled gravitation. For miles he will circle about you as you drive along the country roads, keeping his mouth wide open to gather in the flies that gather about your horses. Did you ever see them as they glide above the surface of a quiet pond, dipping lightly into the water and setting in motion the ever widening circles? There is no prettier sight.

Whoever called this little flycatching swallow a bird of evil omen was either wise or foolish; foolish if he knew no better, wise if he was the farmer who first told it to some mischievous boys to keep them from killing his swallows for they are birds of value to the farmer and add much fat and contentment to the poor fly-bitten cattle.

Do not mistake them for the eaves swallows that have taken the eaves of the barn for the settlement of their colony and peek at you from the tiny holes in their gourd-shaped nests of mud. You must go inside the barn or out under the shed to find the feather-lined home of the barn swallow. Both nests are made of pellets of mud mingled with straw, but the barn swallow as he lives under shelter makes no roof to his house. You can hardly tell by looking at the long, thin-shelled, lightly spotted eggs, what kind of swallows will come out of them, they are so nearly alike, but it makes little difference anyway. They will catch about the same number of mosquitos for you.



## PURPLE MARTIN—(A SWALLOW.)

As you are walking up the main street of almost any town in the state, your ear will catch the conversation of a little colony of martins. "Every interpretation of their thought is a melody. Their household words are songs."

Glancing upward to the telephone wire you will very likely see them perching upon it, the males so deep a purple that they are almost black.

They will not rest there long for they spend most of their time upon the wing and if you will watch them you will soon see that they have chosen for a home a place within the ridge of a store building which they enter at a knot hole or by an opening made by the weather-warped boards.

There was a time when a little birdhouse placed upon a pole would bring blue birds or martins to you in numbers, but now the English sparrow exercises his squatter right, and while either bird can whip the sparrow, he doesn't care for the job of making that his exclusive occupation, so he moves on rather than be constantly annoyed.

The purple martin is one of the birds that like the passenger pigeon has suffered a frightful decrease in numbers within the last decade. The birds that live in colonies are the ones that suffer most.

"To kill two birds with one stone" is fascinating and to many people it is bliss to shoot into a colony of birds and cover the ground with the dead and dying. Now and then a fellow will do it but he is the one who fishes with a seine. It takes only half as many letters to spell his name as it does to spell martin.

When the boll-weevil scared the cotton planters until they feared that the cotton plant would perish from the earth, the martin was one of the birds that went to the rescue, for like all the swallows he is fond of flying insects. Probably there are no birds of greater value than those of the swallow family, and if any man feels that he must shoot a martin, let him do it on the wing for the martin is sportsmanlike enough to take its own game that way.

## BANK SWALLOW.

Perfect little darters and skimmers through the air, they seem to be letting the wind toss them about and play with them while they abandon themselves to the fun of it, yet they are gathering a good square meal of flying insects.

They have learned the protective value of digging little holes in the side of a sand bank where hardly anything can reach them but feathered enemies and if they are larger than the swallows they will find great difficulty in entering the front door of the little cave-dweller's home.

The inevitable English sparrows make good use of these cyclone cellars in bad weather and often make their winter homes within them. At the remote end of each cave, which is usually the depth of an arm's length, they place a bit of hay and swallow-like line the nest with a liberal supply of feathers. Their eggs are white, very thin shelled as are those of all swallows, and the swallow crop is a pretty sure one.

The swallows are communistic and you will find colonies of them in railroad cuts, in sand banks and in the sides of cliffs. Certainly he has the best of the others of his kin in respect of his nesting but they are nearer than he is to their food supply for they keep closer to the cattle sheds, but what to a swallow is the flight of a mile?

If science were to give medals to the birds that live  
"For the heaven that smiles above them  
And the good that they can do"

I have no doubt that the little swallows would each wear a gold medal about his pretty throat. The boll-weevil, the dreaded stegomyia and others of his like find in the swallows their implacable foes. Already the cry has come from the south "Save the swallows.

# Waxwings.

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Order, *Passeres*.

Family, *Ampelidae*.

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619. CEDAR WAXWING. *Ampelis cedrorum*. Length seven inches. Brown above. Crested. Breast yellowish-brown. Red spots on wings resembling wax. Black band separating hat from jacket. Yellow band across end of tail feathers.

## CEDAR WAXWING.

Very much of a globe-trotter is this very pretty bird with his brown panne-velvet jacket and crested hat to match. The most sociable of birds, he travels in such large flocks that the supply of worms, bugs and berries upon which he feeds is soon exhausted in a given neighborhood, when he moves on. He is of an exclusive family, only three varieties having been found, two in America, the third in Japan and they look more like Japanese than they do like American birds. The name is given them because their wings have small red spots that look as though melted wax had been dropped upon them.

They have society appetities and perfect table manners and when you see a dozen of them sitting upon a limb do not be surprised if another should suddenly arrive and taking his place quietly at the end of the limb, offer a choice worm to his nearest friend with a soft remark in an undertone. You will probably not understand the remark but doubtless it was "After you, Alphonse", or something of the kind. Then Alphonse will pass it along to Gaston and Gaston to Leon and so on, until it has been passed to the end of the table and returned, when it is very daintily eaten by the original giver. They are so fond of juniper berries even in a state of decomposition that there is a suspicion that they like an after-dinner cordial.

When you see the top of a tree just loaded with them, you will find here and there a lonely outpost in adjoining trees and if there is cause for alarm, the colony will rise and adjourn in circling flight to a place of greater safety.

As they are so fond of evergreen trees, they are not of wide distribution and are not generally regarded as common in this section, but, in fact, there are very many of them as you will find out after identifying your first one.

They nest late in the year, probably because they wait till the berries are ripe, as it must be quite a job for waxwings to feed their young and they certainly must hate to take a chance of soiling their pretty clothes by doing such work. Their nests are not very well made and into all that I have ever seen they had woven some white wrapping twine. During the period of nesting they are very lonesome and spend much of the time billing and kissing each other.



# Shrikes.

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Order, *Passeres*.  
Family, *Laniidae*.

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621. NORTHERN SHRIKE. *Lanius borealis*. Robin size and larger than its relative, the loggerhead. Slate color above and light slate color beneath. Wings and tail black with a few white feathers. Black patch runs horizontally backward from bill beyond the eye. Slightly curved beak.

622. LOGGERHEAD SHRIKE. *Lanius ludovicianus*. Nine inches long. Bird mostly gray except wings, tail and cheeks, which are black. White feathers in tail. Bill hooked. Very common in Black Hills.

## LOGGERHEAD SHRIKE.

Sitting on his lookout, the dead limb of a tree that overlooks an open space where the smallest birds have their feeding grounds, there is a cannibalistic villain waiting and silently plotting a multitude of crimes. Presently you will see him swoop down upon them and such a scattering you never saw in your life. No human beings ever fled before a cyclone with greater fear than do the little birds at the approach of this outlaw, for some one of them loses its life and its body is borne in the butcher's beak and hung upon a thorn or upon the barb of a wire fence as a butcher hangs his beef.

I have seen that easy downward glide with hardly the movement of a wing and with the speed of a ski-jumper at the foot of his slide, and it seemed hardly possible that it ended in murder for it was the very poetry of motion.

Have you not seen little birds hanging on a barb? Perhaps you have seen the little gopher dangling from a wire fence and thought that the small boy had put him there. No, it was the loggerhead shrike. And why does he hang them there? Because he kills many times as much as he can eat. He just hungers and thirsts for bird blood.

Why is it, do you think, that a bird like the shrike, that can kill almost anything that flies, if it is not so very much bigger than he is, that lays four eggs or more and builds his nest out of reach of snakes, still remains a rare bird? It must have an enemy somewhere. While in the country last summer I came upon a shrike's nest and its four eggs were broken as though a tiny bill had just tapped them. Can it be possible that the smaller birds thus keep down their enemies? What a daring deed for a little bird! He was the David of his race.

There is just one use to which this bird could be put. If he would come to town and kill English sparrows, he would be worth while, not that the killing of sparrows is to be especially commended, but we can spare them best and they are like the Chinese; the loss of a few of them would not put the race in danger of extermination.



# Vireos.

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Order, *Passeres*.

Family, *Vireonidae*.

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Family Characteristics: Mostly heard from the foliage of trees where they feed. Though common, they are rarely seen. Small birds about the size of sparrows, but more suggestive of the warblers. Their plumage is a combination of yellow, drab, gray and white. They live almost entirely on bugs and insects which they find on trees.

624. RED-EYED VIREO. *Vireo olivaceus*. Slightly longer than the English sparrow. Called "Teacher" because of its song. Light olive above, white below. Long, white mark over its eyes. Keeps well in hiding among the tree-leaves. Eyes red. Points light yellow.

627. WARBLING VIREO. *Vireo Gilvus*. Nearly an inch shorter than the English sparrow. Habits similar to those of the red-eyed vireo. Olive-gray above, yellowish-white below. Sides of breast and shoulders pale yellow. White line through the eye.

626. PHILADELPHIA VIREO. *Vireo Philadelphicus*. Over an inch shorter than the English sparrow. Olive above, lighter on crown. Yellow below. White line over the eye.

631. WHITE-EYED VIREO. *Vireo noveboracensis*. Nearly an inch shorter than the English sparrow. Olive above, white below. Sides yellowish. White wing-bars. A yellow line around its white eyes identify it.

# Warblers.

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Order, *Passeres*.

Family, *Mniotiltidae*.

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Family Characteristics: Smaller than English sparrow. So-called wild canary is a type. Color yellow and olive as a rule. Restless and active.

They live mainly on small insects which they find on trees and shrubs and on the seeds of noxious weeds.

652. YELLOW WARBLER. *Dendroica aestiva*. Five inches long. Light olive above. Light yellow beneath. Wings and tail darker and edged with brown.

655. MYRTLE WARBLER. *Dendroica coronata*. A little shorter than the English sparrow. Blue back. White throat. More or less black streaks on otherwise dull white breast. Distinguishing marks are yellow patches on head, each side of breast and lower back. Wings lightly barred with white.

687. REDSTART. *Setophaga ruticilla*. The size of the yellow-bird. Mostly black above. Breast white and orange. Tail orange and black. Female lemon color where male is orange.

681a. NORTHERN YELLOWTHROAT. *Geothlypis trichas occidentalis*. Five inches long. Olive green above. Yellow beneath, deepest on throat. With a black mask.

662. BLACKBURNIAN WARBLER. *Dendroica Blackburniae*. Warbler size. Throat orange. Head orange and black, yellow and white beneath. Points black with some white.

654. BLACK-THROATED BLUE WARBLER. *Dendroica caerulescens*. Warbler size. Throat black, white beneath. Slaty-blue above. White spots on wings and tail.



648. PARULA WARBLER. *Compothylpis Americana*. Warbler size. Slaty-blue above with a light olive patch on the back. Yellow below growing lighter towards tail. Wings have white spots.

673. PRAIRIE WARBLER. *Dendroica discolor*. Warbler size. Olive above, spotted with red. Yellow beneath. Wings barred with yellow. Sides black, starting from eye.

636. BLACK AND WHITE CREEPING WARBLER. *Mniotilta varia*. Warbler size. Black and white stripes above. White eye-ring. Black and white stripes beneath. Points faded black. Creeps about trees much as woodpeckers do.

674. OVENBIRD. *Seiurus aurocapillus*. See thrushes. Actually a warbler, but resembles thrushes more.

661. BLACK POLL WARBLER. *Dendroica striata*. Warbler size. Black crown. Olive and black above, lighter towards tail. White with black stripes below.

### YELLOW WARBLER.

If you see a bird a little smaller than the English sparrow, trimmer, neater and better dressed, with olive coat and yellow vest, no matter what stripes, dots, collars and neckties he may wear, you are quite safe in calling it a warbler.

Sparrow, swallow, finch, thrush and many other names are like Smith, Jones, Brown and Robinson, the names of families, and to merely call a bird a warbler is not enough to mark him.

The month of May is the warbler's month and so is September, for in those months we see most of them in migration. Active and nervous little birds, they flit about the tips of the branches up-side-down or down-side-up, restlessly searching for the tiny eggs, bugs or seeds upon which they live.

A good type is the yellow warbler, the sprite that many of you know as the wild canary. It is a dear little bird and I will tell you some of its good qualities. It is pretty, industrious and domestic. It sings sweetly, builds skillfully and makes the world better for having lived. What more could you ask of a little bird?

All birds have strong likes and dislikes. Each tree-nesting bird has its favorite tree. The waxwing loves the cedar; the cross-bill, the pine; the flicker, the chestnut or the apple in the east, the cottonwood in the west; the oriole loves the elm; the yellow warbler, well, it likes the one that the Irishman wanted to be

hanged upon when given his choice of trees, the gooseberry bush. Its second choice is the willow.

