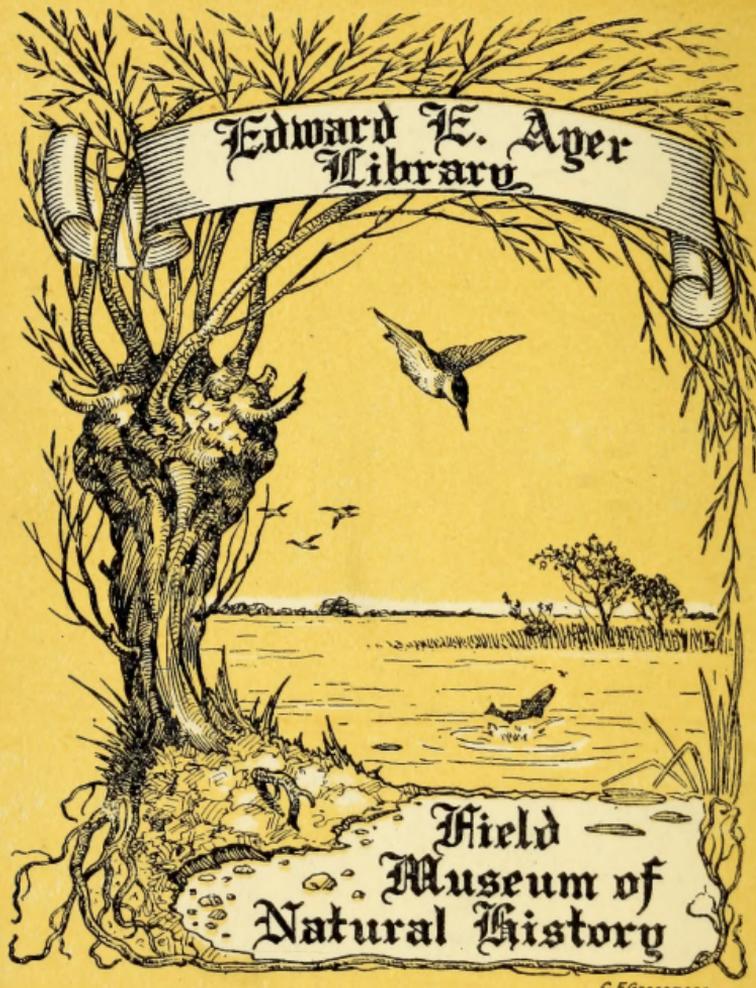
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THE
Language
of Birds

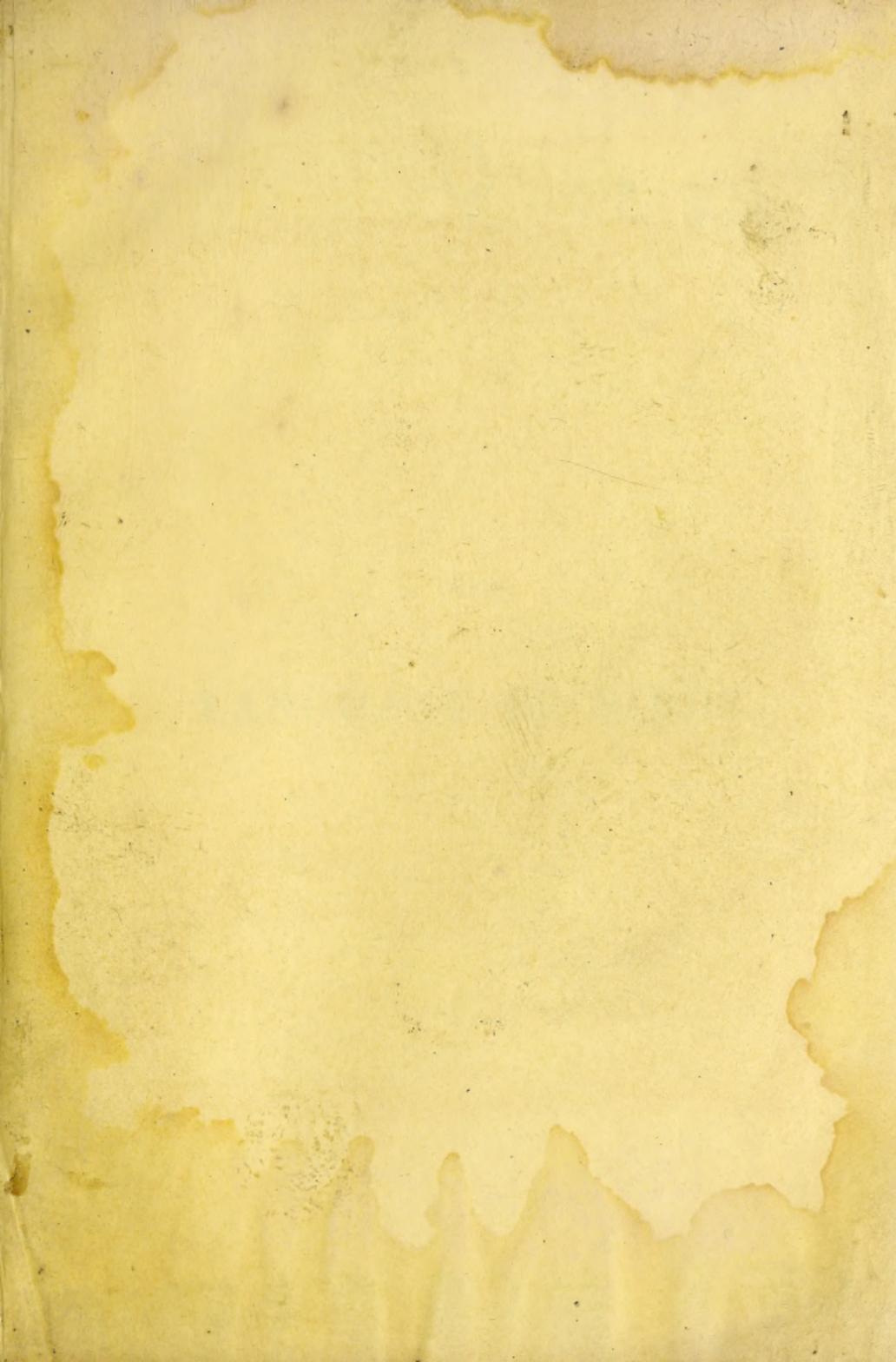
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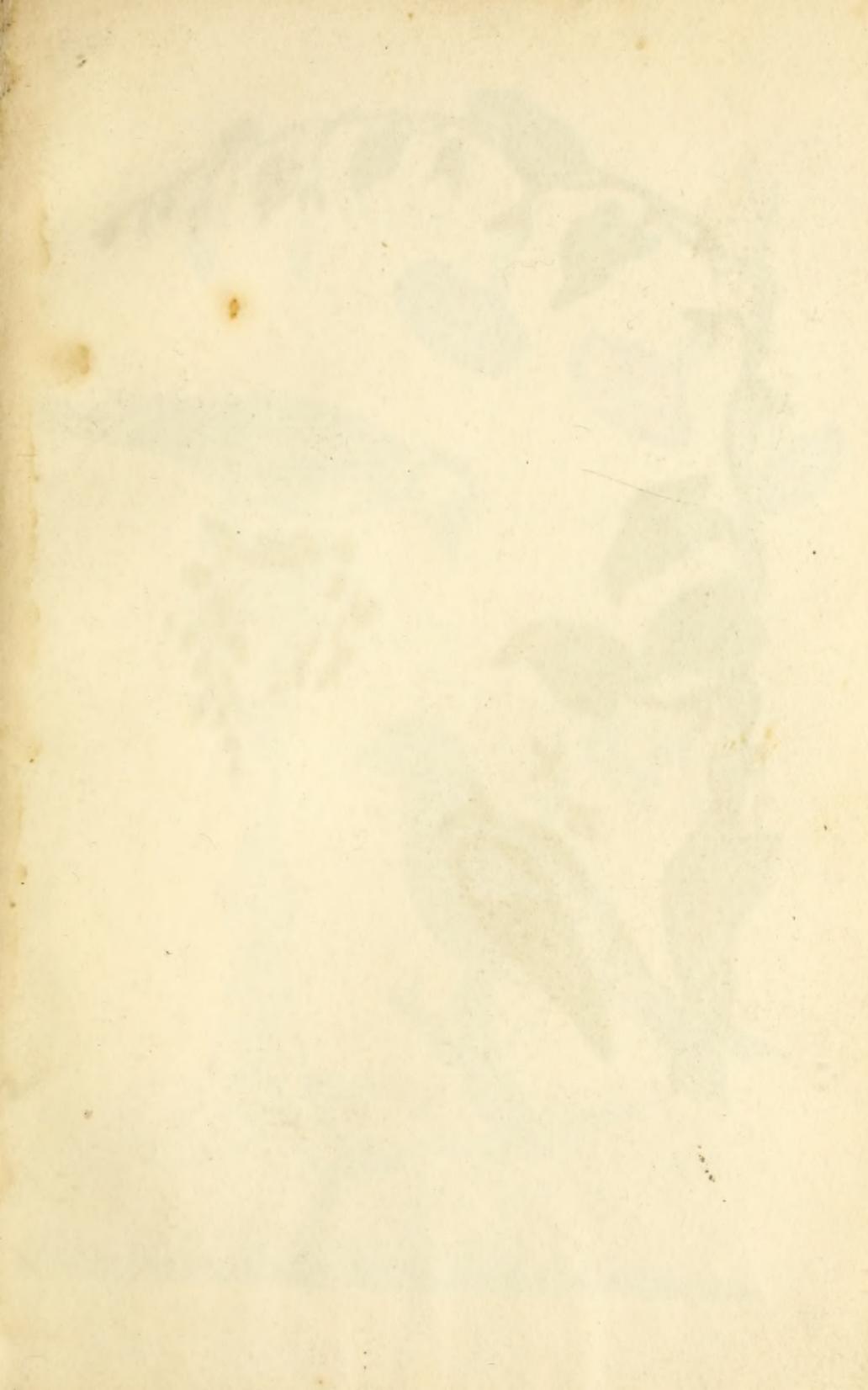


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THE
LANGUAGE OF BIRDS.

THE

LANGUAGE OF BIRDS.





LANGUAGE OF BIRDS

REVISED

WITH FULLY ILLUSTRATIONS

BY MRS. G. S. S. S.

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BY MRS. G. S. S. S.

Winter's wrath begins to quell,
And pleasant spring appears;
The grass now glazes to be soft,
The rindless paper out of the nest,
And drowsy walk in clover.

BY MRS. G. S. S. S.

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LONDON

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SAUNDERS AND OTLEY, CONDUIT STREET,

W. D. G. S. S. S.

THE
LANGUAGE OF BIRDS

COMPRISING

POETIC AND PROSE ILLUSTRATIONS

OF THE

MOST FAVOURITE CAGE BIRDS.

WITH TWELVE HIGHLY-COLOURED PLATES.

BY MRS. G. SPRATT.

Winter's wrath begins to quell,
And pleasaunt spring appeareth:
The grasse now ginnes to be refresht,
The swallows peepes out of her nest,
And clowdie welkin cleareth.

SPENSER.

61504

LONDON

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SAUNDERS AND OTLEY, CONDUIT STREET.

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R. B.
Ayer
p. 601
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THOMAS C. SAVILL,
PRINTER,
ST. MARTIN'S LANE, CHARING CROSS.

P R E F A C E.

IN giving the present little volume its *title*, perhaps I may be accused of taking the hint from the “Language of Flowers.” It is true, that when I met with that entertaining little book, I thought the language of the feathered race much more interesting; and, as I proceeded with this work, imagined I could not give it a more appropriate title than that now adopted, though some persons may perhaps dispute its right to it. Of those I would ask,—What is music, but a language of sweet, of heavenly sounds? Such is the language of the woodland inhabitants; and, were I not fearful of encroaching too much upon the reader’s time, could trace a simili-

tude between our best biped orators and those of the fields and groves. The style of the latter is equally as impressive, varying from the simple to the sublime, and that again to the more lofty. In the language of others may be traced a similitude to the soft insinuating voice of many a favoured lover. Even the little humming-bird may be compared to some of those gay fluttering youths who whisper soft nonsense into beauty's ear—flattering all, constant to none.

I would therefore advise those who dispute the powers of the feathered orators and poets, to stroll into the fields or woods, and spend an hour, morning and evening, in the sweet month of May, listening to their various notes, and I doubt not they will return convinced that there is a “language of birds,” however indifferently I may have represented it.

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E R R A T A.

Page 199, *for* Alarida Arvensis, *read* Alauda Arvensis.

— 204, lines 4 and 11, *for* Alanda *read* Alauda.

— 211, line 9, *for* Alando *read* Alauda.

INTRODUCTION.

As it is customary for authors to say something by way of *Introduction* to their works, I feel compelled to follow the example of my brethren and sisters of the pen and pencil, and to state my motive for presenting the following trifle to the public.

Some authors write for fame or notoriety, others (we are assured) are actuated solely from a wish to benefit their fellow creatures, and a *very small portion* to benefit themselves. Now, I must candidly confess that I am not sufficiently ambitious to be influenced by the first consideration, nor am I philanthropist enough to brave the censures of a very ami-

able set of gentlemen known by the title of *critics*, to be induced to write entirely for the second motive ; but, as for the last, *perhaps* it may have as much weight with *me* as it has with *some* who disdain to acknowledge it.

Having frequently assisted others in their endeavours to amuse or instruct the public, as well as having presented a trifle or two of my own, although not in *propria persona*, which the said public were kind enough to approve, I am induced once more to venture forth, and to solicit a further indulgence and patronage for the present work.

The subject I have chosen is, to my fancy, one full of interest ; for, of all animated nature (next to my own species), birds are the most interesting and beautiful of God's creatures ; and the intensity of my feelings, while listening to the sweet, but to me melancholy, song of the robin, or to the clear and melodious notes of the skylark, as he chants his

evening praise while soaring to the sky, is never equalled by hearing the most scientific musical performer, although I confess myself to be an enthusiastic admirer of music ; but those *God-taught* minstrels are superior to anything the art of man can perform ; for the *Great Master* who has instructed these feathered songsters surpasses all other teachers. Most truly and sweetly does the poet write of the "Notes of the Birds," when he says—

Their tones
Are sweeter than the music of the lute,
Or the harp's melody, or the notes that gush
So thrillingly from beauty's ruby lip.

The songs of birds may be considered as *national melodies*, for each has its own peculiar music, as well as climate, and who is there that can contemplate their form, the texture of their feathers, the diversity and

INTRODUCTION.

brilliancy of their plumage, and not feel in their hearts sentiments of the deepest veneration and thankfulness to Him who sent such beautiful and interesting creatures for our gratification and amusement! How wonderfully his goodness is displayed in adapting each to its peculiar climate, element, and situation! Whether we survey the eagle that builds on the tops of the most inaccessible rocks, or the little sparrow that takes up its abode under our very roof, they, each and all, teach us a lesson of gratitude and humiliation, and shew us that, however highly we may esteem our own powers, to the Creator of all we are indebted, whose eye is equally on the humblest insect as on man.

The intense pleasure I derive from the melody of birds, in their natal bowers, would, no doubt, to many persons appear ridiculous, or as affectation; but the most beautiful

scenery, or the loveliest groves, would, in my eyes, lose half their charms, were they uninhabited by those lovely songsters. The feathered race of all climates are interesting; but our own dear English birds are, to my fancy, the most so: many amongst them are not indebted to a gay and splendid plumage to ensure our admiration, but they charm us by the variety and exquisite melody of their notes. Truly may they be compared to persons of intrinsic worth, with a plain exterior.

There is a "language in flowers:" equally interesting is the language of birds. It is a language of love and adoration; and how forcibly does it speak to the heart all must allow. Where is the poet who has not felt and acknowledged the power of those warblers over his feelings, when taking his rural rambles? and where is the lover who may not learn of them a tender lay? How truly beautiful are the following lines by

Thomson, where he invokes the aid of these songsters, in singing his praise of Spring :—

“ Lend me your song, ye nightingales ! Oh, pour
The mazy-running soul of melody
Into my varied verse ! while I deduce
From the first note the hollow cuckoo sings
The symphony of Spring, and touch a theme
Unknown to Fame, the *passion of the groves*.
When first the soul of love is sent abroad,
Warm thro’ the vital air, and on the heart
Harmonious seizes, the gay troops begin,
In gallant thought, to plume the painted wing ;
And try again the long-forgotten strain,
At first faint-warbled. But no sooner grows
The soft infusion prevalent and wide,
Than, all-alive at once their joy o’erflows
In music unconfined. Up springs the lark,
Shrill-voic’d and loud, the messenger of morn ;
Ere yet the shadows fly, he, mounted, sings
Amid the dawning clouds, and from their haunts
Calls up the tuneful nations. Every copse
Deep-tangled, tree irregular, and bush

INTRODUCTION.

Bending with dewy moisture o'er the heads
Of the coy quiristers that lodge within,
Are prodigal of harmony. The thrush
And woodlark o'er the kind contending throng
Superior heard, run thro' the sweetest length
Of notes, when listening *Philomela* deigns
To let them joy, and purposes, in thought
Elate, to make her night excel their day.
The blackbird whistles from the thorny brake ;
The mellow bullfinch answers from the grove :
Nor are the linnets, o'er the flowering furze
Pour'd out profusely, silent. Join'd to these,
Innumerable songsters, in the freshening shade
Of new-sprung leaves, their modulations mix
Mellifluous. The jay, the rook, the daw,
And each harsh pipe, discordant heard alone,
Aid the full concert ; while the stock-dove breathes
A melancholy murmur thro' the whole.

'Tis love creates their melody, and all
This waste of music is the voice of love ;
That even to birds and beasts the tender art
Of pleasing teaches. Hence the glossy kind
Try every winning way inventive love

Can dictate, and in courtship to their mates
Pour forth their little souls. First, wide around,
With distant awe, in airy rings they rove,
Endeavouring, by a thousand tricks, to catch
The cunning, conscious, half-averted glance
Of their regardless charmer. Should she seem
Softening, the least approbance to bestow,
Their colours burnish, and, by hope inspir'd,
They brisk advance ; then, on a sudden, struck,
Retire disorder'd ; then again approach ;
In fond rotation spread the spotted wing,
And shiver every feather with desire.
Connubial leagues agreed, to the deep woods
They haste away, all as their fancy leads,
Pleasure, or food, or secret safety, prompts ;
That Nature's *great command* may be obey'd :
Nor all the sweet sensations they perceive
Indulg'd in vain. Some to the holly-hedge,
Nestling, repair, and to the thicket some ;
Some to the rude protection of the thorn
Commit their feeble offspring ; the cleft tree
Offers its kind concealment to a few,
Their food its insects, and its moss their nests.
Others apart, far in the grassy dale,

Or roughening waste, their humble texture weave :
But most in woodland solitudes delight,
In unfrequented glooms, or shaggy banks,
Steep, and divided by a babbling brook,
Whose murmurs sooth them all the livelong day,
When by kind duty fix'd. Among the roots
Of hazel, pendant o'er the plaintive stream,
They frame the first foundation of their domes ;
Dry sprigs of trees, in artful fabric laid,
And bound with clay together. Now, 'tis nought
But restless hurry thro' the busy air,
Beat by unnumber'd wings. The swallow sweeps
The slimy pool, to build his hanging house
Intent. And often, from the careless back
Of herds and flocks, a thousand tugging bills
Pluck hair and wool ; and oft, when unobserv'd,
Steal from the barn a straw ; till soft and warm,
Clean, and complete, their habitation grows."

And, again, where he reprobates the inhumanity of confining these lovely creatures in cages :—

“ Be not the muse asham'd, here to bemoan
Her brothers of the grove, by tyrant Man

Inhuman caught, and in the narrow cage
From liberty confined, and boundless air.
Dull are the pretty slaves—their plumage dull,
Ragged, and all its brightening lustre lost ;
Nor is that sprightly wildness in their notes,
Which, clear and vigorous, warbles from the beech.
Oh, then, ye friends of love and love-taught song,
Spare the soft tribes—this barbarous act forbear—
If on your bosom innocence can win,
Music engage, or piety persuade.”

Although I agree, with my whole heart, in the feelings of the poet, as regards the confining these lovely songsters in a “narrow cage,” still I think it possible to enjoy their melody without rendering them unhappy. Some years back, when residing in the country, I had several birds given to me by a dear friend, who knew I was exceedingly fond of the music of the groves, but she did not know that I had a great dislike to keeping them prisoners. However, I could not re-

fuse the present, as my friend was going abroad; and to set them quite at liberty would have been greater cruelty than keeping them, and attending to all their wants. Some of them had been bred in a cage, and others had been taken from their nests before they were quite fledged; consequently all were so tame that they would have had no chance if turned loose amongst the wild birds; I therefore determined to make their captivity as easy to them as possible. For this purpose, I appropriated a room for their use, which looked into the garden;* here I introduced several large plants, such as rose-trees, myrtles, box, fuchsia, and the like, together with pots of groundsel, chickweed, plantain, and different little herbs that birds delight in, with pans of water for them to drink out of,

* The windows should have wire lattice-work outside the glass to admit air, when the window may be kept constantly open in warm weather, without fear of the birds escaping.

and to wash in, taking care to have the floor pretty thickly sprinkled with coarse sand. Thus completed, my little warblers were set at liberty. At first, they seemed very wild, flying about in great confusion ; but, by degrees, they appeared as if reconnoitring the place. Their cages I had hung up round the room, well stored with the various seeds for each, and I was much amused by observing, that every bird knew his own cage, and when hungry always flew to it to feed ; they also mostly roosted in them ; and, if I might judge from appearances, they seemed perfectly happy. One linnet alone refused to quit his little prison ; he was a bird of two years old, and had for a companion a female canary ; he was very lively, sung exquisitely, but would not leave his cage, and seemed very jealous when any other birds were noticed by me, and if they came near him he would peck at them, and even exhibited a degree of

spite in all his actions. In short, he was a thorough old *bachelor bird*; for the dear little canary that was with him he kept at a most respectful distance, not allowing her to sit near him on 'the perch, or to eat or drink till he was satisfied; and she, like all amiable females, submitted to this harsh treatment with the greatest good humour, hoping, no doubt, by her sweetness and amiability, to conciliate his affections, waiting with the greatest patience till he allowed her to feed, and shewing, by the most endearing little actions, how much she wished to please. Often, while watching these birds, have I thought what a pattern was here exhibited for every female to imitate in their conduct to those partners assigned them by fate.

This apartment I denominated my *concert room*, the performers consisted of the following birds:—two goldfinches, two bullfinches, one lark, one thrush, three canaries, two lin-

nets, a blackbird, two chaffinches, and a red-pole. The harmony of these lovely songsters fully repaid me for the trouble of attending to them. It was impossible to imagine anything more exquisitely enchanting than the music of these feathered warblers. Early in the morning, it sounded to my ears like a grand chorus of heavenly tones, chanting in praise of the Maker and Bestower of all that is good and lovely.

The following year I had an increase in my little family, some of the birds having made nests in the shrubs, and brought up their young ones; but as I did not wish to increase my stock, I gave them away when they no longer required a mother's care, with the proviso that they were not to be caged. The five or six years that I kept my birds on the above plan, I lost but four by death. After that period, circumstances of a family nature occasioned me to remove to the neigh-

bourhood of London; consequently my little republic was broken up, as I could accommodate but a very few in my new abode.

It was during my residence in the country, in the midst of my feathered family, that the illustrative drawings were principally made, with, at that time, very little idea of presenting them to the public.

Partly actuated by a wish to meliorate the condition of the feathered captives,—if, perchance, any ladies who are amused by, and who take delight in, these pretty warblers, should honour my humble efforts to entertain, by a perusal, and haply adopt my plan in the management of their birds,—by this means they would find their songs much clearer and finer, and their plumage more beautiful, than when kept in cages,—if, I say, I should be the humble means of inducing them to be treated more kindly, by adopting a more liberal and extended scope

for the display of their natural powers, the double aim I had in view by the publication of the present work will be accomplished, in aid of which, I have culled, from favourite authors, such poetic illustrations as appeared to me most favourable to the object I had so much at heart.

In the selection of vocalists to adorn the work, it was my original intention to have portrayed the natives of my own country only, but there were so many *sweet foreigners* staring me in the face—seemingly to implore their share of admiration and notice, that I could not resist their humble plea; more especially as they enforced it with a chorus of their finest notes.

Fair Reader, such as it is I offer it unto thee; and, generous critic, be indulgent—be merciful.

“ For me, when I forget the darling theme,
Whether the blossom blows, the summer ray

Russets the plain, inspiring Autumn gleams,
Or Winter rises in the blackening east,
Be my tongue mute, may fancy paint no more,
And, dead to joy, forget my heart to beat."

VOICES OF BIRDS.

“RURAL sounds,—the voices, the language, of the wild creatures, as heard by the naturalist,—belong to, and are in concord with, the country only. Our sight, our smell, may perhaps be deceived for an interval by conservatories, horticultural arts, and bowers of sweets; but our hearing can in no way be beguiled by any semblance of what is heard in the grove or the field. The hum, the murmur, the medley of the mead, are peculiarly its own, admit of no imitation, and distinctly notify the various periods of the year, with an accuracy as certain as they are detailed in our calendars. The season of spring is always announced as approaching by the notes of the rookery, by the jangle or wooing accents of the dark frequenters of its trees; and that time having passed away, these contentions and cadences are no longer heard.

The cuckoo then comes, and informs us that Spring has arrived,—that he has journeyed to us, borne by gentle gales, in sunny days,—that fragrant flowers are in the copse and the mead, and all things telling of gratulation and of joy. The children mark this well known sound, spring out, and “cuckoo! cuckoo!” as they gambol down the lane. The very ploughboy bids him welcome in the early morn. It is hardly spring without the cuckoo’s song; and having told his tale, he has voice for no more—is silent or away.

“Then comes the dark, swift-winged martin, glancing through the air, that seems afraid to visit our uncertain clime; he comes, though late, and hurries through his business here, eager again to depart, all day long in agitation and precipitate flight. The bland zephyrs of the spring have no charms with them, but, basking and careering in the sultry gleams of June and July, they associate in throngs, and, screaming, dash round the steeple, or the ruined tower, to serenade their nesting mates; and glare and heat are in their train. When the fervour of summer ceases, this bird of the sun will depart. The evening robin, from the summit of some leafless

bough, or projecting point, tells us that autumn is come, and brings matured fruits, chilly airs, and sober hours ; and he, the lonely minstrel now that sings, is understood by all. These four birds thus indicate a separate season, have no interference with the intelligence of the others, nor could they be transposed without the loss of all the meaning they convey, which no contrivance of art could supply ; and, by long association, they have become identified with the period, and in peculiar accordance with the time.

“ We note birds in general more from their voices than their plumage, for the carols of spring may be heard involuntarily ; but to observe the form and decoration of these creatures requires an attention not always given.

“ Yet we have some native birds beautifully and conspicuously feathered,—the goldfinch, the chaffinch, the wagtails, are all eminently adorned, and the fine gradations of sober browns in several others are very pleasing. Those sweet sounds called the song of birds proceed only from the male, and, with a few exceptions, only during the season of incubation. Hence the comparative quietness of our summer

months, when this care is over, except from accidental causes, where a second nest is formed, few of our birds bringing up more than one brood in a season. The redbreast, blackbird, and thrush, in mild winters, may continually be heard, and form exceptions to the general procedure of our British birds; and we have one little bird, the wood-lark, (*alauda arborea*,) that, in the early parts of the autumnal months, delights us with its harmony, and its carols may be heard in the air commonly during the calm sunny mornings of this season. They have a softness and quietness perfectly in unison with the sober, almost melancholy, stillness of the hour. The sky-lark also sings now, and its song is very sweet, full of harmony, cheerful as the blue sky and gladdening beam in which it circles and sports, and known and admired by all; but the voice of the wood-lark is local, not so generally heard, from its softness must almost be listened for to be distinguished, and has not any pretensions to the hilarity of the former. This little bird sings likewise in the spring; but at that season the contending songsters of the grove, and the variety of sound proceeding from everything that has utterance, confuse, and almost render inaudible, the placid

voice of the wood-lark. It delights to fix its residence near little groves and copses, or quiet pastures, and is a very unobtrusive bird, not uniting in companies, but associating in its own little family parties only, feeding in the woodlands on seeds and insects. Upon the approach of man, it crouches close to the ground, then suddenly darts away, as if for a distant flight, but settles again almost immediately.

“ This lark will often continue its song, circle in the air, a scarcely visible speck, by the hour together; and the vast distance from which its voice reaches us in a calm day is almost incredible. In the scale of comparison, it stands immediately below the nightingale in melody and plaintiveness; but compass of voice is given to the linnet, a bird of very inferior powers.

“ The strength of the larynx, and of the muscles of the throat, in birds, is infinitely greater than in the human race. The loudest shout of the peasant is but a feeble cry compared with that of the golden-eyed duck, the wild goose, or even this lark. The sweet song of this poor little bird, with a fate like that of the nightingale, renders it an object of capture and confinement, which few of them, comparatively,

survive. I have known our country bird-catchers take them by a very simple but effectual method. Watching them to the ground, the wings of a hawk, or of the brown owl, stretched out, are drawn against the current of air by a string, as a paper kite, and made to flutter and vibrate like a kestrel over the place where the wood-lark has lodged, and so intimidates the bird, that it remains crouching and motionless as a stone on the ground; a hand net is brought over it, and it is caught.

“ From various little scraps of intelligence scattered through the sacred and ancient writings, it appears certain, as it was reasonable to conclude, that the notes now used by birds, and the voices of animals, are the same as uttered by their earliest progenitors. The language of man, without any reference to the confusion accomplished at Babel, has been broken into innumerable dialects, created or confounded as his wants occurred, or his ideas prompted, or obtained by intercourse with others, as mental enlargement or novelty necessitated new words to express new sentiments. Could we find a people from Japan, or the Pole, whose progress in mind has been stationary, without increase of idea, from national pre-

judice or impossibility of communication with others, we probably should find little or no alteration in the original language of that people; so, by analogy of reasoning, the animal having no idea to prompt, no new want to express, no converse with others, (for a note caught, and uttered merely, is like a boy mocking the cuckoo,) so no new language is acquired. With civilized man, everything is progressive; with animals, where there is no mind, all is stationary. Even the voice of one species of birds, except in particular cases, seems not to be attended to by another species. That peculiar call of the female cuckoo which assembles so many contending lovers, and all the various amatorial and caressing language of others, excites no influence generally, that I am aware of; with all but the individual species it is a dialect unknown. I know but one note which animals make use of, that seems of universal comprehension, and this is, the signal of danger. The instant that it is uttered, we hear the whole flock, though composed of various species, repeat a separate moan, and away they all scuttle into the bushes for safety. The reiterated *twink, twink*, of the chaffinch, is known by every little bird as information of some prowling cat or weasel.

Some give the maternal hush to their young, and mount to inquire into the jeopardy announced. The wren, that tells of perils from the hedge, soon collects about her all the various inquisitive species within hearing, to survey and ascertain the object, and add their separate fears. The swallow, that, shrieking, darts in devious flight through the air when a hawk appears, not only calls up all the hirundines of the village, but is instantly understood by every finch and sparrow, and its warning attended to. As Nature, in all her ordinations, had a fixed design and foreknowledge, it may be that each species had a separate voice assigned it, that each might continue as created, distinct and unmixed; and the very few deviations and admixtures that have taken place, considering the lapse of time, association, and opportunity, united with the prohibition of continuing accidental deviations, are very remarkable, and indicate a cause and original motive. That some of the notes of birds are, as language, designed to convey a meaning, is obvious, from the very different sounds uttered by these creatures at particular periods. The spring voices become changed as summer advances, and the requirements of the early season have ceased;

the summer excitements, monitions, informations, are not needed in autumn, and the notes conveying such intelligences are no longer heard. The periodical calls of animals, croaking of frogs, &c., afford the same reasons for concluding that the sound of their voices, by elevation, depression, or modulation, conveys intelligence equivalent to an uttered sentence. The voices of birds seem applicable, in most instances, to the immediate necessities of their condition; such as the sexual call, the invitation to unite when dispersed, the moan of danger, the shriek of alarm, the notice of food. But there are other notes, the designs and motives of which are not so obvious. One sex only is gifted with the power of singing,—for the purpose, as Buffon supposed, of cheering his mate during the period of incubation; but this idea, gallant as it is, has such slight foundation in probability, that it needs no confutation; and after all, perhaps, we must conclude that, listened to, admired, and pleasing as the voices of many birds are, either for their intrinsic melody or from association, we are uncertain what they express, or the object of their song. The singing of most birds seems entirely a spontaneous effusion, produced by no exertion, or

occasioning no lassitude in muscle, or relaxation of the parts of action. In certain seasons and weather, the nightingale sings all day, and most part of the night; and we never observe that the powers of song are weaker, or that the notes become harsh and untunable, after all these hours of practice. The song-thrush, in a mild, moist April, will commence his tune early in the morning, pipe unceasingly through the day, yet, at the close of eve, when he retires to rest, there is no obvious decay of his musical powers, or any sensible effort required to continue his harmony to the last. Birds of one species sing in general very like each other, with different degrees of execution. Some countries may produce finer songsters, but without great variation in the notes. In the thrush, however, it is remarkable, that there seems to be no regular notes, each individual piping a voluntary of his own. Their voices may always be distinguished amid the choristers of the copse; yet some one performer will more particularly engage attention by a peculiar modulation, or tune; and should several stations of these birds be visited in the same morning, few or none probably will be found to preserve the same round of notes, whatever

is uttered seeming the effusion of the moment. At times a strain will break out perfectly unlike any preceding utterance, and we may wait a long time without noticing any repetition of it. During one spring, an individual song-thrush, frequenting a favourite copse, after a certain round of time, trilled out most regularly some notes that conveyed so clearly the words, *lady-bird! lady-bird!* that every one remarked the resemblance. He survived the winter, and in the ensuing season the *lady-bird! lady-bird!* was still the burden of our evening song; it then ceased, and we never heard this pretty modulation more. Though merely an occasional strain, yet I have noticed it elsewhere; it thus appearing to be a favourite utterance. Harsh, strained, and tense, as the notes of this bird are, yet they are pleasing from their variety. The voice of the blackbird is infinitely more mellow, but has much less variety, compass, or execution; and he, too, commences his carols with the morning light, persevering from hour to hour without effort or any sensible faltering of voice. The cuckoo wearies us throughout some long May morning with the unceasing monotony of its song; and though there are others as vociferous, yet

it is the only bird I know that seems to suffer from the use of the organs of voice. Little exertion as the few notes it makes use of seem to require, yet, by the middle or end of June, it loses its utterance, becomes hoarse, and ceases from any further essay of it. The croaking of the nightingale, in June, or end of May, is not apparently occasioned by the loss of voice, but a change of note—a change of object; his song ceases when his mate has hatched her brood; vigilance, anxiety, caution, now succeed to harmony, and his croak is the hush, the warning of danger or suspicion to the infant charge and the mother bird.

“ But here I must close my notes of birds, lest their actions and their ways, so various and so pleasing, should lure me on to protract

‘ My tedious tale through many a page;’

for I have always been an admirer of these elegant creatures, their notes, their nests, their eggs, and all the economy of their lives; nor have we throughout the orders of creation any beings that so continually engage our attention as these our feathered companions. Winter takes from us all the gay world of the meads, the sylphs that hover over our flowers,

that steal our sweets, that creep, or gently wing their way in glittering splendor around us; and of all the miraculous creatures that sported their hour in the sunny beam, the winter gnat (*tipula hiemalis*) alone remains to frolic in some rare and partial gleam.

The myriads of the pool are dormant, or hidden from our sight; the quadrupeds, few and wary, veil their actions in the glooms of night, and we see little of them; but birds are with us always, they give a character to spring, and are identified with it; they enchant and amuse us all summer long with sports, animation, hilarity, and glee; they cluster round us, suppliant in the winter of our year, and, unrepining through cold and want, seek their scanty meal amidst the refuse of the barn, the stalls of the cattle, or at the doors of our house; or flitting hungry from one denuded and bare spray to another, excite our pity and regard. Their lives are patterns of gaiety, cleanliness, alacrity, and joy."

After having perused the above remarks, by one of our most admired popular writers, who is there but will admit that there is a "Language of Birds"?

HYMN.

The God of nature and of grace
In all his works appears ;
His goodness through the earth we trace
His grandeur in the spheres.

Behold this fair and fertile globe,
By him in wisdom planned ;
'Twas he who girded, like a robe,
The ocean round the land.

Lift to the firmament your eye,
Thither his path pursue ;
His glory, boundless as the sky,
O'erwhelms the wond'ring view.

Here on the hills he feeds his herds,
His flocks on yonder plains ;
His praise is warbled by the birds,—
Oh, could we catch their strains !

Mount with the lark, and bear our song
Up to the gates of light ;
Or, with the nightingale, prolong
Our numbers through the night.

His blessings fall in plenteous showers,
Upon the lap of earth,
That teems with foliage, fruit, and flowers
And rings with infant mirth.

MONTGOMERY.

SPRING.

The spring comes forth with sun and song,
O'er mountain and o'er main,
The woodland choristers once more
Awake their joyful strain.
The sky puts on its clearest blue—
The earth her green array,
And ocean smiles around his isles,
On nature's bridal day.

