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By Theodore Roosevelt

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bride, whereupon she arose and calmly indorsed his statement (her composure that of a veteran club woman), adding a cordial invitation for all present to the wedding, including the strangers present, the pastor thereupon addressing his guests personally, expressing the wish that they would accept. How can the Spectator or his friend after that ever believe again that the Mennonites are too clannish for ordinary courtesy? In fact, the Spectator lost several fixed impressions concerning the Mennonites that Sunday. Another was that they are utterly devoid of the sense of humor. "What will happen to us Perizzites, and Girgasites, and Hittites, and all of the other 'ites,' when you Mennonites get full possession here in this valley?" the promoter had asked in friendly conversation with the brethren after the service. "Oh, we'll see you running round barefooted," was the reply.

Now any good reference library, the Spectator is well aware—or any good encyclopædia—furnishes ample information about the Mennonites. But what he wanted most was to be gained only in social converse with the brethren (they belonged mostly, they told him, to the branch *Des Bundes Conferenz der Mennonites Brüdergemeinde*). Many of them were from Kansas. The pastor came to the United States with the large Mennonite immigration from Russia following Russia's annulment in 1870 of her pledge to exempt the sect from military and civil service—the immigrants mostly Germans, their second exile for conscience' sake; the Mennonites of the United States contributed generously in paying the cost of the transportation of their brethren, who were soon settled in our Western States and Canada. Three emigrations ing all the same. "My grandfather was an old hooks-and-eyes; with him wearing buttons and to have buttonholes was a sin. My mother wears the Amish cap and cape; but my sisters! well, you saw them in our choir." . . . "Oh, no, they never read novels," most emphatically; nor did they ever dance or play cards. The discipline of the Church was very strict; rectitude of conduct more important than knowledge of doctrines; suspension or excommunication a not infrequent penalty for violation of the severe exactions of the code. Did the Mennonite boys go to the Sunday ball games? The question shocked the brethren to an extent unanticipated.

What a contrast between the two settlements meaning so much to the future of the valley! Would there ever be "a unification," as Hegelians would say, in the conflicting notions of each? Which of the two was likely to prove the greater blessing? The Spectator's friend had resumed describing the attractions of the new town-to-be: a picnic grove, a dancing pavilion, a ball-ground—

"And, of course, a church," rather faintly suggested the Spectator.

"Perhaps," after a pause. "But there are churches enough in this valley already if the support they get means anything. There'll always be a Mennonite service, you see, and that will be an attractive novelty—a good thing on the Sunday programme. How those Mennonites do sing!"—the hilarious greetings from a passing tally-ho on its way to the ball game interrupting his low, sweet rendering of the old German hymn that the Spectator will not soon forget. And did the Spectator find a name for the new town?

He has not as yet. Selah.

English Song Birds

By Theodore Roosevelt

LIKE most Americans interested in birds and books, I know a good deal about English birds as they appear in books. I know the lark of Shakespeare and Shelley and the Ettrick Shepherd; I know the nightingale of Milton and Keats; I know Wordsworth's cuckoo; I know mavis and merle singing in the merry green wood of the old ballads; I know Jenny Wren and Cock Robin of the nursery books. Therefore I have always much desired to hear the birds in real life; and the opportunity offered last June. As I could snatch but a few hours from a very exacting round of pleasures and duties, it was necessary for me to be with some companion who could identify both song and singer. In Sir Edward Grey, a keen lover of outdoor life in all its phases, and a delightful companion, who knows the songs and ways of English birds as very few do know them, I found the best possible guide.

We left London on the morning of June 9, twenty-four hours before I sailed from Southampton. Getting off the train at Basingstoke, we drove to the pretty, smiling valley of the Itchen. Here we tramped for three or four hours, then again drove, this time to the edge of the New Forest, where we first took tea at an inn, and then tramped through the forest to an inn on its other side, at Brockenhurst. At the conclusion of our walk my companion made a list of the birds we had seen, putting an asterisk opposite those which we had heard sing. There were forty-one of the former and twenty-three of the latter, as follows:

*Thrush, *Blackbird, *Lark, *Yellow Hammer, *Robin, *Wren, *Golden Crested Wren, *Goldfinch, *Chaffinch, *Greenfinch, Pied Wagtail, Sparrow, *Dunnock (Hedge Accentor), Missel Thrush, Starling, Rook, Jackdaw, *Black Cap, *Garden Warbler, *Willow Warbler, *Chiff Chaff, *Wood Warbler, *Tree Creeper, *Reed Bunting, *Sedge Warbler, Coot, Water Hen, Little Grebe (Dabchick), Tufted Duck, Wood Pigeon, Stock Dove, *Turtle Dove, Peewit, Tit (? Coal Tit), *Cuckoo, *Nightjar, *Swallow, Martin, Swift, Pheasant, Partridge.