I will tell you of a very clever act of the yellow warbler, leaving it to Burroughs and to Seton whether it is an act of reason or of instinct. When the parasitic cowbird lays its egg in a yellow warbler's nest, the warbler builds a false bottom over it and runs the side walls up so as to make a second nest above for its own egg, thus refusing to make its home an asylum for cowbirds.

It is a wonderful nest that it builds and must be seen to be appreciated. It is made of the silver-colored fiber of plants, the silk of caterpillars, tiny bits of wool and fern down. What a warm little nest it must be! The yellow warbler raises but one family a year and it must do it very carefully.

#### MYRTLE WARBLER.

It is always a pleasure to find one of the warblers, especially one that is new to us. The myrtle warbler, however, is one of our commonest visitants but is always of interest to a bird-lover. They never reveal themselves to you at a single glance for they are so very restless that there is ever something new for you, though you have known them for years.

A flock of at least a dozen of the myrtle birds spent a morning in one of my trees where, a few days before, the kinglets made merry with the bugs. They were very familiar, probably because they were finding a royal feast.

It is too bad that some of our warblers cannot be renamed. The redstart for example has a German name that means "red-tail" but redstarts do not have red tails. They are either orange or lemon. Probably they were called that for the same reason that a grove (lucus) in Latin was named from the Latin word lux, meaning light, because there is little light in a grove.

The Blackburnian warbler, that pretty little bunch of flame, was named after Blackburn, whoever he was. Very likely he was the first man to kill one.

The worm-eating warbler has a repulsive name and it means little more than to speak of the seed-eating sparrow or an insect-eating flycatcher.

The myrtle warbler is said to eat the berries of the myrtle, hence his name. Though a very small part of his diet is myrtle



ROSE-BREADED GROSBEAK

(UPPER FIGURE, MALE; LOWER FIGURE, FEMALE)

Order—PASSERES  
Genus—ZAMELODIA

Family—FRINGILLIDÆ  
Species—LUDOVICIANA



berries, yet the name is a very pretty one and far better than most of them.

If you wish to see the warblers you may begin your search, for May is their month and most of them will be gone ere long across the Canadian border. Look for them busily engaged in the small branches of the trees and shrubs, looking for tiny insects and their eggs. No birds are as well groomed. They are clean and neat all the time with every feather in place upon their snug little bodies. Of their economic and aesthetic value there can be no doubt and when it comes to music—why, they are warblers.

### REDSTART.

This is one of the dearest little birds and he dresses like a little child when he is going to speak a piece and he is just as conscious of the fact that he holds the center of the stage. You can approach him very closely when he will spread out his tiny wings, flutter them a second and then dart out into the air to turn a somersault for you. Sailing back to his perch he will glance at you as much as to say "How is that for high?" Again and again he will repeat the performance, snapping up a tiny fly each time very much as the fly-catchers do.

The man who named him was color-blind if he really meant what he said, for redstart means redtail and that is precisely what the little bird has not. Yet these homely names given to the birds, though they are so often wrong give them a touch of familiarity that their Latin names do not. For example "*Setophaga ruticilla*" doesn't mean as much to us as redstart.

No doubt the little fellow's tail should receive recognition, not because of its color, but because he is so proud of it. He will spread it out like a fan and show as much pride in it as a woman in the train of her party gown. You will recognize him at once as a warbler but you may well depend upon his somersault as the surest means of identification.

I wonder if anyone lives who can identify all the warblers at a glance? I should like to see his picture.

## NORTHERN YELLOWTHROAT.

The greatest pleasure that comes from bird study is the constant surprise that awaits you. I was once studying a cat bird that evidently thought that I was on forbidden ground and was doing his best to frighten me away, when I literally felt the presence of a then invisible spectator. Presently I glanced down at the root of the willowy underbrush before me and saw a pair of bright eyes no bigger than tiny beads fastened upon me. I had never seen the little bird before and it seemed at first as though he were a little outlaw, for across his eyes he wore a black mask, which, however, did not conceal his look of suspicion. He was only a little detective, hiding there to see what I was doing. As soon as he saw that I had discovered him, he darted away, but not very far, so I followed him, only to find that he was leading me by easy stages away from his sphere of living. After I had made my notes of his personal appearance I retired, thinking that perhaps he would cease his orders for me to "quit! quit!" and would give vent to his joy at my departure. I was soon rewarded by his joyous song, "Witchity, witchity, witchity," which is now all that I need to hear, that I may know that there is a northern yellowthroat nearby. Either his little black mask or his buoyant song will serve to tell him from the large family of warblers that come north during the month of May. I think it is always hard for a beginner to tell the warblers apart and the sparrows, too. There are so many kinds and they are all so much alike. It is nearly always easy to say "That is a warbler" or "That is a sparrow," but it is not so easy to tell just which sparrow or warbler it is. You will know the yellowthroat at once, for he has all the delicacy and refinement of the warbler family. He is neat and aristocratic, active, mostly yellow and wholly lovable. The sparrows are usually quite plain, common and democratic and just as lovable, excepting always, our English cousins, the little tyrants.

The northern yellowthroat is the little bird that, in the east where the skunk cabbage grows, actually builds his nest in the very heart of it, for its enemies would hardly care to approach that horrid weed. Some have claimed that the yellowthroat cannot smell, but it is safer, I think, to say that the very alert little

fellow has an extra sense rather than one less than the other birds. He knows the value of good protection and he knows that one can get used to almost anything. His other name is the black-masked ground warbler—an awfully big name for such a little bird.



# Mockingbirds.

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Order, *Passeres*.

Family, *Miminae*.

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Family Characteristics: Long tailed, slender, graceful birds, a little smaller than a robin. Excellent mimics of other birds. Bush-nesters. They eat worms and insects and aside from being a delight to the eye and ear, they are of great value to the horticulturalist.

703a. MOCKING BIRD. *Mimus polyglottos leucopterus*. Nine and one-half inches long. Robin ten inches. Drab above, light drab below. Irregularly marked with brown and white. Best identified by its song which is imitative of all birds.

705. BROWN THRASHER. *Toxostoma rufum*. About the size of the robin but tail longer by an inch. Bright cinnamon color above. Breast white with many brown arrow-shaped spots. Eyes yellow.

704. CATBIRD. *Galeoscoptes carolinensis*. Nine inches long. Very gray bird. Top of head black. Chestnut feathers under tail.

## BROWN THRASHER.

The only bird that I have ever placed in captivity was a brown thrasher. He had never done me wrong, nor had he wronged another, for I took him from his mother's nest against her protest, which although in bird language was perfectly intelligible. I imprisoned him because he was pretty and would sing. When he sang his first song, I was surprised at the sorrowful strain. It was not like the song of the wild bird which is the very ecstasy of music. In a short time he became so gentle that I let him out of his cage and at night he always returned to his perch for sleep. He often sang in his sleep, dreaming no doubt that he was free. Finally I ventured to hang the cage out of doors so that he might have a little more of freedom. For a while he returned to his cage at night but at last he took wings. I feared that he had met the enemy and was theirs, for many a cat had looked at him with a long, lingering look. The following spring



a brown thrasher came to my doorstep and ate some egg crumbs that I threw to him. I believe it was Dick.

The mocking-bird, the cat bird and the brown thrasher are the birds that give us the greatest variety of songs, but they are very shy and keep a distance from the abodes of men. If man were gentler with them, they would soon trust him. Birds are not afraid of horses and cows. You may ride a horse almost into a flock of geese, the wariest of birds. I once saw a humming bird take nectar from the flowers in the hand of a friend.

Perhaps it is not wrong to keep canary birds in cages. They have been reared in captivity and like Byron's prisoner of Chillon may have lost the love of liberty. Perhaps to them

“Stone walls do not a prison make

Nor iron bars a cell—”

for their song seems as buoyant as you could wish.

The four pretty finely dotted brown eggs in the nest nicely wrought of roots, grass and fibre is a mighty tempting thing to leave alone and the sparkling yellow eye of the frightened mother as you come upon her will help you on your way. Then they will have a chance to go on digging for worms in your garden or your lawn. They will charge you nothing for their services for the only bill that they present they use for digging.

#### CATBIRD.

Some men go through the world on the theory that it is always best to avoid trouble either by never troubling trouble till trouble troubles them, or by keeping so far in the background that they are seldom seen, and some fight their way through the world along the line of greatest resistance or try to make good by running a bluff. It is just the same with birds. Our catbird is not much afraid of snakes for her nest is not on the ground. She is afraid mostly of other birds and thinks that a good cold bluff is her best resource. When an enemy approaches she will imitate a cat as well as she can by ruffling up her maltese feathers to make herself look as large as possible and letting out a series of cat-calls.

Tabby probably learned to hiss from hearing a snake and if you should see a wild goose raise its long neck above the rushes near the edge of a pond and hear the hissings that it will make at you, you would be doing well if you did not feel that creepy

sensation that possesses you when you just miss stepping on a snake.

The catbird is not generally liked because it is far easier in this world to notice bad qualities than good ones. Some one has called him the Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde among birds. Surely there is no neater, trimmer or more graceful bird while he is singing one of the sweetest of bird songs, but when he flattens himself out in fear or anger and ruffles up his feathers and hisses his resentment at you he is very far from being a beauty.

If ever a bird lays a pretty egg it is the lady catbird. It is an intense green and four of them are laid in a neat nest made of fine roots and trimmed on the outside with little strips of grapevine bark. As the material indicates, it will be found most often near swamps or on the edge of ponds and rivers.

He is the American mockingbird unless the brown thrasher has won the honor. The votes are not all counted yet. I am almost tempted to call him my favorite bird, for while he is called the "Mr. Hyde" of bird life he is not really so. He assumes that part only to make his enemies think that he is tough and that they had better move on. As soon as they are gone, he comes off his perch like a gentleman, smoothes down his pretty gray suit, and pours out his soul in a paeon of great joy.

Like nearly all of the birds the catbird is a friend of man, and does far more good than harm. I think the only charge ever preferred against him is that he likes an occasional cherry, but he doesn't have to have it stained with coal-tar dye to allure him nor must he have one with every potion. As a friend of mine said to me the other day. "If the birds eat more of my cherries than I can spare, I will plant more cherry trees." Why shouldn't man do that much for the birds? If he doesn't want to lose his cherries let him plant mulberry trees. The birds like mulberries better and mulberries look more like caterpillars anyway.

# Wrens.

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Order, *Passeres*.

Family, *Troglodytidae*.

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Family Characteristics: Brownish-gray color. Small size. Rapid wing-motion in flight. Nervous and active. Song bubbling over. Often throw their tails backward.

Destroyers of ants and their eggs as well as all varieties of small insects.

721. HOUSE WREN. *Troglodytes Aedon*. Four and one-half inches long. Brownish-gray above. Dusky white breast.

722. WINTER WREN. *Troglodytes hiemalis*. Four and one-fourth inches long. Light brown. Finely barred above and below. Carries tail over his back most of the time. Bubbling songster.

724. SHORT-BILLED MARSH WREN. *Cistothorus stellaris*. Four inches long. Brown above, white below. Wings and tail lighter and barred. Shy, quick and nervous. Builds several nests among reeds.

725. LONG-BILLED MARSH WREN. *Cistothorus palustris*. Similar to short-billed variety, but an inch longer and has a whitish line above the eye.

## HOUSE WREN.

When you see a gingery little cinnamon-gray bird with his tail straight up and hear his rippling, bubbling song, you had better make your first guess "a wren." When you hear this little singer you will not be prepared to dispute the fellow who says that he can pour a quart of water out of a pint bottle.

A little Jewish boy in speaking of a new suit that he was wearing, held his coat sleeve up to me and exhibiting a well-concealed green thread in an otherwise gray suit, said "See, it has an inwizzable stripe." So the little wren has many fine inwizzable bars across his back, wings and tail.

If you would like to see a family of these little bits of ambition raised right at your very door, put up a little bird-box right

away. Cut the hole in the box the size of a silver quarter to keep the sparrows out. Put up two boxes if you have time, for they will enjoy making use of both of them if not otherwise occupied. You will enjoy watching them work. You will see them put in sticks that you would never think they could handle and you will find this very impatient bird a bird of remarkable perseverance. Then when they have carried in enough sticks and straws and what-not, they'll lay a feather bed on top of them and Jennie will lay from six to nine tiny, finely dotted pink eggs and if you go near the home then, you'll get an awful scolding for Jennie is just a bit shrewish. When the stork finally lands, the real work begins and woe to the ant colony that happens to be near for it had better hide those eggs and woe to all other tiny living things—for business! There are many mouths to feed and a whole house to keep clean too, and if there is a tidy little house-keeper in the world it is Jennie.