How soft the vernal airs breathe forth
Above the awakening earth ;
Along our path the wild flowers sweet
Are blushing into birth.

And, but for some pale saddening shrine,
The scene so bright and fair,
Would make the fond heart half forget
That ruin had been there !

The cuckoo hails the path of spring,
The silent vale along ;
And pours, amid the hush of eve,
Her far and fitful song.
The hermit nightingale sits lone,
Amid the leafy bowers,
And 'plains to list'ning groves,
At twilight's pale and starry hours.

The music of the grove and stream,
The torrent's distant fall,
That soothed the wand'ring of my youth,
Its glowing dreams recal.
Its hopes, like blossoms of the sky,
That sprung in early hours ;
Too fair to last, and sadly changed
To memory's faded flowers.

Its sweetness vanish'd from the scene
Like odour on the wind ;
Or dying melody, that leaves
But sorrow's dream behind.
And beauty, all too bright for earth,
And love that would not stay ;
A charm with life's delightful spring,
That came and passed away.

The dove that wander'd from the ark,
Above a boundless main ;
No sweet green spot of rest could see,
And soon return'd again.
Youth, love, and spring, thus find on earth
No home where they may dwell ;
On angel-wings they come and go,
Bid welcome and farewell.

JOHN MALCOLM.

BIRDS.

Say who the various nations can declare,
That plough with busy wing the peopled air?
These clear the crumbling bark for insect food;
Those dip their crooked beak in kindred blood;
Some haunt the rushy moor, the lonely woods;
Some bathe their silver plumage in the floods;
Some fly to man, his household t'implore
And gather round his hospitable door,
Wait the known call, and find protection there,
From all the lesser tyrants of the air;
The tawny eagle seats his callow brood
High in the cliff, and feasts his young with blood
On Snowden's rocks, or Orkney's wide domain,
Whose beetling cliffs o'erhang the western main;
The royal bird his lonely kingdom forms,
Amidst the gathering clouds, and sullen storms;
Through the wide waste of air he darts his sight,
And holds his sounding pinions poised for flight;
With cruel eye premeditates the war,
And marks his destin'd victim from afar;
Descending in a whirlwind to the ground,
His pinions like the rush of waters sound;

The fairest of the fold he bears away,
And to his nest compels the struggling prey ;
He scorns the game by meaner hunters tore,
And dips his talons in no vulgar gore.
With lovelier pomp, along the grassy plain
The silver pheasant draws his shining train ;
On Asia's myrtle shores, by Phasis' stream,
He spreads his plumage to the sunny gleam ;
But when the wiry net his flight confines,
He lowers his purple crest, and inly pines ;
The beauteous captive hangs his ruffled wing,
Opprest by bondage and our chilly spring.
To claim the verse unnumbered tribes appear,
That swell the music of the vernal year ;
Seized with the spirit of the kindly May,
They seek the glossy wing, and tune the lay ;
With emulative strife the notes prolong,
And pour out all their little souls in song.
When winter bites upon the naked plain,
Nor food, nor shelter, in the groves remain,
By instinct led, a firm united band,
As marshalled by some skilful general's hand,
The congregated nations wing their way
In dusky columns o'er the trackless sea ;

In clouds unnumber'd annual hover o'er
The craggy Bass, or Kilda's utmost shore ;
Thence spread their sails to meet the southern wind,
And leave the gathering tempest far behind ;
Pursue the circling sun's indulgent ray,
Course the swift seasons, and o'ertake the day.

BARBAULD.

BIRDS' NESTS.

Spring is abroad ! the cuckoo's note
Floats o'er the flowery lea ;
Yet nothing of the mighty sea
Her welcome tones import ;
Nothing of lands where she has been,
Of fortunes she has known ;
The joy of this remember'd scene
Breathes in her song alone.
No traveller she, whose vaunting boast
Tells of each fair but far-off coast ;
She talks not here of eastern skies,
But of home and its pleasant memories.

Spring is abroad ! a thousand more
Sweet voices are around,
Which yesterday a farewell sound
Gave to some foreign shore ;
I know not where—it matters not ;
To-day their thoughts are bent,
To pitch, in some sequester'd spot,
Their secret summer tent ;
Hid from the glance of urchins' eyes,
Peering already for the prize ;
While daily, hourly intervene
The clustering leaves, a closer screen.

In bank, in bush, in hollow hole,
High on the rocking tree,
On the gray cliffs, that haughtily
The ocean waves control ;
Far in the solitary fen,
On heath, and mountain hoar,
Beyond the foot or fear of men,
Or by the cottage door ;
In grassy tuft, in ivy'd tower,
Where'er directs the instinctive power,

Or loves each jocund pair to dwell,
Is built the cone, or feathery cell.

Beautiful things ! than I, no boy
Your traces may discern,
Sparkling beneath the forest fern
With livelier sense of joy :
I would not bear them from the nest,
To leave fond hearts regretting,
But, like the soul screen'd in the breast,
Like gems in beauteous setting,
Amidst Spring's leafy, green array,
I deem them ; and from day to day,
Passing, I pause, to turn aside,
With joy, the boughs where they abide.

The mysteries of life's early day
Lay thick as summer dew,
Like it, they glitter'd and they flew
With ardent youth away ;
But not a charm of yours has faded,
Ye are full of marvel still.

Now jewels cold, and now pervaded
With heavenly fire ye thrill,
And kindle into life, and bear
Beauty and music through the air ;
The embryos of a shell to-day ;
To-morrow, and—away ! away !

Methinks, even as I gaze, there springs
Life from each tinted cone ;
And wandering thought has onward flown
With speed-careering wings,
To lands, to summer lands afar,
To the mangrove, and the palm ;
To the region of each stranger star
Led by a blissful charm :
Like toys in beauty here they lay—
They are gone o'er the sounding ocean's spray ;
They are gone to bowers and skies more fair,
And have left us to our march of care.

W. HOWITT.

THE NOTES OF THE BIRDS.

Well do I love those various harmonies
That ring so gaily in spring's budding woods,
And in the thickets of green quiet haunts,
And lonely copses of the summer's ancient solitudes.

If thou art pained with the world's noisy stir,
Or crazed with its mad tumults, and weighed down
With any of the ills of human life ;
If thou art sick, and weak, or mournest at the loss
Of brethren gone to that far distant land
To which we all do pass, gentle and poor,
The gayest and the gravest, all alike—
Then turn into the peaceful woods, and hear
The thrilling music of the forest birds.

How rich the varied choir ! The unquiet finch
Calls from the distant hollows, and the wren
Uttereth her sweet and mellow plaint at times,
And the thrush mourneth where the kalmia hangs
Its crimson-spotted cups, or chirps, half hid,
Amid the lowly dog-wood's snowy flowers,

And the blue jay flits by, from tree to tree,
And, spreading its rich pinions, fills the ear
With its shrill-sounding and unsteady cry.

With the sweet airs of spring, the robin comes ;
And in her simple song there seems to gush
A strain of sorrow when she visiteth
Her last year's withered nest. But when the gloom
Of the deep twilight falls, she takes her perch
Upon the red-stemmed hazel's slender twig
That overhangs the brook, and suits her song
To the slow rivulet's inconstant chime.

In the last days of Autumn, when the corn
Lies sweet and yellow in the harvest field,
And the gay company of reapers bind
The bearded wheat in sheaves,—then peals abroad
The blackbird's merry chant. I love to hear,
Bold plunderer, thy mellow burst of song
Float from thy watch-place on the mossy tree,
Close at the corn-field edge.
Far up some brook's still course, whose current mines
The forest's blackened roots, and whose green marge
Is seldom visited by human foot,

The lonely heron sits, and harshly breaks
The sabbath silence of the wilderness ;
And you may find her by some reedy pool,
Or brooding gloomily on the time-stained rock,
Beside some misty and far-reaching lake.

Most awful is thy deep and heavy boom,
Grey watcher of the waters ! Thou art king
Of the blue lake ; and all the winged kind
Do fear the echo of thy angry cry.
How bright thy savage eye ! Thou lookest down
And seest the shining fishes as they glide ;
And, poisoning thy grey wing, thy glossy beak,
Swift as an arrow, strikes its roving prey.
Ofttimes I see thee, through the curling mist,
Dart like a spectre of the night, and hear
Thy strange bewildering call, like the wild scream
Of one whose life is perishing in the sea.
And now wouldst thou, O man, delight the ear
With earth's delicious sounds, or charm the eye
With beautiful creations ? Then pass forth,
And find them midst those many-coloured birds
That fill the glowing woods. The richest hues

Lie in their splendid plumage, and their tones
Are sweeter than the music of the lute,
Or the harp's melody, or the notes that gush
So thrillingly from beauty's ruby lip.

S. McLELLAN, JUN., *American Poet.*

SUMMER.

The flow'ry May, who from her green lap throws
The yellow cowslip, and the pale primrose ;
See Nature hastes her earliest wreaths to bring,
With all the incense of the breathing spring.
In that soft season, when descending show'rs
Call forth the greens, and wake the rising flow'rs ;
When op'ning buds salute the welcome day,
And earth, relenting, feels the genial ray ;
The beauteous landscape, ravishingly gay,
With love and joy, inspires the tender lay ;
In sweet confusion, Nature's charms appear,
With ev'ry glory of the smiling year ;
Hear how the birds, on ev'ry bloomy spray,
With joyous music wake the dawning day.

Why sit we mute, when early linnets sing,
When warbling Philomel salutes the spring?
Then sing by turns, by turns the Muses sing.
Now hawthorns blossom, now the daisies spring ;
Now leaves the trees, and flow'rs adorn the ground ;
Begin ; the vales shall echo to the sound.
But when you sing the greens and op'ning glades,
And give us harmony as well as shades ;
A Titian's hand might draw the grove, but you
Can paint the grove and add the music too.

G O L D F I N C H.

Fringilla Carduellis.

“Nay, we’ll have music; let that sweet breath, at least,
Give us her airy welcome.”

WHEN all are lovely and interesting, how difficult it is to fix one’s choice! How often have I seen ladies who have gone to the green-houses and nursery-gardens expressly for the purpose of selecting plants to adorn their balconies and conservatories, but, when there, unable to determine which to select, among the numerous sweets and beauties that surrounded them! thus do I feel at a loss which of the feathered race to present first to the notice of my readers; but the goldfinch having been, from my earliest infancy, my most especial favourite, (owing to my frequently reading Cowper’s beautiful lines to that

bird,) I beg leave to introduce *him* first, and to solicit for him a favourable reception. He is universally esteemed for the melody of his song, the beauty of his plumage, and for his being easily tamed; he is of a mild and social nature, and capable of learning numerous amusing tricks. A friend of mine has one of those beautiful little songsters, which turns a wooden key in a box that contains his seeds, lifts up the lid to feed, and, after having satisfied himself, shuts down the lid again, and turns the key. I remember, several years ago, seeing some goldfinches that were exhibited for their wonderful performances; one of them would lay in any person's hand, without motion, apparently quite dead, allowing itself to be held up by the wing or leg without shewing any signs of life. Another performed the part of a cannonier, and, with a match in its claw, discharged a small cannon, while another fell down, as if wounded, and was carried away by the assistance of others. To many persons, the wonderful performances of these little creatures afford much amusement; but, for my own part, I cannot derive any pleasure from such unnatural exploits; it never was designed by the Almighty that those

sweet warblers should undergo the discipline requisite to teach them such performances.

It appears to me sinning against the designs of Nature. Birds, in the place assigned them by their Maker, I consider the most beautiful of God's creatures; and to torment them for the sake of gain is unpardonable.

I have seen large flocks of these interesting songsters in the fields about Battersea, feasting on the seed of the thistle, which is their favourite food.

The nest of the goldfinch is beautifully neat, and even elegantly interwoven; the outside composed of moss and lichen, and lined with hair, wool, the down of the thistle, and the pappus of the willow.

I much doubt if any human ingenuity could construct anything to compare with the nest of this bird, which is generally built in a fruit tree, and contains four or five eggs.

It wins my admiration

To view the structure of that little work,

A bird's nest. Mark it well, within, without;

No tool had he that wrought, no knife to cut,

No nail to fix, no bodkin to insert,

No glue to join ; his little *beak* was all,
And yet how neatly finished ! What nice hand,
With every implement and means of art,
And twenty years' apprenticeship to boot,
Could make me such another ? Fondly, then,
We boast of excellence, whose noblest skill
Instinctive genius foils.

ANON.

Cowper's beautiful description of the faithful bird may perhaps be thought an exaggeration, and only the offspring of that poet's fertile imagination ; but I believe the goldfinch to be capable of the strongest attachment to its companion, as well as to the person who feeds and attends to all its little wants ; which, perhaps, the following circumstance, as related to me by a friend, may help to prove :—

“ In the autumn of the last year, whenever there happened to be a fine warm day, I used to hang a cage, with my favourite bird, against the garden wall ; for several days, successively, I observed another bird to come and perch upon the top of the cage, and chirp and flutter its golden wings, as if it were endeavouring to persuade the little captive to make its escape. One day I had put him into another

cage, for the purpose of thoroughly cleaning out the one he had been in, and, after having done so, hung it out in the garden. The stranger bird came as usual, but, finding the cage empty, flew away again. For several days following, he paid his accustomed visit to the cage; and one day, the door having by some accident come open, I saw him very deliberately go in, and regale himself with the seeds. The next day he repeated his visit, when I shut the door upon him; at first he did not seem much to like his confinement, but upon my putting him in a large cage, with his acquaintance, he appeared to be perfectly satisfied and reconciled to his captivity, and sung most delightfully. About three months after, having one day opened the cage door, to give them some water to wash with, (which I observe so many small birds delight in,) my gentleman made his escape; the window being open, he flew out, and perched upon a pear tree in the garden, where he immediately commenced his sweetest song. I used every means to entice him back, but without effect; his companion in the cage seemed to lament him much,—would scarcely eat, and ceased to sing,—when, on the third day from the other bird's escaping, the window of the room where I keep my little favourites being

open, I was agreeably surprised by seeing him fly in, and perch upon the cage that contained his companion. It is impossible to describe the delight the little creature inside seemed to evince at the return of his companion, who, on my opening the door, very quietly hopped in, appearing quite at home. Several times since, I have left the door open, taking care to have the windows closed, but he has never since attempted to regain his liberty. The attachment of this bird is the more extraordinary, as they are both cocks."

It has forcibly recalled to my remembrance my favourite lines from Cowper, which are almost appropriate to the above circumstance ; I hope, therefore, they will be acceptable to the reader, although they are most likely familiar to many persons.

THE GOLDFINCHES.

The green-house is my summer seat ;
My shrubs, displaced from that retreat,
 Enjoy'd the open air ;
Two goldfinches, whose sprightly song
Had been their mutual solace long,
 Liv'd happy prisoners there.

They sang as blythe as finches sing,
That flutter loose on golden wing,
 And frolic where they list ;
Strangers to liberty, 'tis true,
But that delight they never knew,
 And therefore never miss'd.

But nature works in every breast
With force not easily suppress'd,
 And Dick felt some desires ;
Which, after many an effort vain,
Instructed him, at length, to gain
 A pass between the wires.

The open windows seem'd to invite
The freeman to a farewell flight,
 But Tom was still confined ;
And Dick, although his way was clear,
Was much too generous and sincere
 To leave his friend behind.

So, settling on his cage, by play,
And chirp, and kiss, he seemed to say,
 You must not live alone ;

Nor would he quit that chosen stand,
Till I, with slow and cautious hand,
Return'd him to his own.

And again, where he condemns the unpardonable cruelty of first confining, and then neglecting, these interesting little creatures—

Time was, when I was free as air,
The thistle's downy seed my fare,
My drink the morning dew.
I perch'd at will on ev'ry spray,
My form genteel, my plumage gay,
My strains for ever new.

But gaudy plumage, sprightly strain,
And form genteel, were all in vain,
And of a transient date ;
For, caught and cag'd, and starv'd to death,
In dying sighs my little breath
Soon pass'd the wiry grate.

Thanks, gentle swain, for all my woes,
And thanks for this effectual close,
And cure of ev'ry ill !

More cruelty could none express ;
And I, if you had shewn me less,
Had been your captive still.

A person of my acquaintance professes to be particularly partial to birds ; but I have often seen their cages dirty, their water-glass dry, and their seed-drawer empty. This, sure, is the extreme of cruelty ; and, as those poor prisoners cannot provide for their own wants, it is the least return we can make, for the pleasure we derive from their melody, to contribute all in our power to soften the pangs of captivity by kind treatment.

Dr. Bechstein observes of this sweet songster, “ It is a very beautiful, lively, active bird, always in motion, and turning continually to the right and left.

“ Its agreeable song, which is only discontinued during moulting, is a mixture of tones and harmonies, more or less dwelt upon ; and the oftener the sound ‘ *fink* ’ is introduced, the more it is admired amongst us.

“ There are some goldfinches that utter it only once or twice in their strains, whilst others will repeat it four or five times following. This species learn with

difficulty to repeat airs from the flageolet, or other bird's songs, and in this respect is inferior to canaries and linnets; but it is remarkable for its docility. Goldfinches have been seen to let off a small cannon, and imitate death. When properly instructed, they will draw up their food and water. They are taught this by means of a miniature chain or pulley, furnished with a soft leather band, pierced with holes, through which the feet are to be placed."

THE GOLDFINCH.

But mark the pretty bird himself! how light
And quick his every motion, every note!
How beautiful his plumes! his red-ringed head;
His breast of brown; and see him stretch his wing,—
A fairy fan of golden spokes it seems;
Oft on the thistle's tuft, he, nibbling, sits,
Light as the down; then, 'mid a flight of downs,
He wings his way, piping his shrillest call.

GRAHAME.

"I have seen, also, (continues this experienced writer,) goldfinches and siskens placed in different cages that have little bells fixed to the seed-drawer in such a way that the bird cannot take its food

without ringing them ; the bells being harmonised, tolerably agreeable chimes are produced."

Wilson tells us that the goldfinch has been seen by Mr. McKenzie, in his route across the continent of North America, as far north as lat. 54°; and adds, "They are numerous in all the Atlantic States north of the Carolinas ; abound in Mexico ; and are also found in great numbers in the savannahs of Guiana." Wilson adds, "The male of this species is one of the loudest and most delightful of the songsters that frequent the fur countries, beginning his chant immediately on his arrival." Dr. Richardson remarks, with great beauty and feeling, "His notes resemble those of the common thrush, but are not so loud. Within the arctic circle, the woods are silent in the bright light of noon-day, but towards midnight, when the sun travels near the horizon, and the shades of the forest are lengthened, the concert commences, and continues till six or seven in the morning." It was observed by Buffon, that "Softness of voice, quickness of instinct, remarkable cleverness, proved docility, tender affection, are all united in this delightful little bird ; and if it were rare, or if it came from a foreign country, it would then be valued as it deserves."

Many of the motions and actions of this lively bird certainly savour of foppishness ; therefore he may be a fit emblem of some of our fashionable dandies.

The gaudy goldfinch, of his plumage proud,
Mimicks the beau,—gay, flutt'ring, vain and loud ;
Round his coquet, the foppish mimick flies,
Turns on his heel, and ev'ry gesture tries.

PAINTED BUNTING.

Emberiza-ciris.

THERE are few birds of more striking beauty than the male of this species, when arrived at its full splendour of plumage, which is not till the fourth season. It is an inhabitant of all the warmer parts of America, extending from Mexico and Peru as far as Canada.

This splendid little bird is about the size of our sparrow, and is one of the most numerous of the summer birds of Lower Louisiana, and is called by the French inhabitants, "le pape," and by the Americans, the "nonpareil." The favourite haunts of this beautiful warbler are said to be the low countries of the southern states, in the vicinity of the sea, along the borders of large rivers, and particularly among the rice plantations; they do not appear of a shy or timid disposition, which, added to their gay attire and docility of manners, cause them to be

generally domesticated among the feathered favourites of the French inhabitants of New Orleans. The negroes make a traffic of them, carrying great numbers to market for sale; these have been taken in the neighbouring plantations, and are easily tamed; and it is supposed, that were the same attention paid to these lovely birds as there is to the canary, there is but little doubt they would breed with equal facility, and become equally numerous throughout Europe. Their nests are generally built in orange hedges, sometimes on the lower branches of the orange tree, and they have been found even on the common bramble-bush. These nests are composed of dry grass, interwoven with the silk of caterpillars, lined with hair, over which, a second lining of the soft fine roots of plants is neatly attached, making beautiful warm habitations for the forthcoming little families that are to occupy them. The hen lays four or five eggs, and it is supposed has two broods in the year.

The celebrated naturalist, Marmaduke Tunstall, Esq., makes mention of these birds in his time, as having been brought to this country, and that two pairs of them had made their nests, and laid their

eggs in the orange trees of a menagerie at Holderness, Yorkshire ; but adds, that the eggs proved unproductive. I have seen a splendid pair that a naval friend brought from Bayo Fourche, as a present to a lady who devoted much of her time to the study and comforts of the feathered race ; they were placed in her conservatory amongst her choice exotics, and although every care was bestowed upon them, they lived but a very short time.

In noticing this *nonpareil*, Wilson observes, “ Six of these birds which I brought with me from New Orleans by sea, soon became reconciled to the cage. In good weather, the males sung with great sprightliness, though they had been caught only a few days before my departure. They were greedily fond of flies, which accompanied us in great numbers during the whole voyage ; and many of the passengers amused themselves with catching these, and giving them to the nonpareils ; till, at length, the birds became so well acquainted with this amusement, that as soon as they perceived any of the people attempting to catch flies, they assembled at the front of the cage, stretching out their heads through the wires with eager expectation, evidently much interested in

the issue of their efforts." Could these splendid little birds be naturalized to our climate, what a gay appearance would they make in our hedge rows! though, being extremely susceptible of cold, they seem more adapted for the house; and although they cannot vie with either our linnet or goldfinch in musical powers, their song being only a little simple warbling, still their note is pleasing, and from their interesting little actions and gay plumage, they would always have many admirers. In their native haunts, their food consists of rice, insects, and various kinds of seeds; they are also fond of the internal grains or seeds of the ripe fig. Beckstein remarks, "English and Dutch sailors take home many of these birds, and it is has been said, that in England they have succeeded in making them breed in aviaries in gardens spacious enough to contain orange trees, on which they have constructed their nests. When in a cage, they are fed on millet, canary-seed, endive, and poppy-seed, on which they may be preserved from eight to ten years."

With the following observations of one who wrote as he felt, I will conclude my notice of this "pape," of the French, the "nonpareil" of the Americans,

and the second subject in my frontispiece :—“ I cannot but think that an intercourse with these little innocent warblers is favourable to delicacy of feeling and sentiments of humanity ; for I have observed the rudest savage softened into benevolence while contemplating the interesting manners of these inoffensive little creatures.”

THE THRUSH.

Turdus-Musicus.

SING on, sweet thrush, upon the leafless bough,
Sing on, sweet bird—I listen to the strain;
See aged Winter, 'mid his surly reign,
At thy bright carol, clears his furrow'd brow.

So, in lone Poverty's dominion drear,
Sits meek Content, with light unanxious heart,
Welcome the rapid moments, bids them part,
Nor asks if they bring aught to hope or fear.

I thank thee, Author of this opening day,
Thou whose bright sun now gilds yon orient skies;
Riches denied, thy boon was purer joys,
What wealth could never give nor take away.

Yet come, thou child of poverty and care,
The mite high Heaven bestows, that mite with thee
I'll share.

BURNS.



THE HISTORY OF

THE

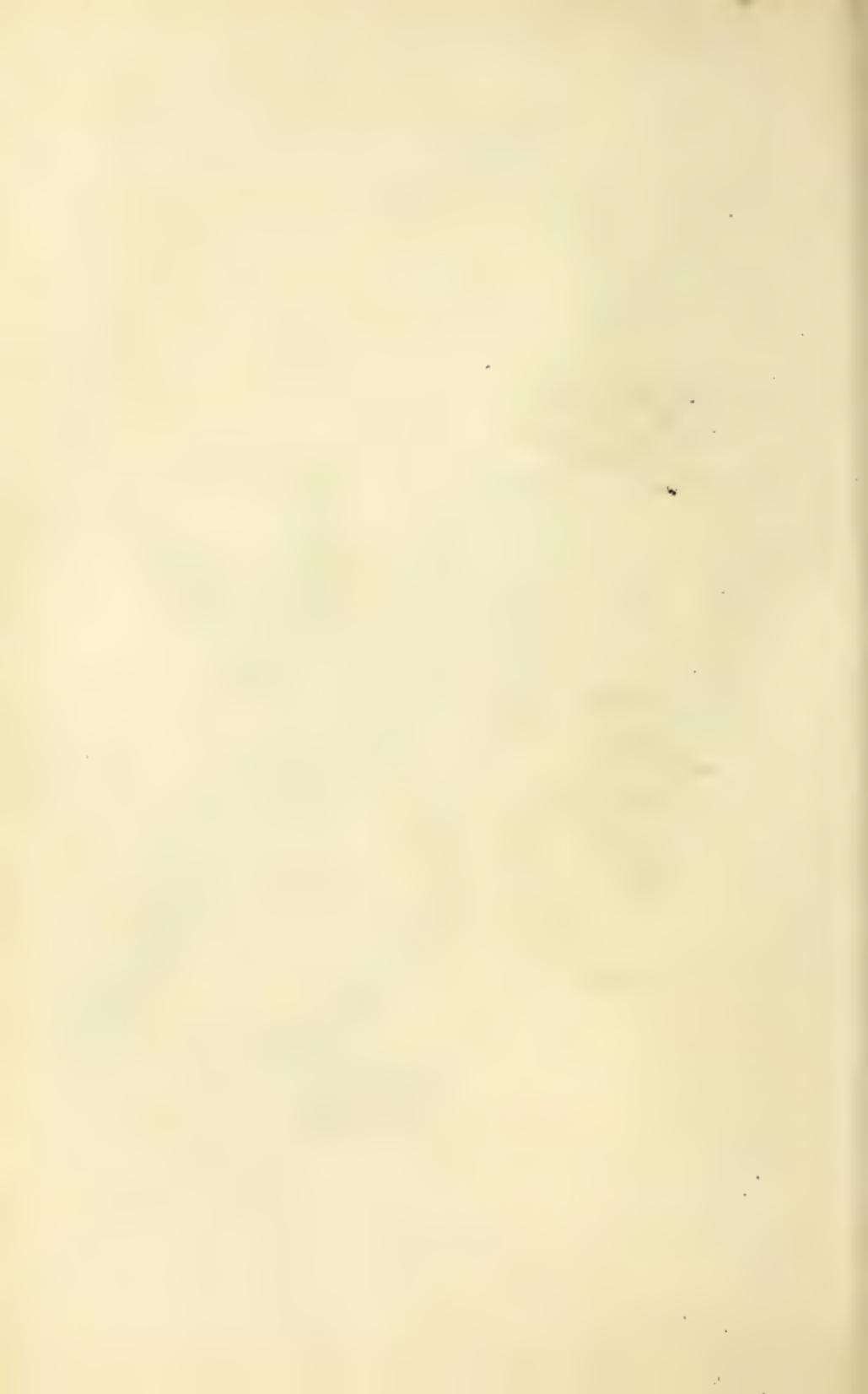
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This rival of the nightingale is found in many parts of Europe, but we may claim it as our own dear English bird, remaining with us all the year, and enlivening us with its clear melodious notes very early in the spring; and, from its singing during stormy weather, is in some places called the storm-cock. The hen usually builds in a fruit-tree, laying four or five eggs, in a nest composed of moss and leaves, lined with dry grass; and to render it more secure, it is strengthened on the outside with small twigs.

The food of the thrush consists of various berries, caterpillars, insects, and sometimes snails.

The song of the thrush is by many preferred to that of the nightingale. It has, no doubt, more clearness, richness, and variety in its notes than any other English bird.

There is a variety of the thrush called the *Turdus-viscivorus* (missel thrush), from its chiefly feeding, in the winter, on the fruit of the misseltoe; and, from its harsh, screaming, loud note, when in anger, is called in some parts of Devonshire by the name of Holmscreech.

There is also another strange variety of this bird,

which is not quite so large in the body as the former ; its length is the same, but the head is very small, and the crown nearly straight with the bill. It is called the Solitary Thrush (*turdus-solitarius*), from its being always seen alone, except in breeding-time. Its usual haunts are mountainous and rocky places, building its nest in church towers and old ruins. The hen lays from five to six eggs, and so much is it averse to society, that two nests never have been found together. The solitary thrush is common in France, Italy, the Mediterranean, and Archipelago. The young may be easily reared ; and to those persons who are fond of birds, the melody of its rich full voice amply repays them for their trouble, as the song of that bird may be considered one of our sweetest native melodies. In addition to which, they may be taught to whistle tunes, and it is even said to articulate words.

When caged, this species sings as well by candle as by day light. Like many of our fashionable folks, it changes its abode with the seasons—coming into those parts where it breeds in April, and retiring in August.

The gentleman who favoured me by sitting (or rather standing) for his picture was the common thrush—one that I had reared myself.

I have a great dislike to robbing birds of their dearly cherished offspring, and have always endeavoured to make children sensible of the cruelty of destroying either their nests or eggs; but being one day in the country, I met a little boy with a nest thrust into his hat, containing one poor, miserable, perishing, half-fledged little creature. I accosted him by asking if he were aware of his cruelty, and how would he like any great over-grown monster, to tear him from his fond mother, his indulgent father, and expose him naked to the wind and rain? (for it was then raining fast.) His reply was—“Why, *Marm*, *vive* or six on us *chaps* have agreed to *ze* who can get most *nestes*, so we takes all as we can find.” “And was there only this one in the nest you have taken?” “Noa, there *wur* three more, but Tom Snooks would get up the tree too; so you *ze* as how he said he *seed* the nest first; but I did him, for I got hold of the nest, and while he was trying to grab the young ’uns out of it, two fell into the bushes under us, and while he was looking for them, I

bolted with this here un and the nest." "And what are you going to do with it?" "To take it to *Varmer Stubbs*." "And what will Farmer Stubbs do with it?" "Give it to the cat, to be *zure*: for you zee the varmer says as how the birds eat his corn and fruit, and he is 'terminated to kill them all, and he tell we boys he will gie us a penny *vor* every nest as we takes him with young 'uns; but as Tom grabbed the other birds, I doubt he'll on'y gie I a hap'ny.' "Ask Farmer Stubbs if he would like any one to take his children away from him?" The boy replied, grinning—"He *han't* got none—he *beant* married." "So much the worse; if he were a parent he would have more feeling, and perhaps not grudge those interesting birds the small modicum they purloin from his abundance." After reprimanding the boy for the misery he had occasioned the parent birds as well as the young, he very innocently asked me if they could feel. He said he knew they felt if he hurt them, but that was not what he meant—could they feel sorry, as he sometimes did if his brother or sister were ill? After explaining to him that those little creatures were as susceptible of pleasure or pain as ourselves, I had the satisfaction of seeing that he

felt pleased and grateful for the trouble I had taken to convince him, begging me to take the poor little bird, and save it from the claws of *Varmer Stubbs's* cat.

Could I have restored the little innocent to its disconsolate parents, most gladly would I have done so ; but as that was impossible, I took it from him, brought it home, and, after some trouble and care had the pleasure of seeing my little nursling thrive amazingly ; and no creature could be more grateful for my attention, fluttering its wings, and chirping with all its might, whenever I approached him ; and, as he was left at large when he grew older, following me from room to room, and round the garden, perching on my shoulder when I sat down. It was my usual custom every morning to open the window of the room where I kept him, when he would immediately fly out, and take his station on a cherry-tree in the garden, and entertain me for hours with his sweetest notes ; but if I called him he would instantly return, and perch on my chair. When the cold weather set in, he confined himself entirely to the room ; but the following spring, he resumed his flights to the garden, returning at my call. One day,

however, I called in vain to my pet—no answer was returned ; search throughout the garden was made, but no bird was to be found ; I therefore supposed that either a hawk or cat had destroyed him, and felt his loss, and missed his cheerful song, as I sat at work, attended to my plants, or amused myself with my drawing ; and began almost to wish I had left him to Farmer Stubbs's cat ; when one day the servant entered, delighted, to tell me he had discovered my lost favourite. Having gone by accident to a shop in the village, he heard the well-known call of my poor bird, but in a dismal tone ; and, looking through the pane of glass in the door between the shop and parlour, there he saw him, a prisoner in a cage. He instantly claimed the bird, told the people how it had escaped, but they refused to give him up, alleging they had had it for a long time. Upon hearing this, I instantly repaired to the place, as the man was confident he was correct in his statement ; but they persisted it was their own bird. I gave the accustomed call, which was answered repeatedly, and louder than ever he had done before, and I could hear him flapping his wings against the cage, endeavouring to get out. I asked, as a satisfaction, to be

allowed to see *their* bird, which they granted with much reluctance; but the actual screaming of the little creature, and the delight he evinced at seeing me, put it out of their power to detain him any longer. I returned, therefore, triumphantly bearing off my prize, which I took care, however, to restrict from his garden rambles, though I have never confined him in a cage.

This, I think, must prove that birds are capable of attachment to those that rear them.

How beautifully descriptive are the following lines by Mrs. Smith in her

ODE TO THE MISSEL THRUSH.

The winter solstice scarce is past,
Loud is the wind, and hoarsely sound
The mill-streams in the swelling blast,
And cold and humid is the ground;
When to the ivy that embowers
Some pollard tree, or shelt'ring rock,
The troop of timid warblers flock,
And, shudd'ring, wait for milder hours.

While thou ! the leader of the band,
Fearless salut'st the opening year ;
Nor stay'st till blow the breezes bland
That bid the tender leaves appear !
But on some tow'ring elm or pine,
Waving, elate, thy dauntless wing,
Thou joy'st thy love-notes wild to sing,
Impatient of St. Valentine !

Oh, herald of the spring ! while yet
No harebell scents the woodland lane,
Nor starwort fair, nor violet,
Braves the bleak gust and driving rain,
'Tis thine, as, through the copses rude,
Some pensive wanderer sighs along,
To soothe him with a cheerful song,
And tell of Hope and Fortitude !

Still may thy nest, with lichen lin'd,
Be hidden from the invading jay ;
Nor truant boy its covert find,
To bear thy callow young way ;

So thou, precursor still of good,
O herald of approaching spring !
Shalt to the pensive wand'rer sing
Thy song of Hope and Fortitude !

What a lesson of content and gratitude may be learnt from these simple worshippers ! Mr. White, in speaking of the thrush, says, " In severe frost, it is one of the first birds that suffers from the inclemency of the season." He further observes, " I had remarked for years that the root of the cuckoo-pint (*arum*) was frequently scratched out of the dry banks of hedges, and eaten, in severe snowy weather. After observing with some exactness myself, and getting others to do the same, we observed it was the thrush kind that scratched it out. The root of the *arum* is remarkably warm and pungent."

Thrushes, during long droughts, are of great service in hunting out shell snails, which they pull in pieces for their young, and are thereby very serviceable in gardens.

In the summer, when their young become fledged, they leave neighbourhoods, and retire to sheep-walks and wild commons.

THE THRUSH.

How void of care yon merry thrush,
That tunes melodious on the bush,
That has no stores of wealth to keep,
No lands to plough, no corn to reap.

He never frets for worthless things,
But lives in peace, and sweetly sings ;
Enjoys the present with his mate,
Unmindful of to-morrow's fate.

Of true felicity possest,
He glides through life supremely blest
And for his daily meal relies
On Him whose love the world supplies.

Rejoiced he finds his morning fare ;
His dinner lies—he knows not where ;
Still to th' unfailing hand he chants
His grateful song, and never wants.

WILLIAMS.

I wish parents would endeavour to impress on
the minds of their children the cruelty of robbing

these interesting little creatures of their dearly cherished treasures. I cannot suppose youths to be naturally cruel; thoughtless they certainly are: it therefore behoves us to regulate their feelings, and to instil into their young minds principles of fellow feeling to all creatures.

Stay, wanton boy, thy savage arm,
Nor drag, unfeeling from its nest
The chirping young, and egg yet warm,
Late by its feather'd mother press'd.

How must that feather'd mother grieve,
Returning from the clover field,
To view the blood wet every leaf,
Her young with tyrant fury kill'd!

Think that e'en now thy mother's eye,
O'er hill and dale doth studious run,
If haply she from far may spy,
The coming of her darling son:

Then, if accustom'd to behold
Thy brow with smiles and beauty crown'd,
She sees thee carried, pale and cold,
Stabb'd through with many a ruffian wound,

Anguish her heart would inly wear,
Fear freeze, or boiling passion storm,
Or frantic madness wildly tear;—
Think, boy, of this, and stay thine arm.

The water-thrush (*turdus aquaticus*) of Wilson's American Ornithology, he says, "passes through Pennsylvania to the north; is seen along the channels of our solitary streams for ten or twelve days; afterwards disappears until August."