The valley of the Itchen is typically the England that we know from novel and story and essay. It is very beautiful in every way, with a rich, civilized, fertile beauty—the rapid brook twisting among its reed beds, the rich green of trees and grass, the stately woods, the gardens and fields, the exceedingly picturesque cottages, the great handsome houses standing in their parks. Birds were plentiful; I know but few places in America where one would see such an abundance of individuals, and I was struck by seeing such large birds as coots, water hens, grebes, tufted ducks, pigeons, and peewits. In places in America as thickly settled as the valley of the Itchen, I should not expect to see any like number of birds of this size; but I hope that the efforts of the Audubon societies and kindred organizations will gradually make themselves felt until it becomes a point of honor not only with the American man, but with the American small boy, to shield and protect all forms of harmless wild life. True sportsmen should take the lead in such a movement, for if there is to be any shooting there must be something to shoot; the prime necessity is to keep, and not kill out, even the birds which in legitimate numbers may be shot.

The New Forest is a wild, uninhabited stretch of heath and woodland, many of the trees gnarled and aged, and its very wildness, the lack of cultivation, the ruggedness, made it strongly attractive in my eyes, and suggested my own country. The birds of course were much less plentiful than beside the Itchen.

The bird that most impressed me on my walk was the blackbird. I had already heard nightingales in abundance near Lake Como, and had also listened to larks, but I had never heard either the blackbird, the song thrush, or the black cap warbler; and while I knew all three were good singers, I did not know what really beau-

tiful singers they were. Blackbirds were very abundant, and they played a prominent part in the chorus which we heard throughout the day on every hand, though perhaps loudest the following morning at dawn. In its habits and manners, the blackbird strikingly resembles our American robin, and indeed looks exactly like a robin, with a yellow bill and coal-black plumage. It hops everywhere over the lawns, just as our robin does, and it lives in nests in the gardens in the same fashion. Its song has a general resemblance to that of our robin, but many of the notes are far more musical, more like those of our wood thrush. Indeed there were individuals among those we heard certain of whose notes seemed to me almost to equal in point of melody the chimes of the wood thrush; and the highest possible praise for any song bird is to liken its song to that of the wood thrush or hermit thrush. I certainly do not think that the blackbird has received full justice in the books. I knew that he was a singer, but I really had no idea how fine a singer he was. I suppose one of his troubles has been his name, just as with our own cat bird. When he appears in the ballads as the merle, bracketed with his cousin the mavis, the song thrush, it is far easier to recognize him as the master singer that he is. It is a fine thing for England to have such an asset of the countryside, a bird so common, so much in evidence, so fearless, and such a really beautiful singer.

The thrush is a fine singer too, a better singer than our American robin, but to my mind not at the best quite as good as the blackbird at his best; although often I found difficulty in telling the song of one from the song of the other, especially if I only heard two or three notes.

The larks were, of course, exceedingly attractive. It was fascinating to see them spring from the grass, circle upwards, steadily singing, and soaring for several minutes, and then return to the point whence they had started. As my companion pointed out, they exactly fulfilled Wordsworth's description: they soared but did not roam. It is quite impossible wholly to differentiate a bird's voice from its habits and surroundings. Although in the lark song there are occasional musical notes, the song as a whole is not very musical, but it is so joyous, buoyant and unbroken, and uttered under such conditions as fully to entitle the bird to the place he occupies with both poet and prose writer.

The most musical singer we heard was the black cap warbler. To my ear its song seemed more musical than that of the nightingale. It was astonishingly powerful for so small a bird; in volume and continuity it does not come up to the songs of the thrushes and of certain other birds, but in quality, as an isolated bit of melody, it can hardly be surpassed.

Among the minor singers the robin was noticeable. We all know this pretty little bird from the books, and I was prepared to find him as friendly and attractive as he proved to be, but I had not realized how well he sang. It is not a loud song, but very musical and attractive, and the bird is said to sing practically all through the year. The song of the wren interested me much, because it was not in the least like that of our house wren, but, on the contrary, like that of our winter wren. The theme is the same as the winter wren's, but the song did not seem to me to be as brilliantly musical as that of the tiny singer of the north woods. The sedge warbler sang in the thick reeds a mocking ventriloquial lay, which reminded me at times of the less pronounced parts of our yellow breasted chat's song. The cuckoo's cry was singularly attractive and musical, far more so than the rolling, many times repeated, note of our rain-crow.