Of course they don't have to have fancy bird-houses, they will use almost any suitable place. I have seen a nest in a rural mail box, in an old shoe, in a hole in a brick wall. They would almost build a nest in your hair if you would keep your pocket full of ant eggs.

As birds nest near the best feeding-grounds, it is needless to say that wrens are of great service to you, especially if you have a garden, and as they are always in danger of cats it is well to place your wren-box where a cat can't reach it. Some friends of mine whose cat had killed a mother wren, took the baby-wrens into their home to raise them and to keep the little fellows well fed it took three of them the greater part of their time and one day after they had begun to fly they thought they had lost them but later they found them snuggled down in a cup at the top of their chandelier. Their experience became one of the happiest of their bird-memories.

# Chickadees and Nuthatches.

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Order, *Passeres*.

Family, *Paridae*.

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Family Characteristics: Permanent residents. More or less black and white. Smaller than sparrows. Gather food from limbs and trunks of trees. Not red-headed like woodpeckers nor do they support themselves by their tail-feathers. Insect-eaters and of special value to horticulturalists.

735. CHICKADEE. *Parus atricapillus*. An inch shorter than the English sparrow. Crown and throat black. Gray above with white cheeks. Soiled white below. Most easily identified by its note.

727. WHITE-BREASTED NUTHATCH. *Sitta carolinensis*. Length six inches. Black crown and neck. Bluish-drab above with some white on points. White below. Climbs trees up or down head first. Active and nervous. Called "Devil-downhead." Bill rather long.

728. RED-BREASTED NUTHATCH. *Sitta canadensis*. Hardly five inches long. Bluish-drab above. Head marked with black and white. Neck black. Breast brownish-red. Some white on points.

731. TUFTED TITMOUSE. *Baeolophus bicolor*. Six inches long. Crested. Drab above, dull white below. Dull black cap and black bill. Rare on the prairies as are all birds that nest in tree-holes.

## CHICKADEE.

This little black-capped titmouse can be told on sight by the merest novice. His black cap and downy feathers are not the only telltales but his manner of hopping about the trees as well. It makes no difference to him whether he is above or beneath them provided always he can find the eggs of the cankerworm and a good supply of tiny insects.

Every little while he will pronounce his name for you too "Chick-a-dee-dee-dee-dee". There is no mistaking it. You could not pronounce it better yourself.

He is called one of the snow-birds and he certainly delights

in the storm. Cheerful at all times he wins your affection at once and holds it forever, for you cannot help loving a courageous heart especially when you find it done up in so small a package.

It is a rare bird on the treeless plains for it chooses for its nesting place the deserted homes of other birds in dead tree-limbs, yet it is a common visitor and even a winter resident along the tree-lined rivers.

For some reason the snowbirds seem to keep in hiding until the weather is thoroughly spoiled, when they come forth in numbers from somewhere to revel in it.



# Kinglets.

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Order, *Passeres*.

Family, *Sylviidae*.

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749. RUBY-CROWNED KINGLET. *Regulus calendula*. Four and one-half inches long. Olive above. Wings and tail olive-yellow. White bars on wings. Breast grayish-yellow. Red spot on head of some males.

748. GOLDEN-CROWNED KINGLET. *Regulus satrapa*. A trifle over four inches long. Similar to the ruby-crowned kinglet except the patch on the head is orange instead of red and it has a white line above the eye.

## RUBY-CROWNED KINGLET.

While starting from home this morning (there is always something new to be seen) I saw as many as a dozen tiny kinglets in the elm tree in front of my home. The little acrobats were climbing and darting and falling about the tips of the boughs among the elm flowers taking every tiny bug in sight and it is safe to say not a guilty one escaped. Except the humming birds, we have no smaller birds than they. They are not bigger than a minute but such little bundles of energy you never did see. I walked right up to them to study them for they were too busy to notice me. I looked hard to find the ruby crown which is small at best and wanting in the females, but they did not keep still long enough to give me more than a wee flash, just enough to let me know which kinglet had come to visit me. The English sparrows stood around like a gang of ragmuffins and watched and glared but they made no demonstrations. They stood there like stuffed birds. Bundles of energy themselves I guess they were just paralyzed to see the kinglets work.

Here to-day, gone to-morrow—you are lucky if you see more than here and there a stray one, but you will be paid for every moment you give them. I wonder how many kinds of birds come in a season to the very tree upon which I saw the kinglets this

morning. I should guess as many as forty. Do you know I have almost given up speaking of any birds as "rare", for just as I have said that such and such a bird is seldom seen, I turn and find a flock of them feeding on my lawn. I think that more than half of "rarity" is in our eyes. Many a man doubtless thinks there are few birds in his locality while it may be that there is a wren's nest in a hole at the top of his porch, the nest of a vireo in the top of his elm tree, a robin's nest in his apple tree, a blue-bird's nest in his garden, sparrows all around him and a hundred swifts in his chimney. Surely if he watches, he will see the little kinglets, for they have a little work to do for everybody.





# Thrushes.

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Order, *Passeres*.

Family, *Turdidae*.

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Family Characteristics: Six to ten inches long, graceful in form and gifted in song. Except the robin redbreast and bluebird, thrushes are brown above with whitish breast marked with arrow-shaped spots.

Their food consists mostly of earth-worms and insects with a little wild fruit for sauce. Of great service in groves and gardens and upon lawns.

761. ROBIN REDBREAST. *Merula migratoria*. Ten inches long. Everybody knows him.

766. BLUEBIRD. *Sialia sialis*. Length seven inches. Bright blue above. Breast light claret-red.

755. WOODTHRUSH. *Hylocichla mustelina*. Eight inches long. Brown above, lightest toward head. White below with arrow-shaped spots on sides of breast. White eye-ring. White throat. A familiar bird.

756. WILSON'S THRUSH. (Veery). *Turdus fuscescens*. Seven and one-half inches long. Tawny-brown above, white below with arrow-shaped spots. Buff in front of wings. Common though shy. Has no eye-ring as other thrushes do.

758a. OLIVE-BACKED THRUSH. *Hylocichla ustulata swainsonii*. Seven and one-half inches long. Olive-brown above. Yellowish breast, white beneath. Yellowish eye-ring. Throat and breast spotted.

759. HERMIT THRUSH. *Hylocichla guttata*. Seven and one-half inches long. Olive-brown above. Brighter toward tail which serves to distinguish it from the wood thrush. Yellow eye-ring whereas wood thrush has white eye-ring.

674. OVENBIRD or GOLDEN-CROWNED THRUSH. *Seiurus aurocapillus*. Olive above, crown of old-gold edged by black lines. Breast spotted like the thrushes. White eye-ring. See under warblers.

## ROBIN REDBREAST.

Of course you know the robin redbreast, who isn't a robin at all but only a thrush—Only a thrush? Well, it is quite an honor to belong to that cultured family. They are vocalists of the highest order. The brown thrasher, the wood thrush, the hermit thrush are all country cousins of the redbreast, and what a quartette of singers they are.

When our ancestors, the Pilgrim Fathers, those famous three brothers, stepped from the Mayflower, the first bird they saw they called the robin. He was the bird that covered the "Babes in the Woods" with leaves, you know, and the name has clung to him ever since. Well, that was probably the limit of the Pilgrim Fathers as to bird lore.

How he can sing! What a nicely trained voice he has! Modulation, accentuation, pitch, crescendo, diminuendo, everything that Caruso knows, he knows, and when he comes north in early spring time, the world takes his word for it—that spring has come. Somehow we give the little fellow credit for knowing more about the weather than the weather bureau knows. Did you ever notice his white eyelids? Can you tell him from his wife, with his darker head and brighter breast? Did you ever hear him sound his note of alarm when you have come upon him suddenly while he is courting his ladylove? And how he pulls upon that worm! He throws out his chest like a Dutchman at a saengerfest and swallows it as though it were a sausage. And what an appetite! Why if you could eat as much between sunrise and sunset as a baby robin, it would take 280 pounds of steak to feed you, and about all the baby robin gets is earthworms from the lawn. You say the robins steal cherries? Maybe. You and I have done that. We knew better but the robins don't. Maybe the very seed from which the cherry tree grew was dropped by a robin. He is entitled to a few of the cherries and he very kindly takes them from the top of the tree where you couldn't get them anyway. If he should fly into your pantry and open a can of preserves he ought not to be censured.

Last October I saw three varieties of thrushes, the brown thrasher, Wilson's thrush and the redbreast all pulling worms from the lawn of a friend of mine who thinks I am having a brain-storm because I am writing these articles. How often you

have seen Mr. Robin hopping over a lawn ( he doesn't walk as the meadow lark does.) Suddenly he stops, turns his head sideways as though he hears a worm crawling through the dirt, then stabbing his bill into the earth he pulls forth a long earthworm without breaking him. Don't you always break them when you dig fish-bait and try to pull one out?

It is too bad Lady Robin is such a dirty house keeper, but then she has a mud house and it is harder to keep clean than most houses. No wonder they love to bathe in the spray of a fountain! A few years ago I was out bird hunting and came upon a nest of dried grass and upon looking into it saw a robin's egg. There was little chance to mistake the "robin-blue" egg but who would dream that a robin ever built a home without mud-plaster? Presently Lady Robin appeared and confirmed my guess that it was her home. But why no mud? Because, the poor things—that very dry season they couldn't find any; if they could it dried before they could get it to the nest. Like other Dakotans of that time, they were adjusting themselves to circumstances. Bad boys shoot very many robins and if any one finds out "who killed Cock Robin" send word to me. Who was it do you say? "It was the Sparrow with his bow and arrow?" Yes, that English sparrow again. While he never kills the robin, I imagine he annoys him awfully. A short time ago I saw a robin in the top of a tree singing away as hard as he could and on an adjacent branch were a dozen English sparrows who were listening to the music. They didn't like it because he had come but they didn't do much but "rubber" at him. He didn't care. He had a little spring poetry to recite and besides he has the very important duty of playing the role of "harbinger of spring." And how soon he is gone! What is it Longfellow says?

"Turn, turn my wheel

All life is brief;

What now is bud will soon be leaf;

What now is leaf will soon decay:

Tomorrow will be another day.

The wind blows east,

The wind blows west,

The blue eggs in the robin's nest

Will soon have wings and beak and breast

And flutter and fly away."

## BLUEBIRD.

When the bluebird comes, we know that South Dakota's state flower, the anemone, will soon push its buds into the sunlight for the wind's caresses. Could we have chosen a better emblem than this royal wind-flower? And when we see tiny specks of blue floating upon the winds of March as though the sun in bursting through the clouds had broken bits of blue heaven and sent them floating down to us in song, we feel that there could be no better sign of the awakened life of another year. That these loving little gentle folks should brave the blasts of early springtime is accounted for only on the theory that

"The bravest are the tenderest  
The loving are the daring."

The bluebird's motto, it seems to me, is "live and let live." Even the English sparrow, the inquisitor of bird life, is treated with respect, and rather than go to law (in bird-land "might makes right") about the possession of a bird-house, a tree hole or the abandoned home of a woodpecker, the bluebird generally moves on and the sparrow often doesn't move in. (Little dog in the manger.)

However, if the bluebird has moved in, he can lay aside his heavenly disposition for a while and show you something of the courageous heart that braved the storm. Then Mr. Sparrow moves on.

It is often asked if the same bird returns year after year to the same spot. No doubt many varieties do so and the bluebird is one of them. Not only does he return but when he starts north he leaves his wife to follow him later. As I am writing the little fellow who lives at 1007 South Main avenue in the little house to which I have given him a perennial lease, in consideration of work in my garden, has arrived but his wife has not yet joined him. Just now he and I are trying to drive out some tenants who have not paid their rent. When the little nest of grass is finished, four pale-blue eggs will be laid which will open upon four tiny almost black little babies that will keep papa and mamma very busy until they too have learned to find worms and to catch insects.



BALTIMORE ORIOLE

(UPPER FIGURE, MALE; LOWER FIGURE, FEMALE)

Order — PASSERES  
Genus — ICTERUS

Family — ICTERIDÆ  
Species — GALBULA



Late in the season another family will be raised and possibly a third and when at last the little home is broken up and you no more see the even and easy flight of your little neighbors nor hear their gentle and almost distant call note you had better make sure that the storm windows are on and that there is plenty of coal in the cellar and you may think of your little friends sailing south upon the winds, their backs reflecting the blue of heaven and their breasts the southern sun.

**OVENBIRD.** Six inches long. The size of an English sparrow. Olive brown above with a golden-brown crown. White beneath with the characteristic thrush spots on the breast. Small white ring about the eyes. One of the birds that walk.