It is probable that it breeds in the higher mountainous districts even of this state. He adds, "Eminently distinguished by the loudness, sweetness, and expressive vivacity of their notes, which, being very high and clear, fall with an almost imperceptible gradation till they are scarcely articulated. At these times, the musician is perched on the middle branches of a tree, over the brook or river bank, pouring out his charming melody, that may be distinctly heard for half a mile; the voice of this little bird appeared to me so exquisitely sweet and expressive, that I was never tired of listening, while traversing the deep shaded hollows of those cane-brakes where it usually resorts." In allusion to the water-thrush,

Audubon remarks, " Much and justly as the song of the nightingale is admired, I am inclined, after having often listened to it, to pronounce it in no degree superior to that of the Louisiana water-thrush. The notes of the latter bird are as powerful and mellow, and as varied. This bird is a resident of the lowlands of Louisiana and the Mississippi. It may be observed perched on a low bough, scarcely higher than the top of the canes, in an erect attitude, swelling its throat, and repeating several times in succession sounds so approaching the whole two octaves of a good piano-forte as almost to induce the hearer to imagine that the keys of that instrument are used on the occasion. The bird begins on the upper key, and progressively passes from one to another, until it reaches the base note ; this last frequently being lost, when there is the least agitation in the air. Its song is heard even in the winter, when the weather is calm and warm."

Wishing to impress others with the same feeling of regard which I possess for my feathered favourites, I gladly avail myself of every interesting circumstance likely to effect my purpose. With this intention, I beg to quote the following observations from an author

to whom I am already so largely indebted. In his observations respecting the ferruginous thrush, (*turdus rufus*,) whose notes, he says, have a considerable resemblance to the song-thrush of Britain, thus remarks: "He is accused, by some people, of scratching up the hills of Indian corn, in planting time; this may be partly true; but for every grain of maize he pilfers, I am persuaded, he destroys five hundred insects; particularly a large dirty-coloured grub, with a black head, which is more pernicious to the corn, and other grain and vegetables, than nine-tenths of the whole feathered race."

How many of these indefatigable little *cleansers of the earth* are wantonly destroyed, from a mistaken idea that they devour the seeds; whereas they are actually of the greatest service to farmers and gardeners.

Among other remarks on this bird, the following must be read with interest:—"Concerning the sagacity and reasoning faculty of this bird, my venerable friend, Mr. Barham, writes me as follows: 'I remember to have reared one of these birds from the nest, which, when full grown, became very tame and docile. I frequently let him out of his cage to give

him a taste of liberty; after fluttering and dusting himself, in dry sand and earth, and bathing, washing, and dressing himself, he would proceed to hunt insects, such as beetles, crickets, and other shelly tribes; but, being very fond of wasps, after catching them, and knocking them about to break their wings, he would lay them down, then examine if they had a sting, and, with his bill, squeeze the abdomen, to clear it of the reservoir of poison, before he would swallow his prey. When in his cage, being very fond of dry crusts of bread, if, upon trial, the corners of the crumbs were too sharp and hard for his throat, he would throw them up, carry and put them in his water-dish to soften, then take them out and swallow them. Many other remarkable circumstances might be mentioned that would fully demonstrate faculties of *mind*; not only innate, but acquired, ideas, (derived, from necessity, in a state of domestication,) which we call understanding and knowledge. We see that this bird could associate those ideas, arrange, and apply them, in a rational manner, according to circumstances. For instance, if he knew that it was the hard, sharp corners of the crumb of bread that hurt his gullet, and prevented him from swallowing

it, and water would soften and render it easy to be swallowed, this knowledge must be acquired by observation and experience ; or some other bird taught him. Here the bird perceived, by the effect, the cause, and then took the quickest, the most effectual and agreeable, method to remove that cause. What could the wisest man have done better ? Call it reason, or instinct, it is the same that a sensible man would have done in this case. After the same manner this bird reasoned with respect to the wasps. He found, by experience and observation, that the first he attempted to swallow hurt his throat, and gave him extreme pain ; and, upon examination, observed that the extremity of the abdomen was armed with a poisonous sting ; and, after this discovery, never attempted to swallow a wasp till he first pinched his abdomen to the extremity, forcing out the sting with the receptacle of poison.

“ ‘ It is certainly a circumstance highly honourable to the character of birds, and corroborative of the foregoing sentiments, that those who have paid the most minute attention to their manners are uniformly their advocates and admirers.’ ”



LETTERS TO A FRIEND

1812

In writing this I suppose I am among my lovely
 friends, I am almost certain for a week or more
 at least, and the only fault of my intended
 publication, that I have not, as yet, been able
 to procure any subscribers. But, from the state of
 my affairs, I cannot have any other means. My
 present state of mind, and the various matters
 that press upon me, have been very much
 for my business. I had, however, only a few
 letters, by which, after a while, my friends, who
 believe in me, and give me their assistance, as
 usual, as they are for my benefit.

Thus, in the midst of my distress, I have
 a few of my friends, who are willing to assist me
 in my distress, and I am not, as yet, able to
 do so. I am, however, very much obliged to
 you for your kind and generous offer, and I
 shall be very glad to accept of it, as I shall be
 able to do so, as I am not, as yet, able to do so.

Your affectionate friend,
 J. H.



COMMON KINGFISHER.

Alcedo, Ispida.

IN allowing the kingfisher a place among my lovely songsters, I am actuated entirely by a wish to oblige a kind friend, who, having heard of my intended publication, took the trouble of going many miles to procure one, supposing that, from the beauty of its plumage, it would be an acquisition to me. My plans were already formed, the subjects selected, their portraits taken, when this unlucky bird made his appearance. I had, therefore, only to choose between two evils; either to offend my friend, who, unknown to me, had taken so much trouble, or to substitute *his* bird for the one intended.

Now, as I dearly love to oblige a friend, (especially if it do not *materially* interfere with my own convenience,) *his* kingfisher was substituted, and the original bird withdrawn, and placed again in the portfolio, to make his appearance on a future day.

This bird, formerly so celebrated by the ancients,

is now only held in estimation for the beauty of his plumage, for which he is so much extolled by those persons who are captivated by a gaudy exterior, without examining whether there be any intrinsic worth to merit their esteem.

The kingfisher is found throughout Europe. There are a vast number of species and varieties, but one only is known as an inhabitant of Britain; they frequent ponds, streams, and rivers,—are solitary birds, seldom leaving the neighbourhood of their natal place; their food is small fish, leeches, and all aquatic worms, and insects, of which they devour prodigious numbers, and they will sit for hours together on the branch of a tree, projecting over the water, where they remain motionless, watching with the most intense anxiety to catch their prey, and, the instant a fish or insect becomes visible, dart down perpendicularly into the water, returning with their victim, which they carry to land, beat to death against the ground, and then swallow, but afterwards throw up the bones, scales, and indigestible parts. Should it so happen that they cannot find a tree, or bough, overhanging their destined haunt, they will conceal themselves among reeds or willows, or will sit on a

stone near the brink, and when they perceive a small fish, they take a spring of several feet upwards, and then drop from that height.

The kingfisher flies but little, and then just above the surface of the water, gliding swiftly, either up or down the stream,—sometimes balancing itself over the water in pursuit of the many small shining beetles, which are seen swimming swiftly in a circle ; as on these also it feeds.

It is said that this bird can boast the plumage of the peacock, with the shadings of the humming-bird. It likewise exhibits the bill of the crane, and the short legs of the swallow ; its breadth is eleven, and length seven inches, the beak an inch and a half in length, and the tail very short. For its size, it is one of the most rapacious of the feathered race ; and yet this clumsy, deformed-looking little creature was, in days of superstition, almost worshipped. Innumerable are the ancient tales, fabulous stories, and poetic effusions, that he is made to figure in.

Pliny tells us that this bird is most common in the seas of Sicily ; that it rises only for a few days, and then in the depth of winter ; and, during that period, the mariners might sail in full security ; for which

reason they were styled *Halcyon* days, and the wind Halcyone. This ridiculous story runs thus :—“Ceyx, king of Magnesia, had espoused Alcyone, the daughter of the wind, by whom he was most passionately beloved ; their affection was mutual, as he regarded her with the most sincere attachment. Some unpleasant and unforeseen events, which affected both his country and his relation, Peleus, exciting his fears, induced him to consult the oracle of Apollo. With this determination he made preparations for his voyage, contrary to the tears and entreaties of Alcyone, who earnestly besought him either to allow her to accompany him or to abandon the enterprise, which her prophetic feelings led her to fear would prove fatal. Dryden, in his translation of Ovid, says—

But ah ! be warned to shun the wat'ry way ;
The face is frightful of the stormy sea ;
For late I saw a-drift disjointed planks,
And empty tombs erected on the banks.
Nor let false hopes to trust betray thy mind,
Because my sire in caves constrains the wind,
Can, with a breath, their clam'rous rage appease,
They fear his whistle, and forsake the seas.

Not so ; for, once indulg'd, they sweep the main ;
Deaf to the call, or, hearing, hear in vain ;
But, bent on mischief, bear the waves before,
And, not content with seas, insult the shore,
When ocean, air, and earth at once engage,
And rooted forests fly before their rage :
At once the clashing clouds to battle move,
And lightnings run across the fields above :
I know them well, and mark'd their rude comport,
While yet a child within my father's court ;
In times of tempest they command alone,
And he but sits precarious on the throne :
The more I know, the more my fears augment ;
And fears are oft prophetic of th' event ;
But if not fears, or reason will prevail,
If fate has fix'd thee, obstinate, to sail,
Go not without thy wife, but let me bear }
My part of danger with an equal share, }
And present, what I suffer only fear : }
Then o'er the bounding billows shall we fly,
Secure to live together, or to die.
These reasons mov'd her starlike husband's heart,
But still he held his purpose to depart ;

For as he lov'd her equal to his life,
He would not to the seas expose his wife ;
Nor could be wrought his voyage to refrain,
But sought, by arguments, to soothe her pain :
Nor these avail'd—at length he lights on one,
With which so difficult a cause he won.
My love, so short an absence cease to fear,
For by my father's holy flame I swear,
Before two moons their orb with light adorn,
If Heav'n allow me life, I will return.

The forebodings of the sorrowing Alcyone were but too soon realized ; Ceyx was shipwrecked, and perished, while his unhappy queen still cherished hopes of his return. Dryden so beautifully paints this story, that I am confident my readers will be more pleased with his verse than with my prose ; he shall, therefore, speak for me.

Meantime, Alcyone (his fate unknown)
Computes how many nights he had been gone.
Observes the waning moon, with hourly view,
Numbers her age, and wishes for a new

Against the promis'd time provides with care,
 And hastens in the woof the robes he was to wear :
 And for herself employs another loom,
 New-dress to meet her lord returning home,
 Flatt'ring her heart with joys that never were to
 come

She fum'd the temples with an od'rous flame
 And oft before the sacred altars came,
 To pray for him who was an empty name ;
 All pow'rs implor'd, but far above the rest
 To Juno she her pious vows address'd,
 Her much-lov'd lord from perils to protect,
 And safe o'er seas his voyage to direct ;
 Then pray'd that she might still possess his heart,
 And no pretending rival share a part ;
 This last petition heard of all her prayer,
 The rest, dispers'd by winds, were lost in air.

But she, the goddess of the nuptial bed,
 Tir'd with her vain devotions for the dead,
 Resolv'd the tainted hand should be repell'd,
 Which incense offered, and her altar held :
 Then Iris thus bespoke : “ Thou faithful maid,
 By whom thy queen's commands are well convey'd,
 Hasten to the house of sleep, and bid the God
 Who rules the night, by visions, with a nod,

Prepare a dream, in figure and in form
 Resembling him who perish'd in the storm :
 This form before Alcyone present,
 To make her certain of the sad event."
 Indu'd with robes of various hue she flies,
 And flying, draws an arch, (a segment of the skies ;))
 Then leaves her bending bow, and from the steep
 Descends, to search the silent house of sleep.

The virgin, ent'ring bright, indulg'd the day
 To the brown Cave, and brush'd the Dreams away :
 The God, disturb'd with this new glare of light
 Cast sudden on his face, unseal'd his sight,
 And rais'd his tardy head, which sunk again,
 And sinking, on his bosom knock'd his chin ;
 At length shook off himself, and ask'd the Dame,
 (And asking, yawn'd) for what intent she came.

To whom the Goddess thus : " O sacred Rest,
 Sweet pleasing Sleep, of all the Pow'rs the best !
 O Peace of Mind, repairer of decay,
 Whose balms renew the limbs to labours of the
 day,
 Care shuns thy soft approach, and sullen flies away !
 Adorn a dream, expressing human form,
 The shape of him who suffer'd in the storm,

And send it flitting to the *Trachin* court,
The Wreck of wretched *Ceyx* to report :
Before his Queen bid the pale spectre stand,
Who begs a vain relief at *Juno's* hand."
She said, and scarce awake her eyes could keep,
Unable to support the fumes of sleep ;
But fled, returning by the way she went,
And swerv'd along her bow with swift ascent.

The God, uneasy till he slept again,
Resolv'd at once to rid himself of pain ;
And, tho' against his custom, call'd aloud,
Exciting *Morpheus* from the sleepy crowd :
Morpheus, of all his numerous train, express'd
The shape of Man, and imitated best ;
The walk, the words, the gesture could supply,
The habit mimic, and the mien belie ;
Plays well, but all his action is confin'd,
Extending not beyond our human kind.
Darkling the demon glides, for flight prepar'd,
So soft, that scarce his fanning wings are heard.
To *Trachin*, swift as thought, the flitting shade,
Thro' air his momentary journey made :
Then lays aside the steerage of his wings,
Forsakes his proper form, assumes the king's ;

And, pale as death, despoil'd of his array,
 Into the Queen's apartment takes his way,
 And stands before the bed at dawn of day :
 Unmov'd his eyes, and wet his beard appears ;
 And shedding vain, but seeming real tears ;
 The briny water dropping from his hairs ;
 Then staring on her with a ghastly look,
 And hollow voice, he thus the Queen bespoke.

“Know'st thou not me ? Not yet, unhappy wife ?
 Or are my features perish'd with my life ?
 Look once again, and, for thy husband lost,
 Lo, all that's left of him, thy husband's ghost !
 Thy vows for my return were all in vain,
 The stormy south o'ertook us in the main,
 And never shalt thou see thy living lord again.
 Bear witness, Heaven, I call'd on thee in death,
 And while I call'd, a billow stopp'd my breath.
 Think not that flying fame reports my fate :
 I present, I appear, and my own wreck relate.
 Rise, wretched widow, rise ; nor undeplor'd
 Permit my soul to pass the *Stygian* ford ;
 But rise, prepar'd in black, to mourn thy perish'd
 lord.”

Thus said the Player-God, and adding art
 Of voice and gesture, so perform'd his part,

She thought (so like her Love the shade appears)
 That *Ceyx* spake the words, and *Ceyx* shed the tears ;
 She groan'd, her inward soul with grief opprest,
 She sigh'd, she wept, and, sleeping, beat her breast ;
 Then stretch'd her arms t' embrace his body bare ;
 Her clasping arms inclose but empty air ;
 At this, not yet awake, she cry'd, " O stay—
 One is our fate, and common is our way !"

So dreadful was the dream, so loud she spoke,
 That, starting sudden up, the slumber broke.

* * * * *

'Twas morning ; to the port she takes her way,
 And stands upon the margin of the sea :
 That place, that very spot of ground she sought,
 Thither by her destiny was brought,
 Where last he stood : and while she sadly said,
 " 'Twas here he left me,—ling'ring here delay'd
 His parting kiss, and there his anchors weigh'd," }
 Thus speaking, while her thoughts past actions trace,
 And call to mind, admonish'd by the place,
 Sharp at her utmost ken she cast her eyes,
 And somewhat floating from afar, descries :
 It seem'd a corpse a-drift, to distant sight ;
 But, at a distance, who could judge aright ?

It wafted nearer yet, and then she knew
That what before she but surmis'd was true :
A Corpse it was ; but whose it was, unknown ;
Yet mov'd, howe'er, she made the case her own,
Took the bad omen of a shipwreck'd man
As for a stranger, wept, and thus began :

“ Poor wretch, on stormy seas to lose thy life,
Unhappy thou, but more thy widow'd wife !”
At this she paus'd ; for now the flowing tide
Had brought the body nearer to the side.
The more she looks, the more her fears increase,
At nearer sight, and she's herself the less :
Now driv'n ashore, and at her feet it lies ;—
She knows too much, in knowing whom she sees—
Her Husband's corpse—at this she loudly shrieks,
“ 'Tis he ! 'tis he !” she cries, and tears her cheeks,
Her hair, and vest ; and, stooping to the sands,
About his neck she cast her trembling hands.

“ And is it thus, O dearer than my life,
Thus, thus return'st thou to thy longing wife !”
She said, and to the neighbouring mole she strode,
(Rais'd there to break th' incursions of the flood ;)

Headlong from hence to plunge herself she springs,
But shoots along, supported on her wings ;

A bird new-made, about the bank she plies,
 Not far from shore, and short excursions tries ;
 Nor seeks in air her humble flight to raise,
 Content to skim the surface of the seas :
 Her bill, though slender, sends a creaking noise,
 And imitates a lamentable voice.
 Now lighting where the bloodless body lies,
 She, with a fun'ral note, renews her cries ;
 At all her stretch, her little wings she spread,
 And, with her feather'd arms, embrac'd the dead :
 Then, flick'ring to his pallid lips, she strove
 To print a kiss, the last essay of love.
 Whether the vital touch reviv'd the dead,
 Or that the moving waters rais'd his head
 To meet the kiss, the vulgar doubt alone ;
 For sure a present miracle was shewn.
 The gods their shapes to winter-birds translate,
 But both obnoxious to their former fate.
 Their conjugal affection still is ty'd,
 And still the mournful race is multiply'd :
 ————— *Alcyone* compress'd,
 Sev'n days sits brooding on her floating nest—
 A wintry queen : her sire, at length, is kind,
 Calms ev'ry storm, and hushes ev'ry wind ;

Prepares his empire for his daughter's ease,
And for his hatching nephews* smooths the seas.

This bird was also said to build her nest on the water, and, in a few days, hatched her young; and, if uninterrupted in this occupation, she was supposed to possess a charm so powerful as to allay the turbulence of the winds and waves, during her incubation, at which time mariners might sail with the greatest security.

Aristotle likewise ascribed medicinal properties to its nest, and gives a most romantic description of its construction: he says, that it floated on the water, and resembled those concretions that are formed by the sea water; that it was like the long-necked gourd, hollow within, with an exceeding narrow entrance, so that, should it overset, the water could not enter; that it resisted violence from iron, but could be broken with a blow from the hand. Even the earliest fathers of the church believed in the power of these birds. St. Ambrose writes: "Behold the little bird which, in the midst of the winter, lays her eggs on

* Grandsons in those days were called nephews.

the shore. From that moment the winds are hushed, the sea becomes smooth, and the calm continues fourteen days. This is the time she requires; seven days to hatch, and seven to foster her young. Their Creator has taught these little animals to make their nest in the midst of the most stormy season, to manifest his kindness by granting them a lasting calm. The seamen are not ignorant of this blessing; they call this interval of fair weather, their *halcyon days*; and they are particularly careful to seize the opportunity, as then they need fear no interruption."

However superstitious our nautical people may be at the present time, and, doubtless, we have frequent instances, even in this enlightened age, of their placing faith in things almost as marvellous,* yet we do not think the kingfisher is considered by them as possess-

* It is a well-known fact, that captains of merchant ships going a voyage, have given seven, and ten guineas for a child's caul, as a talisman capable of protecting their ships from all dangers and accidents. Others place great dependence in the power of a well-worn horse shoe; and the immortal Nelson is said to have had one nailed to the mast of the Victory, which was carefully deposited in one of the State rooms in Windsor Castle, and was shewn, amongst other trophies, to visitors.

ing any supernatural power ; though, among the ignorant vulgar, it is believed that the flesh of this bird will not corrupt, and that no vermin ever attacks it. This is entirely false ; the only advantage it can boast over others of the feathered race is, that the brilliancy of its plumage continues unfaded longer than that of any other bird. Its flesh is not palatable, nor does the nest float on the water, but is formed in a hole, by the water's edge, made soft and warm by fibrous roots and feathers.

The hen lays from eight to ten eggs, beautifully white, and has hatched her first brood about the beginning of April. The fidelity and affection of the male exceeds that of all other birds, devoting his whole attention to providing for her wants, supplying her with abundance of fresh fish. By this means, she is much fatter and plumper when she has reared her offspring than she was before. The male bird, as if aware of his clumsiness of shape, and sudden motions, takes the greatest pains to steal softly and quietly into the nest, fearful to disturb his beloved partner ; even his twitter is discontinued during the time of her incubation.

When residing in Essex, I have sometimes seen

the nests of these birds, which the working people seemed fond of destroying ; they did not offer anything attractive, like most other birds' nests ; on the contrary, the smell and appearance of them was extremely unpleasant, from the quantity of fish bones and scales which had been disgorged by the hen while sitting.

She is said to be so much attached to the place she has chosen to rear her little family, that, should the eggs be taken even two or three times, she will still persevere, and ultimately complete her task. A French author relates, that he had one brought him, which had been taken from the nest several leagues from his house ; after examining her plumage, he set her at liberty, when she was seen instantly to wing her way back to her nest, where she had only just before been captured ; there her faithful partner was watching for her, and though her nest had been robbed twice before, of six or seven eggs each time, she began to lay again, and reared her young, notwithstanding the season was far advanced.

In some counties, the cottagers imagine that this bird, when stuffed and hung up to the ceiling, will foretel the change of weather ; and that, however

sheltered it may be, it will always turn its beak in a different direction to the wind.

I am not aware of the kingfisher possessing any attractions, save its plumage, though ancient poets laud it as a singing bird, and Virgil ranks it equal to the linnet. In my aquatic excursions, I have frequently seen this bird suspended in the air; and when the glorious sun has been shining on its many coloured dazzling plumage, it has almost reconciled me to the inelegancy of its form. My pencil gives but a faint idea of the splendour of colouring; it requires the rich light of the resplendent luminary reflected on it, to shew all the variety of tints—and it may be said of the kingfisher as Lord Byron said of the rose—

“ And grateful yields that smiling sky,
Her fairest hue, and brightest dye.”

We must hear what Bechstein says of him:—
“ When wild, this is a solitary bird, which remains the whole year on the edges of ponds, streams, and rivers. During winter, it may be seen watching for its prey at the holes in the ice, placed on a stone or

stick, or perched on the branch of a tree. In the house it does not walk or hop, but flies or remains perched. It is very necessary to put some turf or branches in a corner, or it must be kept in a cage with a perch. It constantly remains in the same place."

I have never seen these birds domesticated; but, from Mr. Paxton's account, it seems possible to rear them by hand. He says, "Having become possessed of some young kingfishers last summer, we were very anxious to rear them; this we have accomplished, and, to the best of our information, it is the first time kingfishers were ever reared by hand. To accomplish this object, we had a wire cage constructed, about ten feet long, and four broad; the back part of the cage was made to imitate, as nearly as possible, the banks of a river. Through this cage a small stream of water was conducted, in which the birds received their food, &c. When the young birds were first taken from the nest, minnows, and bullheads were their principal food; they have since been fed on almost every species of fresh-water fish, although they evince a decided preference for trout.

"Immediately on a quantity of small fish being put

into the stream of water, they commence killing them, regardless of who may be near; and so surely do they strike, that although we have repeatedly observed them, we never yet saw them miss their prey. As soon as they have caught a fish, they kill it, knocking its head against anything that may be near them. The quantity of fish consumed by each is almost incredible—we should think, on the average, not less than six ounces a day each; they could not exist twenty-four hours without food, they so quickly digest it. There can be no doubt that the sole reason of the kingfisher migrating to the sea-side, on the approach of severe weather, arises from the voracity of its appetite.”

“They are quite tame and domesticated, frequently sitting on the head or shoulder of the person who is in the habit of cleaning out their little dwelling. They are also very cleanly. We have observed them dive into the water as many as forty times incessantly, for the purpose of washing—this is generally done in the evening. Although they appear satisfied with their confinement, they are far from being friendly with each other; they fight with their wings, something after the manner of the swan. This is rather

surprising, as they are very dexterous with their beaks when seizing their prey. We have tried to rear others in a common cage, feeding them partly on flesh, but never succeeded."

According to Wilson's American Ornithology, one species only, the Belted Kingfisher (*Alcedo, Alcyon*), is known in the United States. He observes, "This is a general inhabitant of the banks and shores of all our fresh water rivers, from Hudson's bay to Mexico ; and is the only species of its tribe found within the United States. This last circumstance, and its characteristic appearance, make it as universally known here as its elegant little brother, the common kingfisher of Europe, is in Britain. Like the love-lorn swains of whom poets tell us, he delights in murmuring streams and falling waters ; not, however, merely that they may soothe his ear, but for a gratification somewhat more substantial.

"Amidst the roar of the cataract, or over the foam of a torrent, he sits perched upon an overhanging bough, glancing his piercing eye in every direction below, for his scaly prey, which, with a sudden circular plunge, he sweeps from their native element, and swallows in an instant. His voice, which is not

unlike the twirling of a watchman's rattle, is naturally loud, harsh, and sudden, but is softened by the sound of the brawling streams and cascades among which he generally rambles. He courses along the windings of the brook or river, at a small height above the surface, sometimes suspending himself by the rapid action of his wings, like certain species of hawks, ready to pounce on the fry below; now and then settling on an old dead overhanging limb to reconnoitre. Mill-dams are particularly visited by this feathered fisher, and the sound of his pipe is as well known to the miller as the rattling of his own hopper. Rapid streams, with high perpendicular banks, particularly if they be of a hard, clayey, or sandy nature, are also favourite places of resort for this bird; not only because in such places the small fish are more exposed to view, but because those steep and dry banks are the chosen situations for his nest. Into these he digs, with bill and claws, horizontally, sometimes to the extent of four or five feet, at the distance of a foot or two from the surface. The few materials he takes in are not always placed at the extremity of the hole, that he and his mate may have room to turn with convenience. The eggs

are five, pure white, and the first brood usually comes out about the beginning of June, and sometimes sooner, according to that part of the country where they reside. On the shores of Kentucky river, near the town of Frankfort, I found the female sitting early in April. They are very tenacious of their haunts, breeding for several successive years in the same hole, and do not readily forsake it, even though it be visited.

“An intelligent young gentleman informed me, that, having found where a kingfisher built, he took away its eggs from time to time, leaving always one behind, until he had taken no less than eighteen from the same nest. At some of these visits, the female being within, retired to the extremity of the hole, while he withdrew the egg; and next day, when he returned, he found she had laid again as usual. Over winds and the waves the humble kingfishers of our days, at least the species now before us, have no control. Its nest is neither constructed of glue nor fish bones; but of loose grass and a few feathers. It is not thrown on the surface of the water to float about with its proprietor at random, but snugly secured from the winds and the weather in the re-

cesses of the earth ; neither is its head or its feathers believed, even by the most illiterate of our clowns or seamen, to be a charm for love, a protection against witchcraft, or a security for fair weather. It is neither venerated, like those of the Society Isles, nor dreaded, like those of some other countries ; but is considered merely as a bird that feeds on fish ;— is generally fat ; relished by some as good eating ; and is now and then seen exposed for sale in our markets.

“ Though the kingfisher generally remains with us, in Pennsylvania, until the commencement of cold weather, it is seldom seen here in winter, but returns to us early in April. In North and South Carolina, I observed numbers of these birds in the months of February and March. I also frequently noticed them on the shores of the Ohio, in February, as high up as the mouth of the Mushingum.

“ I suspect this bird to be a native of the Bahama Islands, as well as of our continent. In passing between these isles and the Florida shore, in the month of July, a kingfisher flew several times round our ship, and afterwards shot off to the south.”

Having nothing further to say in praise of this

splendid, but rapacious angler, "All flushed with many hues," and having gratified the wish of my friend, we will say farewell to the kingfisher, and call upon some more entertaining subject for the following pages.

NIGHTINGALE.

Motacilla-Lucinia.

HARK! in the vale I hear thy evening song,
Sweet Nightingale! It soothes my pensive soul.
Dost thou from day's gay flutterers retire,
As I from tumult of the busy world,
To pour thy sad note on the evening gale?
Night, and this still serene full well accord
With feelings such as ours. It is a calm,
Healthful, and sweet to nature, when the soul
Plumes all her powers and imps her drooping wing
For other climes. Yes, songstress of the shade,
We both alike are here brief sojourners,
Waiting the season of our happier change;
Yet from the lone spray cheer the vale awhile,
And, listening, I will learn content from thee.

This much-admired songster is one of our plainly dressed sylvan musicians, but, like true greatness, requires no outward adornment to attract our regards. How wonderfully is the wisdom of the Great Creator manifested by his equal and impartial distribution of his favours to all the feathered race. Thus we see the birds of many climes adorned with the most splendid plumage, but devoid of those pleasing and heaven-taught strains which we find in most of our songsters, whose plainness of appearance might otherwise cause them to pass unnoticed ; but to these simply-apparelled warblers our groves and woods are indebted for half their charms.

The nightingale visits us about the beginning of April, and usually leaves us in August. It is a solitary bird, seldom leaving the bush or tree where it first takes up its abode ; consequently, is seldom seen, though so often heard in our groves. The food of the nightingale, in its wild state, is worms, ants, flies, and green caterpillars, of which they clear the bushes and small trees ; towards the end of summer, they eat elder-berries and currants.

The female constructs her nest of dried leaves, straw, and moss, and lays from four to five eggs, but

they seldom all come to maturity in our climate. While she is engaged in hatching and rearing her young, her faithful partner takes his station a few yards off, upon some neighbouring branch, cheering her with his harmonious voice to beguile the time; and should danger threaten, she is informed of it by the interruption of his song, which is seldom heard very close to the nest, for fear of its being discovered. He provides her with the daintiest bits, and assists her in rearing their offspring with the greatest assiduity; and should any one chance to approach the nest, he flies to some distance, where he commences his sweet strains, as if to attract the notice of the intruder from the abode of all his treasures; this manœuvre is understood by the hen, who remains silent till he again informs her the danger is past. When the young ones are first come abroad, and are helpless, the parent birds make a plaintive and jarring noise, snapping with their bills, and pursuing people along the hedges as they walk, as if to intimidate by their menaces.

As the nightingale is considered to excel all other birds in its musical powers, it is also said to exceed it in the exquisiteness of its scent, frequenting those

places where sweet herbs grow, and, I am told, particularly delights in the perfume of musk, and that a grain or two of it put into cotton and inserted in a reed, or cane, serving for a perch, will entice him to sing.

So much has been said and sung in praise of this sweet bird, by poets of all nations, that it is not likely I can have anything new to advance; I can only join my mite to the general voice in its favour. To this sweet serenader I have been indebted for many hours of calm repose which I otherwise should not have had; and how often have I found myself repeating the following beautiful lines, by Coleridge:—

No cloud, no relique of the sunken day
Distinguishes the west; no long thin slip
Of sullen light; no obscure trembling hues.
Come, we will rest on this old mossy bridge:
You see the glimmer of the stream beneath,
But hear no murmuring; it flows silently
O'er its soft bed of verdure. All is still,
A balmy night! and though the stars be dim,
Yet let us think upon the vernal showers
That gladden the green earth, and we shall find
A pleasure in the dimness of the stars.

And hark ! the Nightingale begins its song,
Most musical, most melancholy bird !
A melancholy bird ?—oh ! idle thought !
In nature there is nothing melancholy.
But some night-wandering man, whose heart was
 pierced
With the resemblance of a grievous wrong,
Or slow distemper, or neglected love,
First named these notes a melancholy strain ;
And youths and maidens most poetical,
Who lose the deepening twilight of the spring
In ball-rooms and hot theatres, they still,
Full of meek sympathy, must heave their sighs
O'er Philomela's pity-pleasing strains.
My friend, and thou, our sister, we have learnt
A different lore ; we may not thus profane
Nature's sweet voices, always full of love
And joyance ! 'Tis the merry Nightingale
That crowds, and hurries, and precipitates,
With fast thick warble, his delicious notes,
As he were fearful that an April night
Would be too short for him to utter forth
His love-chaunt, and disburden his full soul
Of all his music !

Farewell, O warbler ! till to-morrow eve ;
We have been loitering long and pleasantly.
And now for our dear homes,—that strain again ?
Full fain it would delay me ! My dear babe,
Who, capable of no articulate sound,
Mars all things with his imitative lisp,
How he would place his hand beside his ear,
His little hand, the small forefinger up,
And bid us listen ! And I deem it wise
To make him Nature's playmate ; and if Heaven
Should give me life, his childhood shall grow up
Familiar with songs, that with the night
He may associate joy ! Once more, farewell,
Sweet Nightingale !

Who would not love the sweet Philomel for calling forth such heart-touching strains, almost as exquisite as her own !

Being in a bad state of health last summer, I went to spend a short time with a friend at Hampton-court, where, during the nights, the song of the nightingale surpassed my powers of description ; perhaps the effect was heightened by hearing it so near the river, as we know how much more melodious music sounds from the water. Nightly, as I laid my fevered head

upon my pillow, was I soothed by the sweetest strains ; first, very softly, in a low tremulous tone, then raising them higher and louder, and again sinking them almost to a whisper, till they gradually had the effect of lulling me into the sweetest slumber. This lovely serenader sung, at night, from a bay-tree, near the house, but I never heard him during the day.

The voice of the nightingale, at night, is thought, by some persons, to be expressive of melancholy, though, during the day, they consider his notes rather of a cheerful tone. Chaucer eulogizes this bird in the following strain :—

And at the last, the bird began to sing
So passing sweetly, that by many fold
It was more pleasant than I couth devise :
And whan his song was ended in these wise,
The Nightingale, with so merry a note,
Answerid him, that alle the wode yrang
So sodainly, that as it were a sote,
I stode astonied, and was with the song
Thorow ravished ; that, till late and long,
I ne wist in what place I was, ne where,
And agen, methought, she sang even by mine ere.

But the music of birds has not this delightful effect upon all; for I have known those who have been ordered by their physicians to more genial climes for the benefit of their health; express themselves annoyed by the incessant song of this sweet Philomel, who nightly serenaded them from the bay-trees which often grow almost in at the windows.

It is said that nightingales never travel so far north as Northumberland and Scotland, nor are they to be found in Devonshire and Cornwall, although two of our mildest counties. Mr. Blyth accounts for it in the following way:—

“The nightingale, I think, appears to migrate almost due north and south, deviating but a very little indeed either to the right or left. There are none in Brittany, nor in the Channel Islands (Jersey, Guernsey, &c.); and the most westward of them probably cross the channel at Cape la Hogue, arriving on the coast of Dorsetshire, and thence apparently proceeding northward, rather than dispersing towards the west, so that they are only known as accidental stragglers beyond, at most, the third degree of western longitude, a line which cuts off the counties of Devonshire and Cornwall, together with all Wales and Ire-

land, and by far the greater portion of Scotland ; in which lastmentioned kingdom, the species has once or twice occurred to the eastward only of this meridian."

How wonderful is the emigration of these delicate and fragile little creatures, and how it proves the goodness of the Almighty, in endowing them with strength to take such long flights as is requisite to transport them from clime to clime, as the seasons change, and the difficulty in obtaining their food increases. Thus, though these birds abound with us during the summer, they seek, in winter, those countries where insects are most plentiful.

These sweet songsters are frequently immured in cages, though keeping them confined is attended with much difficulty and trouble, their food being insects and meal-worms.

The nightingale has been the subject of many fabulous tales. Among them we are told that Pandion had two beautiful daughters, named Procne and Philomela ; the former was married to Tereus, king of Thrace. At the expiration of a few years, Procne felt desirous of seeing her sister ; and Tereus, wishing to gratify the sisterly affection of his wife, undertook to go himself, hoping to persuade Pan-

dion to allow Philomela to accompany him back, and remain a short time with her sister ; but Tereus no sooner beheld the lovely Philomela than he became passionately in love with her ; and, when he at length, after much solicitation, obtained the reluctant consent of her father for her to accompany him, forgetful of all the ties of honour and affection, giving way to his ungovernable passion, conducted the hapless Philomela to a remote castle, among almost inaccessible woods, where, regardless of her intreaties and tears, and every restraint that the ties of their near relationship should have imposed upon him, he took advantage of her helpless situation, and reduced her to a state of misery and disgrace. When, in the agony of her soul, she reproached him with his cruelty and treachery, vowing she would make known her wrongs, he was so provoked by the eloquence of her sorrow, and the justness of her indignation, and enraged by the sense of his guilt, that he cut out her tongue.

The unhappy Philomela, thus confined and injured, without the power of making her wrongs known, bethought herself of a means of communicating her wretched condition to her affectionate sister, to whom Tereus had reported that she was dead.

Thus determined, Philomela, by means of her needle, wove the story of her injuries in tapestry, and prevailed on one of her guards to carry it to Procne, who no sooner learnt the dreadful fate of her wretched sister than she determined to revenge her wrongs, by the most signal vengeance on her infamous husband. Procne's first object was the release of her unhappy sister, that she might assist in her vengeance; for which purpose, she took advantage of the following religious rites, performed by the Thracians, to celebrate, once in three years, the feast of Bacchus. At this ceremony, matrons of the highest rank joined the frantic train of Bacchanals, running about during the night, adorned with ivy and vine leaves, carrying flaming torches. Procne, availing herself of the liberty given by these orgies, assembled a number of women and persons devoted to her interest, penetrated the woods where stood the fortress that confined her unhappy sister, and after forcing the doors, and disguising the wretched Philomela with wreaths of ivy, she led her to the palace of her perfidious husband, the inhuman perpetrator of her sister's wrongs.