We did not reach the inn at Brockenhurst until about nine o'clock, just at nightfall, and a few minutes before that we heard a nightjar. It did not sound in the least like either our whippoorwill or our night hawk, uttering a long-continued call of one or two syllables, repeated over and over. The chaffinch was very much in evidence, continually chaunting its unimportant little ditty. I was pleased to see the bold, masterful missel thrush, the storm cock as it is often called; but this bird breeds and sings in the early spring, when the weather is still tempestuous, and had long been silent when we saw it. The starlings, rooks, and jackdaws did not sing, and their calls were attractive merely as the calls of our grakles are

attractive; and the other birds that we heard sing, though they played their part in the general chorus, were performers of no especial note, like our tree creepers, pine warblers, and chipping sparrows. The great spring chorus had already begun to subside, but the woods and fields were still vocal with beautiful bird music, the country was very lovely, the inn as comfortable as possible, and the bath and supper very enjoyable after our tramp; and altogether I passed no pleasanter twenty-four hours during my entire European trip.

Ten days later, at Sagamore Hill, I was among my own birds, and was much interested as I listened to and looked at them in remembering the notes and actions of the birds I had seen in England. On the evening of the first day I sat in my rocking-chair on the broad veranda, looking across the Sound towards the glory of the sunset. The thickly grassed hillside sloped down in front of me to a belt of forest from which rose the golden, leisurely chiming of the wood thrushes, chanting their vespers; through the still air came the warble of vireo and tanager; and after nightfall we heard the flight song of an oven bird from the same belt of timber. Overhead an oriole sang in the weeping elm, now and then breaking his song to scold like an overgrown wren. Song sparrows and cat birds sang in the shrubbery; one robin had built its nest over the front, and one over the back door, and there was a chippy's nest in the wistaria vine by the porch. During the next twenty-four hours I saw and heard, either right around the house or while walking down to bathe, through the woods, the following forty-two birds:

Little Green Heron, Quail, Red Tailed Hawk, Yellow Billed Cuckoo, Kingfisher, Flicker, Hummingbird, Swift, Meadow Lark, Red Winged Blackbird, Sharp Tailed Finch, Song Sparrow, Chipping Sparrow, Bush Sparrow, Purple Finch, Baltimore Oriole, Cowbunting, Robin, Wood Thrush, Thrasher, Cat Bird, Scarlet Tanager, Red-Eyed Vireo, Yellow Warbler, Black-Throated Green Warbler, King Bird, Wood Peewee, Crow, Blue Jay, Cedar Bird, Maryland Yellow Throat, Chickadee, Black and White Creeper, Barn Swallow, White Breasted Swallow, Oven Bird, Thistlefinch, Vesperfinch, Indigo Bunting, Towhee, Grasshopper Sparrow, and Screech Owl.

The birds were still in full song, for on Long Island there is little abatement in the chorus until about the second week of July, when the blossoming of the chestnut trees patches the woodland with frothy greenish yellow.

I sent the companion of my English walk John Burroughs's "Birds and Poets." John Burroughs's life-work is beginning to have its full effect in many different lines. When he first wrote there were few men of letters in our country who knew nature at first hand. Now there are many who delight in our birds, who know their songs, who keenly love all that belongs to out-of-doors life. For instance, Madison Cawein and Ernest McGaffy have for a number of years written of our woods and fields, of the birds and the flowers, as only those can write who join to love of nature the gift of observation and the gift of description. Mr. Cawein is a Kentuckian; and another Kentuckian, Miss Julia Stockton Dinsmore, in the little volume of poems which she has just published includes many which describe with beauty and charm the sights and sounds so dear to all of us who know American country life. Miss Dinsmore knows Kentucky, and the Gulf Coast of Louisiana, and the great plains of North Dakota; and she knows also, the regions that lie outside of what can be seen with material vision. For years in our family we have had some of her poems in the scrap-book cut from newspapers when we knew nothing about her except the initials signed to the verses. Only one who sees with the eyes of the spirit as well as the eyes of the body could have written the "Threnody," curiously attractive in its simplicity and pathos, with which the little book opens. It contains many poems that make a similar appeal. The writer knows bluebird and robin, redbird and field lark and whippoorwill, just as she knows Southern rivers and Western plains; she knows rushing winds and running waters and the sights and sounds of lonely places; and, moreover, she knows, and almost tells, those hidden things of the heart which never find complete utterance.

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