### OVENBIRD.

In spite of the fact that scientists classify this little bird as a wood warbler his wonderful similarity to the thrushes will lead you to think of him as one of them. If it is not a thrush, and we must take the scientists' word for it, one thing is sure, it is trying as hard to make a thrush of itself as the flicker is. Both of them depart from the habits of their kind, "come off their perches" and get down to earth. Well, the thrush family is thoroughly respectable and the flicker is not to be blamed, but the ovenbird need never be ashamed of the warblers.

Few birds are of greater interest. To see one of them walking among the dead leaves, actually walking seems very queer for so small a bird and the moving of its head and neck backward and forward, rooster-like when it walks gives it a dignity that is very striking.

Ovenbirds like cuckoos are often spoken of as very shy but in the west they seem to be surprisingly familiar. I have walked to within a few feet of them and have observed as little timidity among them as is to be expected from robins. The scarcity of trees in the west subjects all birds to more frequent exposure and doubtless explains in part what many people have often remarked, the greater familiarity of western birds.

The name ovenbird is given to it because of the shape of its nest which is entered from the side and very prettily arched above.

# Grebes.

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Order, *Pygopodes*.  
Family, *Podicipidae*.

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6. PIED-BILLED GREBE. *Podilymbus podiceps*. Thirteen and a half inches long. Dull brownish drab above and white below except for his black throat. This little "dabchick" can be identified by the black band around the middle of his bill and by his short tail. He is one of several birds that the boys call "hell-diver". His long lobed toes enable him to prove his title to the name. Can be found on almost any Western pond and even in the wet places along railroad tracks.

2. RED-NECKED GREBE or HOLBOELL'S GREBE. *Colymbus holboellii*. Nineteen inches long. The red neck of this grebe is his special marking though he has a black crown and a small black crest to give beauty to an otherwise dull body. Dusky above and grayish white below.

4. EARED GREBE. *Colymbus nigricollis californicus*. Thirteen inches long. The yellow tufts of feathers extending backward from the eyes are the conspicuous marks. Head black. Sides brown. Back dull black. Breast white.

## PIED-BILLED GREBE.

One of the most interesting of birds is this little fellow that is so often mistaken for a duck. "Hell-diver" they call him and surely he is an artist in the water. Many a gunner has seen his shot scatter over the surface of the pond where a second before he saw this elusive bird, for just as the gun flashed the "dabchick" "ducked" quicker than a flash and did not reappear until he was at a safe distance from the gunner. Scientists tell us that he belongs to the lowest order of bird life and is but little removed from the reptiles but he is all the more interesting if that be true.

The grebe builds a floating nest and lays its white eggs in a slight depression on its weed-raft. The heat of its body, the



warm sun beating down upon the muddy, half-decomposed nest of rushes and possibly even the warm water, all help to call the little divers from their dirty eggshells and when they have arrived you need not fear, as a friend of mine did, that they will drown if they tumble out of the nest. They will really be "in their element." The little fellows must have a good time floating about in their nest or taking a ride upon their mamma's back while she is passing dainty morsels up to them to satisfy their constant hunger. It is no use to shoot them for they are pretty poor upon the table but they are mighty pretty on the pond.



# Loons.

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Order, *Pygopodes*.

Family, *Podicipidae*.

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7. COMMON LOON (GREAT NORTHERN DIVER). *Gavia immer*. Thirty-two inches long. A diver in deep water. Head and neck black streaked with white. Black above, barred and streaked with white beneath. Tail feathers short. Their cry resembles human laughter.

A great old diver is the laughing loon. Whether silly people are loony or lunny depends upon whether they possess the characteristics of the loon or have been moon-struck. Just why anyone should charge the loon with a lack of wisdom is hard to guess for they are about as wise as any bird that swims. Unlike the grebes, they sail to the deep water where they go after big game. They are poor land birds and are almost as helpless as a "fish out of water" but once in the center of the lake, they are the perfection of ease, swimming being easier to them than flying.

Museums are seldom without a "stuffed" loon and most of the birds that we see in collections are literally "stuffed" but rarely mounted. Water birds seem to be favorites with cheap taxidermists who seemingly will not be satisfied until they can row about as "the only loons upon the lake."

# Gulls and Terns.

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Order, *Longipennes.*

Family, *Laridae.*

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Family characteristics: In the West, the gulls are usually seen in very large flocks during migration either gathering worms in time of plowing or bugs during harvesting. Their prevailing bluish-gray color, wide wing-spread and easy flight make them easy to identify. Terns are the only birds mistaken for them but the little black tern that skims over our ponds is easily recognized. Terns can be distinguished from gulls by the way they point their bills downward in flight rather than straight ahead of them. Their bills are straight whereas the bills of the gulls curve downward at the point and are slightly enlarged near the tip.

59. FRANKLIN GULL. *Larus Franklinii.* About fourteen inches long. Wide wing-spread. Head black with white eye-ring. Upper parts "gull-blue" or pearl gray. Breast white with beautiful rose tint. Bill red. Tips of wing feathers black tipped with white.

60. BONAPARTE GULL. *Larus philadelphia.* About fourteen inches long. Wide wing-spread. Head black. Upper parts "gull-blue" or pearl gray. Under parts white. Tips of wing feathers black. Bill black. Feet red.

77. BLACK TERN. *Hydrochelidon nigra surinamensis.* Length nine and one-half inches. Almost wholly black above. Tail slate color. Lower body white beneath. Feet black. Bill black. May be seen on almost any inland pond skimming the surface of the water with bills turned downward. Nests on muskrat houses or bundles of dead reeds. Often mistaken for a gull.

69. FORSTER TERN. *Sterna forsteri.* Fourteen and one-half inches long. Light pearl gray above. White below. Top of head black. Bill red with black tip. Legs red. Tail split deeply.

## BONAPARTE GULL.

Who has not seen the flocks of gulls that by thousands visit the fields of the Mississippi valley? What a pretty sight it is to see them sailing silently above us! The world must be a moving

picture to them. Multitudes of these beautiful sea birds make an annual flight from the Mexican Gulf to Manitoba and northward to nest. Graceful beyond compare they seem to be merely floating through the air, turning their heads now this way now that, and stopping their flight not even while scratching their pretty heads with their toes.

It is a pretty long journey that they make to their northern summer resorts, but they are rapid in flight having a very wide wingspread and much smaller bodies than their appearance indicates and it would take them only four or five days, or even less, to make the trip if they did not visit along the way, but they stop over in springtime to eat worms from the newly plowed fields and in the fall to gather grasshoppers from the newly harvested grain. Remember they never harm the grain.

Alas, the poor gulls are awfully imposed upon. It is a favorite pastime with some of the terns or sea swallows to pursue and annoy the gulls until they drop any choice morsel of food which they may be carrying when the terns secure the booty thus cheating the gullible gull out of it. The gulls are shot by thousands for commerce, their plumage being especially desirable for hat trimmings but it is a waning practice for the woman who parades the streets these days wearing upon her hat the badge of bird motherhood is fast learning that whatever of reflected beauty she acquires from the pretty plume is offset by a loss of esteem from those she meets. An old saying is "Whatever of coin goes into a man's purse comes out of his soul", and it is just as true of "Whatever of plumage goes upon a woman's hat."

# Pelicans.

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Order, *Steganspodes*.

Family, *Pelicanidae*.

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125. WHITE PELICAN. *Pelecanus erythrorhynchos*. Almost entirely white but some black feathers on wings. The large yellow pouch hanging from the lower mandible of this bird and his pure white plumage are enough to distinguish him. If more is needed the small hook at the extremity of the upper mandible and the rudder-like projections above it will make the identification complete.

The white pelican is one of the strangest looking birds that visit us. In size half way between a goose and a swan, its long neck is terminated by one of the oddest heads among birds, beasts or fishes. The lower jaw or mandible, if you prefer, has hanging beneath it a large pouch that looks as though it had been painted yellow. It can doubtless hold a quart or more of frogs, small fishes and reptiles and such other water food as can be found. The upper mandible has a small hook at its extremity that enables it to hold with certainty whatever it seizes. They are wholly white except upon the wings, the larger feathers of which are nearly black. Why sportsmen should delight in shooting one of these useful and certainly harmless oddities can be explained only on the theory that men love to kill whatever is rare. Pelicans cross the Dakotas in fairly large numbers stopping at the small lakes to load up with provisions before continuing their northern journey. Wounded birds often become very tame, a fact that is characteristic of nearly all wild life. It is doubtless true that we should be greatly surprised at the familiarity of birds and mammals if they could know that we would not harm them. Whether or not the pelican is the taxidermist's delight would be hard to say but most of the dead ones have been mounted—I beg your pardon, I should say "stuffed"—and most of them miserably so.

I recently met a lady who is "stuffing" birds as a business

who does not know anything whatever of wild life and is just as apt as not to mount a chimney swift upon a yellow warbler's nest or a grebe upon an apple bough. I really think that she should use oyster dressing and stuff only domestic fowl.



# Ducks, Geese and Swans.

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Order, *Anseres*.

Family, *Anatidae*.

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Family characteristics: Water birds having bills with strainers on the sides. They usually have plate-like bills like those of the common duck. Strong fliers, expert swimmers and divers. Feet are webbed and legs are short. They live on small fishes, snails and the small animal life of ponds, lakes and rivers. Many of them feed on water-weeds like eel grass (called wild celery.) They visit grain-fields in season to pick up waste grain. They are much prized as game food and millions are shot on the prairie lakes every year both for food and for sport, mainly the latter.

## DUCKS.

132. MALLARD. *Anas boschas*. Nearly two feet long. Head dark green. Has a white collar. Breast chestnut. Gray below. Dark gray above. Speculum purplish green. Several small tail feathers are curled. The female is dark brown above. Buff breast and purplish green speculum on wings.

140. BLUE-WINGED TEAL. *Querquedula discors*. Sixteen inches long. Best told by its size, the blue speculum on its wings and the white in front of its eyes. Nests in large numbers in this latitude. Habits like those of the green winged teal.

139. GREEN-WINGED TEAL. *Nettion carolinensis*. A beautiful little duck about fifteen inches long with a cinnamon-colored head marked with green on the sides and having a green speculum on its wings. Slightly crested. Feeds in shallow water tipping up to feed on the vegetation on the bottom. A good table duck.

141. CINNAMON TEAL. *Querquedula cyanoptera*. Sixteen inches long. Cinnamon colored head, breast and sides, light blue on wings but with green speculum. Much more of the cinnamon color than on the green winged teal. Most abundant in the far west.

142. SPOONBILL. *Spatula clypeata*. During spring migration a very pretty duck marked with green, black, blue and white. Can be surely identified by its wide, flat, spoon-like bill and size midway

between mallards and teals. About twenty inches long. ▲ very common duck.

143. PINTAIL. *Dafila acuta*. The pintail is not really as large as the mallard but it is about four inches longer, its unusual length being due to its having a long swan-like neck and long "pintail" feathers. It has a purplish speculum on its wings and more or less brown, white and gray, upon its body.

136. WIDGEON. *Mareca penelope*. 19 inches long. Bill blue tipped with black, top of head whitish but most of head marked with black. Body gray with wavy black markings, russet green speculum on black and white. Rare.

137. BALDPATE. *Anas americana*. Nineteen inches long. Top of head whitish edged with green. Bill blue tipped with black. Plumage mostly grayish, white below, green speculum. Make a whistling noise in flight. Rob other ducks of their food.

135. GADWALL. *Chaulelasmus streperus*. 20 inches long. A gray duck with a flat crest. Body marked with black and white lines across the gray. White below. Rump black. Wings black, white and brown.

144. WOOD DUCK. *Aix sponsa*. A foot and a half long. This has been called the best dressed bird of our latitude. Its many rich colors and its crest will be sufficient to identify it. It has a variegated bill and a purple and green head striped with white. White throat. Spotted breast. Body many colored. It nests in hollow trees and carries its young in its bill from its nest to the water. Rare.

147. CANVASBACK. *Aythya vallisneria*. Twenty to twenty-two inches long. Head and upper neck dark red. Long neck nearly black. Body nearly white. Tail dark drab. Eyes red.

146. REDHEAD. *Aythya americana*. Nineteen inches long. Similar in size and markings to the canvasback but has a thicker head and a shorter bill, the head rising more abruptly from the base of the bill. Breast nearly black, but white under parts. Sides and back gray, finely waved with black.

153. BUFFLEHEAD or BUTTERBALL. *Charitonetta albeola*. Fifteen inches long. It has a very large head for so small a duck and therefore named for the buffalo. Bill short. Prevailing colors are black above and white below. Head banded with white though mostly purplish. Tail gray. Neck and sides white. Not highly prized.