The miserable state in which Procne discovered the sad victim of her husband's perfidy and barba-

riety, deprived her of every sense, save only the desire of revenging her wrongs. The dumb eloquence of the poor injured Philomela was more touching and powerful with her than the strongest passion of the heart—maternal love,—and the sight of her little Itys, who had hitherto been so dear to her, now stung her to madness. To revenge herself on the father, she put to death the child, and, to add to the horrid tale, she is said to have served up his flesh to Tereus, at a banquet.

Ovid informs us that the gods, as a punishment on the guilty Tereus, transformed him into a lapwing, Procne into a swallow, Philomela into a Nightingale, and Itys into a pheasant.

Poor melancholy bird, that, all night long,
Tell'st to the moon thy tale of tender wo,
From what sad cause can such sweet sorrow flow,
And whence this mournful melody of song

Thy poet's musing fancy would translate
What mean the sounds that swell thy little breast,
When still at dewy eve thou leav'st thy nest,
Thus to the list'ning night to sing thy fate.

Pale sorrow's victims wert thou once among,
Though now releas'd, in woodlands wild to rove ;
Say—hast thou felt from friends some cruel wrong ?
Or, diest thou martyr of disastrous love ?
Ah, songster sad ! that such my lot might be,
To sigh and sing at liberty,—like thee !

The Eastern poets have eulogized this sweet bird, imagining, among other beautiful fictions, that he is enamoured of the rose.

So, when the nightingale, in Eastern bowers,
On quiv'ring pinions woos the queen of flowers,
Inhales her fragrance as he hangs in air,
And melts with melody the blushing fair ;
Half rose, half bird, a beauteous monster springs,
Waves his thin leaves, and claps his glossy wings ;
Long horrent thorns his mossy legs surround,
And tendril talons root him to the ground ;
Green films of rind his wrinkled neck o'erspread
And crimson'd petals crest his curled head ;
Soft warbling beaks in each bright blossom move,
And vocal rose-buds thrill th'enchanted grove ;

Admiring evening stays her beamy star,
 And still night listens from her ebon car,
 While, on white wings, descending hours throng,
 And drink the floods of odour and of song.

DARWIN.

Many of our old English poets have exerted the most luxuriant imaginations in celebrating this songster. In Milton's beautiful poem of "Paradise Lost," the nightingale holds a distinguished place:—

O Nightingale, that, on yon bloomy spray,
 Warblest at eve, when all the woods are still,
 Thou with fresh hope the lover's heart doth fill,
 While the jolly hours lead on propitious May.
 Thy liquid notes, that close the eye of day,
 First heard before the shallow cuckoo's bill,
 Portend success in love. O, if Jove's will
 Have link'd that am'rous pow'r to thy soft lay,
 Now timely sing, ere the rude bird of hate
 Foretel my hapless doom in some grove nigh;
 As thou from year to year hast sung too late
 For my relief, yet hadst no reason why.
 Whether the Muse or Love call thee his mate,
 Both them I serve, and of their train am I.

Thomson, in claiming the privilege of liberty for sweet Philomel, shews how much he admired that songster :—

But let not chief the nightingale lament
 Her ruin'd care ; too delicately fram'd
 To brook the harsh confinement of a cage.
 Oft when returning with her loaded bill,
 Th' astonished mother finds a vacant nest,
 By the hard hands of unrelenting clowns
 Robb'd, to the ground the vain provision falls !
 Her pinions ruffle, and, low drooping, scarce
 Can bear the mourner to the poplar shade,
 Where, all abandoned to despair, she sings
 Her sorrows through the night ; and on the bough
 Sole sitting, still at every dying fall
 Takes up again her lamentable strain
 Of winding wo ; till, wide around, the woods
 Sigh to her song, and with her wail resound.

Among poets of modern date, the following, by Loots, of Holland, ranks pre-eminent :—

Soul of living music ? teach me—
 Teach me, floating thus along,

Love-sick warbler, come and reach me,
With the secrets of thy song.
How thy beak, so sweetly trembling,
On one note long ling'ring tries—
On a thousand tones assembling,
Pours the rush of harmonies ;
Or, when rising shrill and shriller,
Other music dies away,
Other songs grow still and stiller—
Songsters of the night and day !
Till, all sunk in silence round thee—
Not a whisper—not a word—
Not a leaf-fall to confound thee—
Breathless all, thou only heard.
Tell me, thou who failest never,
Minstrel of the songs of spring,
Did the world see ages ever,
When thy voice forgot to sing ?
Is there, in thy woodland hist'ry,
Any Homer, whom ye read ?
Has your music aught of myst'ry—
Has it measure, cliff, and creed ?
Have ye teachers who instruct ye,
Checking each ambitious strain—

Learned parrots to conduct ye,
When ye wander back again ?
Smiling at my dreams, I see thee ;
Nature, in her chainless will,
Did not fetter thee, but free thee—
Pour thy hymns of rapture still !
Plum'd in pomp and pride prodigious,
Lo ! the gaudy peacock nears ;
But his grating voice, so hideous,
Shocks the soul and grates the ears.
Finches may be trained to follow
Notes which dext'rous arts combine,
But those notes sound vain and hollow,
When compared, sweet bird, with thine.
Classic themes no longer courting,
Ancient tongues I'll cast away,
And, with Nightingales disporting,
Sing the wild and woodland lay.

But however highly modern writers may celebrate this minstrel, we are very far behind the ancients. Pliny says, "The Nightingale that, for fifteen days and nights, hid in the thickest shades, continues her note without intermission, deserves our attention and

wonder. How surprising, that so great a voice can reside in so small a body—such perseverance in so minute an animal? With what a musical propriety are the sounds it produces modulated! The note at one time drawn out with a long breath, now stealing off into a different cadence; now interrupted by a break, then changing into a new note, by an unexpected transition; now seeming to renew the same strain, then deceiving expectation! She sometimes seems to murmur within herself; full, deep, swift, drawling, trembling; now at the top, the middle, and the bottom of the scale! In short, in that little bill seems to reside all the melody which man has vainly laboured to bring forth from a variety of instruments. Some even seem to be possessed of a different song from the rest, and contend with each other with ardour. The bird overcome is then seen only to discontinue its song with its life.”

Gesner, likewise, relates the following story, shewing that the nightingale not only sings the sweetest of all birds in a cage, but that it also possesses the faculty of talking; in proof of which, he communicates the following anecdote, the truth of which I must leave to more scientific persons to deter-

mine. I have seen many nightingales, but never met with one that possessed such a faculty ; but education may effect wonders, for we know that this bird, which in its wild state sings only ten or twelve weeks in the year, when tamed may, with care and attention, be induced to charm us with its harmonious notes for nine or ten months. But for Gesner's story, which, he says, was communicated to him by a friend :—

“ Whilst I was at Ratisbon,” says his correspondent, “ I put up at an inn, the sign of the Golden Crown, where my host had three Nightingales. What I am going to repeat is wonderful—almost incredible—and yet it is true. The Nightingales were placed separately, so that each was shut up by itself in a dark cage. It happened at that time, being the spring of the year, when those birds are used to sing indefatigably, that I was so afflicted with the stone that I could sleep but very little all night. It was usual, then, about midnight, when there was no noise in the house, but all still, to hear the two nightingales jangling with each other, and plainly imitating men's discourse. For my part, I was almost astonished with wonder, for at this time, when all was

quiet else, they held conference together, and repeated whatever they had heard among the guests by day. Those two of them that were most notable, and masters of this art, were scarce ten feet distant from one another. The third hung more remote, so that I could not so well hear it, as I lay a-bed. But it is wonderful to tell how these two provoked each other, and, by answering, invited and drew one another to speak. Yet did they not confound their words, or talk both together, but rather utter them alternately, and of course. Besides the daily discourse of the guests, they chaunted out two stories, which generally held them from midnight to morning, and that with such modulations and inflections that no man could have taken to come from such creatures. When I asked the host if they had been taught, or whether he observed their talking in the night, he answered, No. The same said the whole family. But I, who could not sleep for nights together, was perfectly sensible of their discourse.

“One of their stories was concerning the tapster and his wife, who refused to follow him to the wars, as he desired her; for the husband endeavoured to persuade his wife, as far as I understood by the

birds, that he would leave his service in that inn, and go to the wars in hopes of plunder. But she refused to follow him, resolving to stay either at Ratisbon, or go to Nuremberg.

“There was a long and earnest contention between them; and all this dialogue the birds repeated. They even repeated the unseemly words which were cast out between them, and which ought rather to have been suppressed and kept a secret; but the birds not knowing the difference between modest and immodest, honest and filthy words, did out with them.

“The other story was concerning the war which the emperor was then threatening against the protestants; which the birds had probably heard from some of the generals that had conferences in the house. These things did they repeat in the night, after twelve o'clock, when there was a deep silence. But, in the day-time, for the most part, they were silent, and seemed to do nothing but meditate and resolve within themselves upon what the guests conferred together as they sat at table or in their walks. I verily had never believed our Pliny, writing so many wonderful things concerning these little creatures, had I not myself seen with my eyes, and heard them with

my ears, uttering such things as I have related. Neither yet can I, of a sudden, write all, or call to remembrance every particular that I have heard."

In Dr. Bechstein's admirable work on cage birds, he says—"Independent of these talents, the nightingale possesses a quality very likely to augment the number of his friends ; he is capable, after some time, of forming attachments. When once he has made acquaintance with the person who takes care of him, he distinguishes his step before seeing him, he welcomes him by a cry of joy, and during the moulting season he is seen making vain efforts to sing, and supplying by the gaiety of his movements, and the expression of his looks, the demonstrations of joy which his throat refuses to utter. When he loses his benefactor, he sometimes pines to death ; if he survives, it is long before he is accustomed to another.* His attachments are long, because they are

* "A nightingale which I had given away," says M. Le Manie, "no longer seeing his mistress, left off eating, and was soon reduced to the last gasp : he could not support himself on his perch ; but, being restored to his mistress, he revived, ate, drank, perched, and had recovered in twenty-four hours. It is said that some have been known, when set

not hasty, as is the case with all mild and timid dispositions.”

The greater nightingale, which is said by some naturalists to be only a variety, Bechstein considers a distinct species. He observes—“The difference in the song is very remarkable. The greater nightingale has a much stronger, louder, and deeper voice; but it sings more slowly and more unconnectedly; it has not that astonishing variety, those charming protractions, and harmonious conclusions, of the common nightingale. It mutilates all the strains, and, on this account its song has been compared to the missel-thrush, to which, however, it is superior in softness and pureness. The common nightingale is superior in delicacy and variety, but inferior in force and brilliancy. The greater nightingale sings generally in the night, so that it is the real night-singer; whilst among nightingales this is uncommon. Its voice is so loud that it is almost impossible to bear it in a room. It is necessary to keep it always outside the window, either by hanging its cage there, or at liberty in the woods, to return to their masters. It is quite certain that they recognise the voice of their masters and mistresses, and approach at their call.”

by opening from it a sort of passage into which it can remove.

“Its call, also, is very different. It seems, also, to pronounce David, Jacob, and generally begins its song by the latter word.”

It is said that this delightful songster, scorning to be outdone, will not yield to any competitor, either of birds or men, and that the wood-lark is its greatest antagonist, between whom there sometimes happens such a contention for mastery, each striving to outvie the other, that, like true-bred cocks, they seem resolved to die rather than lose the victory.

An old author, speaking of these contentions, relates the following amusing anecdote:—“Myself,” says he, “and a gentleman, riding in the country, in an evening, hard by a coppice or wood side, heard a nightingale sing so sweetly, as, to my thinking, I never heard the like in all my life, although I have heard many in my time; for the place being in a valley, and the coppice on the side of it, made all the notes of the nightingale seem double with the echo. We had not stayed long, but comes a woodlark, and lights upon the twig of an oak, and there they sung, each outvying the other. In a short space more,

about a hundred paces off, lights another woodlark. Distant from the first, and under him, as near as we could judge, was another nightingale; these four birds sung with so melodious harmony, warbling out their pleasant notes, for above a whole hour, that never any music came in competition with it, to the pleasing of our ears. As soon as the woodlarks were gone, the nightingales, we supposed, went a little to refresh nature, having played their parts so well that every bird, in the highest degree, strove for mastery, each striving to outvie the other. My friend and I having stood a full hour to hear these songsters charming our ears, at our going, I persuaded him to sing a merry catch under the woodside; which he had no sooner begun, but one of the nightingales came and bore his part, and, in a minute's time, came the other to bear his part, still keeping of their stations, and my friend and I standing between them; and as he raised his notes, so did they, that he did protest he never enjoyed more pleasure in so short a time in all his life; for the coppice or wood, being upon the side of a hill, and a valley in the bottom, so doubled all their notes with such a sweet and pleasant echo, that I am confident none could think

the time long, in hearing so sweet and delightful pleasant harmony.”

But the poet goes greater lengths, in describing the contention between the Nightingale and the Fiddler.

THE FIDDLER AND NIGHTINGALE.

PRONE to the sea the sun declin'd apace,
Mild in his course, and shorn of all his rays ;
When, on the bank of Tyber's gliding stream,
Retir'd from cares and Phœbus' burning beam,
Beneath a tow'ring rock a fiddler sat,
Pleas'd with the kindness of his smiling fate.
A verdant prospect all around him lay,
Whilst all around, transported, heard him play.

High on a tree, within a neighb'ring grove,
Stood Philomel, and warbled out her love :
This syren there her daily song renews,
A hurtless syren, a sylvestrian muse ;
Struck with unusual notes, she quits her stand,
And, in a moment, perches o'er his hand ;
Hid in a thicket of a spreading bough,
Receives his music, and returns it too.

Pleas'd with the fancy, and his rival's play,
He means to try her skill, and give her way :
His nimble bow and pliant fingers fly,—
To every touch the ready notes reply :
Commands the compass with a boundless sway,
Sweeps o'er the strings, and preludes to the fray.

As nimbly she resolves the various song,
In son'rous evolutions from her tongue :
Thus for the coming strife herself prepares ;
And matchless art with equal courage dares.

The fiddler strikes his sounding violin,
The conscious chords re-echo from within :
With easy slide he drew a downward stroke,
And in one simple sound the fiddle spoke :
Now sharply turns the tune, and plys amain ;
On ev'ry string does ev'ry finger strain ;
Then rests. The bird, as skilful in her part,
Runs the same keys, and gives him art for art,
She with a careless air begins her song,
Draws out her notes, and makes 'em mighty long.
Deep in her throat the lengthened sounds arise,
Invariably the same without surprise ;
Then in a moment chang'd her lab'ring voice,
Varies the tune, and charms ten thousand ways.

The wond'ring fiddler, in attention fixt,
Now with his rival, now himself, perplext,
Admires the harmony, and whence it flows,
From what such num'rous modulations rose.
In lofty flights he next attempts to rise,
And with a bolder stroke his fiddle tries ;
The sharp in smaller flourishes he proves,
Slurs it along, and to the grave he moves :
The grave in strong and louder strains resound,
Beats the wide skies, and from the vales rebounds.
The rough, the smooth, the deep, the sharp unite,
And, from their discord, yield a strange delight.
This Philomela tries, and, with her throat,
In little quavers shakes the trembling note :
But, suddenly to other measures run,
Mounts in her voice, and raises high the tone,
Calls up her strength, and throws out all her pow'r,
And sings, and chants, and makes a glorious roar :
Nor rests ; but brightens still, and boldly dares
To imitate the thunder of the wars.

Abash'd, amaz'd, the angry fiddler stood ;
Then thus bespoke the songster of the wood :—
Presumptuous bird ! to match unrivall'd skill,
As yet unmatch'd, unrivall'd still,

If my good instrument and hand avail ;
Or break my fiddle, and will own I fail.
Not more ; but fiercely strikes the tuneful shell,
From whence inimitable music fell.
With eager hand he labours ev'ry string,
While with the sound the woods and valleys ring.
From chord to chord the bounding echo flies,
Innumerable raptures fill the skies ;
In vast variety his fiddle speaks,
And vents his soul into a thousand breaks ;
Takes a vast scope, and fills the spacious round,
And proudly triumphs in unequal sound ;
In a full chorus, all at last consent ;
Then waits an answer, and expects th' event.

The bird already wonders had perform'd,
Yet still her glowing breast ambition warm'd ;
Again collects her strength, again will try,
Resolv'd to conquer, or prepar'd to die.
In vain the combat she again renews ;
In vain the complicated song pursues ;
In vain her little bosom swells to time,
Or, with her native force, such height would climb ;
Puzzled and lost in labyrinths of sound,
Is in a whirl of rapt'rous music drown'd.

Unequal to the mighty task, she fails ;
Great is her courage, but her grief prevails ;
Reluctant yields a triumph hardly won,
And gives one deep, melodious, dying groan ;
Drops on his fiddle, and resigns her breath ;
A noble sepulchre ! a glorious death !
At what could such an emulation aim ?
At what, but conquest and a future fame ?
Who can the depth of forming nature tell !
Or who imagine, in an animal,
There should such gen'rous seeds of glory dwell.

ADIEU TO THE NIGHTINGALE.

Sweet poet of the woods, a long adieu !
Farewell, soft minstrel of the early year !
Ah ! 'twill be long ere thou shalt sing anew,
And pour thy music on "the night's dull ear."
Whether on spring thy wand'ring flights await,
Or whether silent in our groves thou dwell,
The pensive muse shall own thee for her mate,
And still protract the song she loves so well.

With cautious step the lovelorn youth shall glide
Through the lone brake that shades thy mossy nest,
And shepherd girls from eyes profane shall hide,
The gentle bird who sings of Pity best ;
Far still thy voice shall soft affections move,
And still be dear to Sorrow and to Love.

C. SMITH.

Oh Nightingale ! thou surely art
A creature of a fiery heart—
These notes of thine they pierce, and pierce ;
Tumultuous harmony and fierce !
Thou sing'st, as if the god of wine
Had help'd thee to a Valentine,
A song in mockery, and despite
Of shades, and dews, and silent night,
And steady bliss, and all the Loves
Now sleeping in these peaceful groves !
I heard a Stockdove sing or say
His homely tale, this very day.
His voice was buried among trees,
Yet to be come at by the breeze :
He did not cease : but coo'd—and coo'd ;
And somewhat pensively he woo'd :

He sang of love with quiet blending,
 Slow to begin, and never ending ;
 Of serious faith, and inward glee ;
 That was the song, the song for me.

WORDSWORTH.

AN EVENING ADDRESS TO A NIGHTINGALE.

Sweet bird ! that, kindly perching near,
 Pour'st thy plaints melodious in mine ear,—
 Not, like base worldlings, tutor'd to forego
 The melancholy haunts of woe,—
 Thanks for thy sorrow-soothing strain :
 For surely thou hast known to prove,
 Like me, the pangs of hopeless love ;
 Else why so feelingly complain,
 And with thy piteous notes thus sadden all the grove ?
 Say, dost thou mourn thy ravish'd mate,
 That oft enamour'd on thy strains has hung ?
 Or has the cruel hand of fate
 Bereft thee of thy darling young ?
 Alas ! for both I weep—

In all the pride of youthful charms,
A beauteous bride torn from my circling arms !
 A lovely babe, that should have liv'd to bless,
And fill my doting eyes with frequent tears,
 At once the source of rapture and distress,
The flattering prop of my declining years !
 In vain from death to rescue I essay'd,
By every art that science could devise ;
 Alas ! it languish'd for a mother's aid,
And wing'd its flight to seek her in the skies :
 Then O ! our comforts be the same
At evening's peaceful hour ;
 To shun the noisy paths of wealth and fame,
And breathe our sorrows in this lonely bower.
 But why, alas ! to thee complain !
 To thee, unconscious of my pain !
 Soon shalt thou cease to mourn thy lot severe,
And hail the dawning of a happier year.
 The genial warmth of joy-renewing spring
Again shall plume thy shatter'd wing ;
 Again thy little heart shall transport prove,
Again shall flow thy notes responsive to thy love.





CHIMNEY SWALLOW.

Hirundo Rustica.

I CAN fancy that I hear some of my fair readers exclaim, "What! give us a swallow next to a lovely nightingale? how absurd!" To such of my gentle readers, I beg to observe, that this is not a scientific work, but one intended solely for amusement; and being myself a true lover of nature, feeling an equal interest in the most insignificant, as well as the most beautiful, of God's creatures, I wish, if possible, to obtain the same share of interest for my feathered favourite now introduced.

An actress of great celebrity* used to say, "that she loved every living creature *better* than men and women." I do not go quite so far, though I certainly think every one of the feathered race objects

* Miss Fanny Kemble.

worthy our regards ; and I have frequently been as much amused, while watching the evolutions of a swallow, flying round a pond in search of his prey, or in observing their curious manœuvre of dipping their breasts swiftly into pools, and immediately returning to their nests, (as the ignorant suppose, to temper the mortar with the moisture thus carried on their feathers,*) as ever I have been by the music of the finest songster.

Swallow, that on rapid wing
Sweep'st along in sportive ring,
Now here, now there, now low, now high,
Chasing keen the painted fly :
Could I skim away with thee
Over land and over sea,
What streams would flow, what cities rise,
What landscape dance before mine eyes ;
First, from England's southern shore,
'Cross the channel we would soar,
And our vent'rous course advance
To the sprightly plains of France ;

* It is now well known this is not the case ; the bird uses its own saliva for this purpose.

Sport among the feathered choir,
On the verdant banks of Loire ;
Skim Garonne's majestic tide,
Where Bordeaux adorns his side ;
'Cross the towering Pyrenees,
'Mid myrtle groves, and orange trees ;
Enter then the wild domain,
Where wolves prowl round the flocks of Spain ;
Where silk-worms spin, and olives grow,
And mules plod surely on and slow ;
Steering thus for many a day,
Far to south our course away,
From Gibraltar's rocky steep
Dashing o'er the foamy deep,
We'd rest at length, our journey o'er,
On sultry Afric's fruitful shore ;
Till vernal gales should gently play,
To waft us on our homeward way.

Another motive I had for presenting the swallow next to the nightingale is, that, as the latter leaves us the end of August, the former quits us in September ; we thus (if we choose to carry our fancy so far) may imagine that the swallow, grieving at the departure

of her sister, is inconsolable for her loss, and at length determines to seek her in other climes; and, having found her, they return together the following spring.

Early in the spring, when the warmth of the sun begins to animate the insect tribe, and to rouse them from their state of torpidity,—when the gnat and beetle change their outward robes, and issue forth upon the wing,—then we may expect to see the swallow returning, after its long migration, from distant lands. Generally, the beginning or middle of April, they have taken up their summer quarters; at first they appear but seldom, flying heavily and slowly, as if exhausted by their long voyage; but as the weather grows warmer, and the supply of insects increases to afford them nourishment, their strength and activity improve.

The food of the swallow consists of insects, which they pursue flying with their mouths open; and during the heat of summer they are for ever on the wing, chasing their prey with amazing swiftness; the insects endeavour to avoid the swallow by windings and turnings, but he is so admirably fitted by nature, that they seldom escape him; for, besides

his great length of wing, he is likewise provided with a long forked tail, which acts as a rudder, enabling him to turn with the greatest rapidity. It is affirmed that the swallow tribe do not come hither for warm weather, nor retire from cold, but because in the summer our air is fuller of fogs and damps than other countries, and for that reason breeds a more numerous variety of insects; and it has happened, when the air has been dry and hot, the insects have died,—in consequence of which, the swallows have perished from want, falling down dead out of the air: the like results occur in cold weather. Thus instinct teaches them to follow their food.

The house or chimney swallow builds a nest with great art and industry, composed of clay, strengthened with straw and horse-hair, and lined with feathers. In this nest the hen lays five or six eggs, and sometimes rears a second brood in the year. This occurs when the parents come early, and the season proves particularly mild, and they pair soon; but should the weather prove severe, or their nests be robbed in the beginning of the season, this important task is frequently deferred to September, when they find a difficulty in rearing even one nest.

At the latter end of September they leave us ; and I have been much amused in watching their motions on the tops of houses, where, for several days previous to their departure, immense flocks have assembled, and, by their twittering notes, flying to and fro from house to house, apparently debating on their intended expedition ; they often reminded me of our members of parliament when any momentous debate was going forward ; and a few birds flying from one flock to the other, seemed like the several deputations from our different companies going to petition our great houses for redress of grievances.

Sometimes the latter broods, being weak, are not in a condition to depart so soon ; it is even ascertained that occasionally they are too feeble to venture till the setting in of winter ; while their parents vainly exhort them to efforts, which instinct assures them they are incapable of performing, in consequence, it frequently happens, that these miserable little families being thus necessitated to remain, both parents and their tender offspring share the same fate, and perish from the severity of the season, and the want of food.

The swallow does not always build in chimneys, sometimes in barns or outbuildings ; and in the warmer parts of Europe, where there are no chimneys, we are told they build in porches, gateways, galleries, and even in open halls.

In speaking of this bird, Mr. White says, “ Five, or six or more feet down the chimney, does this little bird begin to form her nest, about the middle of May, which consists, like that of the house-martin, of a crust or shell, composed of dirt or mud, mixed with short pieces of straw to render it tough and permanent ; with this difference, that whereas the shell of the martin is nearly hemispheric, that of the swallow is open at the top, and like half a deep dish ; this nest is lined with fine grasses and feathers, which are often collected as they float in the air. Wonderful is the address which this adroit bird shews, all day long, in ascending and descending with security through so narrow a pass.

When hovering over the mouth of the funnel, the vibrations of her wings acting on the confined air occasion a rumbling like thunder. It is not improbable that the dam submits to this inconvenient situation, so low in the shaft, in order to secure her

broods from rapacious birds, and particularly from owls, which frequently fall down chimneys, perhaps in attempting to get at these nestlings.

All the summer long is the swallow a most instructive pattern of unwearied industry and affection ; for, from morning to night, while there is a family to be supported, she spends the whole day in skimming close to the ground, and exerting the most sudden turns and quick evolutions. Avenues, and long walks under hedges, and pasture fields, and mown fields, where cattle graze, are her delight, especially if there are trees interspersed ; because in such spots insects most abound. When a fly is taken, a smart snap from her bill is heard, resembling the noise at the shutting of a watch-case ; but the motion of the mandibles is too quick for the eye. The swallow, probably the male bird, is the excubitor to house-martins, and other little birds, announcing the approach of birds of prey ; for as soon as a hawk appears, with a shrill, alarming note, he calls all the swallows and martins about him, who pursue in a body, and buffet and strike their enemy, till they have driven him from their village, darting down from above on his back, and rising in a perpendicular line

in perfect security. This bird also will sound the alarm, and strike at cats when they climb on the roofs of houses, or otherwise approach the nests. Each species of *Hirundo* drinks as it flies along, sipping the surface of the water; but the swallow alone, in general, washes on the wing, by dropping into a pool for many times together; in very hot weather, house-martins and bank-martins dip and wash little.

The swallow is a delicate songster, and, in soft sunny weather, sings both perching and flying on trees in a kind of concert, and on chimney tops; it is also a bold flier, ranging to distant downs and commons, even in windy weather, which the other species seem much to dislike; nay, even frequenting exposed sea-port towns, and making little excursions over the salt water.

Horsemen on wide downs are often closely attended by a little party of swallows for miles together, which plays before and behind them, sweeping around, and collecting all the skulking insects that are roused by the trampling of the horses' feet; when the wind blows hard, without this expedient,

they are often forced to settle to pick up their lurking prey. After this circumstantial detail of the life and discerning *στοργη* of the swallow, I shall add, for your further amusement, an anecdote or two not much in favour of her sagacity.

“ A certain swallow built, for two years together, on the handles of a pair of garden-shears that were stuck up against the boards in an out-house, and, therefore, must have her nest spoiled whenever that implement was wanted : and, what is stranger still, another bird, of the same species, built its nest on the wings and body of an owl, that happened by some accident to hang dead and dry from the rafter of a barn. This owl, with the nest on its wings, and with eggs in the nest, was brought as a curiosity worthy the most elegant private museum in Great Britain. The owner, struck with the oddity of the sight, furnished the bringer with a large shell, or conch, desiring him to fix it just where the owl hung. The person did as he was ordered ; and, the next year, a pair, probably the same pair, built their nest in the conch, and laid their eggs.

“ The owl and the conch make a grotesque appear-

ance, and are not the least curious specimens in that wonderful collection of art and nature.”*

It is said that most birds have movements peculiar to the season of love : thus, the swallow sweeps over the surface of the ground and water, endeavouring, by his rapid turns and evolutions, to captivate some favourite fair.

It is well known that the feathered race were particularly esteemed by the Greeks, almost every bird being consecrated to some god ; but those which were not so dedicated were, nevertheless, hallowed and associated in the pleasing change in the seasons. At Rhodes, the swallow was greeted in songs as the harbinger of spring. Troops of children were to be seen carrying this bird from house to house, chanting their simple ditty, and receiving provisions in return for the amusement they imparted.

* Sir Ashton Lever’s museum.

The swallow is come !
The swallow is come !
O fair are the seasons, and light
Are the days that she brings,
With her dusky wings,
And her bosom snowy white.
And wilt thou not dole,
 From the wealth that is thine,
The fig, and the bowl
 Of rosy wine,
And the wheaten meal, and the basket of cheese,
And the omelet cake, which is known to please
The swallow, that comes to the Rhodian land ?
Say, must we begone with an empty hand ;
 Or shall we receive
 The gift that we crave ?
If you give, it is well ;
But beware if you fail,
Nor hope that we'll leave thee ;
Of all we'll bereave thee.
We'll bear off the door,
 Or the posts from the floor,
Or we'll seize thy young wife who is sitting within,
Whose form is so airy, so light, and so thin,

And as lightly, be sure, will we bear her away—
Then look that thy gifts be ample to-day ;
And open the door, open the door,
 To the swallow open the door !
No greybeards are we
To be foil'd in our glee ;
But boys who will have our will
This day,
But boys who will have our will.

In Wilson's " American Ornithology," he mentions two different kinds of this bird, the bank-swallow or sand-martin, and the barn-swallow, a short account of each I take the liberty of extracting. *Hirundo Riparia*,—Linn. (bank-swallow, or sand-martin.)

He says, " This appears to be the most sociable with its kind, and the least intimate with man, of all our swallows, living together in large communities of sometimes three or four hundred. On the high sandy bank of a river, quarry, or gravel pit, at a foot or two from the surface, they commonly scratch out holes for their nests, running them in a horizontal direction to the depth of two, and sometimes three feet. Several of these holes are often within a few

inches of each other, and extend in various strata along the front of the precipice, sometimes for eighty or one hundred yards. At the extremity of this hole, a little fine dry grass, with a few large downy feathers, form the bed on which their eggs, generally five in number, and pure white, are deposited. The young are hatched late in May; and here I have taken notice of the common crow, in parties of four or five, watching at the entrance of these holes, to seize the first straggling young that should make its appearance.

“From the clouds of swallows that usually play round these breeding places, they remind one, at a distance, of a swarm of bees.

“This bird appears to be in nothing different from the European species; from which circumstance, and its early arrival here, I would conjecture that it passes to a high northern latitude on both continents. *Hirundo Americana*, (barn-swallow.) There are but few persons in the United States unacquainted with this gay, innocent, and active little bird. Indeed, the whole tribe are so distinguished from the rest of small birds, by their sweeping rapidity of flight, their peculiar aerial evolutions of wing over our fields and rivers, and through our very streets,

from morning to night, that the light of heaven itself, the sky, the trees, or any other common objects of nature, are not better known than the swallows. We welcome their first appearance with delight, as the faithful harbingers and companions of flowery spring and ruddy summer; and when, after a long, frost-bound, and boisterous winter, we hear it announced that "The swallows are come,"—what a train of charming ideas are associated with the simple tidings! The wonderful activity displayed by these birds forms a striking contrast to the slow habits of most other animals. It may be fairly questioned, whether, among the whole feathered tribes which Heaven has formed to adorn this part of creation, there be any that, in the same space of time, pass over an equal extent of surface with the swallow. Let a person take his stand, on a fine summer evening, by a new-mown field, meadow, or river shore, for a short time, and, among the numerous individuals of this tribe that flit before him, fix his eye on a particular one, and follow, for a while, all its circuitous labyrinths, its extensive sweeps, its sudden, rapidly-reiterated zig-zag excursions, little inferior to the lightning itself, and then attempt, by the powers of mathematics to calculate the length of the various lines it describes.

Alas ! even his omnipotent fluxions would avail him little here, and he would soon abandon the task in despair. Yet, that some definite conception may be formed of this extent, let us suppose that this bird flies, in his usual way, at the rate of one mile in a minute, which, from the many experiments I have made, I believe to be within the truth ; and that he is so engaged for ten hours every day ; and, further, that his life is extended to ten years, (many of our small birds being known to live much longer, even in a state of domestication,) the amount of all these, allowing three hundred and sixty-five days to a year, would give us two million one hundred and ninety thousand miles ; upwards of eighty-seven times the circumference of the globe ! Yet this little winged seraph, if I may so speak, who, in a few days, and at will, can pass from the borders of the arctic regions to the torrid zone, is forced, when winter approaches, to descend to the bottoms of lakes, rivers, and mill-ponds, to bury itself in the mud with eels and snapping turtles, or to creep ingloriously into a cavern, a rat-hole, or a hollow tree, there to doze, with snakes, toads, and other reptiles, until the return of spring ! Is not this true, ye wise men of Europe and America, who have published so many *credible*

narratives on this subject? The geese, the ducks, the cat-bird, and even the wren, which creeps about our out-houses in summer, like a mouse, are all acknowledged to be migratory, and to pass to southern regions at the approach of winter. The swallow alone, on whom Heaven has conferred superior powers of wing, must sink in torpidity at the bottom of our rivers, or doze all the winter in the caverns of the earth. I am myself something of a traveller, and foreign countries afford many novel sights. Should I assert that, in some of my peregrinations, I had met with a nation of Indians, all of whom, old and young, at the commencement of cold weather, descend to the bottom of their lakes and rivers, and there remain until the breaking up of frost; nay, should I affirm, that thousands of people in the neighbourhood of this city regularly undergo the same semi-annual submersion,—that I myself had fished up a whole family of these from the bottom of Schuylkill, where they had lain *torpid* all winter, carried them home, and brought them all comfortably to themselves again—should I even publish this in the learned pages of the *Transactions* of our Philosophical Society, who would believe me? Is, then, the organization of a swallow less delicate than

that of a man? Can a bird, whose vital functions are destroyed by a short privation of pure air, and its usual food, sustain, for six months, a situation where the most robust man would perish in a few hours or minutes? Away with such absurdities! they are unworthy of a serious refutation. I should be pleased to meet with a man who has been personally more conversant with birds than myself, who has followed them in their wide and devious routes—studied their various manners—mingled with and marked their peculiarities more than I have done; yet the miracle of a resuscitated swallow, in the depth of winter, from the bottom of a mill-pond, is, I confess, a phenomenon in ornithology that I have never met with.”

From my own observations I have reason to think swallows are very affectionate to each other; and the following verses were written on the occasion of a gentleman having thoughtlessly shot one of those harmless little creatures:—

The burning noon was on the hill,
The herds had sought the shade,
And nature, motionless and still,
In slumb'ring bliss was laid.

But still, along the cooler lake,
Where flash'd the waters bright,
I marked the sportive swallows take
Their race of wild delight.

Now high in air, I saw them fling
Their many-circling sweep—
Now, stooping, brush with rapid wing
The bosom of the deep.

Beside the bank, intent to kill,
I marked their frolic game,
And oft with too successful skill
I took the deadly aim.

Upon the glossy mirror spread,
My bleeding victims lay—
In one short pang for ever fled
Their reckless summer's day.

But one at length, less quickly slain,
With broken pinion fell ;
With life enough to feel his pain,
And scream his wild farewell ;

And, as his dying struggles broke
The all unruffled tide,
His voice in keen reproaches spoke,
The barbarous sport to chide.

A *swallow*, that, in frolic way,
Was gaily glancing by,
Mark'd where the wounded sufferer lay,
And heard his piercing cry.

Sudden he check'd his swift career,
To pity's summons true ;
And back, his drooping mate to cheer,
With rapid wheel he flew.

Then hov'ring, twittering, strove in vain
The wounded bird to raise ;
And, soften'd by his friendly pain,
I turn'd awhile to gaze.

He touch'd his beak, he rais'd his head,
Then slowly flew before,
And back returned, and gently led,
To strive to gain the shore.

Exerting all his failing strength,
Cheered by his friendly guide,
The wounded swallow reach'd, at length,
The rushy bank,—and died.

But still around his comrade threw
His ever-wheeling flight ;
Nor join'd again the frolic crew,
That skimm'd the waters bright.

Surpris'd and touch'd, I flung aside
The murder-dealing gun—
And “ Not in vain, fond bird,” I cried,
“ Thy deed of love is done.

“ Full many a swallow, sav'd by thee,
Shall urge its swift career—
And taste its harmless pleasures, free
From danger as from fear.

“ To me a moral lesson be,
With thoughts of thee to read,
And shame the race that heartless see,
A suffering brother's need ;

“ In selfish pleasure’s wild career,
Shall teach me still to shew,
That pity’s voice, like thee, I hear,
And stoop to others’ woe.

“ To raise the fall’n, in sorrow’s hour,
To save a sinking friend—
And when to save exceeds my pow’r,
Support and comfort lend.”

I hope my readers are, by this time, disposed to acknowledge that the poor swallow is not unworthy a place among the more favoured of the feathered race. The illustrative drawing was taken from one I had been watching in all his evolutions round a piece of water in the neighbourhood of Carshalton, last autumn, where, seated upon a bank, at a little distance, I had vainly endeavoured to follow, with my eye, his rapidly-reiterated turnings ; but, finding my head turn giddy, I soon gave up the attempt. As sufficient has already been said in praise of this migrator, and many may, perhaps, wish him to wing his way to other regions, I will dismiss him, in the words of the poet—

Away—away !—why dost thou linger here,
When all thy fellows o'er the sea have pass'd ?
Wert thou the earliest comer of the year,
Loving our land, and so dost stay the last ?
Hears't thou no warning in the autumnal blast ?
And is the sound of groaning streams unheard ?
Dost thou not see the woods are fading fast,
Whilst the dull leaves with wailful winds are stirr'd ?
Haste,—haste to other climes, thou solitary bird !

Thy coming was in lovelier skies—thy wing,
Long wearied, rested in delightful bowers ;
Thou camest when the living breath of spring,
Had filled the world with gladness and with flowers !
Sky-ward the carolling lark no longer towers—
Alone we hear the robin's pensive lay ;
And from the sky of beauty darkness lowers :
Thy coming was with hope, but thou dost stay
'Midst melancholy thoughts that dwell upon decay.

Blessed are they who have before thee fled !
Theirs have been all the pleasures of the prime ;
Like those who die before their joys are dead,
Leaving a lovely for a lovelier clime,

Soaring to beautiful worlds on wings sublime,
Whilst thou dost mind me of their doom severe,
Who live to feel the winter of their time;
Who linger on, till not a friend is near—
Then fade into the grave—and go without a fear.

HOWITT.

I had almost forgotten to notice another species of swallow (*Hirundo Esculenta*) which is found on the coast of China. I have been informed by a friend, who has seen some of them, that these birds, at their pairing time, travel from the interior of the country to the sea coast, building their nests among the rocks. These nests are composed of some gelatinous substance, supposed to be the slimy matter caused by the dashing of the waves against the rocks, and the spawn of fish; in this singular nest, the hen lays four or five eggs, but even in such apparently secure asylums the poor birds feel the tyranny of man in robbing them of their habitations, the nests being considered great delicacies by the Chinese, who put them in their soups as we do vermicelli. They watch the poor bird's daily toil, almost with savage joy, and when she expects to reap the reward of all

her labour and anxiety, in the pleasure of tending and rearing her little family, her nest is torn from the rock, where she had hoped it had been securely placed beyond the reach of man, and carried to the East Indies, to feast the palate of some epicure.

My friend told me he had seen immense quantities sold at extravagant prices, and once he had a large basket-full sent him a present, as part of his sea store, and the donor considered she was paying him the highest compliment; but his taste was not *sufficiently refined* to benefit by her kind attention.

THE WINGED WORSHIPPERS.*

Gay, guiltless pair,
What seek ye from the fields of Heaven?
Ye have no need of prayer,—
Ye, who have no sins to be forgiven.

Why perch ye here,
Where mortals to their Maker bend,
Can your pure spirits fear
The God ye never could offend?

* These lines were written on the occasion of two swallows flying into a church during Divine service.

Ye never knew
The crimes for which we come to weep ;
Penance is not for you,
Blessed wanderers of the upper deep.

To you 'tis given
To make sweet nature's untaught lays ;
Beneath the arch of heaven,
To chirp away a life of praise.

Then spread each wing
Far, far above, o'er lakes and lands,
And join the choirs that sing
In yon blue dome, not reared with hands.

Or, if ye stay
To note the consecrated hour,
Teach me the airy way,
And let me try your envied power.

Above the crowd,
On upward wings could I but fly,
I'd bathe in yon bright cloud,
And seek the stars that gem the sky.

'Twere Heaven indeed,
Through fields of trackless light to soar,
On Nature's charms to feed,
And Nature's own great God adore.

SPRAGUE.

EVENING.

Hush, ye songsters ! day is done ;
See how sweet the setting sun
Gilds the welkin's boundless breast,
Smiling as he sinks to rest.
Now the swallow down the dell,
Issuing from her noontide cell,
Mocks the deffest marksman's aim,
Tumbling in fantastic game.
Sweet inhabitants of air !
Sure thy bosom holds no care ;
Not the fowler, full of wrath,
Skilful in the deeds of death ;
Not the darting hawk on high,
Ruthless tyrant of the sky,
Owns one art of cruelty

Fit to fell or fether thee,
Gayest, freest of the free,
Reeling, whistling shrill on high,
Where yon turrets kiss the sky ;
Teasing, with thy idle din,
Drowsy daws at rest within ;
Long thou lov'st to sport and spring
On thy never-wearying wing.
Lower now, 'midst foliage cool,
Swift thou skim'st the peaceful pool,
Where the speckled trout at play,
Rising, shares thy dancing prey,
While the treacherous circles swell,
Wide and wider where it fell ;
Guiding sure the angler's arm
Where to find the finny swarm ;
How, with artificial fly,
Best to lure the victim's eye,
Till, emerging from the brook,
Brisk it bites the barbed hook ;
Tugging, in unequal strife,
With its death, disguised as life,
Till it breathless beats the shore,
Ne'er to cleave the current more.

Peace ! creation's gloomy queen,
Darkest Night, invests the scene ;
Silence, Evening's hand-maid mild,
Leaves her home amid the wild ;
Tripping soft, with dewy feet,
Summer's flowery carpet sweet,
Morpheus' drowsy power to meet.

Ruler of the midnight hour,
In thy plenitude of power,
From this burdened bosom throw,
Half its leaden load of woe !
Let thy cheerless suppliant see.
Dreams of bliss, inspired by thee,
Let before his wandering eyes
Fancy's fairest visions rise ;
Long lost happiness restore,—
None can need thy bounty more !

COMMON LINNET.

Fringilla Linaria Cannabina.

“ The rose upon the briar, by the waters running clear,
 May have charms for the linnet, or the bee ;
 Their little loves are blest, and their little hearts at rest,
 But my true love is parted from me.”

BURNS.

PERHAPS there are few small birds more deserving our admiration than this sweet songster, which is by many persons preferred to all others for the house, from its possessing a peculiarly fine note of its own, not requiring to be taught, although, where it is desired, this bird will readily learn the song of any other ; it may likewise be taught to whistle or pipe any simple tune ; but the natural note of this lovely harmonist is so exquisitely sweet and melodious, that no person possessing any genuine taste would



wish to deprive it of what nature has so lavishly bestowed upon it.

The linnet usually builds in a thick bush or hedge, sometimes among gorse, making a pretty nest, composed of bents, dried weeds and stubble, closely matted together, and lined with fine soft wool, mixed with the down gathered from thistles and other plants, sewn together, as it were, with horse-hair. In this nice warm nest the hen lays four or five eggs, the young ones making their appearance in April, or beginning of May. These lovely warblers, in their wild state, are exceedingly handsome, the crown of the head and the breast being of a fine crimson; but in captivity they have only their music to recommend them, as their plumage never acquires that brilliancy of colouring, but continues of a dull brown. They are by many considered difficult to tame, though one I have at this time will eat out of my hand, and sings perched on my desk, while I am drawing, and appears delighted when I talk to him, beguiling many tedious hours of the day by his melodious notes. This sweet bird came into my possession in rather a singular way, the relation

of which may not be altogether uninteresting to my readers.

Last summer, a few friends proposed a pic-nic party to spend the day in the neighbourhood of Hampton Court ; and, our object being to enjoy the pure country air, after putting up our various carriages, from a poney-chaise to a landau, we strolled through the fields along the winding stream, till the air and exercise having had more effect on our appetites than all the medicine of the pharmacopœia could have had, compelled us to seek a spot where we might be sheltered from the heat of the sun ; preferring our sandwiches, seated on the richly enamelled carpet under the ultramarine canopy provided for us by our provident Father, to returning to the inn. We had not much difficulty in finding such a spot : a spreading oak protected us from the sun ; and our wine, immersed in the running stream by our side, was as cool as if it had just been taken out of the ice-house. Two or three of the party were very musical, and had brought with them two flutes and a guitar for the purpose of amusing their friends ; but while we were partaking of our refreshments

we were most delightfully regaled with the sweetest strains I ever heard, from innumerable feathered choristers. Having concluded our repast, we wandered about, some searching for plants, others watching the fish as they jumped above the water to catch the flies, and a few reclined beneath a spreading ash, as if "lost in lonely musing, in the dream confused, of careless solitude," when our ears were again delighted with the music of the groves; a hundred voices seemed to join in concert, but there was no singing out of tune, or out of time; the quivering voice was heard warbling the varying notes, and "the woodlands round, applied their choir, and winds and waters flowed in consonance."

My friends who had brought their instruments returned them to their cases, ashamed to contend with such heaven-taught performers; and as we strolled about, sometimes picking blackberries or wild flowers, I fancied I heard a doleful chirping of a bird. Having looked about for a considerable time without ascertaining whence the sound proceeded, at length I discovered the remains of a bird's nest scattered about; it instantly occurred to me that some cruel boy had wantonly robbed a poor

bird of her little ones, and perhaps, not satisfied with having achieved the act of robbery, had added that of murder, by leaving them to perish with hunger and cold. Following the track where the pieces of nest had been thrown at intervals, it led me to a furze bush, where I soon found a poor little linnet, but in a very woeful plight; one of its wings seemed much injured, which prevented its flying. It appeared to be a bird of about a month old, but was in such a weak state that there seemed little chance of its living. My friends laughed at the idea of my taking it to nurse, but I determined to give it a chance for life, which it could not have if left there; accordingly, making a rather clumsy, but warm nest for my little invalid, he was placed in it. I fed him at first with sop and scalded rape seed; in about a fortnight his appearance was much improved, and in a month he was quite convalescent. When he could fly, he became very wild, but by degrees got more tame, and soon began to warble a little. At Christmas, he was in full song, and, by his music all the winter, has repaid me for my care and kindness to him. Mornings and evenings his strains are the sweetest; they sound to me like the overflowings of

a grateful heart offering up praise and thanksgiving to the throne of grace.

I find the following observation on these sweet birds in a note to Wilson's Ornithology, by Sir W. Jardine :—"Every person who has lived much in the country, must have often remarked the common European linnets congregating towards the close of a fine winter's evening, perched on the summit of some bare tree, pluming themselves in the last rays of the sun, chirruping the commencement of their evening song, and then bursting simultaneously into one general chorus, again resuming their single strains, and again joining,—as if happy, and rejoicing at the termination of their day's employment."

Linnets are great washers. In the coldest days this winter, my birds have immersed themselves in water three or four times every week, splashing it about till every feather was wet. They never seemed to take cold from it; but a canary, which took a fancy to follow their example, caught cold in consequence, and had to be nursed, kept very warm, and, for several mornings, to have a portion of water-cress.

My country rambles recalled to my remembrance

the following exquisitely descriptive lines by one who writes so true to nature,—I think there are few equal to Montgomery in their delineations :—

Birds, the free tenants of land, air, and ocean,
Their forms all symmetry, their motions grace ;
In plumage delicate and beautiful,
Thick, without burden, close as fishes' scales,
Or loose as full-blown poppies to the breeze ;
With wings that might have had a soul within them,
They bore their owners with such sweet enchant-
ment :

Birds, small and great, of endless shapes and colours,
Here flew and perched, there swam and dived, at
pleasure,

Watchful and agile, uttering voices wild
And harsh, yet in accordance with the waves
Upon the beach, the winds in caverns moaning,
Or winds and waves abroad upon the water,
Some sought their food among the finny shoals,
Swift darting from the clouds, emerging soon
With slender captives glittering in their beaks ;—
These in recesses of steep craigs constructed
Their eyries inaccessible, and trained

Their hardy broods to forage in all weathers ;
Others, more gorgeously apparell'd, dwelt
Among the woods, on nature's dainties feeding,
Herbs, seeds, and roots ; or, ever on the wing,
Pursuing insects through the boundless air ;
In hollow trees or thickets these concealed
Their exquisitely-woven nests, where lay
Their callow offspring, quiet as the down
On their own breasts, till from her search the dam,
With laden bill, returned, and shared the meal
Among her clamorous suppliants, all agape ;
Then, cowering o'er them with expanded wings,
She felt how sweet it is to be a mother :
Of these, a few, with melody untaught,
Turned all the air to music, within hearing,
Themselves unseen ; while bolder quiristers,
On loftiest branches, strained their clarion pipes,
And made the forest echo to their screams
Discordant,—yet there was no discord there,
But temper'd harmony ; all tones combining,
In the rich confluence of ten thousand tongues,
To tell of joy, and to inspire it. Who
Could hear such concert, and not join in chorus ?
Not I. Sometimes, entranced, I seemed to float

Upon a buoyant sea of sounds ; again,
With curious ear, I tried to disentangle
The maze of voices, and, with eye as nice,
To single out each minstrel, and pursue
His little song through all its labyrinth
Till my soul entered into him, and felt
Every vibration of his thrilling throat,
Pulse of his heart, and flutter of his pinions.
Often, as one among the multitude,
I sang from very fulness of delight ;
Now like a winged fisher of the sea,
Now a recluse among the woods,—enjoying
The bliss of all at once, or each in turn.

There are other varieties of the linnet, but the *Fringilla Linaria Cannabina* is the one kept for its song. The green linnet, or rather greenfinch, is kept by bird-catchers about London as a call-bird. The lesser red-pole, another variety, (*Fringilla Linaria Pusilla*,) is a very pretty, lively bird, and, to my fancy, has a very sweet note, though it is not much valued in general ; but, as I intend to honour him with a place in this work, it is needless to say anything about him here.

Should any of my fair readers be so unfortunate as to lose a favourite bird, I here present her with a few lines to inscribe as a memento :—

ON THE DEATH OF A FAVOURITE LINNET.

Silent and cold, beneath this mould,
A lovely linnet lies ;
And now no more, as heretofore,
With neighbour Dickie vies.
His little throat, with many a note,
Once charm'd the ravish'd ear,
While wanton plays, and pretty ways,
Made every note more dear.
His early song was loud and long,
His ev'ning lays the same ;
Cheerful and gay, he past the day
Without reproach or blame.
But what defence was innocence,
Or music's softest airs,
Against a fate that, soon or late,
Nor lord nor linnet spares ?

Vain man ! be wise ; before your eyes
Keep still your latter end ;
The life of Lin was free from sin,—
Yours, pray in time amend.

THE GREEN LINNET.

The May is come again :—how sweet
To sit upon my orchard-seat !
And birds and flowers once more to greet,
My last year's friends together :
My thoughts they all by turns employ ;
A whispering leaf is now my joy,
And then a bird will be the toy
That doth my fancy tether.

One have I marked, the happiest guest
In all this covert of the blest :
Hail to thee, far above the rest
In joy of voice and pinion,

Thou, Linnet ! in thy green array,
Presiding spirit here to-day,
Dost lead the revels of the May,
 And this is thy dominion.

While birds, and butterflies, and flowers,
Make all one band of paramours,
Thou, ranging up and down the bowers,
 Art sole in thy employment ;
A life, a presence, like the air,
Scattering thy gladness without care,
Too bless'd with any one to pair,
 Thyself thy own enjoyment.

Upon yon tuft of hazel trees,
That twinkle to the gusty breeze,
Behold him perch'd in ecstasies,
 Yet seeming still to hover ;
There ! where the flutter of his wings
Upon his back and body flings
Shadows and sunny glimmerings
 That cover him all over.

While thus before my eyes he gleams,
A brother of the leaves he seems ;
When, in a moment, forth he teems
 His little song in gushes :
As if it pleas'd him to disdain
And mock the form which he did feign,
While he was dancing with the train
 Of leaves among the bushes.

WORDSWORTH.

LESSER REDPOLE.

Fringilla Linaria.

AMONG my most especial favourites, this interesting little bird ranks in a very high degree. It builds much in the same manner as the common linnet, and although its song is very simple, its engaging little actions, and sprightly, spirited manœuvres, render it a favourite wherever it is kept. The plumage, likewise, is exceedingly pretty; the top of the head and breast are of a fine shining deep crimson; a black spot, like a stock, under the throat gives it a smart appearance, which, contrasted with its deep yellow beak, bright brown back and sides, and the most beautiful large intelligent eye, that, to my fancy, few birds surpass it in plumage; the legs are of a shining black, and, being rather short and thick, look like a person with black gloves on. Its constant call of “peweeet,” and “creec, creec hewid,” is in such a sweet soft tone, so much like a baby when it

first begins to imitate sounds, that it is impossible not to be amused by it. When let to fly about a room, it is one of the most entertaining and courageous little creatures. One that I have will fight with birds twice his size, and is so saucy and independent that, after well dusting himself, he always flies and perches directly over some other bird, while he shakes the sand out of his feathers, as if he did it on purpose to annoy. Like the goldfinch, the redpole is easily taught many amusing tricks. In a cage, it is constantly in motion, running along the perch, and turning with a rapidity, as if he were waltzing. Bechstein observes—"The mutual tenderness of the male and female is very pleasing; they are continually caressing each other with their bills, and even do the same to siskins, linnets, goldfinches, and canaries, from which it appears very likely that they would pair with these birds." The redpole is a great duster, and will, for half an hour at a time, flutter and shake the sand about him in a shower, when he is out of his cage. The red on the top of his head, in confinement, is perfectly smooth, but when at liberty, he erects it, like the jay, which gives him a very knowing look.

According to the American Ornithology, this bird is an inhabitant of the northern countries, appearing in the Genesee country, with the first deep snow; hence they have acquired the title of snow-birds. It extends throughout all the northern parts of Europe, in the remote wilds of Russia, and Kamtschatka: they are abundant in the Highlands of Scotland, sometimes building on the tops of the heath, and sometimes in a furze bush, like the linnet, and occasionally on the ground, and, like that bird, the nest is composed of felt-work.

This beautiful bird has not escaped the epicurean taste of the *bons vivans* of America; from becoming extremely fat, it is there considered a great delicacy, hundreds being destroyed to supply the market of Philadelphia. When will man learn to moderate his appetite! This is almost as bad as Heliogabalus' feasting upon Nightingale's *tongues*.

THE SNOW BIRD.

Say, pretty stranger-bird, where is thy home?

In a lonely dell, or on mountain top?

Are its walls of ice, with a snowy dome,

Bespangled with many a crystal drop?

Then why, little wanderer, leave thy home ?

Thou lovest to dwell in the frozen north,
Whence the chilling frost and the tempest come
To herald thy way as thou goest forth.

Is thy food of the pearly dew congeal'd :

Has the fearful avalanche charms for thee,
Or why dost thou slumber so long concealed,
When Spring has smiled gaily on bush and tree ?

Sprite of the storm, or a mischievous fay,

We woo thee not back with thy dreaded train,
Thou mayest not linger ;—away, away !
We ask no part in thy wintry reign.

My home is the northern pole,
Where winter reigns with dread control ;
Yet I would never, never roam
From this dear spot, this happy home.

My nest is of the sparkling ice ;
The frost arranged the quaint device—
It shines with gems of every hue,
For ever bright, for ever new.

I love to hear the torrent pour,
And listen to the storm's wild roar ;
This is the music, soft and sweet,
That lulls me in my lone retreat.

My food the same kind hand supplies,
That hears the raven when it cries ;
That tender hand, that power divine,
Ordained my fate as well as thine.

I crave no song, or painted wing,
Nor envy you the breath of spring ;
More dear to me the mountain snow,
Than all the richest flowers that blow.

Each sad allotment hath its joy,
And every pleasure much alloy ;
Then learn of me ; I murmur not,
Nor mourn my cold, my hapless lot.

S. S.

THE CANARY BIRD.

Fringilla Canaria.

Hark ! the numbers, soft and clear
 Gently steal upon the ear :
 Now louder, and yet louder rise,
 And fill with spreading sounds the skies.

THIS delightful songster, which is now almost naturalized to our climate, was brought into Europe about the fourteenth century, and, for many years, was sold for high prices, but they are now so easily bred in England, that few persons who are partial to birds are without one or two of these interesting little creatures, which now may be obtained at moderate prices.

The canary is, without doubt, the most elegantly-formed of our cage birds : the exquisite symmetry of its make, and the delicacy of its plumage, would render it a favourite ; but when, in addition to these,



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is added its clear and melodious note, continuing for some time in one breath without intermission, then raising it higher and higher, gradually, with great variety and sweetness, who is there that will not accord it a just share of admiration? By many persons it is esteemed next to the nightingale; and, from its singing throughout the year, its mild and docile nature, I think there are few birds so desirable for the house. It is likewise capable of acquiring, not only the song of other birds, but also of learning, with great exactness, any simple tune that it hears played on an instrument in a room where it is kept.

This interesting little foreigner is remarkably sociable, readily pairing with the linnet, the goldfinch, and sometimes with the chaffinch; and, in the building of its nest, evinces the greatest taste and discrimination in the selection of the various materials placed in its way for that purpose: and most delightful and amusing is it to see the workings of Nature exemplified by these little creatures in the choice of their mates, hatching and rearing their offspring, and the impassioned ardour exhibited by the male bird, in assisting his mate in selecting materials for her nest, in arranging them for her accommoda-

tion, in procuring food for their young, and in chaunting his sweetest, softest, and most amorous strain, to amuse her during the important business she has undertaken.

The method of training the young birds to the imitation of instruments, or the whistling of tunes, is thus described by Dr. Bechstein :—“ No sooner have the young canaries reached the thirteenth or fourteenth day than they begin to warble ; and as these pretty interesting birds are so docile as to neglect entirely their natural song, and to imitate the harmony of our instruments, it is necessary immediately to separate from his companions, and from every other bird, the young one which is to be instructed, by putting him aside, in a cage which is at first covered with a piece of linen, and afterwards with a darker cover. The air which is to be taught should be performed five or six times a day, especially in the evening and morning, either by whistling, or on a flageolet, or bird organ. He will acquire it more or less readily in from two to six months, according to his abilities and memory. If his separation from the other birds be delayed beyond the fourteenth day, he will retain some part of

his father's song, which he will always intermingle with his acquired air, and, consequently, never perform it perfectly."

Most persons admire birds thus educated; but where they have so fine a natural song as the canary has, those who prefer nature to art give the preference to the self-instructed songster; and I must confess I am one of the latter. The plumage of the canary varies from that of deep yellow to the palest primrose. The delicacy of its appearance, and the docility of its nature, render it a fit emblem of youth and innocence; like the beautiful and sweet-scented primrose, the dress of the canary has no splendid colours to attract attention, but, like that flower, its delicacy of appearance, and native loveliness, insure our regards. It may be compared to a young and spotless maiden, whose chief attraction is her purity and innocence.

How capable this sweet warbler is of soothing the feelings of one whose heart had not been corrupted by an intercourse with the world, may be inferred from the following exquisite lines to a favourite canary bird, by Fawcett:—

Must thou, sweet bird, no more thy master cheer?
No more shall I thine artless chauntings hear!
Oh, skill'd in music's pure simplicity,
How have my tranquil hours been blest by thee!
When tir'd with efforts of laborious thought,
Sooth'd were my languors by thy sprightly note;
When borne, on Poesy's swift-sailing wing,
To some fair scene, all paradise and spring,
List'ning to thee, I felt a scene more fair,
And, with a wilder transport, wander'd there;
When (by dark threat'ning clouds a captive made)
I sigh'd for vernal scene and vocal shade,
While thy domestic warblings chas'd my spleen
I miss'd nor vocal shade, nor vernal scene.
Each day I listened to thy varied song,
Pleas'd with the labours of thy little tongue;
Sweet was thy song when morning shed its ray,
Sweet was thy song when evening clos'd the day;
When care oppress'd me, thou couldst bid it
 flee;
When friends were far, I found a friend in thee.
The most melodious dweller in the grove,
Ne'er told, in notes so soft, its artless love.

Well knows the clear-toned blackbird how to sing,
And with sweet sounds to hail the welcome spring ;
Charm'd with the song, the silent swain, the while,
Leans on his staff, and listens with a smile ;
Yet must the jetty songster's sweetest note
Yield to the strains that tremble in thy throat.
Oft have I mark'd the active skylark rise,
On soaring wings, ambitious of the skies ;
Oft have I stood the ascending song to hear,
Till the last songster lessen'd into air ;
Much have I prais'd the lively melody—
But more I prize the notes that flow from thee !
When the fall'n sun but faintly streaks the sky,
And softer colours soothe the pensive eye ;
The plaining chantress of the night I love,
Warbling her sadness to the silent grove ;
Thro' the calm air the lone mellifluous song
Pours its full tide of harmony along ;
Low it begins, while all is hush'd around,
And gently steals from silence into sound ;
With gradual rise ascends the skilful lay,
Prolongs the liquid swell, and slowly melts away ;
Sweet is the strain, as Hammond's tender line,
Dear is the song—but not so dear as thine !

That true lover of nature, whose whole life was devoted to exploring its beauties and wonders, observed, in his Natural History of Selborne—" Might not canary birds be naturalized to this climate, provided their eggs were put, in the spring, into the nests of some of their congenors, as goldfinches, greenfinches, &c.? Before winter, perhaps, they might be hardened, and able to shift for themselves." Mr. Blythe, in a note, adds, " I have once or twice seen canary finches flying about loose during the summer months, which had of course made their escape from confinement : but they are too unsuspecting, too easily entrapped, to stand any chance against the snares that are always laid for them ; they are sure to come down instantly to the call of a bird of their own species. A canary, in the vicinity of my residence, was one evening observed to fly direct to a hole in a dry bank—a warm, but rather a singular roosting place ; it was soon captured."

It would be truly desirable, were it possible, to adorn our groves with these lady-like birds ; for, to my fancy, they are the nobles of the feathered race. I fear, however, they are too timid and gentle to live wild among the *John Bull* birds of our woods and

forests. They add much to the beauty of a conservatory or green-house, when they are allowed to fly at large in them, instead of being caged."

I was staying, a few years since, with a friend who was equally partial to birds and plants, but would never suffer her feathered favourites to be confined in a cage, allowing them the range of her green-house. It was delightful to see how happy the little creatures seemed; it appeared like a fairy scene, many having built their nests among the larger plants. My friend told me these sweet warblers, thus at liberty, afforded her more pleasure, and were a greater acquisition to the appearance of her green-house than the most splendid plant, and that any damage occasioned by them was so trifling as scarcely to be worth naming; that they often saved the trouble of having the plants smoked, to destroy the insects, keeping them quite clear of those little green flies which are so destructive to many shrubs. The male canary is a pattern of paternal care and solicitude, for it frequently happens that the female will be ready to hatch a second brood before the first are forward enough to quit the nest; knowing that

her mate will undertake the charge of the family entrusted to his care, she leaves them, to prepare another nest for her forthcoming brood, when the male bird, faithful to his charge, feeds and protects the little family with the greatest tenderness and assiduity, continuing with them till they are capable of providing for themselves. How truly Thomson describes the separation of the young birds from their parents in the following sweet lines :—

But now the feather'd youth their former bounds,
Ardent, disdain, and, weighing oft their wings,
Demand the free possession of the sky ;
This one glad office more, and then dissolves
Paternal love at once, now needless grown—
Unlavish *Wisdom* never works in vain.
'Tis on some evening, sunny, grateful, mild,
When nought but balm is breathing through the
 woods
With yellow lustre bright, that the new tribes
Visit the spacious heavens, and look abroad
On Nature's common, far as they can see,
Or wing their range and pasture. O'er the boughs

Dancing about, still at the giddy verge
Their resolutions fail; their pinions still,
In loose vibration stretch'd, to trust the void,
Trembling, refuse, till down before them fly
The parent guides, and chide, exhort, command,
Or push them off. The surging air receives
The plummy burden; and their self-taught wings
Winnow the waving element. On ground
Alighted, bolder up again they lead,
Further and further on, the lengthening flight,
Till vanish every fear, and every power
Rous'd into life and action, light in air
Th' acquitted parents see their soaring race,
And, once rejoicing, never know them more.

The dear little warbler whose likeness I have endeavoured to delineate, was one reared in a cage, but allowed his liberty whenever he chose to go out, the door being always left open. He was so familiar, that at breakfast time he used to sit upon my shoulder, and partake of my morning meal from my mouth, after which he usually flew out at the window to regale himself with the morning air, perching upon

a beautiful *arbutus canariensis* (strawberry tree) that grew on the lawn near the house. Here he would sing until hunger sent him home, when he instantly returned to his cage, where he would continue the remainder of the day. I observed, that although he would peck the fruit on this beautiful tree, he never seemed actually to eat it, but appeared to prefer the germen out of the blossom.

Delightful, airy, skipping thing,
To charm by nature taught ;
How canst thou thus imprison'd sing,
And swell thy downy throat ?

Divine would be the poet's lays,
Breath'd with that melting air
With which thy warbling voice repays
Thy bounteous feeder's care.

Had but those forests Orpheus drew,
Clos'd in their shades a bird
Of equal harmony with you,
No tree of taste had stirred.

The groves had listen'd to the tongue
Of their own feather'd choir ;
Nor on the vocal strings had hung,
But on their boughs the lyre.

A hen canary in my possession is the most amusing little thing imaginable ; she has no idea of singing, nor any note, save a harsh sort of scream, more like the sharpening of a saw than anything else ; but when she hears the other birds warbling forth their lovely tones, she watches them, swells her little throat, and endeavours to imitate all their motions in singing, every now and then pouring out her harsh scream, and ending with her call of *sweet, sweet*.

She is particularly fond of hemp-seed, but they being large, she finds a difficulty in breaking the shell ; to obviate this, she throws them into the water, till they get a little soft ; when she thinks they are sufficiently soaked to crack the outside, she takes them out, shells them, breaks them in small portions, which she places on the side of her cage, and when all have been thus prepared, commences to feed upon them. She does the same with a piece of biscuit, if too hard to peck. When her cup is full of water,

and the seeds or biscuit have sunk to the bottom, it is curious to observe her manœuvres: not liking to put her head down so far to reach them, she splashes the water about as if she were washing, till she has spilt sufficient to enable her readily to get at the bottom of the cup with her bill.



THE SKYLARK.

Alarida Arvensis.

Thus winged larks forsake their native nest,
The merry minstrels of the morn ;
New to heaven they mount away,
And meet again no more.

THIS sweet songster, so well known, and so justly admired for its clear melodious note, has been almost as much celebrated by poets as the nightingale. What can be more delightful, or what can raise the mind to a juster sense of the power of our all-wise Creator, than to listen to this ethereal minstrel—this “pilgrim of the sky,” first warbling its clear note upon the wing, raising its melodious voice as it soars, until it seems lost in the heights above us, the note continuing, though the little performer is invisible to our view, when suddenly we see it

descending, and with a swell, almost like heavenly music, issuing from the clouds, and sinking by degrees as it approaches that spot where all its affections are centered, once again to guard the partner of his joys, and to assist her in providing for their tender nurslings.

These warblers are frequently kept in captivity, but their note is then much inferior to what it is when they are at liberty. To hear them to perfection, we ought to seek them at the break of day, to visit them in the fields, the groves, observe them fluttering from branch to branch, and answering to their mates, then paying their tribute of praise while chaunting their matin song as they ascend above the clouds. How many, very many, are there, who speak as if enraptured with the melody of birds, who perhaps have only heard them in their captive state ! To *feel* the beauty of their music, we should seek them in their natal bowers.

The skylark builds its nest upon the ground, beneath a tuft of grass, which serves to hide and shelter its young. The hen lays four or five eggs, and while she is sitting, her faithful partner amuses her with his sweetest song—

Light from the sod the Lark, exulting, springs,
Joy tunes his voice and animates his wings ;
Bard of the blushing dawn, to him are giv'n
Earth's choicest verdure and the midway heaven.
Hark ! the glad strains that charm our wondering
 ears,
As upward still the minstrel fearless steers,
Till, wide careering through the solar stream,
A speck, he wanders on the morning beam.

In London, immense numbers of larks are annually destroyed to supply a dainty morsel for the table, they being much esteemed by persons of *delicate appetite*, who cannot relish coarser fare. Frequently, in my country rambles in the winter, have I met gentlemen with their guns in search of those delightful songsters, and when they had risen in great numbers, anxiously have I watched to see how many had fallen ; and if the sportsmen had missed them all, I rejoiced with my whole heart.

How beautiful, exquisitely beautiful, are the following lines by Thomson on the subject :—

“ Here the rude clamour of the sportsman's joy,
 The guns fast thundering, and the winded horn,

Would tempt the muse to sing the *rural game* ;
How, in his mid career, the spaniel, struck
Stiff by the tainted gale, with open nose,
Outstretch'd, and, finely sensible, draws full,
Fearful, and cautious, on the latent prey ;
As in the sun the circling covey bask
Their varied plumes, and, watchful every way,
Through the rough stubble turn the secret eye.
Caught in the meshy snare, in vain they beat
Their idle wings, entangled more and more ;
Nor on the surges of the boundless air,
Tho' borne triumphant, are they safe ; the gun,
Glanc'd just, and sudden, from the fowler's eye,
O'ertakes their sounding pinions ; and again,
Immediate, brings them from the towering wings,
Dead to the ground ; or drives them, wide dispersed,
Wounded, and wheeling various, down the wind.

These are not subjects for the peaceful Muse,
Nor will she stain with such her spotless song ;
Then most delighted, when she social sees
The whole mix'd animal creation round
Alive and happy. 'Tis no joy to her,
This falsely cheerful, barbarous game of death ;
This rage of pleasure, which the restless youth
Awakes, impatient, with the gleaming morn,

When beasts of prey retire, that all night long,
Urg'd by necessity, had rang'd the dark,
As if their conscious-ravage shunn'd the light,
Asham'd. Not so the steady tyrant Man,
Who, with the thoughtless insolence of power
Inflamed, beyond the most infuriate wrath
Of the worst monster that e'er roam'd the waste,
For sport alone, pursues the cruel chase,
Amid the beamings of the gentle days."

I once told a gentleman who was going out to shoot larks, expressly for a present to a fair lady to whom he was paying attention, that I was confident one *live* bird would be a more acceptable assurance of his love and regard, than two dozen of those dear little creatures whose lives he was about to take. He seemed much pleased with the idea, and immediately procured a fine bird, which was of course very highly prized,—more especially as the giver was obliged, shortly after, to go abroad, where he was detained for a considerable time. His fair friend often told me that her dear little songster was the greatest consolation to her in the absence of one, she so fondly loved, and that often, while listening to his clear and melodious notes, she had almost persuaded herself to

fancy that her lover was entertaining her with his flute, which he had frequently been in the habit of doing previous to his departure.

The wood or tree lark (*Alanda Arborea*) is one of our earliest and sweetest songsters, frequently singing at night when in captivity. In hot summer nights, woodlarks soar to a prodigious height, and hang singing in the air.

While high in air, and poised upon his wings,
Unseen, the soft, enamour'd woodlark sings.

The titlark (*Alanda Pratensis*) sings exquisitely, either on the ground, perched on a tree, or flying, and has perhaps the finest note of all; it can be made exceedingly tame, but seldom lives above three or four years when caged. I have seen them so tame as to come when called, and to sing at the command of their master.

How beautifully the poet speaks of this sweet bird when stolen from his nest and confined:—

The tuneful lark, who from his nest,
Ere yet well fledged, is stolen away,
With care attended, and caress'd,
Will sometimes sing the live-long day;

Yet still his native fields he mourns,
His gaoler hates, his kindness scorns,
For freedom pants, for freedom burns :

That darling freedom once obtain'd,
Unskill'd, untaught, to search for prey,
He mourns the liberty he gain'd,
And hungry pines his hours away.
Helpless the little wand'rer flies,
Then homeward turns his longing eyes,
And warbling out his grief, he dies.

I have known many persons who, having taken birds, either from the nest or in a trap, after some time becoming tired with the trouble of attending to them, or from a generous (but, alas, too late) feeling of the misery of captivity, have given them their liberty. This is mistaken kindness, as birds, after being caged, and having become tame, cannot live again in a state of nature; they are either pecked to death by the wild birds, or they easily become the victim of cats or birds of prey.

What pity it is that we cannot be content to enjoy bounteous nature in her own haunts; what a sacri-

lege it seems, to confine these lovely minstrels in the smoke and noxious atmosphere of a city, instead of seeking them "in the valley of seclusion." Who will not admire Coleridge's description of a happy country dwelling, in the midst of all that is lovely in nature!

Low was our pretty cot, our tallest rose
Peep'd at the chamber-window. We could hear
At silent noon, and eve, and early morn,
The sea's faint murmur. In the open air
Our myrtles blossom'd ; and across the porch
Thick jasmins twined. The little landscape round
Was green and woody, and refresh'd the eye.
It was a spot which you might aptly call
The Valley of Seclusion ! Once I saw
(Hallowing his sabbath day by quietness)
A wealthy son of commerce saunter by,
Bristowa's citizen ; methought, it calm'd
His thirst of idle gold, and made him muse
With wiser feelings : for he paused, and looked
With a pleased sadness, and he gazed all around,
Then eyed our cottage, and gazed round again,
And sigh'd, and said, it was a blessed place,

And we *were* bless'd. Oft, with patient ear,
Long-listening to the viewless skylark's note,
(Viewless, or haply for a moment seen
Gleaming on sunny wing,) in whisper'd tones
I've said to my beloved, "Such, sweet girl!
The inobtrusive song of happiness,
Unearthly minstrelsy! then only heard
When the soul seeks to hear; when all is hushed,
And the heart listens!"