149. BLUEBILL or SCAUP DUCK. *Aythya affinis*. Sixteen inches long. Bill a pale blue. Head black with green reflections. White below and black above with fine wavy barring. Found late in the fall in large numbers.



167. RUDDY DUCK. *Erismatura jamaicensis*. Fifteen inches long. Top of head black and cheeks white. Brown above. Gray below. Bill blue and short. Mostly chestnut colored above. A good diver. Often carries tail erect on the water.

151. GOLDEN-EYE. *Clangula clangula americana*. Head dark green with a white spot at base of bill, white neck and breast. Black above. More or less white on wing. Female with much brown above. Sometimes called "whistlers".

### MERGANSERS OR FISH DUCKS.

129. AMERICAN MERGANSER. *Merganser Americanus*. Over two feet long. Called "fish-duck" because of diet and "saw-bill" because of tooth-like projections from the sides of its narrow bill. Black and white above and white below. Head black with greenish reflections and crested. Bill red. Loves cold water.

130. RED-BREASTED MERGANSER. *Merganser serrator*. Nearly two feet long. Black head crested, and having greenish reflections. Black back, white neck, white on wings. Body gray, brown and buff. Nearly white below. Bill not flat like a duck's but narrow and edged with tooth-like projections. The flesh of this duck is generally highly flavored with its fishy food.

131. HOODED MERGANSER. *Lophodytes cucullatus*. Seventeen inches long. Conspicuous black and white crest. Black and brown above, sides brown, white below. White speculum. Saw-billed. Too pretty a bird to shoot and not a good table duck.

### GEESE.

172. CANADA GOOSE. *Branta Canadensis*. Three feet long. Black head and neck and some white on the sides of the head. Gray body.

169. LESSER SNOW GOOSE or WHITE BRANT. About two feet long. Plumage white with tips of wings black.

169a. GREATER SNOW GOOSE or WHITE BRANT. *Chen hyperborea nivalis*. About three feet long. They are white with tips of wings black.

### SWANS.

181. TRUMPETER SWAN. *Olor buccinator*. Five and a half feet long. All white with black feet and bill. Very long neck. Named from its bugle-like note.

180. WHISTLING SWAN. *Olor Columbianus*. Four and a half feet long. White with black feet and bill and a yellow spot in front of the eyes.

## CANVASBACK DUCK.

What a reputation this duck has! But like every other good thing it has its imitation as well as its reputation. The widgeon or bald-pate is the name of the duck that is often sold in swell restaurants for the canvasback and the principal difference in taste is that the bald-pate is sweeter and tenderer. Why not? Does not the canvasback duck dive and swim to the bottom of the pond to pull up the wild celery (eel grass) only to find when it reaches the surface that a bald-pate is there to take it away from him and eat it? Thus the bald-pate gets the celery and the canvasback gets the exercise. Redheads too, get palmed off as canvasbacks, for the birds resemble each other so much that when a few of the tell-tale wing feathers are pulled out of the redhead, an expert has to guess them apart. As far as good, juicy ducks go, the redhead, bald-pate, the spoon-bill, the blue bill, the mallard, the teal and the pin-tail all have admirers who prefer them to the canvasback. The really poor duck you know is the one that eats the most fishes for he takes the fish flavor and chasing them toughens his muscles.

“Sweet land of liberty!” And land of license too. How many are the ducks shot in the springtime when they are gentlest, for love is warming in their fluffy breasts and they are choosing their mates for the season. Thin and tired from their long migration, the pot-hunters have a merry springtime knocking them down. Let them shoot the canvas-backs in the fall, if they will. They will earn the name of sportsmen if they get more than they can carry, for the canvasback is a clever and watchful bird. But shooting them in the springtime? It’s like taking candy from a baby.

A man told me recently that he never shot the female ducks, but only the males as he did not wish to break up their nesting. He is a very wise man and could probably tell a drone from a honey-bee if he saw them flying through the air. As a matter of fact few gunners can tell them apart after they (the ducks) are dead. So imagination and self-deception are used to justify wrongdoing.

## AMERICAN MERGANSER.

Many people call it the "Saw-bill Duck," some call it the "Fish Duck" and others the "Sheldrake." None of the names are calculated to whet one's appetite, yet the names sound far better than the duck tastes.

Last fall a friend of mine came proudly up the street with a string of ducks that tested his strength. Rushing to him to see what he had I found no two alike. There were a mallard, a green-winged teal, a bald-pate, a pin-tail, a blue-bill, a redhead, a canvas-back, a spoon-bill and a merganser. It seemed rather odd that there should be no duplication, but it shows how thoroughly we are in the path of duck migration.

As I enthused over them and pointed out their beauty and peculiarities, he became interested and as I gave more time to the merganser than all the others, because of its peculiar bill and flashy colors, he thought he would delight me by offering it to me for my supper. He did that very thing! Now, few delicacies are sweeter to me than a good, fat, juicy wild duck done just so that a suggestion of red blood follows the knife when it is cut, but my admiration for a merganser ends just where the feathers penetrate the skin, so I refused to rob him of his choicest duck and took two others in lieu thereof, namely a bald-pate and a blue-bill. Give me those and you may have your canvas-backs and mallards.

Why does the merganser taste so? Because he eats small fishes and frogs, and fishes and frogs like onions and cabbage are not so very good second-hand. The merganser being able to pursue and catch a fish under water becomes very muscular and when you get both kinds of strength in your meat, it becomes too strong for any use.

There is every reason to believe that the merganser nests very rarely below the line of the British possessions. Mrs. Merganser's reputation as a housewife and mother is above reproach and is similar to that of the wood duck that goes into seclusion during the nesting season, using a tree-hole for a home and lining it with the down she plucks from her own breast. Meanwhile the old man goes away into still deeper seclusion and changes his pretty garments for a new suit.

Oh I fear that great beauty too often has its drawbacks. The theory of compensation is at work all the while.

### MALLARD.

Probably of all ducks the mallard is the most popular in this western section of the country. This is due in part to its size and in part to the fact that it is just as finely flavored as any of them. You get a little more of a good thing when you get a mallard. The same ducks in different sections of the country have different food values for few if any creatures are more "What they eat" than are ducks. A celery-fed duck becomes almost worthless when it feeds on fish.

Our common barnyard duck is a domesticated mallard and domestication has made him a mormon for it is not believed that in the wild state they mate for less than life.

As with most ducks the male has little to do with rearing the young. The female gathers leaves, grass and the like, for a nest, lines it with down from her own breast and leaves it only at short intervals during the breeding season. The drake meanwhile follows a duck habit and goes into seclusion for a moult and it is said that for a while he is not able to fly at all.

They migrate by sexes, the males preceding the females who follow with their broods. Foxy sportsmen often pride themselves on the fact that they shoot only males which is often true during the male migration.

The ponds of the interior are fine feeding grounds for them and they may often be seen tipping up but rarely if ever diving for buds, seeds, grains and small mollusks. If you see them dive you may be quite sure that they are trying to avoid danger..

They are very fond of the farmer's corn but the farmer seems never to care. He has his gun loaded for the hawks and owls that are doing him far greater service and far less damage. Of course the mallard's fondness for the farmer's corn is all in favor of fine flesh and you may be sure that a corn-fed mallard is a luxury.

Mallards are sportive, alert and wary, so much so that they do not descend at once to the water as the teals do but circle about over the sedges to be sure that there is no lurking danger.

# Herons and Bitterns.

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Order, *Herodiones*.

Family, *Ardeidae*.

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191. LEAST BITTERN. *Botaurus exilis*. Almost fourteen inches long. A suggestion of a crest. Head and upper body black with greenish sheen. Body brown, red, buff, green and yellow in varying shades. Feet, bill and eyes greenish yellow. Found about creeks and marshes. Distinctly a marsh wader.

190. AMERICAN BITTERN. *Botaurus lentiginosus*. Two and a half feet long. Legs long and unfeathered as befits a wading bird. Four toes. Long bill and head suitable for frog-catching. Mixed brown, black, buff, slate and yellow in color. Throat white. Called also "thunder-pump" and "stakedriver" from its cry.

194. GREAT BLUE HERON or BLUE CRANE. *Ardea Herodias*. Nearly four feet long. Subdued blue above. White head with black patch above the eye running into a pretty crest. General characteristics of wading birds with long legs and yellow bill. Larger than the American bittern. Black legs and feet. Long bill, yellow.

201. LITTLE GREEN HERON. *Ardea virescens*. About a foot and a half long. Crested and plumed. White throat and a mixture of green, yellow and brown upon the body. Dark green head and bill with chestnut neck. Found like others of its kind along the edges of marshes.

202. BLACK CROWNED NIGHT HERON. *Nycticorax nycticorax naevius*. About two feet long. Conspicuous white trailing crest during nesting. Upper parts dull black especially crown and back, under parts white including throat, middle parts gray. Bill nearly black, eyes red, legs yellow.

## AMERICAN BITTERN.

If a person should try to describe every little change of color in this bird, he would have to describe each separate feather, yet he is easily identified for he is the most common of our big waders.

As you are riding along in the train, passing a lake or a small

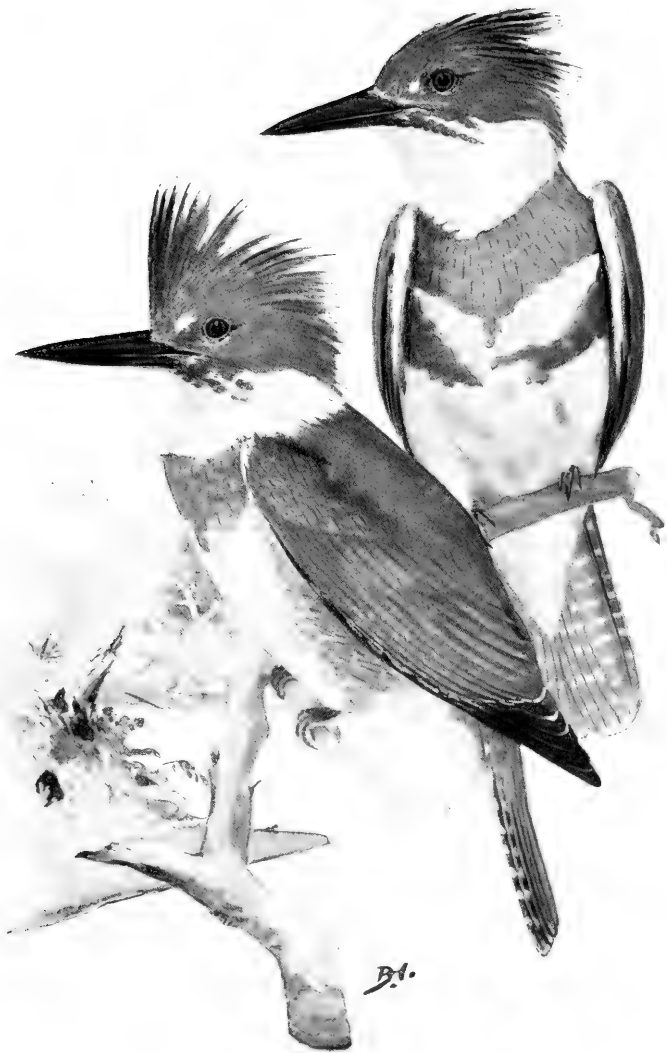
stream edged with sedges, you will often see one "fly up the creek" (that's another name he has.) He is scared half to death but at that he flies rather leisurely as he does everything and soon drops to hiding into the rushes a few rods away.

He is "patience on a monument" and thinks nothing of standing on one leg for two hours waiting for a frog or a snake or a lizard or a tadpole to come within reach, when like a flash the jig is up and the frog is down. He is named also the "thunder pump" for the reason that the "boom" of the bittern sounds like an old broken down pump trying to raise water. "Stake-driver" is another name, and "Bog-bull," and there are others.

Of course you don't have to ride in a railroad train to see them. It will pay you to make them a friendly call. Perhaps you could find a crude nest on the ground at the edge of the marsh and if you should, you would be well paid for your tramp.

Often on a short trip by rail I have identified from forty to fifty different kinds of birds. It is good recreation and makes the time and journey pass quickly. Often you must recognize your bird at long range solely by its flight but many birds taken by surprise will scurry from the side of the track and give you a good view of them. You will cover a large territory in that way and reach the water birds as well as the song birds.

Watch for a bittern. If you keep your lamps lighted you will see him on almost any trip with his flat outstretched head and his long legs hanging out behind as a rudder, sailing over the rushes by the roadside.



BELTED KINGFISHER  
(UPPER FIGURE, FEMALE; LOWER FIGURE, MALE)  
Order—COCYGES      Family—ALCEDINIDÆ  
Genus—CERYLE      Species—ALCYON





# Cranes.

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Order, *Paludicolae*.