Here all nature harmonizes with our finer and purer feelings! Never have I felt more seriously sensible of the goodness of the Almighty than when listening to the matin song and vesper hymn of the skylark.

Mr. White, in his *Natural History of Selborne*, speaks of a curious little bird, which *he* calls the "grasshopper-lark."* He says, "The grasshopper-lark began his sibilous note in my fields last Saturday. Nothing can be more amusing than the whisper of this little bird, which seems to be close by, though at a hundred yards distance; and, when

* More modern Ornithologists do not consider it to be a lark, but a brake-locustelle.

close at your ear, is scarce any louder than when a great way off. Had I not been a little acquainted with insects, and known that the grasshopper kind is not yet hatched, I should have hardly believed but that it had been a *locusta* whispering in the bushes. The country people laugh when you tell them that it is the note of a bird. It is a most artful creature, skulking in the thickest part of a bush, and will sing at a yard distance, provided it be concealed. I was obliged to get a person to go on the other side of the hedge, where it haunted; and then it would run, creeping like a mouse, before us, for a hundred yards together, through the bottom of the thorns; yet it would not come into fair sight; but in the morning early, and when undisturbed, it sings on the top of a twig, gaping, and shivering with its wings."

The note of this bird has often deceived me. I have frequently walked, early in the spring, over Coombwood and Wimbleton Common, for the purpose of collecting heaths and primroses, which grow about those places in great luxuriance, when suddenly my attention has been attracted by this grasshopper-like music. Being much surprised at hearing it so early in the season, I have endeavoured to get

a sight of these little creatures, always being much amused by their sprightly movements; but all my endeavours to discover the vocalist proved fruitless; and after getting my hands scratched by the furze, and my dress torn by the brambles, relinquished the search as a hopeless case, although the chirping frequently appeared almost under my hand. Had I then been aware of this little bird, I might possibly have been fortunate enough to have discovered the nest of one, as they build in the thickest furze bush, and in the midst of the prickly bramble. I have frequently heard them chirping late on a quiet summer's night, when all else, save themselves, seemed at rest; but it is the skylark whose praise we are about to sing; and how beautiful are the following lines to that lovely songster, by Wordsworth:—

Ethereal minstrel! Pilgrim of the sky!
Dost thou despise the earth where cares abound?
Or while thy wings aspire, are heart and eye
Both with thy nest upon the dewy ground?
Thy nest, which thou canst drop into at will,
Those quivering wings composed that music still!

To the last point of vision, and beyond,
 Mount, daring Warbler ! that love-prompted strain,
 ('Twixt thee and thine a never-failing bond)
 Thrills not the less the bosom of the plain ;
 Yet might'st thou seem, proud privilege ! to sing
 All independent of the leafy spring,
 Leave to the Nightingale her shady wood ;
 A privacy of glorious light is thine,
 Whence thou dost pour upon the world a flood
 Of harmony, with rapture more divine ;
 Type of the wise, who soar, but never roam,
 True to the kindred points of Heaven and Home.

Not less to be admired are the following, by our favourite, Burns :---

O stay, sweet warbling woodlark, stay,
 Nor quit for me the trembling spray,
 A hapless lover courts thy lay,
 Thy soothing fond complaining.

Again, again that tender part,
 That I may catch thy melting art ;
 For surely that wad touch her heart,
 Wha kills me wi' disdainin'.

Say, was thy little mate unkind,
And heard thee as the careless wind ?
Oh nocht but love and sorrow join'd,
 Sic notes o' wae could wanken.

Thou tells o' never-ending care ;
O' speechless grief, and dark despair ;
For pity's sake, sweet bird, nae mair !
 Or my poor heart is broken !

The calandra lark (*Alando Calandra*), an inhabitant of Syria, Italy, Sardinia, Provence, and some parts of America, is much admired, both for its song and its imitative powers. It acquires the songs of the goldfinch, linnet, canary, and many other birds, with facility. It also imitates the chirp of young chickens, and the cry of a cat: its song is so much admired in Italy, that, "to sing like a calandra," is understood as meaning "to sing well."

Landscapes how gay the bow'ry grotto yields,
Which thought creates, and lavish fancy builds !
What art can trace the visionary scenes,
The flowery groves, and everlasting greens ?

Nature and art in all their charms combin'd,
And all Elysium to one view confin'd !
Yet in such charms, the noble thoughts abound,
That needless seem the sweets of easy sound :
So tries the artless lark her early flight,
And soars to hail the god of verse and light.
Scarce within view, aloft the skylark tow'rs,
And his glad sound in cheerful music pours :
He feels in every pulse the gentle glow,
And looks, and listens, to the plain below ;
Charm'd by his song, if thence his partner calls,
To her lov'd breast with am'rous speed he falls,
Unrival'd, as thy merit, be thy fame,
And thy own laurels shade thy envy'd name ;
Thy name, the boast of all the tuneful choir,
Shall tremble on the strings of ev'ry lyre.
No charms are wanting to thy artful lays,
The tribute song a humble subject pays.



THE BULLFINCH.

Loxia Pyrrhula.

“ So wand’ring further—at the close of day
To the high woods he pensive wing’d his way.”

THIS highly esteemed bird shews what may be effected by education. The bullfinch, which in a state of nature has but three cries, all harsh and disagreeable, becomes, by the art of cultivation, one of our finest songsters, not only acquiring the note of the other birds, but it may be taught also to pipe tunes, by means of a flageolet or flute, and will, with great exactness, go through a tune of two parts. Some years since, vast numbers of these birds were brought from Germany every season, which had been taught there to whistle marches, and minuets; and as our bird-fanciers were not then so expert at teaching them, they sold for very considerable sums; but

I believe, at present, our English birds are equal in singing to any that can be imported.

The song of this sweet warbler is not its only recommendation; its plumage is handsome, and it is capable of the strongest attachment, as the following tale will prove; and we have been assured that it is strictly true:—

“ A lady had a bullfinch of which she was particularly fond, and the attachment of this little creature was so extreme, as to surpass everything of the kind ever known: her presence created a sunshine to him, and he sung and rejoiced with his whole heart when she was by, while he drooped in her absence, and would sit silent in his cage for hours together. The lady fell ill, and was confined to her bed for a week with so severe an indisposition as to be unable to attend to her bird; at length, when she was sufficiently recovered to see him, she ordered his cage to be brought and set upon the bed beside her; the poor bird knew her voice in an instant, though it was weak and low, from extreme fever; the cage door was opened, he uttered a shrill cry of joy, between a song and a scream, fluttered from her hand to her cheek, and fell down dead in

a moment." What a striking instance of affection and sensibility in a bird ! Buffon relates that tame bullfinches have been known to escape from the aviary, and live at liberty in the woods for a whole year, and then to recollect the voice of the person who had reared them, return to her, and never more to leave her. Others have been known, which, when separated from their first owner, have died of grief.

The memory of these little birds is likewise surprising, retaining for a length of time the remembrance of any person who may have injured them ; one of them having been thrown down with its cage by a common low person, did not seem at first much disturbed by the accident, but afterwards, it would fall into convulsions whenever it saw any meanly-dressed person, and it died in one of those fits eight months after the first accident.

What a rational pleasure may we not derive from watching and tending these innocent little creatures, which are so sensible of our care, and so grateful for our attention ; but how few there really are of those who keep birds that derive any enjoyment from

them, save when they are amused by their melodious notes ! How few suppose them to possess feeling and sensibility ; yet the numerous examples that are related of them prove that, where affection and kindness is lavished on them, their gratitude and love are unbounded. I have read of a bullfinch belonging to a lady being subject to frightful dreams, which occasioned it to fall off its perch, and beat itself against the wires of its cage ; but no sooner did it hear the kind voice of its affectionate mistress, than (although in the dark,) it became instantly tranquil, reascended its perch, and quietly settled itself to sleep again.

This little creature was very fond of chickweed, and as soon as it perceived any person bringing it to him, notwithstanding every care was taken to prevent his finding it easily, he would shew his joy by his actions and cries.

May we not consider the bullfinch an emblem of love and lasting affection ? What could be a more appropriate present from a lover to his mistress, than one of these affectionate birds ? and to enhance his value, he may be taught any particular tune ; to

warble the softest and sweetest notes in the ear of the fair, it would almost seem like the language of her absent lover.

What lady of any sensibility but would take delight in attending to such a sweet and affectionate companion when presented as a token of love! It would be found a solace for

Heart-rending cares and quiv'ring fears,
Anxious nights, untimely tears.

The following lines, I believe, were written on one of those lovely songsters, which had escaped from its cage, and, after paying a visit to the woods, was seen flying through the streets of Liverpool in its way back to its mistress:—

Poor exile from a fairer sky!
What dooms thee still to wander here,
Removed from all the charms that vie
To crown with bliss the opening year?

Oh! in this dull and cheerless scene,
Say, canst thou one attraction find
To make thee quit the forest green,
And leave each rural spot behind?

Far from the scenes that erst could please ;
 Secluded from the winged race ;
Canst thou inhale the vernal breeze,
 Nor wish thy former haunts to trace ?

If thou canst hail the god of day,
 When, dim with mists, he meets thine eye,
Will his bright beams less joy convey
 When blazing in a cloudless sky ?

Or from the hour when first in air
 Kind nature taught thy wing to soar,
Hast thou not fled to lands more fair,
 Or tried a clime unknown before ?

Go, silly bird, on pinion free,
 And seek the verdant bowers of spring ;
There fly unchecked from tree to tree,
 With bosom light, and rapid wing.

Had I the power which thou enjoy'st,
 To roam at will from shore to shore,
Soon would I quit this scene of noise,
 And tread its cheerless streets no more.

In Mr. White's Natural History of Selborne, he says, "A few years ago, I saw a cock bullfinch in a cage, which had been caught in the fields after it was come to its full colours ; in about a year it began to look dingy, and, blackening every succeeding year, it became coal black at the end of four years ; its chief food was hemp-seed ; such influence has food on the colour of animals."

The following observations of Dr. Bechstein shew how much this bird is esteemed in Germany :—
"Although the song of the male and female bullfinch, in their wild state, is very harsh and disagreeable, yet, if well taught while young, as they are in Hesse, and Fulda, where there are schools of these little musicians, for all Germany, Holland, and England, they learn to whistle all kinds of airs and melodies with so soft and flute-like a tone that they are great favourites with amateurs, and particularly with the ladies. There are some of these little birds which can whistle distinctly three different airs, without spoiling or confusing them in the least. Added to this attraction, the bullfinch becomes exceedingly tame, sings whenever it is told to do so,

and is susceptible of a most tender and lasting attachment, which it shews by its endearing actions ; it balances its body, moves its tail from right to left, and spreads it like a fan.

“ It will even repeat words with an accent and tone which indicates sensibility, if one could believe that it understood them ; but its memory must not be overloaded.

A single air with a prelude, or a short flourish to begin with, is as much as the bird can well remember, and this it will execute to the greatest perfection.

“ These little prodigies would be more interesting and agreeable if their Hessian instructors possessed a little musical taste ; but these are generally trades-people, employed about the house with their different occupations and trades ; and hymns, airs, minuets, of a hundred years old, and public-house songs, in general, compose the whole of their music. This, however, is not the little bird’s fault. The bullfinch can also imitate the songs of other birds ; but, in general, it is not permitted to do so, that it may only learn to repeat the airs which are taught it. Different degrees of capacity are shewn here,

as well as in other animals. One young bullfinch learns with ease and quickness, another with difficulty, and slowly. The former will repeat, without hesitation, several parts of a song; the latter will be hardly able to whistle one, after nine months uninterrupted teaching. But it has been remarked that those birds which learn with most difficulty, remember the songs which have once been well learnt better and longer, and rarely forget them, even when moulting."

The bullfinch is not singular in this, for how often has it been the case in our own species, that persons who have, when adults, possessed the greatest genius, were in their juvenile days dull and unpromising, and with difficulty learned their stated tasks. Some of our best authors, when at school, were looked upon as mere dunces by their masters and fellow students. Unlike most other birds, the male and female bullfinch continue together the whole year; and so tenderly attached are they, that they can hardly live when separated; if parted, they incessantly repeat their call in a tender and languid strain.

The following fable of the bullfinch and daw may perhaps entertain :—

A bullfinch who his talents try'd
With good success, but more of pride,
As cobling, strutting, turkey vain,
Each bird the mark of his disdain,
Admir'd and fear'd where'er he sung,
Perch'd near a daw, and thus begun :

See ! joys complete on me bestow'd,
With pers'nal charms, and parts endow'd ;
But feather'd sages sure agree,
That nature nodded, forming thee ;
Awkward, alert, with whims thy head
Mercurial mounts, but drops in lead ;
Thy shape, thy hue, our sight offends ;
Thy short, shrill accents who commends ?
Not so absurd the hooting owl,
But gravely he, thou pertly dull.

Abash'd the daw, with satire stung,
Jabber'd and gnaw'd, and bit his tongue ;
To hollow tree his seat withdrew,
Still sputt'ring anger as he flew.
With fickle wing, soon chang'd his place,
A chimney cover'd his disgrace ;
Here fix'd, he scorns, with heedless ear,
The sounds that reach his hollow sphere.

The titt'ring voice, or hasty calling,
Dog's snap abrupt, or puss's squalling;
Alternate fugues of scolding tongues,
Or sem-briefs bray'd from asses' lungs :
With better strains, at length, he heard
A pipe instruct a tutor'd bird ;
Catching the song, with tuneful throat,
And echoing back each rival note.
Thus charm'd, he, from his dark abode,
Invited, tries th' advent'rous road :
Down-right he flounders on ; his sight
Is hid in momentary night.
But gloomy fears, and perils ending,
To spacious, lightsome room descending,
Behold, with what a glad surprise,
Imprison'd there, *the finch* he spies,
Swinging betwixt the floor and ceiling,
A cage, his pendent, airy dwelling.
A gilded ball shone o'er his head,
Thick wires, like rays, around him spread :
A turf beneath his foot was found,
In miniature, a verdant ground ;
Seeds here conceal'd, there groundsel seen,
There plaintain stalks were wove between :

Water, with streaks of saffron dy'd,
Rich draughts from crystal font supply'd.

A shew of bliss his state express'd,
Tho' splendid servitude at best.

But now what refuge, or relief,
Can hide his shame, or soothe his grief?
While standing, oft disclos'd before him,
With hateful form, oft hov'ring o'er him;
Clapping his sooty wings, his foe,
Adds insults to the captive's woe.
"Where's now," cries he, "thy scorn or boast?
What's wit, or beauty, freedom lost?
Tho' gay thy prison, firm its hold;
And fetters gall, tho' made of gold.
Hence, warbling slave, be this thy strain,
Thy excellence but proves thy bane:
Whilst I, in my defects, am bless'd,
Thou still art wretched, tho' caress'd;
The meanest, thanks to nature owe;
And chance can bring the vainest low."



C H A F F I N C H.

Fringilla Coelebs.

THIS favourite of birdfanciers remains with us all the year, is a stout, hardy bird, common in almost every hedge, and garden, and in the house will sing seven or eight months in the year, though in its wild state we do not hear it above three.

Of all small birds, except the goldfinch, the chaffinch makes the prettiest nest; in the top of a high hedge, or on the side branches of a tree: the outside is green moss, small twigs, withered grass, horse and cow hair, beautifully blended, and lined with wool and feathers. In this nice warm, soft bed, the hen lays four or five eggs, and has young ones the beginning of May. She has two broods in the year; the first, all males, the latter, females. The male is very assiduous in his attentions, amusing his partner with his sweetest notes, seldom straying to any distance, and then only to procure food, which consists of

small seeds, caterpillars, and insects. These birds are of great service to gardens in the summer, clearing the cabbages and trees of insects, which so often devour them. The males are very courageous, frequently maintaining obstinate combats, fighting till one or other is completely vanquished.

Most of these birds possess fine musical powers, and will learn the song of many birds, or a tune from the flageolet or bird organ ; some, however, are very dull, and learn with difficulty. Chaffinches require more attention than other songsters in captivity, being apt, in the winter, to forget their acquired song ; it is, therefore, necessary in the spring to make them practise again, which frequently takes five or six weeks' exertion. I once had a family of these interesting little creatures domesticated in a summer house in my garden. A stupid country lad, employed as half gardener, half groom, took it into his head to prune a tree that grew against this my favourite resort in warm weather ; in doing which, he discovered the nest of a chaffinch with four young ones, and, being a bit of a birdfancier, was in the act of consigning nest and birds into his hat, intending to take them home, and bring them up by hand,

when I fortunately made my appearance and prevented him, being well aware of the nest, the birds having built there for three or four years. When I perceived him with the ladder against the tree, and pruning knife in hand, I instantly thought of the poor little feathered nurslings, and, giving an involuntary scream, startled the boy, which occasioned him to let fall hat, nest, and birds. Fortunately, the little creatures were not hurt, therefore I determined to replace them, with their nice warm habitation, in their old situation ; but the lad had so mutilated the tree, that I found there was no protection for them against cold, cats, or birds of prey ; so, carefully placing the nest in a large shrub, inside, near the window, I waited at a little distance to see if the parent birds would discover their offspring, which continued chirping with all their might. I soon had the pleasure of seeing the old birds come in and survey the place with much attention ; at length the hen resumed her place on the nest, while her mate went in search of food ; presently he returned, and, after a sort of twitter from the hen, (no doubt assuring him of their safety,) he deposited whatever he had brought close to her. For nearly an hour that I

watched these indefatigable little creatures, the number of excursions the male made in search of food is surprising. Wishing to domesticate, without confining them, I left water, and such things as they were likely to require; by degrees, both old and young became exceedingly tame, pecking out of my hand; but towards autumn they all disappeared. However, the following spring they made their appearance, repaired the nest, which I had left, thinking it possible they might return; and there the hen laid and reared her young; but they also left in the autumn. For three or four years the old birds returned nearly about the same time, when, at length, I lost them altogether.

In Germany, that land of birds and birdfanciers, the chaffinch is highly prized. Bechstein observes—“The passion for this bird is carried to such an extent in Thuringia, and those that sing well are sought for with so much avidity, that scarcely a single chaffinch that warbles tolerably can be found throughout the province. As soon as one arrives from a neighbouring country, whose note appears good, all the bird-catchers are after it. This is the reason why the chaffinches in this province are such

indifferent songsters; the young ones have only bad masters in the old ones, and they, in their turn, cannot prove better."

This nice observer of the habits and natural propensities of the feathered race, enumerates the various notes expressive of their passions and wants, which is truly entertaining. "The note of tenderness, and which is also thought to indicate a change of weather, is *trif, trif*; its call, or the rallying note it makes use of on its passage, and which so often draws it within the snares of our birdcatchers, is *iak, iak*, repeated several times; the cry *fink, fink*, which it often repeats, and from which its German name is derived, appears, if we may so call it, to be mechanical and involuntary. But what make it appear to still more advantage among other birds, are its clear and trilling tones, that seem almost to approach to words. In fact, its warbling is less a song than a kind of *battement*, to make use of a French word, and is expressed in German by the word *schlag* (trill), which is used to designate its song, as well as the nightingale's. Some chaffinches have two, three, four, even five *battemens*, each consisting of several strains, and lasting several minutes.

“This bird is so great a favourite in Germany, that not a single tone of its voice has escaped the experienced ears of the birdfanciers. They have observed its nicest shades, and are continually endeavouring to improve and perfect it. I confess I am myself one of its warmest admirers. I have constantly around me the best songsters of its species.”

This entertaining author likewise observes—“One thing peculiar to chaffinches is the necessity of teaching them their song every year, and this is the manner proper for them during the four or five weeks this exercise lasts: they first utter a murmur, or weak warbling; to which they add, at first, in an under voice, one or two, and afterwards several, syllables of their song; they are then said to record.”

A chaffinch that takes only a week or a fortnight to repeat this lesson for fully bringing out its voice, is reckoned among the geniuses of his species. He also adds—“If we pay a little attention, however, we shall find that this exercise is intended less to awaken the memory than to render the throat, stiffened by a tolerably long state of inaction, more pliant, and to bring back its natural flexibility.”

I imagine this practice is not confined to chaf-

finches alone, for I have observed other birds, before resuming their songs, appear to record, for several days before bringing out a clear note; and I think this generally will be found the case with all songsters in the house.

The bird my illustrative drawing was taken from, owes his birth to that nursery of songsters, *Tambach*. It was purchased for a high price; and the varying tones of this little creature's deep powerful voice, so melodious, soft, and trilling, fills the mind of the listener with wonder and admiration.

Hark to the strain!

Let me hear it again—

'Tis a spell that can waft me o'er land and o'er sea—

Oh, hark to the strain!

Is it pleasure or pain

That sends my heart, Fatherland, throbbing to thee?

It is surprising that birds, possessing such powers of harmony, should be so little prized as they are in this country. There is no reason why our English songsters should not become as great performers as foreigners, were they equally well taught.

In Germany, the chaffinch is a bird of passage, arriving in the month of March, and leaving in October or November. A few stragglers, however, remain all the winter. Like the swallow, they perform their journeys in large flocks ; in that country, the males arrive fifteen days prior to the females. In some counties in England, the females make their appearance before the males. Mr. White particularly noticed it in Hampshire. Bechstein speaks of some varieties of this species—"One quite white, another with a white collar, a third streaked, spotted," &c.

There is no difference between the wood chaffinch and those of gardens and orchards.

Thy tender lay, thy simple strain,
Unnoticed might have passed ;
But now thou com'st my praise to gain,
The sweetest and the last.

Pure are the charms in thee I find,
Emblem of youth's bright wing ;
'Twas thine to bring past joys to mind,
And promise future spring.

Last warbler of the blooming year,
Thy brother mates are flown !
Thy tender song is far more dear,
From warbling thus alone.

The following beautiful lines of Herrick, I think,
are not inapplicable to the German chaffinch :—

Charm me to sleep, and melt me so
With thy delicious numbers,
That, being ravished, hence I go
Away in easy slumbers.
Ah, make me weep
My pains asleep,
And give me such reposes,
That I, poor I,
May think thereby
I live and die 'midst roses !

Fall on me like a silent dew,
Or like those maiden showers
Which, at the peep of day, do strew
A baptism o'er the flowers.
Melt, melt my pains,
With thy soft strains,

That ease unto me giv'n,
With full delight
I leave this light,
And take my flight for heaven.

(1620.)

Perhaps, a few years hence, when the capabilities of this delightful songster are fully known in England, it may be as much appreciated as it is by our German friends.



COMMON WREN.

(*Motacilla Troglodytes.*)

OF British birds, the Wren, in all its varieties, though the smallest of our songsters, is doubtless the most interesting. When we consider its diminutive size, and hear its clear, sweet, simple strain, "stealing upon the gentle wing of some calm-breathing wind," we are almost tempted to fancy it caused by a magic power, did we not know and feel that He who gave strength to the eagle, equally dispenses his gifts to the smallest of his creatures.

The common wren is as pretty a bird as we can imagine it possible for the most skilful artist to produce by a combination of brown in all its shadings, forming the most tastefully mottled plumage, with a bright and sparkling eye; and when the wren is on her nest, I have seen that little bright eye glittering

like a diamond, as she anxiously watched the approach of any intruder.

This interesting little songster usually creeps about hedges, in the neighbourhood of farm-houses. Sometimes it is seen sitting upon a tree or barn, enlivening all around by its sweet voice, which is remarkably loud for the size of the bird. Like the robin, its finest notes are heard in the evening; and in the house is equally loud, clear, and harmonious. The wren may be truly considered one of *Nature's poets*; its language is plain but impressive, and speaks to the heart. Like some of our sweetest poets, he aims not at loftiness of expression, but is content to please by awakening all our better thoughts and finer feelings.

The nest of this little minstrel is equally deserving our commendation. Few birds take such pains to procure a snug, retired, warm habitation for their forthcoming offspring, and well would it be if parents of the biped race were equally provident for the wants of a family. I have seen a pair of these little creatures, for days together, reconnoitring every nook about a farm-yard, before they could determine upon a situation that appeared to offer every advantage of

security, comfort, and seclusion; and when at length such a spot was found, how eagerly did they set to work to complete their task. Here, again, they set an example to those who boast superior reason; there was no bickering or contention between master and mistress about the destined habitation; whatever one proposed the other adopted. No disputes about the colour of the drapery or the form of the bed—unanimity and good humour prevailed till the whole was complete, and then the joyful expression of their notes and actions can only be imagined by those who take delight in nature, and examine her in all her secret haunts. How few, very few, there are like my favourite poet, Wordsworth, who enters into all its real delights! The contemplation of a bird's nest to him is a source of pleasure and continual amusement. How exquisitely beautiful and true is his delineation of a wren's nest, which I beg to offer, as being much more interesting than any prose description:—

Among the dwellings framed by birds,
In field or forest, with nice care,
Is none that with the little wren's
In snugness may compare.

No door the tenement requires,
And seldom needs a laboured roof ;
Yet is it to the fiercest sun
Impervious, and storm proof.

So warm, so beautiful withal,
In perfect fitness for its aim,
That to the kind by special grace
Their instinct surely came.

And when for their abodes they seek
An opportune recess,
The hermit has no finer eye
For shadowy quietness.

These find, 'mid ivied abbey walls,
A canopy in some still nook ;
Others are pent-housed by a brae
That overhangs a brook.

There, to the brooding bird, her mate
Warbles by fits his low clear song ;
And by the busy streamlet both
Are sung to all day long.

Or in sequestered lanes they build,
Where, to the flitting bird's return,
Her eggs within the nest repose,
Like relics in an urn.

But still, where general choice is good,
There is a better and a best ;
And, among fairest objects, some
Are fairer than the rest.

This, one of those small builders proved
In a green covert, where from out
The forehead of a pollard oak,
The leafy antlers sprout.

For she who planned the mossy lodge,
Mistrusting her evasive skill,
Had to a primrose looked for aid,
Her wishes to fulfil.

High on the trunk's projecting brow,
And fixed an infant's span above
The budding flow'rs, peeped forth the nest,
The prettiest of the grove !

The treasure proudly did I shew
To some, whose minds without disdain
Can turn to little things ; but once
Looked up for it in vain.

'Tis gone—a ruthless spoiler's prey,
Who heeds not beauty, love, or song—
'Tis gone (so seemed it), and we grieved,
Indignant at the wrong.

Just three days after, passing by,
In clearer light, the moss-built cell,
I saw—espied its shaded mouth,
And felt that all was well.

The primrose for a veil had spread
The largest of her upright leaves ;
And thus, for purposes benign,
A simple flower deceives.

Concealed from friends who might disturb
Thy quiet with no ill intent,
Secure from evil eye, and hands
On barbarous plunder bent.

Rest, mother-bird ! and when thy young
Take flight, and thou art free to roam,
When withered is the guardian flower,
And empty thy late home,

Think how ye prosper'd, thou and thine,
Amid the unviolated grove,
Housed near the growing primrose tuft,
In foresight or in love.

In such a delightful nest the hen lays from eight to sixteen little tiny eggs, but seldom hatches more than half that number. The young birds make their appearance in May, and they, with their parents, may easily be tamed, as I have found by experience.

Being anxious to domesticate a young brood of these interesting little creatures, and knowing of a pair having built for three or four years in an out-house that contained garden implements, and other odd matters, I had an old hat fixed as near the spot they were wont to build in as possible. About the time they usually commenced their operations, they came to reconnoitre their old haunt. At first, they seemed rather doubtful—holding long debates, appa-

rently as to its security. Leaving them undisturbed, the experiment answered my expectations; they took possession of the hat, built, the hen laid, and hatched a brood, to the number of six. When the young birds were three days old, the habitation, with its contents, was carefully removed, and placed in a convenient situation in a room. The female bird did not attempt to leave the nest; the male flew about, much alarmed. At last he was caught, and placed on a perch near the nest. The following morning, the window was left open, when he flew out, but quickly returned, and appeared by his actions as if endeavouring to persuade his partner to leave her station. She, however, seeing there was no interruption offered her, remained very quiet and contented with her tender offspring—which appeared, at last, to convince her mate he had nothing to fear, for, after a mutual understanding, he went in search of provisions for the little family. Returning shortly, with some insect in his beak, which was soon divided among the nurslings, he soon became familiar, picking up whatever was thrown to him. Two of the young birds, when old enough to take care of themselves, were placed with my other songsters. The

parents, with the remainder of the family, went in and out at their pleasure, and in the autumn entirely disappeared.

The following summer, my young wrens sung delightfully; and all their little sprightly actions were truly entertaining. Nor were they altogether useless, for they kept the room free from flies, and my plants clear of those little insects which so often devour them. It was amusing to see those little creatures, with their keen quick eyes, examining the stems and under-sides of the leaves of the rose-trees and geraniums; not one insect escaped their diligence.

In the winter, running up and down the bell-ropes and lines of the window-blinds seemed to afford them the greatest amusement; and if they could find a little dust, which the carelessness of the servant had left on the window-frame, they were highly delighted. They repaid me for my care of them with their sweetest notes, during the greater part of the year, even in frosty weather, if the sun but shone—

Uttering such dulcet and harmonious breath,
That the rude *clown* grew civil at their song.

The Golden-crested Wren (*Motacilla Regulus*) is the smallest and most beautiful of the wren species, having a line of golden-coloured feathers on the head, which it can erect or depress at pleasure. This gives it a smart and gay appearance. Its habits are similar to the preceding; the hen lays eight eggs. This species is not so often seen as the former. They have a soft, but cheerful, note; and, as Mr. Blyth observes, "callous and saturnine must he be who is not enlivened by it."

There are other varieties of the wren; but there being such a family likeness among them, it is unnecessary to particularize each. We should consider them of essential service in a garden, keeping the trees and plants clear from insects, without purloining any of the fruit in return for their services.

Bechstein observes, that the golden-crested wren, reared from the nest, will perch on a tree in a room, which they enjoy so much that they are never far from it. If there be many birds, they will perch in a row, press close together, and sleep in this manner. He adds, that they are very impatient of cold in confinement; and says, "I once caught half a dozen golden wrens, at the beginning of winter, and they

lived extremely well upon egg and meat, being exceedingly tame. At roosting time, there was always a whimsical conflict amongst them for the inside places, as being the warmest, which ended, of course, by the weakest going to the wall. This scene began with a low whistling call amongst them to roost, and the two birds on the extreme right and left flew on the backs of those in the centre, and squeezed themselves into the middle. A fresh couple from the flanks immediately renewed the attack upon the centre, and the conflict continued till the light began to fail them. A severe frost, in February, killed all but one of them in one night, though in a furnished drawing room. The survivor was preserved, in a little cage, by burying it every night under the sofa cushions; but having been, one sharp morning, taken from under them before the room was sufficiently warmed by the fire, though perfectly well when removed, it was dead in ten minutes."

Mr. Sweet, in reference to the Wood Wren, says, "This elegant and beautiful little species ranks itself amongst my list of favourites. It visits this country the beginning of April, and leaves in August, or the beginning of September. It is generally to

be found, in summer, amongst tall trees, woods, and plantations, where it is readily detected on its arrival by a shrill, shaking sort of note, that may be heard at a great distance, and cannot be confounded with any other bird. On its first arrival, it sings the greater part of the day, and continues its song, more or less, through the summer, except at the time it is engaged in feeding its young. Its nest is built on the ground, in a thicket, amongst moss and dead leaves, so that it is impossible to find it without watching one of the old ones to the nest, which is readily done when they have young.

They may either be tamed when old, or reared from the nest, and are not difficult to be caught when young, with a little bird-lime at the end of a fishing rod, as may several other species of this interesting group.

This scientific admirer of nature, classes the Willow Wren also among his feathered favourites. He says, "It visits us the latter end of March, or beginning of April, and leaves us again at the end of September or beginning of October. On its first arrival, it enlivens our woods and groves with its lively, piercing song, and gay frolics, flying about from tree to tree,

and catching the small gnats that come in its way. It builds its nest on the ground among dead leaves and moss, with a covering at the top, of the same materials as those lying all around, so that it is impossible to find it without watching one of the old ones to the nests."

Mr. Sweet likewise observes that they are easily tamed, and tells us of one that he caught in September, which was in three days after let out of the aviary into the room, to catch the flies, that were numerous at that season. After amusing itself for some time in catching flies, it began singing, and it did the same several other times when it was let out, and in a few days began to sing in its aviary. It soon became so familiar, that it would take flies out of the hand, and when out in the room, if a fly were held towards it, would fly up and take it immediately. Mr. Sweet adds, "that the note of this *little* bird is, when in full song, so loud and shrill, that its voice is plainly heard above the nightingale's, when both are in full song."

In Wilson's American Ornithology, I find the following observations on the Winter Wren:—

"This little stranger visits us from the north in

the month of October, sometimes remaining with us all the winter, and is always observed, early in the spring, on his route back to his breeding place. In size, colour, song, and manners, he approaches nearer to the European wren (*Motacilla Troglodytes*) than any other species we have. During his residence here, he frequents the projecting banks of creeks, old rocks, decayed logs, small bushes, and rushes near watery places: he even approaches the farm-house, rambles about the wood pile, creeping among the interstices, like a mouse; with tail erect, which is his constant habit, mounted on some projecting pinnacle, he sings with great animation: even in the yards, gardens, and outhouses of the city, he appears familiar, and quite at home." How feelingly does the author (Wilson) speak, when he alludes to the necessity of taking the lives of those innocent little creatures for the purpose of gaining a more intimate acquaintance with their formation; he thus alludes to it:—"I have often regretted the painful necessity one is under of taking away the lives of such inoffensive, useful little creatures, merely to obtain a more perfect knowledge of the species; for they appear so busy, so active and unsuspecting,

as to continue searching about the same twig, even after their companions have been shot down beside them. I have stood under the tree, motionless, to observe them, while they gleaned among the low branches, sometimes within a foot or two of my head."

Having already said so much, and made so many extracts relative to the wren species, that I should almost fear I had tired the patience of my readers, but the more I say, the more I fancy to have left unsaid respecting these attractive birds, and as perhaps some may think them equally interesting, I will venture on a few more gleanings from my favourite Wilson. "The House Wren," he tells us, "arrives in Pennsylvania towards the middle of April, and about the eighth or tenth of May begins to build its nest, sometimes in the wooden cornishes under the eaves, or in a hollow cherry-tree; but most commonly in small boxes, fixed on the top of a pole, in or near the garden, to which he is extremely partial, for the great number of caterpillars and other larvæ with which it constantly supplies him. If all these conveniences are wanting, he will even put up with an old hat, nailed on the weather-boards, with a small hole for entrance; and if even this be denied

him, he will find some hole, corner, or crevice about the house, barn, or stable, rather than abandon the dwelling of man.

“In the month of June, a mower hung up his coat under a shed near the barn ; two or three days elapsed before he had occasion to put it on again : thrusting his arm up the sleeve, he found it completely filled with some rubbish, as he expressed it, and, on extracting the whole mass, found it to be the nest of a wren, completely finished, and lined with feathers. In his retreat, he was followed by the little forlorn proprietors, who scolded him with great vehemence for thus ruining the whole economy of their household affairs.”

The following detail, as related by the same author, must be read with feelings of interest by every lover of nature :—“ This little bird has a strong antipathy to cats, for, having frequent occasion to glean among the currant bushes and other shrubbery in the garden, those lurking enemies of the feathered race often prove fatal to him. A box fixed up in the window of the room where I slept, was taken possession of by a pair of wrens ; already the nest was built, and two eggs laid, when one day,

the window being open, as well as the room door, the female wren venturing too far into the room to reconnoitre, was sprung upon by Grimalkin, who had planted herself there for the purpose, and, before relief could be given, was destroyed."

Curious to see how the survivor would demean himself, I watched him carefully for several days; at first he sung with great vivacity for an hour or so, but becoming uneasy, went off for half-an-hour: on his return, he chanted again as before, and went to the top of the house, stable, and weeping willow, that she might hear him; but seeing no appearance of her, he returned once more, visited the nest, ventured cautiously into the window, gazed about with suspicious looks, his voice sinking to a low melancholy note, as he stretched his little neck about in every direction. Returning to the box, he seemed for some minutes at a loss what to do, and soon after went off, as I thought, altogether, for I saw him no more that day. Towards the afternoon of the second day, he again made his appearance, accompanied by a new female, who seemed exceedingly timorous and shy, and who, after great hesitation, entered the box. At this moment, the little widower, or bridegroom,

seemed as if he would warble out his very life with ecstasy of joy. After remaining about half-a-minute in, they both flew off, but returned in a few minutes, and instantly began to carry out the eggs, feathers, and some of the sticks, supplying the place of the two latter with materials of the same sort, and ultimately succeeded in raising a brood of seven young, all of which escaped in safety."

In some parts of Ireland, it is customary, on St. Stephen's day, for the children to go about in procession, carrying a wren, and chanting a sort of doggerel rhyme, the purport of which is, begging a participation in the plenteous stores of their more opulent neighbours.

I hope my fair readers will accord a just mead of praise to this *feathered* poet of our own fair land, who, if not so richly appareled as his brethren of other climes, is not the less worthy our warmest regard; and let us remember, that *true worth* "needs not the foreign aid of ornament, but is (like beauty), when unadorned, adorned the most."