Family, *Gruidae*.

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206. SANDHILL CRANE. *Grus Mexicana*. Forty-four inches long with red skin conspicuous on its head. Its plumage is gray, wings darkest. Its beak is long and sharp. Legs very long for wading.

204. WHOOPING CRANE. (White Crane.) *Grus Americana*. Fifty inches long. It has white plumage with black wing-feathers. Like the sandhill crane it has red skin on its head. Legs very long for wading.

## SANDHILL CRANE.

To be wading along the edge of an inland lake and suddenly see the neck of a sandhill crane rise out of the rushes is an experience that will never be forgotten. There is something snaky about it. The bird itself is almost a freak of nature, absolutely without grace yet suggestive enough to appeal to the orientals along with the dragon as means of expressing their artistic feelings. They always look best on a cloisonne vase. Last year at Lake Andes flocks of them were seen flying in single file, their long necks piercing the air and their long legs dragging almost horizontally behind them. Great numbers of them are often seen during their migration sailing very high in the air and shrieking a note that will almost give you the shivers.

They are fighters of the highest order and use their long pointed beaks as spears, often driving them clear through the bodies of their enemies. In the sandhills of Nebraska, the inhabitants prize them as a table luxury, claiming that their flesh is savory especially in the fall. Surely one of them would make a meal for the neighbors.

With all their awkwardness they are an aristocratic looking bird. You respect their size and they are credited with hav-

ing the very aristocratic tendency of getting pretty giddy at times. Along about pairing off time they have unusual demonstrations. Very likely the Sioux Indians learned their ghost dances from them for one is a repetition of the other. They will dance in circles and scream and whirl about until they fall to earth exhausted. Even the ladies indulge in these dances and are rather forward with their courting. Oh, in birdland they say that the lady phalarope does all the courting. She is the real new woman.

Two large soiled white eggs laid upon a floating nest of dead rushes was what I once found on the edge of a lake in Nebraska and I have often wondered what the mother crane did with her legs when she sat upon her eggs.



# Coots and Rails.

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Order, *Paludicolae*.

Family, *Rallidae*.

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221. AMERICAN COOT. *Fulica Americana*. About fifteen inches long. Stout white bill with brown spot near the end. Color solidly dark lead color almost a black. Are readily tamed and become very sociable.

212. VIRGINIA RAIL. *Rallus Virginianus*. About the size of the robin but longer legged. Olive brown above. Chestnut on wings. Dark cheeks, white chin. Breast brown. Wings short and flies poorly. A bird of the marshes. Very shy.

214. CAROLINA RAIL. *Porzana Carolina*. A little smaller than the robin. Brown above, gray breast and white belly. Forehead black, throat black, bill yellow. A marsh bird with fairly long legs. Very shy and generally keeps concealed in tall grass or reeds.

## COOT.

Coots and grebes are all of them grouped in popular fancy under the name "mudhens" and "hell-divers." They are the birds that you have often seen upon the edges of ponds sunning themselves and you very likely thought that they were ducks. You can readily distinguish the American coot by his black plumage and his white pointed bill. If you should eat one you might "confound" him but never with a duck.

In New England they often speak of a worthless fellow as a "poor coot" but whatever of ill you may say of him when he is on land, you can never accuse him of being slow or awkward when in his native element. If by any chance you pride yourself upon your ability as a marksman, the coot may be able to convince you to the contrary for if the word of some sportsmen can be believed, the coot can actually dodge a bullet. Upon almost any of the inland prairie lakes they may be seen either resting upon some projection in the shallow water or bobbing their heads backward and forward as they swim to deeper water to find good diving.

# Phalarope.

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Order, *Limicolae*.

Family, *Phalaropodidae*.

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224. WILSON'S PHALAROPE. *Steganopus tricolor*. Nine inches long. Very long, delicate bill. Swimmers as well as waders. Blue-gray above. Brown below. Black stripes along the sides of head and neck. Female does the love-making. The male does the nest building and incubating. The lady phalarope is the real new woman among the birds.

# Snipe and Sandpipers.

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Order, *Limicolae*.

Family, *Scolopacidue*.

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264. CURLEW. *Numenius Longirostris*. Length nearly two feet of which about seven inches is bill. Mostly buff-colored with irregular streaks of black and light and dark chestnut. Bill curves downward.

230. JACK SNIPE or WILSON'S SNIPE. *Gallinago delicata*. Eleven inches long. Bill long and delicate. Upper parts striped with buff and dull drab. Stripes black above. White below. Plumage generally striped and spotted. Rather common around ponds and lakes where he probes for food.

254. GREATER YELLOW LEGS. *Totanus melanoleucus*. Thirteen and one half inches long. Black mottled with gray and white above. Tail mostly white though marked with gray. White below spotted and barred with black.

255. LESSER YELLOW LEGS. *Totanus flavipes*. Ten and one half inches long. Black above with white marking. White below with black marking. Tail white. A common wader. Almost identical with the large variety except as to size.

228. WOODCOCK. *Philohela minor*. Eleven inches long. Very long bill. Prominent eyes. Like the undertaker you can track him by his holes in the ground. Mottled brown above. Brown below. A favorite with hunters. Legs very yellow.

242. LEAST SANDPIPER. *Tringa minutilla*. Six inches long. A common wader. Best identified by its size. Dusky brown above. Black toward the tail. Gray and white below. Active and easily scared. Generally seen in flocks.

261. UPLAND PLOVER (Bartramian Sandpiper). *Bartramia Longicauda*. Twelve inches long. Brown and gray above with more or less black barring. Beneath white with buff stain. Bill and legs yellow and long. Generally found on the open prairies away from water.

263. SPOTTED SANDPIPER called "Tip-up". *Actitis macularia*. Seven and one half inches long. Brownish-olive above, white below and spotted. The little fellows teeter up and down as they walk about the edges of ponds searching for food.

### CURLEW.

A few years ago when the food value of game birds appealed more strongly to me than their aesthetic value, I was shooting ducks on the lakes in the sandhills of Nebraska. As a curlew flew over I took a long-distance shot at it and crippled it. Such a cry as it gave I have never heard before nor since. It was such cries as that that caused the ancients to believe in the transmigration of souls.

Presently curlews began to come from every direction and to fly in a circle above me, setting up such a weeping and wailing that I would have given my day of anticipated sport if I could have raised the wounded bird to the air again. Shy and wary almost beyond belief they seemed to lose their fear and come to their wounded comrade with an appeal to take their lives as well.

What on earth can be done with a wounded bird? Can you look it in the eye and wring its neck? A man who can do that is fit for treason. And the echo of that cry! Twenty years has not dulled it.

An aquatic bird with bill adapted to fishing for small sea food, it strangely comes in great numbers to spend the summer in the loneliest part of the prairies, the sandhills of Nebraska and the Bad Lands of Dakota. It seems to court solitude, to steal from the rapture of the lonely shore to the pleasure of the pathless prairies and the silence of the inland sand dunes. Surely no bird is better suited to be the genius of solitary places.

### UPLAND PLOVER (BARTRAMIAN SANDPIPER).

It seems almost like fate that a bird like the plover that has done so much for man should be so rapidly passing. In the grasshopper times no agency was so effective and none cost as little. It was worth its weight in gold and I think that is the reason that one variety is called the golden plover. Anyone who has been in Dakota long, can remember when there was a plover on

almost every fence post. He can remember the plover call, the flight on trembling wings and as he alighted on the post, how carefully he adjusted his wings as though every feather must be perfectly placed. What slender legs and tiny neck. What a prim little body! But how rare!

Sportsmen have bagged about all of them and would go on bagging and bagging until there is never a quail or a chicken or a plover left. The plover should be restored to his rightful place in the field. How often you have seen it fly about the dog in order to entice him away from either its nest or its young. Nest, did I say? Hardly a nest but a little depression wallowed in the grass and jammed full with four good big pointed eggs that seem to me to be every bit as big as the bird's body. I would not believe for a long time that the little fellow laid the muddy looking things. What little rolls of fuzz come out of them too! Pretty little babies they are—one of the triumphs of creative art.

The plover is a dainty morsel for the epicure but only a mouthful for the glutton who generally gets him. It is murder to kill a plover, murder in the first degree, with malice aforethought, as cool and deliberate as the aim that lays him low. Civilization (if it is) takes its toll. As it comes westward it carries evil and death with it and mars and scars the beautiful face of things. No more rag-dolls for our babies that they may have something to make their little minds work (The little boy in "Helen's Babies" didn't like "boughten dollies") but they open and close their eyes now and when you press them they cry "Mamma," "Mamma". In a little while they'll sulk and get to swearing.

Let us make a plea for the plover, let us make it possible for the children yet unborn to hear its whistle upon the moorland calling them forth to tune their hearts with Nature. Let them no more hear the "Bang! Bang! Bang!" that all too soon is making a silent prairie.

# Avocet.

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Order, *Limicolae*.

Family, *Recurvirostridae*.

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225. AMERICAN AVOCET. *Recurvirostra Americana*. Sixteen inches long. Very long bill curved upward. Long-legged wader. Head and neck pinkish brown. Wings black and white. A very pretty, refined and delicate bird.



# Plovers.

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Order, *Limicolae*.

Family, *Charadriidae*.

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272. GOLDEN PLOVER. *Charadrius dominicus*. Ten inches long. Yellow and white spots on dull black above. Black below. Black throat and face.

273. KILDEER. *Aegialitis vocifera*. About ten inches long. Can be recognized by his call which he constantly repeats "kildeer, kildeer, kildeer." The two black bands on white breast serve to identify him. Long legs. Fast runner.

# Grouse and Quails.

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Order, *Gallinae*.  
Family, *Tetraonidae*.

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**Family Characteristics:** These are the wild types of our domestic chicken. They have heavy, thick breasts, and short wings used rapidly in flight. Their breeding habits are similar to those of domestic fowl. They are most valuable game birds for food. Great destroyers of hoppers and bugs.

305. PRAIRIE CHICKEN. *Tympanuchus Americanus*. A foot and a half long. Heavy breast. Light brown above. Heavily barred with black. Dull white below barred with brown. Small bunches of large feathers hang from either side of the neck of the male bird. Has air-sacs on the sides of throat. The favorite game bird of the west.

308b. SHARP TAILED GROUSE. *Pedioecetes phasianellus campestris*. Generally a little smaller and lighter than the prairie chicken. Dull whitish below. Has no extra large feathers on neck as the prairie chicken has. In other respects very similar.

309. SAGE HEN. *Centrocercus urophasianus*. About two feet long. Mottled gray above barred with brown and black, yellow sacs on sides of throat. Larger than others of its kind. Most common in Wyoming and west of the Missouri River. Flesh tastes strongly of wild sage except when very young. Color drab, much mixed and barred.

289. BOB WHITE. *Colinus Virginianus*. About ten inches long. Male has white throat, female has yellow throat. Buff and brown above and below with more or less black markings above. Calls his name.

## QUAIL or BOB WHITE.

Bob white is as trim a bird as you will see in a Sabbath day's journey or even in a month of Sundays. It is too bad for him that he is so plump and still worse that he is so delicate a morsel. As a matter of fact, he is only a morsel at best. Surely quails must breed very fast to perpetuate themselves for there is

no bird that is in such constant danger. First of all, they nest upon the ground and lay white eggs. That means that snakes and squirrels have easy times finding them. Then in winter they huddle together to keep warm, sitting in a compact circle with their tails together, and they are often buried beneath the snow and smothered. No bird is hunted by man more than they are so that it is no wonder that they must lay a nest full of eggs and if the mother is shot the little widower must climb upon the nest and play mother. Pot-shooting is easy with them for their great fondness for each other causes them to keep well huddled, but no true sportsman could be guilty of taking a shot at a flock sitting upon the ground. Why even the birds known as fly-catchers catch their flies only on the wing. Hunting-madness seems to be on the increase and unless something is done to check it our game birds will be reduced to such small numbers that the day's shooting will bring small returns.

We are too ready to overlook the aesthetic value of game birds. Some of our wild ducks are of wonderful beauty. In fact, it is doubtful if the wood-duck has a rival. And bob white! Who says he is not a work of art? He is to birds what the speckled trout is to fishes.

I should hate to think that the time is near when I shall not see now and then a quail running in the roadside ahead of my carriage and actually jumping to one side as I pass.

Bob white whistles his own name and should always be called by the name he chooses for himself.



# Doves and Pigeons.

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Order, *Columbae*.

Family, *Columbidae*.

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Family Characteristics: "Dove-color" or soft iridescent brownish drab. Rarely seen alone, generally in pairs or flocks. Rapid fliers. Two white eggs at a sitting. Can be recognized from similarity to our common pigeon. They have very large crops for birds of their size and live mostly on the seeds of weeds. They are the farmer's best friend.