The wren from which my illustrative drawing was taken, I received from a friend residing in New South Wales. Its plumage, being so much more

beautiful, I thought, by many, it would be preferred to our own more homely-attired minstrel, as a pictorial embellishment. The parent birds had built in a little basket which a servant had hung outside the window to dry, and was forgotten for some days ; when remembered, it was discovered to have been taken possession of by a pair of these birds. My friend, being very partial to the feathered race, took them under his especial protection, and, when the young were hatched, removed them into the house ; the parents soon followed their offspring, and became domesticated in a very short time. Having an opportunity of sending to England, a pair of these dear little birds were put into a large cage, and entrusted for me to the care of a servant, who had been used to them, and understood how they ought to be fed and managed. Having been informed of my intended present, I was delighted when the man presented himself with cage in hand, containing two of those lovely birds, but was surprised to observe that one never moved off the perch, while the other was so timid that he fluttered about if I went near him. Not wishing to have them disturbed till they became more familiar, they were hung up in a retired part

of the room; still one did not move, and when I came to examine it, found it to be a stuffed bird. Upon questioning the man, he said that, notwithstanding all his care, one had died about a month before his arrival in England, and his master having given him such strict injunctions to deliver *both* the birds to me, the one having died, he had stuffed the skin; (and he must have been *au fait* at it, as it was so exceedingly well done.) Upon my asking how he came to leave it in the cage with the live bird, he said the latter seemed to grieve so much after its companion, that he thought it would have died also; that some person on board advised him to place the stuffed bird into the cage, which he accordingly did, whereupon the live one hopped and frisked about, shewing every symptom of extreme delight at the return of his friend; but, finding that he did not eat, would carry the food up in his bill, place it on the perch beside him, and, by the most coaxing manœuvres, invite him to partake of it, and at night, always roosted close beside him. The man added, that finding the live bird daily grow better, he had left the stuffed one in, but was *affeared* to tell me, lest I might think he had neglected his charge.

Not liking the idea of keeping the living and the dead together, I removed the stuffed bird. The other daily drooped more and more, and, whether from the change of climate, or the loss of his companion, I cannot say ; but at the end of a week, on going to feed him, I discovered him lying at the bottom of his cage quite dead. Who can say that this bird did not possess feelings and sensibility. I do not suppose that he thought it was *really* his companion that he had beside him, no more than I can imagine a miniature likeness to be the actual person it represents. Here was an end of all its cares and griefs. I could almost fancy, as the day before its death it gently warbled in a timid, doleful strain, that its notes were addressed to its departed companion, which I thus attempt to analyze :—

And we will sleep a pleasant sleep,
And not a care shall dare intrude,
To break the marble solitude,
So peaceful and so deep.

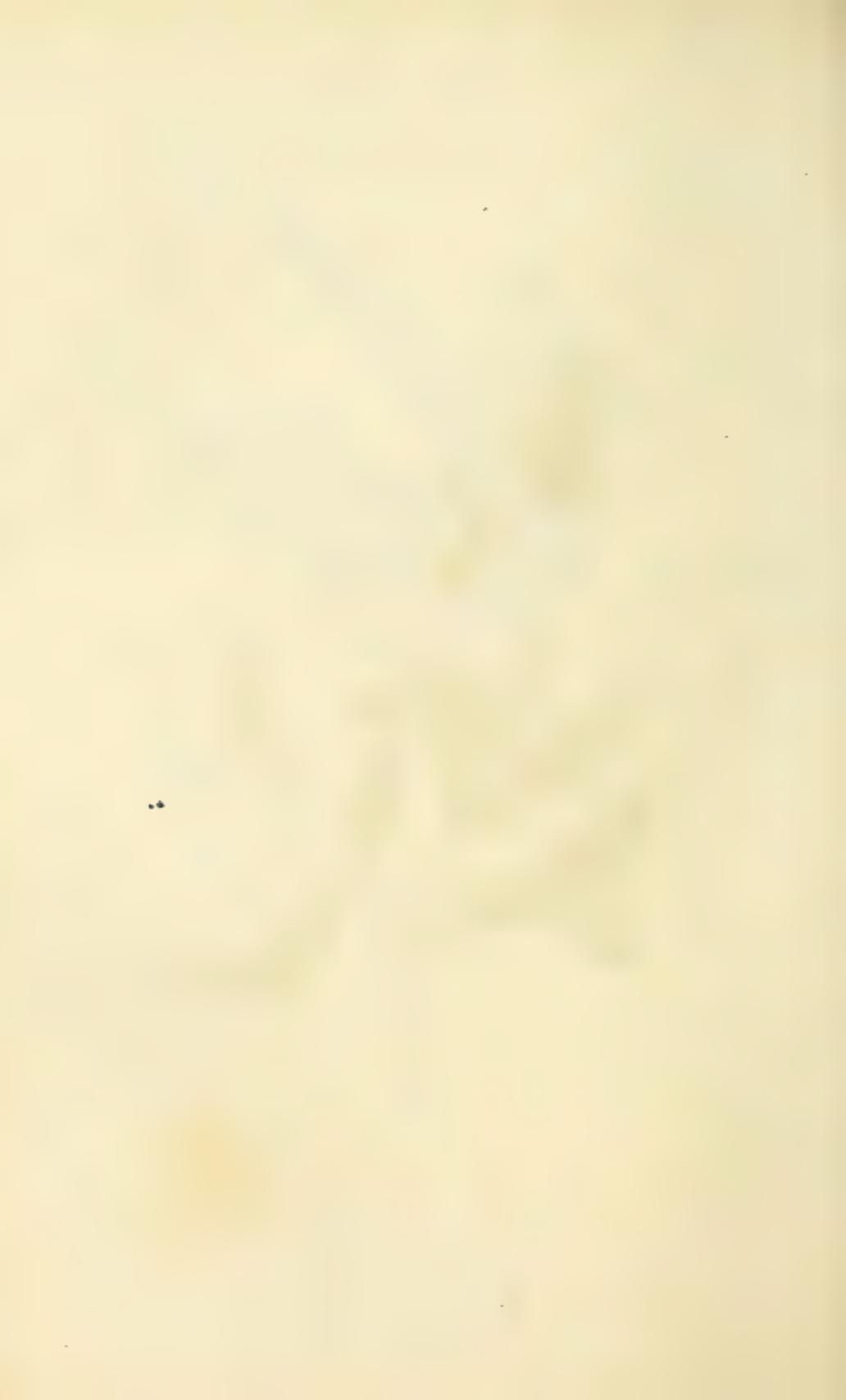
THE
TUFTED-NECKED HUMMING-BIRD,

Trochilus Ornatus.

THIS beautiful genus of birds comprises upwards of seventy species : and of all that flutter in the garden, or sing in the grove, the humming-bird is, undoubtedly, the most beautiful and interesting. It shews the power of the great Creator, who formed such minute creatures so perfect, and possessing those powers of attraction, which calls forth admiration and wonder. To behold one of those beautiful little objects, not larger than a hazel nut, clothed with the most resplendent plumage, capable of hatching and rearing its offspring, should make mankind sensible of their own insignificance.

Those who have not seen these *gems* of the feathered race, hovering about the flowers in their natal haunts, can form but a faint idea of them, even from the best possible representation the artist can effect.





The nests of these little flutterers, which are, of course, in proportion to the size of the bird, are equally to be admired. The female constructs it, while her mate goes in quest of materials. The hen never lays more than two eggs, when she begins to sit, the male and female taking it by turns ; but the female takes the greatest share of this important business, seldom quitting the nest, except for a few minutes at a time, morning and evening, when the dew is upon the flowers, and their honey most abundant. During her absence, the male takes her place, for the eggs, being so small, the least exposure to the cold, would prove fatal to the embryo bird. In twelve days the young ones make their appearance ; but the plumage of a young humming-bird is not so beautiful as that of the old ones.

The Indians formerly used the feathers of this beautiful bird for the purpose of adorning their persons ; and among savage nations, kings and princes made use of their plumage for the same purpose ; but since the intercourse that has taken place in later years with more civilized countries, they disdain such simple adornments, preferring the manufactures of more refined nations, and although vast numbers

of these lovely little creatures are destroyed by them, it is only for the purpose of selling as curiosities to Europeans.

They are found in the West Indies, fluttering over the sugar-canes. A friend of mine in Jamaica reared a nest of young ones. It was attended with great trouble, but they were so tame, and so much attached to her, that they never attempted to gain their liberty. They, however, shared the fate of too many pets of the feathered race: a cat was accidentally shut up in the room with them at night, and the poor birds became her prey.

These birds have no note, but a little simple chirping; though some old writers have asserted that they had a most pleasing melancholy melody in their voices. The noise they make in fluttering about resembles the hum of large flies, and chafers; hence they acquired the name of humming-birds.

Thou coloured winglet, floating in the ray
Of June's most gladsome hours, whose gorgeous vest
Was woven in the rainbow,—little rest
Thou knowest, in the long bright summer day;

Sipping the fragrant honeyed dew,—away
Thou fly'st from flower to flower, and, blest
With buoyant thoughts, and spirits full of zest,
Through fields of ether lies thine airy way.

Not having a living subject to make my drawing from, for the illustrative plate, and all the stuffed birds I could get at being some way or other defective, it was suggested to me that I had better select one from some popular work of note. While deliberating on the subject, half determined not to give the illustration, as all my other subjects were taken from life, a naval friend presented himself, with Donovan's very beautiful work in his hand, begging me to take any one from it, as he could answer for their correctness. His profession calling him to every part of the globe, he was well acquainted with each species of this lovely gem of other lands; so, after turning over the leaves of this splendid work, choosing one, then fancying another more beautiful, I fixed upon the *Trochilus Ornatus*, there being additional interest attached to it, independent of its exquisitely splendid plumage; and fearful of curtailing any of his beauty were his size reduced, have given him

exactly as represented by Donovan, which, my friend tells me, is as large as the living bird. "This humming-bird was brought from New Zealand, and was one among the numbers of those rarities collected in that island by the celebrated navigator, Captain Cook, in his first voyage round the world, that in which he was accompanied by Sir Joseph Banks and Dr. Solander."

However beautiful and wonderful the feathered inhabitants of other climes may be, and, doubtless, they make a splendid appearance in a museum, or when well represented by the artist, yet we cannot feel that intense interest in them that we do in those of our own woods and groves, those dear little minstrels that enliven our rural walks by the melody of their voices, greeting us with cheerful notes whichever way we turn. So pleasing to me is the music of these our *native melodists*, as I have heard it when, breathing the pure country air in a May morning, that I cannot imagine how any one, possessing sensibility, should prefer the smoke and bustle of a town life, to the delight of contemplating Nature in all her loveliness.

Sing, pretty birds, the leaves are green,
The skies are bright and blue,
And gaily shines the sylvan scene
With strings of pearly dew ;
The primrose and the cowslip flower,
The rose and pimpernel,
Unfold their cups in every bower,
And sweeten every dell.

Sing, pretty birds, the lilies bend
Upon the open lea ;
The woodbine and the hawthorn send
Sweet tidings to the bee ;
There's not a cloudlet in the sky
To dim the face of heaven,
Whose tint is like the deepening dye,
To crouching violets given.

Wilson gives a very interesting account of the humming-bird in America, a few extracts from which I beg leave to present to my readers. (*Trochilus Colubris.*) "Though this interesting and beautiful genus of birds comprehends upwards of seventy species, all of which, with a very few exceptions,

are natives of America, and its adjacent islands, it is yet singular that the species now before us should be the only one of its tribe that ever visits the territory of the United States.

“According to the observations of my friend, Mr. Abbot, of Savannah, in Georgia, (who has been engaged these thirty years in collecting and drawing subjects of natural history in that part of the country,) the humming bird makes its first appearance there, from the south, about the 23rd of March, two weeks earlier than it does in the county of Burke, sixty miles higher up the country, towards the interior; and at least five weeks sooner than it reaches this part of Pennsylvania. As it passes on to the northward as far as the interior of Canada, where it is seen in great numbers, the wonder is excited, how so feebly constructed and delicate a little creature can make its way over such extensive regions of lakes and forests, among so many enemies, all its superiors in strength and magnitude. But its very minuteness, the rapidity of its flight, which almost eludes the eye, and that admirable instinct, reason, or whatever else it may be called, and daring courage, which Heaven has implanted in its bosom, are its guides and pro-

tectors. In these we may also perceive the reason why an all-wise Providence has made this little hero an exception to a rule which prevails almost universally through nature,—viz., that the smallest species of a tribe are most prolific. The eagle lays one, sometimes two, eggs; the crow, five; the titmouse, seven or eight; the small European wren, fifteen; the humming-bird, *two*; and yet this latter is abundantly more numerous in America than the wren in Europe.

“About the 25th of April, the humming-bird usually arrives in Pennsylvania; and about the 10th of May begins to build its nest. This is generally fixed on the upper side of a horizontal branch, not among the twigs, but on the body of the branch itself. Yet I have known instances where it was attached by the side to an old moss-grown trunk; and others, where it was fastened on a strong rank stalk, or weed, in the garden; but these cases are rare. In the woods it very often chooses a white oak sapling to build on; and in the orchard, or garden, selects a pear-tree for that purpose. The branch is seldom more than ten feet from the ground. The nest is about an inch in diameter, and as much in depth.

A very complete one is now lying before me, and the materials of which it is composed are as follow :—The outward coat is formed of small pieces of a species of bluish gray lichen, that vegetates on old trees and fences, thickly glued on with the saliva of the bird, giving firmness and consistency to the whole, as well as keeping out moisture. Within this are thick matted layers of the fine wings of certain flying seeds, closely laid together ; and, lastly, the downy substance from the great mullein, and from the stalks of the common fern, lines the whole. The base of the nest is continued round the stem of the branch, to which it closely adheres ; and, when viewed from below, appears a mere mossy knot, or accidental protuberance. The eggs are two, pure white, and of equal thickness at both ends. On a person's approaching their nest, the little proprietors dart around with a humming sound, passing frequently within a few inches of one's head ; and, should the young be newly hatched, the female will resume her place on the nest, even while you stand within a yard or two of the spot. The precise period of incubation I am unable to give ; but the young are in the habit, a short time before they leave the nest, of thrusting

their bills into the mouths of their parents, and sucking what they have brought them. I never could perceive that they carried them any animal food; though from circumstances that will presently be mentioned, I think it highly probable they do. As I have found their nests with eggs so late as the 12th of July, I do not doubt but that they frequently, and perhaps usually, raise two broods in the same season. The humming-bird is extremely fond of tubular flowers, and I have often stopped, with pleasure, to observe his manœuvres among the blossoms of the trumpet-flower; when arrived before a thicket of these that are full blown, he poises, or suspends himself on wing, for the space of two or three seconds, so steadily, that his wings become invisible, or only like a mist; and you can plainly distinguish the pupil of his eye looking round with great quickness and circumspection; the glossy golden green of his back, and the fire of his throat, dazzling in the sun, form altogether a most interesting appearance. When he alights, which is frequently, he always prefers the small dead twigs of a tree, or bush, where he dresses and arranges his plumage with great dexterity. His only note is a single chirp, not louder than that of a

small cricket or grasshopper, generally uttered while passing from flower to flower, or when engaged in fights with his fellows ; for, when two males meet at the same bush or flower, a battle instantly takes place ; and the combatants ascend in the air, chirping, darting, and circling around each other, till the eye is no longer able to follow them. The conqueror, however, generally returns to the same place, to reap the fruits of his victory. I have seen him attack, and, for a few moments, tease the kingbird, and have also seen him, in his turn, assaulted by a humble bee, which he soon put to flight. He is one of those few birds that are universally beloved ; and amidst the sweet dewy serenity of a summer's morning, his appearance among the arbours of honeysuckles and beds of flowers is truly interesting.

When morning dawns, and the blest sun again
Lifts his red glories from the eastern main,
Then through our woodbines, wet with glittering
 dews,
The flower-fed humming-bird his round pursues ;
Sips, with inserted tube, the honey'd blooms,
And chirps his gratitude as round he roams ;

While richest roses, though in crimson drest,
Shrink from the splendour of his gorgeous breast ;
What heavenly tints in mingling radiance fly !
Each rapid movement gives a different dye ;
Like scales of burnished gold they dazzling shew,
Now sink to shade, now like a furnace glow !

“ The singularity of this little bird has induced many persons to attempt to raise them from the nest, and accustom them to the cage. Mr. Coffey, of Fairfax county, Virginia, a gentleman who has paid great attention to the manners and peculiarities of our native birds, told me, that he raised and kept two, for some months, in a cage, supplying them with honey dissolved in water, on which they readily fed. As the sweetness of the liquid frequently brought small flies and gnats about the cage and cup, the birds amused themselves by snapping at them on wing, and swallowing them with eagerness, so that these insects formed no inconsiderable part of their food. Mr. Charles Wilson Peale, proprietor of the museum, tells me, that he had two young humming-birds, which he raised from the nest : they used to fly about the room, and would frequently perch on

Mrs. Peale's shoulder to be fed. When the sun shone strongly into the chamber, he has observed them darting after the moats that floated in the light, as fly-catchers would after flies. In the summer of 1803, a nest of young humming-birds was brought to me that were nearly fit to fly. One of them actually flew out by the window the same evening, and, falling against a wall, was killed. The other refused food, and the next morning, I could but just perceive that it had life. A lady in the house undertook to be its nurse, placed it in her bosom, and, as it began to revive, dissolved a little sugar in her mouth, into which she thrust its beak, and it sucked with great avidity. In this manner it was brought up until fit for the cage. I kept it upwards of three months, supplied it with loaf-sugar dissolved in water, which it preferred to honey and water; gave it fresh flowers every morning sprinkled with the liquid, and surrounded the space in which I kept it with gauze, that it might not injure itself. It appeared gay, active, and full of spirit, hovering from flower to flower as if in its native wilds, and always expressed, by its motions and chirping, great pleasure at seeing fresh flowers introduced to its cage. Num-

bers of people visited it from motives of curiosity ; and I took every precaution to preserve it, if possible, through the winter. Unfortunately, however, by some means it got at large, and, flying about the room, so injured itself, that it soon after died.

“ This little bird is extremely susceptible of cold, and, if long deprived of the animating influence of the sun-beams, droops, and soon dies. A very beautiful male bird was brought me this season (1809), which I put into a wire cage, and placed in a retired shaded part of the room. After fluttering about for some time, the weather being uncommonly cool, it clung by the wires, and hung in a seemingly torpid state for a whole forenoon. No motion whatever of the lungs could be perceived on the closest inspection, though at other times this is remarkably observable ; the eyes were shut, and when touched by the finger, it gave no signs of life or motion. I carried it out to the open air, and placed it directly in the rays of the sun, in a sheltered situation. In a few seconds, respiration became very apparent, the bird breathed faster and faster, opened its eyes, and began to look about, with as much seeming vivacity as ever. After it had completely recovered,

I restored it to liberty, and it flew off to the withered top of a pear-tree, where it sat for some time dressing its disordered plumage, and then shot off like a meteor.

The flight of the humming-bird, from flower to flower, greatly resembles that of a bee; but is so much more rapid, that the latter appears a mere loiterer to him. He poises himself on wing, while he thrusts his long, slender, tubular tongue into the flowers in search of food.

He sometimes enters a room by the window, examines the bouquets of flowers, and passes out by the opposite door or window. He has been known to take refuge in a hot-house during the cool nights of autumn; to go regularly out in the morning, and to return as regularly in the evening, for several days together. The humming bird has hitherto been supposed to subsist altogether on the honey, or liquid sweets, which it extracts from flowers. One or two curious observers have indeed remarked, that they have found evident fragments of insects in the stomach of this species; but these have been generally believed to have been taken in by accident. The few opportunities which Europeans have to

determine this point by observations made on the living bird, or by dissection of the newly-killed one, have rendered this mistaken opinion almost general in Europe. For myself, I can speak decisively on this subject: I have seen the humming bird, for half an hour at a time, darting at those little groups of insects that dance in the air in a fine summer evening, retiring to an adjoining twig to rest, and renewing the attack with a dexterity that sets all our other fly-catchers at defiance. I have opened, from time to time, great numbers of these birds; have examined the contents of the stomach with suitable glasses, and in three cases out of four, have found these to consist of broken fragments of insects. In many subjects, entire insects of the coleopterous class, but very small, were found unbroken. The observations of Mr. Coffey, as detailed above, and the remarks of my worthy friend, Mr. Peale, are corroborative of these facts. It is well known that the humming-bird is particularly fond of tubular flowers, where numerous small insects of this kind resort to feed on the farina, &c.; and there is every reason for believing that he is as often in search of these insects as of honey; and that the former compose at

least as great a portion of his usual sustenance as the latter. If this food be so necessary for the parents, there is no doubt but the young also occasionally partake of it. To enumerate all the flowers of which this little bird is fond, would be to repeat the names of half our American Flora. From the blossoms of the towering poplar, or the tulip-tree, through a thousand intermediate flowers, to those of the humble larkspur, he ranges at will, and almost incessantly. Every period of the season produces a fresh multitude of new favourites. Towards the month of September, there is a yellow flower which grows in great luxuriance along the sides of creeks and rivers, and in low, moist situations; it grows to the height of two or three feet, and the flower, which is about the size of a thimble, hangs in the shape of a cap of liberty above a luxuriant growth of green leaves. It is the *balsamina noli me tangere* of botanists, and is the greatest favourite with the humming-bird of all our other flowers. In some places, where these plants abound, you may see, at one time, ten or twelve humming-birds darting about, and fighting with and pursuing each other. About the 20th of September, they generally retire to the south. I

have, indeed, sometimes seen a solitary individual on the 28th and 30th of that month, and sometimes even in October; but these cases are rare. About the beginning of November, they pass the southern boundary of the United States into Florida."

Perhaps I have made my extract too lengthy, but every line appearing to me full of pleasing information, from one so capable of judging correctly, my readers will doubtless be more pleased than otherwise.

In the vast, and the minute, we see
The unambiguous footsteps of the God
Who gives its lustre to an insect's wing,
And wheels his throne upon the rolling world.

THE HUMMING-BIRD.

High, on her brow sublime, is borne
One scarlet woodbine's tremulous horn;
A gaudy bee-bird's triple plume
Sheds on her neck its waving gloom;
With silvery gossamer entwined,
Stream the luxuriant locks behind;

Thin folds of tangled net-work break
In airy waves adown her neck ;
Warp'd in his loom, the spider spread
The far-diverging rays of thread ;
Then round and round with shuttle fine
Inwrought the undulating line ;
Scarce hides the woof her bosom's snow,
One pearly nipple peeps below ;
One rose-leaf forms her crimson vest,
The loose edge crosses o'er her breast ;
And one translucent fold, that fell
From the tall lily's ample bell,
Forms with sweet grace her snow-white train,
Flows as she steps, and sweeps the plain ;
Silence and Night enchanted gaze,
And Hesper hides his vanquished rays !

DARWIN.

So where the humming-bird in Chili's bowers,
On murmuring pinions, robs the pendent flowers ;
Seeks, where fine pores their dulcet balm distil,
And sucks the treasure with proboscis bill ;

Fair Cyprepedia,* with successful guile
Knits her smooth brow, extinguishes her smile ;
A spider's bloated paunch and jointed arms
Hide her fine form, and mask her blushing charms ;
In ambush sly the mimic warrior lies,
And on quick wing the panting plunderer flies.

DARWIN.

* The Cyprepedium, from South America, has a large globular nectary, about the size of a pigeon's egg, of a fleshy colour, and an incision, or depression, on its upper part, much resembling the body of the large American spider. This spider, called by Linnæus, *Aranea avicularia*, with a convex orbicular thorax, the centre transversely excavated ; he adds, that it catches small birds as well as insects, and has the venomous bite of a serpent. M. Louvilliers de Poincy, in his " Histoire Nat. des Antillas," calls it a *Phalange*, and says it catches the humming bird in its strong nets. Darwin observes, that " the similitude of the Cyprepedium to this great spider seems to be a vegetable contrivance to prevent the humming bird from plundering its honey.'

THE REDBREAST.

Motacilla Rubecula.

Sweet Robin ! I hail thy appearance once more ;
 Come, sing in my garden, or peck at my door ;
 Though an ingrate, for favours so often conferred,
 I still view with pleasure my beautiful bird.

When the last winter's tempest rushed down from
 the sky,
 Thou stoodst at my window with pityful eye,
 The bread from my table unsparing I cast,
 And thought that *one* friend may be faithful at last.

Thy contemplative look 'twas my joy to behold,
 Thy flight long repress'd, and thy plumage of gold,
 And the oft'ner thou cam'st from thy dwelling un-
 known,
 The more welcome thou wast to the crumbs I had
 thrown.



The mild breath of spring, from their covert profound,
Call'd the leaves into light and bespangled the
ground ;

Ah! then, 'mid the blaze of prosperity's reign,
I sought for my robin, but sought him in vain.

Now the summer is past, and the forest is bare,
At my window thou standest—a sad spectacle there—
Cold and shivering, my pardon thou seem'st to im-
plore,

And to ask for the hand that once fed thee before.

Come, banish thy grief, nor past folly bewail,
My love is a store-house that never will fail ;
At evenings, at mornings, at noon, and at night,
To feed my sweet bird shall still give me delight.

Ah! why should I thus thy inconstancy chide?
Have *I* no conviction of crimes deeper dyed?
Though of reason possessed, and instruction divine,
My spirit is far more ungrateful than thine.

From the moment since first I this vital air drew,
One friend has preserved and supported me too ;
Yet how often have I, whilst I sumptuously fared,
Forgotten the hand that my banquet prepared.

COTTLE.

Being retired to my little *concert room*, to select a subject to close the illustrations of this work, and, having chosen a blackbird, was on the point of committing his likeness to paper, when casting my eyes to the window, I perceived a dear little Robin perched on a flower-pot outside. Opening the sash very cautiously, to throw him out some crumbs, he was alarmed, and flew off; but presently I observed him perched on a branch of an old apple-tree, in the garden. It instantly occurred to me, that he would make a much prettier picture than the former sombre-coated gentleman, who was consequently restored to his companions, and, with pencil in hand, and paper on desk, I commenced my sketch of sweet robin on the apple-tree, which change I hope will be equally agreeable to my readers; for although he is a sad pilferer of our fruits, devouring our currants and gooseberries without mercy, still the pleasure we

derive from his winter visits amply repays us for the loss of a little fruit.

No doubt, many persons have observed that the white currants suffer less from the ravages of birds than the red, although the former are known to be much the sweetest. The fact is, that all birds, but more particularly the robin, prefer all red fruits; nor will they touch the white currants, so long as any red are within their reach.

Who is there that does not love this familiar little songster? Who can harm this sweet familiar friend, which seems to place so much confidence in man as frequently to enter his abode and solicit his protection? In severe winters how much are we enlivened by a visit from Mr. Robin, whose bright animated eye and sprightly motions are exhibited while partaking of the crumbs placed for him in the window-sill of our breakfast parlour. I have seen some saucy enough even to fly on the table, and peck the butter, with the greatest *sang-froid*, although several persons were breakfasting at the time.

The fowls of Heav'n,
Tam'd by the cruel season, crowd around
The winnowing store, and claim the little boon

Which PROVIDENCE assigns them. One alone—
The redbreast—sacred to the household gods,
Wisely regardful of th' embroiling sky,
In joyless fields and thorny thickets leaves
His shiv'ring mates, and pays to trusted Man
His annual visit. Half afraid, he first
Against the window beats ; then brisk alights
On the warm hearth ; then, hopping on the floor,
Eyes all the family askance,
And pecks, and starts, and wonders where he is,
Till, more familiar grown, the table crumbs
Attract his slender feet.

THOMSON'S " WINTER."

This sweet " enchanter of the grove" is migratory in Germany, but stays with us all the year, and the long duration of his harmonious voice ensures him a welcome whenever he appears, although his song is rather of a melancholy cast, which bears a strange contrast to his sprightly motions and plumage, which are remarkably lively and gay. But how soothing is his note in the twilight of an autumnal evening, when all other songsters have retired to roost. Often in my lonely walks have I been startled by some

little creature hopping before me, but from the deep gloom around have been unable to discern what it was ; when, suddenly, as if by magic, the sweetest strain of music has struck upon my ear, from a withered branch of hazel close by, where I have at length, after close inspection, discovered this sweet performer—this favourite of poets—whose song is thus beautifully noticed by the Rev. James Graham :—

TO A REDBREAST, THAT FLEW IN AT MY
WINDOW.

From snowy plains and icy sprays,
From moonless nights and sunless days,
Welcome, poor bird !—I'll cherish thee ;
I love thee, for thou trustest me.
Thrice welcome, helpless, panting guest,
Fondly I'll warm thee in my breast.
How quick thy little heart is beating,
As if its brother flutterer greeting !
Thou needst not dread a captive's doom—
No : freely flutter round my room ;
Perch on my lute's remaining string,
And sweetly of sweet summer sing.

That note—that summer note—I know ;
It wakes, at once, and soothes, my wo,
I see those woods—I see that stream—
I see—ah ! still prolong that dream,
Still with thy song those scenes renew,
Tho' through my tears they reach my view.

No more now, at my lonely meal,
While thou art by, alone I'll feel ;
For soon, devoid of all distrust,
Thou'lt learn to sip the sparkling juice,
And when (our short collation o'er)
Some favourite volume I explore,
Be't work of poet or of sage,
Safe thou shalt hop across the page ;
Unchecked shall flit o'er Virgil's groves,
Or flutter 'mid Tibullus' loves ;
Thus, heedless of the raving blast,
Thou'lt dwell with me till winter's past ;
And when the primrose tells 'tis spring,
And when the thrush begins to sing—
Soon as I hear the woodland song,
Freed thou shalt join the vocal throng.

Robins are said to be sad depredators of the fruits, but should we grudge them the little they consume, for which they so amply repay us by their harmonious singing, when most other songsters have forsaken us. Though they are usually considered only autumnal songsters, they sing equally in spring and summer; but in the two former seasons their voices are not distinguished in the universal harmony that surrounds us. It is only in the still, quiet, autumnal evening, among the fading leaves, that the genuine beauty of his notes can be appreciated, as Miss Strickland beautifully observes:—

A thousand birds, with joyous tone,
Proclaim the birth of spring;
But, *Robin*, thou art left alone,
The autumn hymn to sing.
We hear the echo's jocund voice,
When waving trees look green,
And linnet, lark, and thrush rejoice,
When summer flowers are seen;
But when they wither on the plain,
Then, *Robin*, thou art heard

To mourn their death in plaintive strain,
For thou art pity's bird.
And oft, as at the closing day,
Thy thrilling notes I hear,
I fondly deem thy pensive lay,
The requiem of the year.
Where fading leaves their shadows fling,
'Tis sweet to find thee nigh,
A list'ner, when I touch the string,
And warbling in reply.

The redbreast is seldom confined in a cage, being rather a troublesome bird to feed ; for although fond of fruits, its chief diet consists of insects ; but in severe winters, they will eat almost every kind of berry, even the *solanum dulcamara*. This shews the erroneous assertion of some people, who insist, that whatever a bird will eat is not injurious to man ; whereas, it is well known that the *dulcamara* is a strong poison, and that many children, tempted by the beautiful appearance of the fruit, have eaten it, and in consequence have met their death.

These birds are very spirited ; the males will fight

and dispute their rights with the greatest obstinacy. During a severe winter, I was in the habit of throwing crumbs into an old uninhabited pigeon-house, and one robin having taken possession, would not let another bird enter it, or partake of his fare.

What an acquisition is this bright-eyed, rosy bird, to the hedge-rows, when perched on the brambles or the wild rose bushes, when they are besprinkled with the hoar frost. How beautifully chaste are the lines of that soul of harmony, Miss Twamley, who writes from and to the heart, where she alludes to the redbreast, in her exquisite description of autumnal scenery; they are so beautiful, that I hope she will pardon my inserting them in this work.

'Twas he,

The wintry warbler, poor robin redbreast,
As blithe, and brisk, and merry, as his wont,
Singing and chirruping, as by my side,
In kind companionship, he skipped along,
Or flew from tree to tree. And as he sung,
Methought his gay notes shaped themselves to sense,
Language like ours; and thus my fancy framed,
From his sweet music, unmelodious words:—

Farewell to Autumn ! She's passing away

Silently, swiftly going—

She is shaking the last brown leaves from the spray,

And they fall on the earth, where the sun's slant ray

Finds only damp moss growing.

Autumn is parting ; mute and fast

Her few faint flowers are dying ;

The noon of the year is gone and past,

And every moaning and muttering blast,

The summer's dirge is crying.

But let us be merry, though summer is gone,

And Autumn away is gliding ;

And hoary winter, now hurrying on,

With storms and snows, will be here anon,

'Mid winds all loudly chiding.

Still, ever be merry, as I am now,

Thorough the wintry weather ;

For ye have the bright hearth's cheering glow,

While for me the ruddy hedge-berries grow,

So let us be gay together !

Oh! ever be merry!—what do ye gain
By murmuring, fretting, sighing?
Why ever strive to discover pain?
Why court the things of which ye complain?
Why on life's dark side be prying?

Cease, cease, and be merry! Oh come to me,
E'en a bird shall teach ye reason;
Shall show ye how gaily and happily
Poor robin can sing in a leafless tree,
And love e'en the dreariest season.

Then ever be merry, a lesson take now,
That well ye may aye remember;
A contented heart, and a cloudless brow,
Can light life's shadowy path with a glow,
Like sunshine in dim November.*

The robin builds a very warm nest, composed of dried leaves, intermixed with moss and hair, lined with the softest feathers. In some countries, it builds its nest in the crevices of mossy banks, or at the foot of a hawthorn in a hedgerow; in others,

* Romance of Nature. C. Tilt, Fleet-street.

it chooses the thickest coverts, hiding its nest with oak leaves. The hen lays four or five eggs, and we are assured that the young birds will sing before they have cast their first feathers.

The trouble the redbreast takes to prepare a worm for food is truly ingenious: taking a worm in its beak at one end, he knocks it repeatedly on the ground, till the inside comes entirely away, then taking it by the other end, he cleanses the outer part, which is the only portion of the worm that he eats.

It is surprising to see with what expertness they will perform this operation, and the number of worms they will despatch in the course of a day, when they have young ones to feed. These juvenile warblers do not attain all their beauty till the following year.

As I observed before, the redbreast is seldom confined in a cage, though I have known instances of their being made prisoners, and of their repaying those who had confined them with the sweetest melancholy strain, singing at night when the candles were in the room. This was truly returning good for evil. What a lesson for man! I dearly love the robin, and I love his sweet voice, but it is when he is free, and comes hopping and warbling along

with his roguish black eye, searching about the snow, or tripping to the open door, to ask for his share of the morning meal. It is then I joy to listen to his melody, and when he cheers me with his Christmas carol, how gladly do I shake the crumbs about, and coax him nearer and nearer ; but my poor robin, I would not deprive you of your liberty, nor can I take any pleasure in hearing this innocent warbler singing at night, when placed in captivity. How sweetly Miss Twamley writes, when speaking of this bird in winter :—

Cold blew the wintry wind, as if it swept
O'er frozen worlds, and caught their iciness :—
The small birds, hopping 'mong the leafless twigs,
Chirped cheerily, as I around me flung
Their wonted portion of my morning's meal ;
And leader of them all, the robin, tame
And free, came warbling and hopping on,
Nearer and nearer yet ; his bright black eye
Looking askance upon the scattered food,
And his tail frisking, as he skipped about,
Singing his glad ' good morrow.'

I do love

That fearless bird : all the long winter thro',
'Midst snow and frost, and bitter cold he came,
Greeting me daily with his rich sweet voice ;
Nor e'er went unremembered.

E'en before

The poet's nightingale, the redbreast holds
A place in *my* esteem ; for she seems coy,
Distant, capricious, and commands you forth
To listen and admire her in her pride
Of conscious excellence,—like beauty, vain,
And claiming such our homage as her right ;
While my own merry robin comes to cheer
Our gloomy winter with his lively song.
He comes to *us*, and, perched on twig or gate,
Or on the chimney top, or window sill,
Sits warbling sweetly on his welcome lay.

The rose is for the nightingale,

The heather for the lark ;

But the holly greets the redbreast

'Mid winter drear and dark ;

And the snow-drop, wakened by his song,

Peeps tremblingly forth,

From her bed of cold still slumber,
 To gaze upon the earth ;
For the merry voice above her,
 Seemed a herald of the spring,
As o'er the sleeping flowers
 Blithe robin came to sing.
“ Up, up ! my lady Snow-drop !
 No longer lie in bed,
But dance unto my melody,
 And wave your graceful head.
The bulbul wooes the red red rose,
 The lark the heathery dell ;
But the robin has the holly tree,
 And the snow-drop's virgin bell.”
The snow-drop timidly looked out,
 But all was dim and drear,
Save robin's merry song, that sought
 Her loneliness to cheer.
And presently the crocus heard
 Their greeting, and awoke,
And donned with care her golden robe,
 And em'rald-coloured cloak,
And springing from her russet shroud,
 Stepped forth to meet the sun,

Who broke the clouds with one bright glance,
And his jocund race begun.
The crocus brought her sisters, too,
The purple, pied, and white ;
And the redbreast warbled merrily
Above the flowerets bright.
Oh ! the nightingale may love the rose,
The lark the summer's heather ;
But the robin's consort flow'rs come,
And brave the wintry weather.