316. MOURNING DOVE. (Turtle Dove.) *Zenaidura Macroura*. Length twelve inches. Bluish drab or "dove color" above. Breast lighter. A sheen on neck the color of the iris flower. Black bill. Red feet.

315. PASSENGER PIGEON. *Ectopistes migratorius*. So rare that a description is not needed. The bird is almost extinct though men living today can remember when flocks of them almost obscured the sunlight. Their nesting in colonies made them easy prey for gunners.

## MOURNING DOVE (TURTLE DOVE).

There are birds as well as blossoms that follow in the trail of the traveler, and many of them have shared with the settler the difficulties and the dangers of readjustment. How much longer, I wonder, will it take the mourning dove to learn that she must build a better nest if she would rear her young where the Dakota zephyrs outmoan her? Thousands of their nests are scattered by "every stormy wind that blows," and many a pair of bare babies fall to earth, never to rise again. It doubtless took them decades to become "as wise as serpents" and to change the location of their "wickypups" from the ground to the trees in order to save their babies from being swallowed alive, and by the time they learn the capers of our winds, nature may temper the storms until they become as "harmless as doves." The winds can't blow always, you know. Nothing does.

The dove and his mate are more constant than you and your shadow, for they are chummy in the darkest days, and I think if Lovey should die Dovey would die, too. Don't you? Did you ever see them billing and cooing? No? Then you don't know what love is.

Next to loving, doves like weed seed and nine thousand seeds of ragweed or hawkweed or foxtail or pigeon grass are often gathered by a dove in a day. On a single Dakota farm a ton of weed seed goes to furnish a season's food for the doves. Alas, the farmers never pay the dove debt. It is a charge, I fear, a charge of shot, that the dove too often gets, for there is almost a whole mouthful of meat on the little fellow's breast, don't you know?

It is too bad that they are so trustful. And how ready the mother is to sacrifice her life for the little ones! If you approach her nest while she has her two white eggs or her fledgelings under her wings, she will tumble to earth, as much as to say, "Take me! See, I cannot fly!" and if you follow her she will lure you away where you belong, for you have little right to intrude upon her nursery.

The dove isn't vain, he isn't pretty enough. He is content just to be good. He is so awkward that if the wind blows at all he has all he can do to keep his balance on a fence wire. He is not very smart, either, and is generally at the foot of his class in school, but he is industrious, and he is good and that is something, isn't it?

In "Locksley Hall" it says:

"In the spring a fuller crimson comes upon the robin's breast;  
In the spring the wanton lapwing gets himself another crest;  
In the spring a livelier iris comes upon the burnished dove;  
In the spring a young man's fancy lightly turns to thoughts of love."

You see that the dove, with the awakened world, feels the spirit of the springtime, for when he comes there is "calling, cooing, wooing everywhere," and he is always the dove of peace, the bearer of the myrtle.

# Vultures.

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Order, *Raptores.*

Family, *Cathartidae.*

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325. TURKEY VULTURE. *Cathartes Aura.* Two and one-half feet long. A scavenger among the birds, the "buzzard" is beautiful in inverse ratio to its distance from you. As it soars on easy flight very high above you it is grace itself. Near you it is repulsive. Its head is unfeathered, its color black, and its habits untidy. It resides where it can find the most carrion.

# Hawks and Eagles.

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Order, *Raptores*,  
Family, *Falconidae*.

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Family Characteristics: Large, ferocious birds with curved talons and beak for grasping and tearing their prey. They feed upon gophers, field mice, birds, snakes, lizards, frogs and grasshoppers with an occasional meal of domestic fowl, that delicacy being a favorite meal only of Cooper's hawk, the sharp-shinned hawk and the goshawk.

360. SPARROW HAWK. *Falco sparverius*. The size of a robin. A common prairie hawk. Cheeks with black stripes. Barred brown above. Top of head blue. Cries "killy, killy."

331. MARSH HARRIER. *Circus hudsonius*. Twenty inches long. A ruff about the face like an owl's. Brownish gray streaked with white above, with white patch on lower back. Bristles at base of bill. Under parts white specked with brown. Flies low and slowly over marshes. A very valuable hawk and the farmer's friend.

339. RED SHOULDERED HAWK. *Buteo lineatus*. Eighteen inches long. Dull red breast and shoulders lightly barred. Darker above. Black tail, barred with white.

337b. RED-TAILED HAWK. *Buteo borealis calurus*. Twenty inches long. Dull red tail, banded near the end with black or brown and white. Brown above, dull white or buff below; varies greatly in plumage.

333. COOPER'S HAWK. *Accipiter Cooperii*. Sixteen inches long. Our common "chicken hawk." White below spotted with brown. Black on top of head. Back bluish gray. Tail with three or four black bands and rounded at the end. Tip white. Should be shot if any hawks deserve shooting.

334. AMERICAN GOSHAWK. *Accipiter atricapillus*. Twenty two inches long. Whitish below with irregular gray markings. Bluish-drab above. Black on head. Tail banded below. A first class villain.

332. SHARP-SHINNED HAWK. *Accipiter velox*. An inch longer than the robin. Dull bluish brown above. White below with brown

spots and bars. Tail with three or four bands of black and white at the tip with short wings and long tail, he is a rapid dodger and a terror to small birds. He needs a gun.

342. SWAINSON'S HAWK. *Buteo Swainsonii*. Twenty inches long. A prairie hawk. White beneath with brown band across its breast. Throat white. Tail fully banded. One of the most valuable birds on earth and perfectly harmless.

327. SWALLOW-TAILED KITE. *Elanoides forficatus*. Twenty-one inches long. Blue-black above except head. Head and underneath pure white. Tail forked.

348. ROUGH-LEGGED HAWK. *Archibuteo ferrugineus*. Twenty-two and a half inches long. White below streaked with brown, especially on flanks. Reddish brown above. Tail white. Called "squirrel hawk."

349. GOLDEN EAGLE. *Aquila chrysaetus*. Thirty-three inches long. Head and neck golden on the back. Plumage brown. Tail mostly white. Legs with white feathers. Young birds generally darker than older ones.

352. BALD EAGLE. *Haliaeetus leucocephalus*. Thirty-three inches long. Head and neck white. Body brownish. Beak yellow. Tail rounded. Our national bird.

### GOLDEN EAGLE.

This, the king of birds, favorite of Jove, the thunderer, messenger of that great god of the Romans who sat upon Olympus' height, that was borne by Roman soldiers upon the tops of their standards that like flags were carried before the Roman legions, was the type of all that was watchful, brave and daring.

The Indian takes "Eagle" for his name, wears its feathers on his war dress and tips his arrows with them so that they will fly straight to the heart of his enemy.

The eagle whose picture adorns our coins can whip any living thing of its size. He is a fit emblem of our national life, for he is quiet and peaceful except in matters of business, when he always gets what he goes after.

On the edge of the Bad Lands, I once climbed a precipice to see an eagle's nest. It was hard and dangerous climbing and I should never dare do it again. At last I reached the eyrie where two very young eaglets were resting in their feather-lined nest of coarse twigs laid flat upon the edge of the precipice. I was





BLUE JAY

Order—PASSERES

Family—CORVIDÆ

Genus—CYANOCITTA

Species—CRISTATA



watching the curved beaks of the eaglets when I heard a rush of wings like the storm-wind and a snap of the old eagle's beak that was as loud as the crack of a pistol. I had seen him circling a mile or more above me but I did not dream that his eagle eye was keeping watch over that little speck below. I clutched the harder to the walls of the precipice and began my retreat expecting every minute to hear the whirlwind of those mighty wings again or to have my brains hanging from that hooked beak.

Eagles are getting scarcer every year. They are now found only in the mountains and unsettled regions. Ranchmen shoot them because they steal their lambs and Indians want their feathers for adornment. Really they do but little harm, living mostly on prairie chickens, prairie dogs and smaller mammals. We can spare a few lambs to preserve the noblest of our birds. I fear that modern methods of civilization would exterminate all forms of life except what can be eaten. Think of a world of chickens and geese and beeves and hogs and men! Why not save a few things for sentiment's sake?

### HAWKS.

There are three kinds of hawks that may as well be killed as not. You may tell them by the fact that they wear mostly blue feathers. They are the sharp-shinned hawk, called the little blue darter, and ten inches in length, Cooper's hawk or big blue darter sixteen inches in length, and the goshawk or blue hen hawk, twenty-two inches long. Add two inches to each of the above and you will get the length of the females.

This trio of villains are pirates of the high winds. The domestic chickens that they eat are of little consequence in comparison with the large number of useful song and game birds whose hearts are actually pierced by their vicious claws and whose throats are cut by their murderous beaks. Swift of wing so that ducks going at one hundred miles an hour can be overtaken and the most artful of dodgers, a trick learned from chasing smaller birds, there is little chance of escape for bird or beast that starts on the race for life.

Such birds never sing, they give yells as piercing as their claws. Like many little boys "they should be seen but not heard," and they should be seen only long enough to permit a gun to be

properly pointed. They are birds of beauty, grace and dignity, qualities which are worthy of a better character, but their pretty plumage could be put to no better use than to furnish wings to arrows that may quiver in their hearts, and it would be no more than justice that the same plumage that warms their nests should drink the last life drop of their bleeding breasts.



# Owls.

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Order, *Raptores*.

Family, *Bubonidae*.

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Family Characteristics: Large birds of prey with curved beak and sharp, curved talons. Large faces with firmly set eyes. If you walk around them they must turn their heads in order to see you. Usually dull brown in color much mottled and their legs are generally feathered. They live largely on rats and mice, grasshoppers and snakes and are therefore of great value. The small amount of domestic fowl that they eat is hardly worth notice.

376. SNOWY OWL. *Nyctea nyctea*. Two feet long. Mostly snow white. Often mottled with drab. Very yellow eyes. Feathered socks.

378. BURROWING OWL. *Speotyto cuniculario hypogaea*. Mostly brown above. More or less white beneath. No horns. Does not wear socks. You can tell him by his size and the place where you find him.

375a. WESTERN HORNED OWL. *Bubo Virginianus pallescens*. Twenty-two inches long. Named from the upright feathers that project above the ears like horns. A genuine night owl. Mottled brown above. Buffy white below. This is the owl that when the old maid prayed for a husband asked "Who? Who?" to which the maid is said to have replied. "Anybody good Lord". Both a bad and a good bird.

373. SCREECH OWL. *Megascops asio*. Nine inches long. Small feathers projecting upward from the sides of the head suggesting horns. Dull-brown plumage. Screech dismally at night. A very valuable aid to the farmer.

368. BARRED OWL. *Syrnium nebulosum*. Twenty inches long. Upper half of the bird barred with dark brown or whitish. Tail and wings banded. Dark brown above. Streaked white below.

367. SHORT-EARED OWL. *Asio Accipitrinus*. Fifteen inches long. A real prairie owl with short horns and yellow eyes. White eye-brows and black ring about the eyes. Dark yellowish-brown above. Buffy white below. Irregularly barred all over.

## SNOWY OWL.

Many men stuff birds but none of them becomes a taxidermist until he has put up a snowy owl. Most of these birds that are in our latitude are either in museums or private collections or are soon to go there.

They make swell targets. They have two large owl's eyes that are better than bull's eyes and outer rings around them too. They are not fit for food unless it be for other owls, but for all that they are just as good for targets. Why, I can think of nothing that interferes with their target-value. I wish that somebody could. How would it be to enact a law that whoever shoots one shall eat it?

They probably will not become extinct for some time for no Arctic explorer has been far enough north as yet to get beyond their range. What specters they must be in the Arctic nights to the smaller inhabitants of the icy plains!

As these owls depend for their food wholly upon what they kill, they have become expert hunters. They can catch a duck on the wing or a hare on the foot and many a fish loses his life by venturing too near the little island of sea-weeds upon which a snowy owl is sitting and singing "I'm waiting and watching for thee."

I have a friend who started on a short trip with a cage containing two owls, one a snowy owl and the other as near as I could judge from his description a long eared owl. When he arrived at his destination, he called a friend to see his owls. The snowy owl was apparently all that the cage contained. Doubtless if they could have seen what the snowy owl contained they would have ceased to wonder.

Just west of the Missouri river in the least settled regions he is a common visitor wearing his frostiest suit and feeding upon the multitudes of sparrow-like birds that throng the open plains, but as that region becomes more thickly settled, he will be driven to the north or go to join the dodo and the auk and be gathered to his feathered fathers and his patron saint, Minerva. Alas! Wisdom is so rare!

## BURROWING OWL.

This smallest of the owls is about the size of the robin but being an owl, he is top-heavy and sits up like a judge. He really takes himself seriously. Whenever I look one of them in the eye, I feel like laughing at his apparent dignity.

He lives by the chase otherwise his eyes would not be in the front of his head like a hen's. If sheep were in the habit of chasing wolves, their eyes would be in front and wolves would wear their eyes on the side. Man with his eyes in front has ever been on the watch for something to prey upon. That's just as sure as it is that a bird with a hooked beak like our little owl, loves meat. I don't know whether this is also true of man or not.

An owl cannot make goo-goo eyes for the reason that he cannot turn his eyes sideways. Did you ever try to walk around one? If you noticed it you would recall that he had to turn his whole head around to follow you. Did it not seem to you that his head was on a pivot and could turn around and around and around? Try the next one you see and see if you can't get him to wring his neck off.

This little owl you will often see where there is a prairie-dog town and there are many people who will tell you that there can be found at the bottom of its hole a happy family of rattlesnakes, prairie-dogs and owls. No doubt the three are at times in the same hole but at such times the prairie-dog is inside the owl and the owl inside the rattlesnake.

You may be tempted to inquire why this little owl chooses to make its home in the deserted burrow of the prairie-dog but you must remember that he lays many white eggs and hatches out many hungry little owls, so you should not blame him for getting a home with as little labor as possible, and placing it in the heart of the city whose inhabitants when young are such fine food. And how interesting is this little fowl with his brood of owlets sunning themselves at the mouth of their burrow! You may be sure that it keeps the prairie-dogs as busy as guinea pigs to raise enough little pups to feed them. Don't shoot this little bunch of feathers on stilts. He eats rats, mice, gophers, and never anything that you would eat anyway.

Except as to his diet the owl is always overrated. He is

never as big as he looks for he is mostly fuss and feathers and I fear that he is rather tough. At least I have heard that charge made against the boiled owl. He doesn't know very much in spite of his reputed wisdom. He just looks wise, and has his counterpart in the big-headed, goggle-eyed, long haired variety of sages that like the moping owl of Gray complain mostly to the moon.





# *Non-Game Birds.*

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Arranged by colors to assist in identification.

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**Black.** American Raven, Common Crow, Bronzed Grackle, Purple Grackle, Cowbird, Rusty Blackbird, Brewer's Blackbird, Purple Martin.

**Black-white.** Lark Bunting, Bobolink, Hairy Woodpecker, Downy Woodpecker, Snowflake, Rose-breasted Grosbeak in flight, Blackpoll Warbler, Black-and-white Creeping Warbler, Magpie, Red-headed Woodpecker.

**Black-red.** Scarlet Tanager, Red-winged Blackbird, Red-headed Woodpecker, Chewink, Rose-breasted Grosbeak, Orchard Oriole.

**Black-yellow.** Yellow-headed Blackbird, Goldfinch, Evening Grosbeak, Northern Yellowthroat.

**Black-orange.** Baltimore Oriole, Redstart.

**Blue.** Indigo Bird, Blue Jay, Bluebird, Kingfisher.

**Blue-gray.** Mourning Dove.

**Brown.** Brown Thrasher, Fox Sparrow.

**Brown-olive.** Wood Thrush, Hermit Thrush, Wilson's Thrush, Olive-backed Thrush.

**Brown-gray.** House Wren, Winter Wren, Marsh Wren, Whippoorwill, Cedar Waxwing.

**Gray.** Cat-bird, Chimney Swift, Junco, Night-hawk.

**Gray-black.** Chickadee, Northern Shrike, Loggerhead Shrike.

**Gray with whitish breast.** Kingbird, Phoebe, Wood Pewee, Olive-sided Flycatcher, Least Flycatcher, Canada Jay, Mockingbird, Tufted Titmouse, Bank Swallow, Black-billed Cuckoo, Yellow-billed Cuckoo, White-breasted Nuthatch, Lapland Longspur.

**Olive with light olive breast.** Golden-crowned Kinglet, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Red-eyed Vireo, Philadelphia Vireo, Warbling Vireo, Prairie Warbler, Arkansas Kingbird.

**Red-headed.** Red-headed Woodpecker, Northern Flicker, Red-shafted Flicker, Downy Woodpecker, Hairy Woodpecker, Ruby-crowned Kinglet.

**Red or reddish.** Cardinal Grosbeak, Red Crossbill, Redpoll, Purple Finch, Orchard Oriole, Robin Redbreast.

**Red-white-black.** Rose-breasted Grosbeak, Red-headed Woodpecker.

**Slate.** Junco.

**Slate-yellow-white.** Myrtle Warbler, Parula Warbler, Black-throated Blue Warbler.

**Sparrow-like.** Chipping Sparrow, English Sparrow, Field Sparrow, Grasshopper Sparrow, Song Sparrow, Tree Sparrow, White-crowned Sparrow, White-throated Sparrow, Lapland Longspur.

**Yellow.** Yellow Warbler. Nearly all warblers have some yellow.

**Yellow-breasted.** Meadow-lark, Prairie Horned Lark, Dickcissel, Yellow-breasted Chat, Blackburnian Warbler, Arkansas Kingbird.



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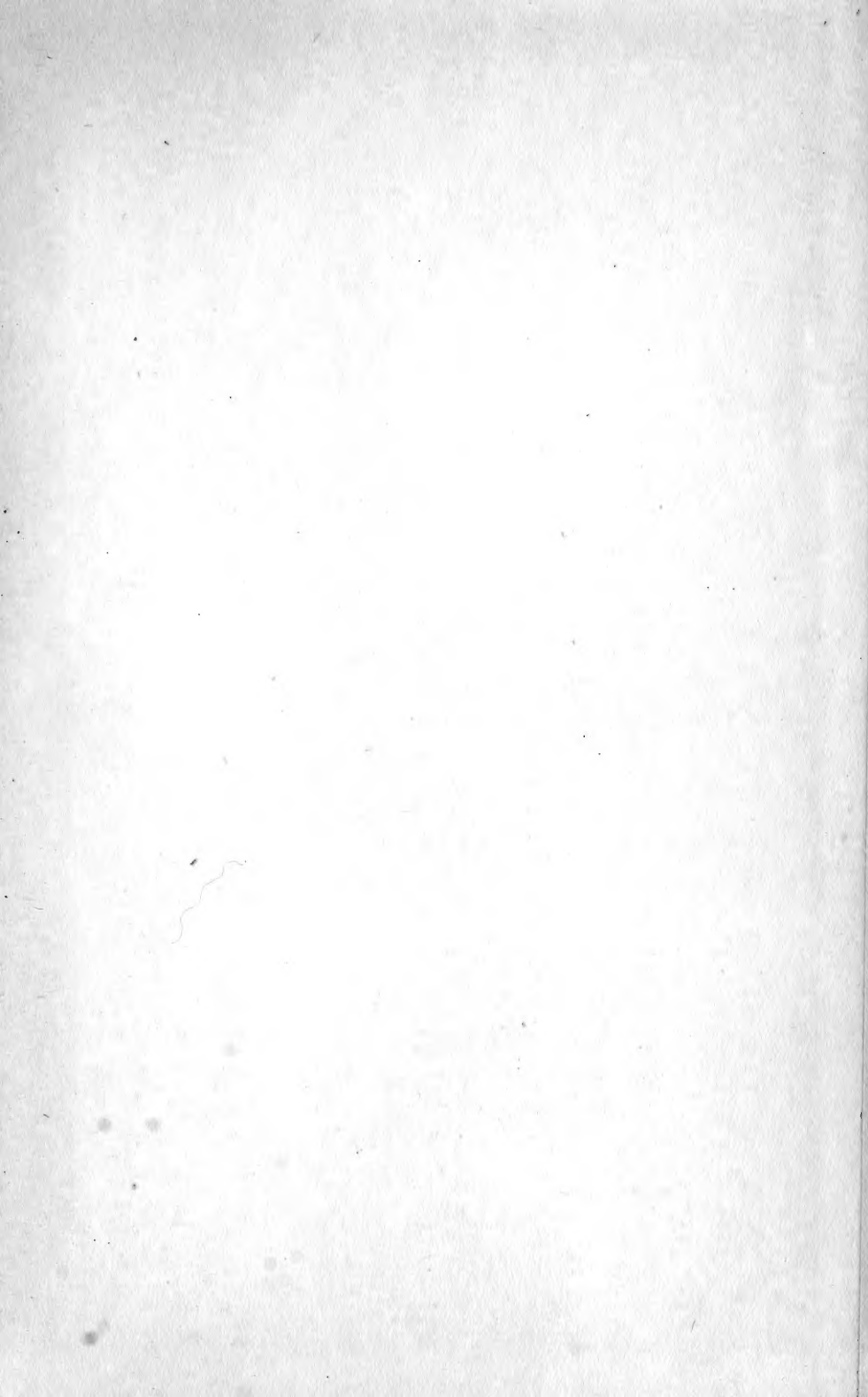
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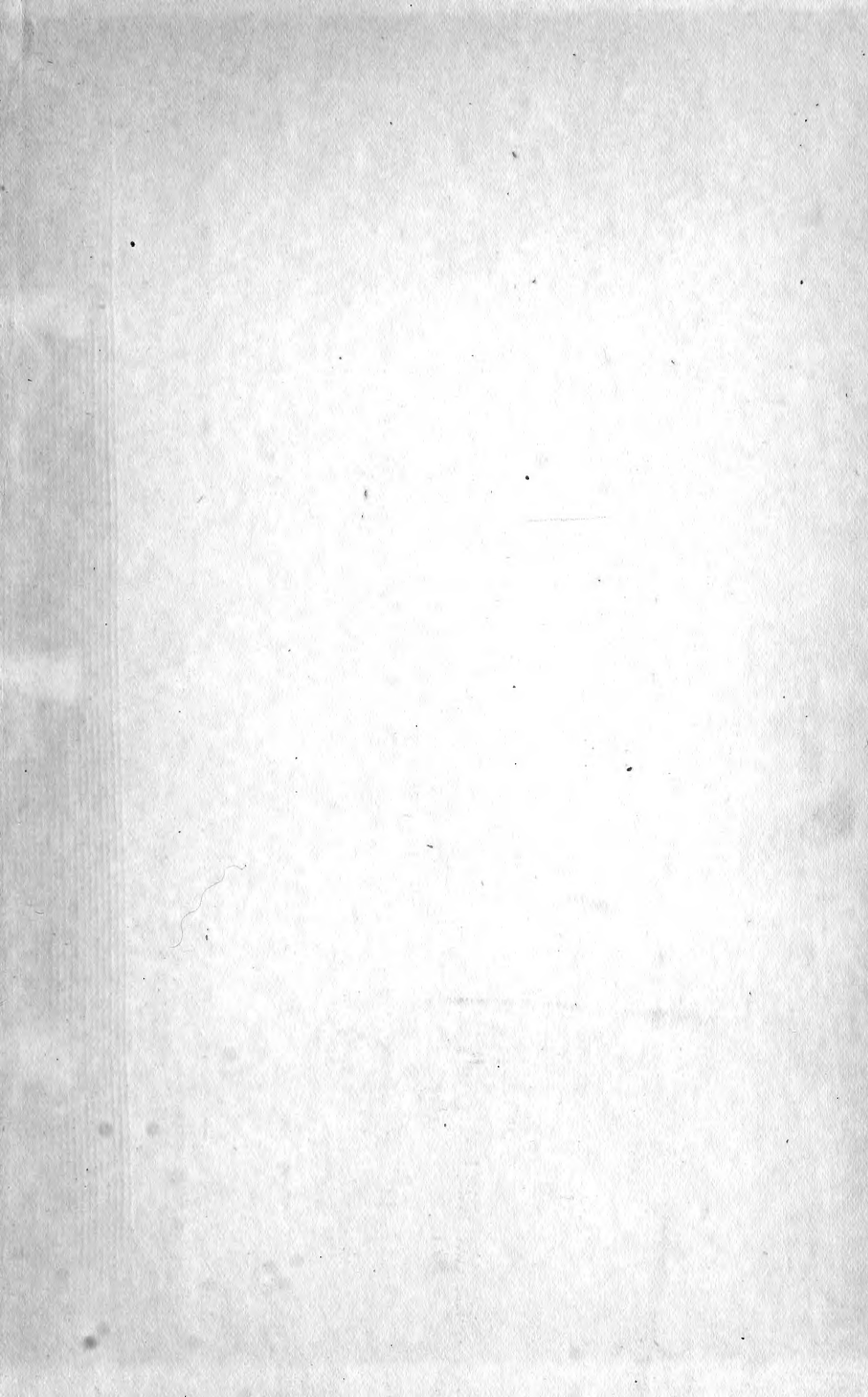
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