We may surely consider poor robin an emblem of contentment and perseverance, not cast down by the casual changes of circumstances, but happy and thankful for what Providence bestows.

Sweet bird, whom the winter constrains—
And seldom another it can—
To seek a retreat, while he reigns,
In the well shelter'd dwelling of man ;
Who never can seem to intrude,
Though in all places equally free,
Come, oft as the season is rude,
Thou art sure to be welcome to me.

At sight of the first feeble ray,
That pierces the clouds of the east,
To inveigle thee every day,
My windows shall shew thee a feast.

For, taught by experience, I know
Thee mindful of benefit long ;
And that, thankful for all I bestow,
Thou wilt pay me with many a song.

There, soon as the swell of the buds
Bespeaks the renewal of spring,
Fly hence, if thou wilt, to the woods,
Or where it shall please thee to sing :—

And shouldst thou, compelled by a frost,
Come again to my window or door,
Doubt not an affectionate host,
Only pay as thou pay'dst me before.

Thus music must needs be confess'd
To flow from a fountain above ;
Else how could it work in the breast
Unchangeable friendship and love ?

And who on the globe can be found,
Save your generation, and ours,
That can be delighted by sounds,
Or boasts any musical powers?

COWPER.

We will now say farewell to our friendly visitor, and as even he must have an end, we will sing his dirge in the words of the poet:—

Call for the robin redbreast and the wren,
Since o'er shady groves they hover,
And with leaves and flowers to cover
The friendless bodies of unburied men;
Call unto his funeral dole
The ant, the field-mouse, and the mole,
To raise hillocks that shall keep him warm,
But keep the wolf far hence, that's foe to men,
For, with his nails, he'll dig him up again.

MISCELLANEOUS POEMS.

SOLILOQUY OF A WATER-WAGTAIL,

(ON THE WALLS OF YORK CASTLE.)

ON the walls that guard my prison,
 Swelling with fantastic pride,
 Brisk and merry as the season,
 I a feathered coxcomb spied:
 When the little hopping elf
 Gaily thus amused himself:—

“Hear your sovereign’s proclamation,
 All good subjects, young and old!
 I’m the lord of all creation—
 I,—a water wag-tail bold!
 All around and all you see,
 All the world was made for *me!*”

“ Yonder sun, so proudly shining,
Rises,—when I leave my nest ;
And, behind the hills declining,
Sets,—when I retire to rest ;
Morn and ev’ning, thus, you see,
Day and night, were made for *me* !

“ Vernal gales to love invite me,
Summer sheds for me her beams ;
Autumn’s jovial scenes delight me ;
Winter paves with ice my streams ;
All the year is mine, you see,
Seasons change, like moons, for *me* !

“ On the heads of giant mountains,
Or beneath the shady trees ;
By the banks of warbling fountains
I enjoy myself at ease ;
Hills and valleys, thus, you see,
Groves and rivers made for *me* !

“ Boundless are my vast dominions ;
I can hop, or swim, or fly ;
When I please, my tow’ring pinions
Trace my empire through the sky ;
Air and elements, you see,
Heaven and earth, were made for *me* !

“ Birds and insects, beasts and fishes,
All their humble distance keep ;
Man, subservient to my wishes,
Sows the harvest, which I reap ;
Mighty man himself, you see,
All that breathe, were made for *me*.

“ ’Twas for my accommodation
Nature rose when I was born ;
Should I die,—the whole creation
Back to nothing would return ;
Sun, moon, stars, the world, you see,
Sprung,—exist—will fall with *me* !”

Here the pretty prattler ending,
Spread his wings to soar away ;
But a cruel hawk, descending,
Pounc'd him up,—a helpless prey !
—Couldst thou not, poor wagtail, see
That the hawk was made for *thee* ?

J. MONTGOMERY.

ODE TO THE CUCKOO.

Hail, beauteous stranger of the grove !
Thou messenger of spring !
Now Heaven repairs thy vernal seat,
And woods thy welcome sing.

What time the daisy decks the green.
Thy certain voice we hear ;
Hast thou a star to guide thy path,
Or mark the rolling year ?

Delightful visitant ! with thee,
I hail the time of flowers,
And hear the sound of music sweet
From birds among the bowers.

The school-boy wandering through the wood
To pull the primrose gay,
Starts, the new voice of spring to hear,
And imitates thy lay.

What time the pea puts forth her bloom,
Thou fliest thy vocal vale,
An annual guest in other lands,
Another spring to hail.

Sweet bird ! thy bower is ever green,
Thy sky is ever clear,
Thou hast no sorrow in thy song,
No winter in thy year.

Oh, could I fly, I'd fly with thee !
We'd make, with social wing,
Our annual visit o'er the globe,
Companions of the spring.

LOGAN.

THE SWAN.

Look at the feeding swan beneath the willows ;
How pure her white neck gleams against the green,
As she sits nestling on the waters !

Beautiful !

She is the lady of the sea-girt isles.

See, how she swells her navigable wings,

And coasts her sedgy empire keenly round !

She looks a bird of snow, dropp'd from the
clouds,

To queen it o'er the minnows.

The bright,

The pearly creature ! Lone and calm she rides,

Like Dian on the waves, when night is clear,

And the sleek west wind smoothes the billows down

Into forgetfulness, that she may see

How fast her silver gondola can boom

Sheer on the level deep.

FAWCETT.

THE EAGLE'S SONG.

The rock is my dwelling,
That beetles on high ;
In the thunder, my yelling
Resounds through the sky :—
When the chase is severest,
I urge on the pack :—
When dangers are nearest
I keep on my track.

When the lightning is flashing
Upon the last field,
Where lately was crashing
Of sabre and shield ;
O'er the dead and the dying
I flap my dark wing :—
While the mountains replying
Their death chorus sing.

When the tempest is roaring,
And sweeping the trees,
Aloft I am soaring,
And courting the breeze.

Spheres rendered asunder,
When thunderbolts dart,
I demand of the thunder,
If proud beats his heart.

In my youth, I delighted
To gaze on the sun,
When his radiance affrighted
All breasts but my own.
When Death's angel draws near,
May his form be a cloud,
Be the lightning his spear,
And the ocean my shroud.

YOUNG.

THE SWAN'S MELODY.

I am, indeed, a lady fair,
And proudly sail on glossy stream,
Nor seek my food with toil and care,
My life is all a sunny dream.

On my broad back, my cygnet brood
Securely cross the treacherous flood ;
The tender down that clothes my breast,
Shields Delia from the biting gale.
My stately form, and snowy crest,
Through ages grace the poets' tale ;
And they have sung that my last sigh
Is one long note of melody !
Thus my own requiem I sing,
And the fair quills that arm my wing
Inscribe for me an elegy !

THE WATER-FOWL.

Whither, 'midst falling dew,
While glow the heavens with the last steps of day,
Far through their rosy depths dost thou pursue
Thy solitary way ?

Vainly the fowler's eye,
Might mark thy distant flight to do thee wrong,
As, darkly painted on the crimson sky,
Thy figure floats along.

There is a Power whose care
Teaches thy way along that pathless coast ;
The desert, and the illimitable air,
Lone wandering, but not lost.

All day, thy wings have fanned,
At that far height, the cold, thin atmosphere,
Yet stoop not, weary, to the unwelcome land,
Though the dark night is near.

And soon that toil shall end,
Soon shalt thou find a summer home and rest,
And scream among thy fellows ; reeds shall bend
Soon o'er thy shelter'd nest.

Thou'rt gone ! the abyss of heaven
Hath swallowed up thy form ; yet on my heart
Deeply hath sunk the lesson thou hast given,
And shall not soon depart.

He who from zone to zone
Guides through the boundless sky thy certain flight,
In the long way that I must tread alone
Will lead my steps aright. •

BRYANT.

TO THE CROW.

Say, weary bird, whose level flight,
Thus at the dusky hour of night,
Tends thro' the mid-way air,
Why yet beyond the verge of day,
Is lengthened out thy dark delay,
Adding another to the hours of care.

The wren, within her mossy nest,
Has hushed her little brood to rest ;
The wild wood pigeon rock'd on high,
Has coo'd his last soft note of love,
And fondly nestles by his dove,
To guard their downy young from an inclement
sky.

Haste, bird, and nurse thy callow brood,
They call on Heav'n and thee for food,
Bleak,—on some cliff's neglected tree ;
Haste, weary bird, thy lagging flight,
It is the chilling hour of night,
'Tis hour of rest for thee !

TO THE BLUE BIRD.

When winter's cold tempests and snows are no more,
Green meadows and brown furrow'd fields re-appear-
ing,

The fisherman hauling their shad to the shore,
And cloud-cleaving geese to the lakes are a-steering ;
When first the lone butterfly flits on the wing ;
When red glow the maples, so fresh and so pleasing ;
O then comes the blue bird, the herald of spring,
And hails, with his warblings, the charms of the
season.

Then loud piping frogs make the marshes to ring ;
Then warm glows the sunshine, and fine is the wea-
ther,

The blue woodland flowers just beginning to spring,
And spice wood and sassafras budding together ;
O then to your gardens, ye housewives, repair,
Your walks border up ; sow and plant at your lei-
sure,

The blue bird will chant from his box such an air,
That all your hard toils will seem truly a pleasure.

He flits through the orchard, he visits each tree,
The red flow'ring peach, and the apple's sweet blossom,

He snaps up destroyers wherever they be,
And seizes the caitiffs that lurk in their bosoms ;
He drags the vile grub from the corn it devours,
The worms from their webs, where they riot and
welter ;

His song and his services freely are ours,
And all that he asks is, in winter, a shelter.

The ploughman is pleased when he gleans in his
train,

Now searching the furrows—now mounting to cheer
him ;

The gard'ner delights in his sweet, simple strain,
And leans on his spade to survey and to hear him ;
The slow ling'ring schoolboys forget they'll be chid,
While gazing intent as he warbles before 'em,
In mantle of sky-blue, and bosom so red,
That each little loiterer seems to adore him.

When all the gay scenes of summer are o'er,
And autumn slow enters, so silent and fallow,

And millions of warblers that charm'd us before,
Have fled in the train of the sun-seeking swallow,
The blue-bird, forsaken, yet true to his home,
Still lingers and looks for a milder to-morrow,
Till, forced by the horrors of winter to roam,
He sings his adieu in a low note of sorrow.

While spring's lovely season, serene, dewy, and warm,
The green face of earth and the pure blue of heav'n,
Or love's native music, have influence to charm,
Or sympathy's glow to our feelings is given,
Still dear to each bosom the blue-bird shall be ;
His voice, like the thrilling of hope, is a treasure ;
For through bleakest storms if a calm he but see,
He comes to remind us of sunshine and pleasure.

WILSON.

TO THE CUCKOO.

O blithe new comer ! I have heard,
I hear thee, and rejoice ;
O cuckoo ! shall I call thee bird,
Or but a wand'ring voice ?

While I am lying on the grass
Thy two-fold shout I hear,
That seems to fill the whole air's space,
As loud far off, as near.

Though babbling only to the vale,
Of sunshine and of flowers,
Thou bring'st unto me a tale
Of visionary hours.

Thrice welcome, darling of the spring !
Even yet thou art to me
No bird, but an invisible thing,
A voice,—a mystery.

The same when, in my school-boy days,
I listen'd to that cry,
Which made me look a thousand ways,
In bush, and tree, and sky.

To seek thee did I often rove
Through woods, and on the green ;
And thou wert still a hope, a love,
Still longed for, never seen.

And I can listen to thee yet ;
Can lie upon the plain,
And listen, till I do beget,
That golden time again.

O blessed bird ! the earth we pace
Again appears to be
An unsubstantial, fairy place,
That is fit home for thee !

WORDSWORTH.

THE SEA-BIRD'S TALE.

Far, far o'er the wave is my island throne,
Where the sea-gull roams and reigns alone ;
Where nought is seen but the beetling rock,
And nothing is heard but the ocean's shock ;
And the scream of birds when the storm is nigh,
And the crash of the wreck, and the fearful cry
Of drowning men in their agony.

I love to sit when the waters sleep,
And ponder the depths of the glassy deep,

Till I dream that I float on a corse at sea,
And sing of the feast that is made for me;
I love on the rush of the storm to sail,
And mingle my scream with the hoarser gale.

When the sky is dark, and the billow high,
And the tempest sweeps in terror by,
I love to ride on the maddening blast,
And flap my wing o'er the fated mast,
And sing to the crew a song of fear,
Of the reef and the surge that await them here.

When the storm is done, and the feast is o'er,
I love to sit on the rocky shore,
And tell, in the ear of the dying breeze,
The tales that are hushed in the sullen seas :—
Of the ship that sank in the reefy surge,
And left her fate to the sea-bird's dirge :—
Of the lover that sailed to meet his bride,
And his story left to the secret tide :—
Of the father that went on the trustless main,
And never was met by his child again :—
And the hidden things which the waves conceal,
And the sea-bird's song can alone reveal.

I tell of the ship that hath found a grave :—
Her spars still float on the restless wave ;
But down in the halls of the sullen deep
The forms of the brave and the beautiful sleep.
I saw the storm as it gathered fast ;
I heard the roar of the coming blast ;
I marked the ship in her fearful strife,
As she flew on the tide, like a thing of life,
But the whirlwind came,—and her masts were wrung
Away, and away on the waters flung ;
I sat on the gale o'er the sea-swept deck,
And screamed in delight o'er the coming wreck.—
I flew to the reef with a heart of glee,
And wiled the ship to her destiny ;
On the hidden rocks, like a hawk she rushed,
And the sea through her riven timbers gushed ;—
On the whirling surge the wreck was flung,
And loud on the gale wild voices rung ;
I gazed on the scene, I saw despair
On the pallid brows of a youthful pair ;
The maiden drooped like a gentle flower
That is torn away from its native bower ;
Her arms round her lover she wildly twined,
And gazed on the sea with a wildered mind ;

He bent o'er the trembler, and shelter'd her form
From the splash of the sea and the sweep of the
storm ;

But woe to the lover, and woe to the maid,
Whose hopes on the treacherous sea are laid ;
For he is a king whose palaces shine
In lustre and light down the pearly brine ;
And he loves to gather in glory there
The choicest things of the earth and air ;
In his deep saloons, with coral crown'd,
Where gems are sparkling above and around,
He gathers his harem of love and grace,
And beauty he takes to his cold embrace ;
The wind and the waves are his messengers true,
And lost is the wanderer whom they pursue ;
They sweep the shore, they plunder the wreck,
His stores to heap, and his halls to deck.
Ah, lady and lover, ye are doom'd their prey ;—
They come ! they come !—ye are swept away ;
Ye sink in the tide,—but it cannot sever
The fond ones, who sleep in its depths for ever !
Oh ! wild was the storm, and loud was its roar,
And strange were the sights that I hover'd o'er :

I saw a babe with its mother die,
I listened to catch its parting sigh,
And I laughed to see the black billows play
With the sleeping child in their gambols gay ;
I saw a girl whose arms were white
As the foam that danced on the billows height,
And the ripples toyed with her glossy curls,
And her cheek was kissed by the wanton whirls ;
But her bosom was dead to hope and fear,
For she shuddered not, as the shark came near ;
I poised my foot on the forehead fair
Of a lovely boy that floated there ;—
I looked in the eyes of the drowning brave,
As they upward gazed through the fatal wave ;—
I screamed o'er the bubbles that told of death,
And stooped as the last gave up his breath ;
I flapp'd my wings, for the work was done ;
The storm was hushed, and the golden sun
Sent his light abroad o'er the lulling seas ;—
And I tell my tale to the whispering breeze,
Of the hidden things which the waves conceal,
And the sea-bird's song can alone reveal.

S. G. GOODRIDGE.

THE STORMY PETRIL.

A thousand miles from land are we,
Tossing about on the roaring sea ;
From billow to bounding billow cast,
Like fleecy snow on the stormy blast ;
The sails are scattered abroad, like weeds,
The strong masts shake, like quivering reeds ;
The mighty cables, and iron chains,
The hull which all earthly strength disdains,
They strain, and they crack, and hearts like stone,
Their natural, hard, proud strength disown.

Up and down ! up and down !
From the base of the wave to the billow's crown,
And amidst the flashing and feathery foam,
The stormy petril finds a home,—
A home if such a place may be,
For her who lives on the wide, wide sea ;
On the craggy ice, in the frozen air,
And only seeketh her rocky lair
To warm her young, and to teach them to spring
At once o'er the waves on their stormy wing.

O'er the deep ! o'er the deep !
 Where the whale, and the shark, and the sword-fish
 sleep ;
 Outflying the blast, and the driving rain,
 The petril telleth her tale in vain—
 For the mariner curseth the warning bird
 That bringeth him news of the storm unheard ;
 Ah ! thus doth the prophet of good or ill,
 Meet hate from the creature he serveth still ;
 Yet *he* ne'er falters—so, petril, spring
 Once more o'er the waves on thy stormy wing !

BARRY CORNWALL.

LAMENT OF THE BIRDS OF PASSAGE.

Behold ! the birds fly
 From Gauthiod's strand,
 And seek with a sigh
 Some far foreign land.
 The sound of their woe,
 With hollow winds blend ;
 " Where now must we go ?
 Our flight whither tend ?"
 'Tis thus unto Heaven that their wailings ascend.

The Scandian shore
 We leave in despair ;
Our days glided o'er
 So blissfully there !
We there built our nest
 Among bright blooming trees ;
There rock'd us to rest
 The balm-bearing breeze :—
But now to far lands we must traverse the seas.

With rose-crown all bright
 On tresses of gold,
The midsummer night
 It was sweet to behold !
The calm was so deep,
 So lovely the ray,
Who could not then sleep !
 But were tranced on the spray
Till waken'd by beams from the bright car of day.

The trees gently bent
 O'er the plains in repose ;
With dew-drops besprent
 Was the tremulous rose !
The oaks *now* are bare,
 The rose is no more ;

The zephyr's light air
Is exchang'd for the roar
Of storms, and the May-fields have mantles of hoar.

Then why do we stay
In the north, where the sun
More dimly each day
His brief course will run ?
And why need we sigh ?
We leave but a grave,
To cleave through the sky
On the wings which God gave ;
Then, Ocean, be welcome the roar of thy wave !

When earth's joys are o'er,
And the days darkly roll ;
When autumn winds roar,
Weep not, O my soul !
Fair lands o'er the sea
For the birds brightly bloom ;
A land smiles for thee,
Beyond the dark tomb,
Where beams never-fading its beauties illumine !

STAGNELIUS.

(From the "Quarterly Review.")

THE CUCKOO AND THE BEE.

“ My dearest cuckoo,” said a bee,
“ ’Tis right to celebrate the spring ;
But evermore the self-same strain to sing
Year after year, day after day,
Is somewhat to abuse one’s liberty.
And really, I must insist,
You wake us with some newer lay,
If you’d be held a first-rate vocalist.”

“ My little friend,” the cuckoo cried,
“ It well becomes you to endeavour,
From us to take our well-known song away ;
You, who the self-same track pursue for ever !
Pray, what new architecture have you tried,
Through all the centuries you’ve spent
In making wax, and gathering honey ?
Your hexagons, they are not for my money ;—
And certainly you might invent
New shapes, without the detriment
My voice would suffer from new trills and quavers.”

“ A most untenable excuse,”
The bee retorts ; “ buildings are not like songs ;
Your law is pleasure, ours is use ;

And as utility ne'er wavers,
Our uniformity's an excellence,
Yours shews deficiency of sense ;
To pleasure's essence, change belongs."

COUNT GYLLENBERG.

(*From the "Quarterly Review."*)

THE AMERICAN EAGLE.

Bird of the heavens ! whose matchless eye
Alone can front the blaze of day,
And, wandering through the radiant sky,
Ne'er from the sunlight turns away ;
Whose ample wing was made to rise,
Majestic, o'er the loftiest peak,
On whose chill tops the winter skies
Around thy nest in tempests speak.
What ranger of the winds can dare,
Proud mountain-king, with thee compare,
Or lift his gaudier plumes on high
Before thy native majesty,
When thou hast ta'en thy seat alone
Upon thy cloud-encircled throne ?

Bird of the cliffs, thy noble form
Might well be thought almost divine ;
Born for the thunder and the storm,
The mountain and the rock are thine ;
And there, where never foot has been,
Thy eyry is sublimely hung,
Where low'ring skies their wrath begin,
And loudest lullabies are sung.
By the fierce spirit of the blast,
When, his snow-mantle o'er him cast,
He sweeps across the mountain top,
With a dark fury nought can stop,
And wings his wild, unearthly way,
Far through the clouded realms of day.

Bird of the sun ! to thee,—to thee
The earliest tints of dawn are known ;
And 'tis thy proud delight to see
The monarch mount his gorgeous throne ;
Throwing the crimson drapery by,
That half impedes his glorious way,
And mounting up the radiant sky,
Ee'n what he is—the king of day !

Before the regent of the skies
Men shrink and veil their dazzled eyes;
But thou, in regal majesty,
Hast kingly rank as well as he,
And with a steady dauntless gaze
Thou meet'st the splendor of his blaze.

Bird of Columbia! well art thou
An emblem of our native land,
With unblench'd front and noble brow,
Among the nations doom'd to stand;
Proud, like her mighty mountain woods—
Like her own rivers, wandering free,
And sending forth, from hills and floods,
The joyous shout of liberty!
Like thee, majestic bird, like thee,
She stands in unbought majesty,
With spreading wing, untired and strong,
That dares a soaring far and long,
That mounts aloft, nor looks below,
And will not quail though tempests blow.

The admiration of the earth,
In grand simplicity she stands;

Like thee, the storm beheld her birth,
And she was nursed by rugged hands.
But, past the fierce and furious war,
Her rising fame new glory brings,
For kings and nobles come from far,
To seek the shelter of her wings ;
And, like thee, rider of the cloud !
She mounts the heavens serene and proud,
Great in a pure and noble fame,
Great in her spotless champion's name,
And destined in her day to be
Mighty as Rome—more nobly free.

My native land—my native land !
To whom my thoughts will fondly turn,
For her the warmest hopes expand,
For her the heart with fears will yearn.
Oh, may she keep her eye, like thee,
Proud eagle of the rocky wild,
Fixed on the sun of liberty,
By rank, by faction, unbeguiled ;
Remembering still the rugged road
Our venerable fathers trod,

Then placed thee under genial skies,
Where flowers and shrubs spontaneous rise
With richer fragrance, bolder dyes,
By her endued ;

And bade thee pass thy happy hours,
In tamarind shades and palmy bowers,
Extracting from unfailing flowers
Ambrosial food.

There, lovely bee-bird ! mayst thou rove
Through spicy vale, and citron grove,
And woo, and win, thy fluttering love,
With plume so bright.

There rapid fly, more heard than seen,
'Mid orange boughs of polish'd green,
With glowing fruit, and flowers between
Of purest white.

Here feed, and take thy balmy rest,
There weave thy little cotton nest,
And may no cruel hand molest
Thy timid bride ;

Nor those bright changeful plumes of thine
Be offered on the unfeeling shrine,
Where some dark beauty loves to shine
 In gaudy pride.

Nor may her sable lover's care
Add to the baubles in her hair,
Thy dazzling feathers rich and rare ;
 And thou, poor bird,

For this inhuman purpose bleed ;
While gentle hearts abhor the deed,
And Mercy's trembling voice may plead,
 But plead unheard.

Such triflers should be brought to know,
Not all the hues thy plumes can shew
Become them like the conscious glow
 Of modesty ;

And that not half so lovely seems
The ray that from the diamond gleams
As the pure gem that trembling beams
 In Pity's eye.

SMITH.

EPITAPH ON A BLACKBIRD KILLED BY
A HAWK.

Winter was o'er, and spring-flowers deck'd the glade,
The blackbird's note among the wild woods rung :
Ah, short-lived note! the songster now is laid
Beneath the bush on which so sweet he sung.

Thy jetty plumes, by ruthless falcon rent,
Are now all soil'd among the mouldering clay ;
A primrose turf is all thy monument,
And for thy dirge the redbreast lends his lay.

GRAHAME.

THE SPARROW'S NEST.

Look, five blue eggs are gleaming there !
Few visions have I seen more fair,
Nor many prospects of delight,
More pleasing than that simple sight !
I started, seeming to espy
The home and shelter'd bed,

The sparrow's dwelling, which, hard by
My father's house, in wet or dry,
My sister Emmeline and I

Together visited.

She looked at it as if she fear'd it ;
Still wishing, dreading, to be near it ;
Such heart was in her, being then
A little prattler among men.

The blessing of my later years
Was with me when a boy ;
She gave me eyes, she gave me ears ;
And humble cares, and delicate fears,
A heart, the fountain of sweet tears,

And love, and thought, and joy.

The sun has long been set :
The stars are out by twos and threes ;
The little birds are piping yet
Among the bushes and the trees ;
There's a cuckoo, and one or two thrushes ;
And a noise of water that gushes ;
And the cuckoo's sovereign cry
Fills all the hollow of the sky !

Who would go "parading"
In London, and "masquerading,"

On such a night of June ?
With that beautiful soft half-moon,
And all these innocent blisses,
On such a night as this is !

WORDSWORTH.

THE BIRDS OF PASSAGE.

Birds, joyous birds of the wand'ring wing !
Whence is it ye come with the flowers of spring ?
—We come from the shores of the green old Nile,
From the land where the roses of Sharon smile,
From the palms that wave through the Indian sky,
From the myrrh-trees of glowing Araby,
We have swept o'er cities in song renown'd—
Silent they lie, with the deserts round !
We have cross'd proud rivers, whose tide hath roll'd,
All dark, with the warrior-blood of old ;
And each worn wing hath regain'd its home,
Under peasant's roof tree or monarch's dome.
—And what have ye found in the monarch's dome,
Since last ye traversed the blue sea's foam ?
—“ We have found a change, we have found a pall,
And a gloom o'ershadowing the banquet's hall,

And a mark on the floor, as of life-drops spilt—
Nought looks the same, save the nest we built !

Oh, joyous birds, hath it still been so !
Through the halls of kings doth the tempest go !
But the huts of the hamlet lie still and deep,
And the hills o'er their quiet a vigil keep.
Say what have ye found in the peasant's cot,
Since last ye parted from that sweet spot ?
“ A change we have found there, and many a change,
Faces, and footsteps, and all things strange !
Gone are the heads of the silvery hair,
And the young that were, have a brow of care,
And the place is hushed where the children play'd—
Nought looks the same, save the nest we made !”

Sad is your tale of the beautiful earth,
Birds that o'ersweep it in power and mirth !
Yet through the wastes of the trackless air,
Ye have a guide,—and shall *we* despair ?
Ye over desert and deep have pass'd—
So shall *we* reach our bright home at last !

MRS. HEMANS.

CONCLUSION.

Who is there with feelings at all alive to the beauties of nature that can spend the delightful month of May in the country, and not *feel* the effects produced on their hearts by the songs of those sylvan poets, our *national melodists*? To me, the exquisite enjoyment I derive from a May-morning walk surpasses all the splendour and attractions the most brilliant assembly can offer. A dear departed friend, whom *fashion* compelled to reside in the metropolis during the *season*, (which now, alas! includes the most delightful time of the year for the country,) used to say, "Give me a cottage, with plenty of roses, where I can enjoy the concert of birds in the morning, amid their own sweet seclusion!" Mr. Knapp, an equal admirer of early morning, and the dear

“enchanters of the grove,” thus alludes to *his* rural rambles :—

“At one period of my life, being an early waker and riser, my attention was frequently called ‘to songs of earliest birds,’ and I always observed that these creatures appeared abroad at very different periods as the light advanced. The rook is, perhaps, the first to salute the opening morn; but this bird seems rather to rest than to sleep. Always vigilant, the least alarm after retirement rouses instantly the whole assemblage, not successively, but collectively. It is appointed to be a ready mover. Its principal food is worms, which feed and crawl upon the humid surface of the ground in the dusk, and retire before the light of day; and, roosting higher than other birds, the first rays of the sun, as they peep from the horizon, become visible to it. The restless, inquisitive robin now is seen, too. This is the last bird that retires in the evening, being frequently flitting about when the owl and bat are visible, and awakes so soon in the morning that little rest seems required by it. Its fine large eyes are fitted to receive all, even the weakest, rays of light that appear. The worm is its food too, and few that

move upon the surface escape its notice. The cheerful melody of the wren is the next we hear, as it bustles from its ivied roost ; and we note its gratulation to the young-eyed day, when twilight almost hides the little minstrel from our sight.

“ The sparrows roost in holes, and under the eaves of the rick, or shed, where the light does not so soon enter, and, hence, is rather a tardy mover ; but it is always ready for food, and seems to listen to what is going forward. We see it now peeping from its pent-house, inquisitively surveying the land ; and, should provision be obtainable, it immediately descends upon it without any scruple, and makes itself a welcome guest with all. It retires early to rest. The blackbird quits its leafy roost in the ivied ash ; its *chink, chink*, is heard in the hedge ; and, mounting on some neighbouring oak, with mellow, sober voice, it gratulates the coming day. ‘ The plain-song cuckoo gray,’ from some tall tree now tells its tale. The lark is in the air, the ‘ martin twitters from her earth-built shed,’ all the choristers are tuning in the grove ; and amid such tokens of awakening pleasure, it becomes difficult to note priority of voice. These are the matin voices of the summer season :

in winter, a cheerless chirp, or a hungry twit, is all we hear: the families of voice are away, or silent; we have little to note, and perhaps as little inclination to observe. 'During no portion of the day can the general operations of nature be more satisfactorily observed, than in the early morning. Rosy June—the very thoughts of an early summer's morning in the country, like enchantment, gives action to the current of our blood, health and enjoyment! All things appear fresh and unsoiled. The little birds, animated and grateful, are frisking about the sprays; others, proceeding to their morning's meal, or occupied in the callings of their nature, give utterance, by every variety of voice, to the pleasures that they feel; the world has not yet called us, and, with faculties unworn, we unite with them, partake of this general hilarity and joy, feel disposed to be happy, and enjoy the blessings around us. The very air itself, as yet uninhaled by any, circulates about us, replete with vitality, conveying more than its usual portion of sustenance and health; 'and man goeth forth unto his labour.' Night-feeding creatures, feeling the freshness of light, and the coming day, are all upon the move, retiring from danger and

observation; and we can note them now unhidden in their lairs, uncongealed beneath the foliage in the hedge; the very vegetation, bathed in dew and moisture, full fed, partakes of this early morning joy and health, and every creeping thing is refreshed and satisfied. As day advances, it changes all; and of these happy beings of the early hour, part are away, and we must seek them; others are oppressed, silent, listless; the vegetable, no longer lucid with dew, and despoiled of all the little gems that glittered from every serrature of its leaf, seems pensive at the loss. When blessed with health, having peace, innocence, and content, as inmates of the mind, perhaps the most enjoyable hours of life may be found in an early summer's morning."

Having now brought the present little volume near a conclusion, I beg to make a few remarks respecting the nests of those birds which form the illustrations; presuming thereby, to shew how apt we all are to think too highly of our own powers and abilities, and too prone to look with contempt on the works of nature, which so clearly demonstrate the wisdom of Him who teaches even the little

feathered warbler, by an instinctive faculty, to rival the laboured efforts of the most skilful artizan.

The goldfinch, linnet, canary, and humming birds, manifest their skill in felt-making; the chaffinch pursues the same trade, in the formation of its habitation, but manufacturing a superior article,—for as cambric is superior to cotton, so is the felt-work of the chaffinch superior to that of the preceding birds.

This ingenious little artizan chooses the finest wool as being the best for closely uniting with other materials; and to shape and strengthen her nest, she binds it round with grass stems: thus we see nature imitated by art, as the hat-maker, for a similar purpose, binds the rim of his hat. The chaffinch also secures her habitation against any unforeseen accident, by manufacturing bands of moss, felted with wool, which she winds round the branches of the tree that she has chosen for the site of her future residence.

The bank swallow is regarded as a miner, and its method of preparing the ground to receive the nest is truly amusing. It may be seen with its sharp claws clinging to the surface of a dry sand bank, where it intends to build, and striking into the sand

with its strong bill, as if it were a pickaxe, soon loosens a portion, which it scratches down. Having made an entrance, and removed sufficient to admit its body into the hole, which is usually a perfect circle, it sets to work, with both bill and claws, till it has succeeded in excavating a gallery between two and three feet in length, and being sloped upwards, prevents the influx of rain ; nor is this laborious little miner less careful to secure its habitation from the cold winds which might affect its tender nurslings, should it strike upon the face of the bank, to guard against which, the gallery is always more or less tortuous ; and the nest, which is of the simplest kind, composed of hay, lined with duck or goose feathers, is placed at the furthest end ; thus this simple little bird provides one of the most secure and warmest nurseries for its callow brood. Other varieties of the swallow are proficient in masonry, mortar-working, and cementing.

The kingfisher and lark may be ranked among the miners, though their excavations do not exceed many inches in depth.

The bullfinch is a basket-worker. Having selected his tree, sometimes the flat branch of a spruce-pine,

or silver-fir, the foundation for the nest is laid of birch twigs placed crossways in the forks of the branches ; having completed a secure and firm ground-work, the bird collects a quantity of flexible fibrous roots, which it intertwines, forming a complete basket-work, which it then lines with the finest roots and a little moss. Many ladies would be proud, could they, with all their ingenuity, manufacture a work-basket as neat and tasty as the nest of a bull-finch.

The thrush claims to be associated with the workers in masonry. This bird commences its operations by laying a substantial foundation of moss, then forming a sort of cup composed of intertwined moss, grass-stems, wheat-straws, or roots, finishing the top in a thick hoop ; the artist then plasters the inside of the frame-work with small pieces of horse or cow dung, cementing them to the outer work with its saliva, and to add to the warmth of the nest, and the comfort of her callow offspring, which she brings forth amid the cold and storms of early spring, a layer of decayed wood, divided into short slips, is spread neatly over, and attached smoothly to the last coat, with the same cement of saliva.

Here, again, proud man may learn of the thrush. How many build their habitations for outward show, with but little regard to inward comforts or convenience ! but this bird is mindful of both.

The common wren is ranked among the *dome builders*. On the wall, tree, or turf, which it selects, she makes an outline of her future habitation, by gluing with her saliva small particles of moss ; to the support of these she joins others, until she has constructed a hemispherical cavity, about twenty times the size of the architect. A small oval hole in the side forms the entrance, and the interior is lined with hair, feathers, down, or moss, of the softest and most delicate texture. The dome above is nicely arched, and altogether forms a warm, commodious, and comfortable habitation for the numerous inmates expected to occupy it. The nest of this little bird, so large, in proportion to its size, proves the goodness of the Almighty, who endows this little creature with instinct to foresee that she will require a roomy domicile to receive her numerous progeny.

Our familiar sprightly robin is styled a ground-builder. This social bird, which visits us in the winter, to partake of our good cheer, chooses the most secluded spot to construct its nest, generally

selecting the root of a bush or hedge, where, secure from observation, under the shelter of some overhanging grass or weed, she lays a solid foundation of moss ; then, intertwining moss, hair, and fine grass, constructs a neat and rounded habitation, which she carefully hides under an archway, covered over with leaves, leaving only a very small door-way for entrance.

Having thus assigned to each of my warblers his trade or profession, I will leave my readers to ponder over these interesting examples of the ingenuity, art, and perseverance, of these sylvan minstrels, “ the warbling artizans of the woods.” For my own part, I cannot conceive a more interesting sight in nature, than the nests of these different feathered songsters, so elegantly and tastefully constructed. Our poet, Wordsworth, who has an eye to see, and heart to feel, all the beauties and rational enjoyments which even the poorest may partake of, seems particularly interested by the sight of one, and thus exclaims :—

“ Behold, within the leafy shade
“ Those bright blue eggs together laid ;
On me the chance-discovered sight
Gleamed like a vision of delight.”

W I N T E R.

Our ears the lark, the thrush, the turtle, blest,
And Philomela, sweetest o'er the rest.
So in the shades, where, cheer'd with summer rays,
Melodious linnets warbled sprightly lays :
Now when the nightingale to rest removes,
The thrush may chant to the forsaken groves ;
But, charm'd to silence, listens while she sings,
And all th' aerial audience clap their wings.
Soon as the faded, falling leaves complain
Of gloomy winter's inauspicious reign,
No tuneful voice is heard of joy and love,
But mournful silence saddens all the grove ;
All nature mourns, the skies relent in showers,
Hush'd are the birds, and clos'd the drooping flowers ;
The flowers now droop, forsaken by the spring ;
The birds, when left by summer, cease to sing.
Behold the groves that shine with silver frost,
Their beauty wither'd, and their verdure lost !
No grateful dews descend from ev'ning skies,
Nor morning odours from the flowers arise ;
No rich perfumes refresh the fruitful field,
Nor fragrant herbs their native incense yield ;

No more the mounting larks, while Daphne sings,
Shall, list'ning in mid-air, suspend their wings ;
No more the nightingales repeat their lays,
Or, hush'd with wonder, hearken from the sprays ;
No more the streams their murmurs shall forbear,
A sweeter music than their own to hear.
Adieu, ye vales, ye mountains, streams, and groves,
Adieu, ye shepherds' rural lays and loves ;
Adieu, ye flocks ; farewell, ye sylvan crew ;
Music, farewell ; and all the world adieu.

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