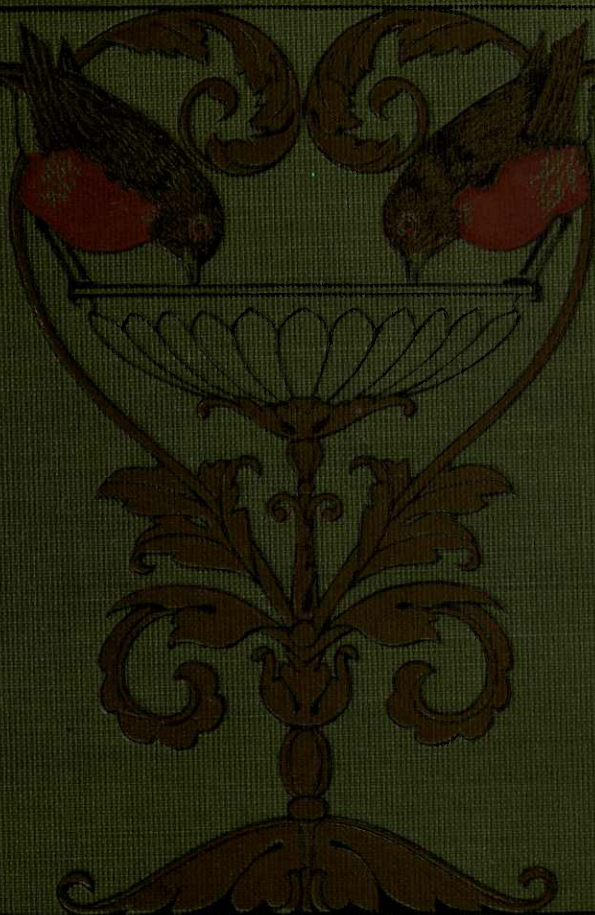


Mr. CHUPE'S
and
Miss JENNY
The Life Story of Two Robins



BY EFFIE BIGNELL

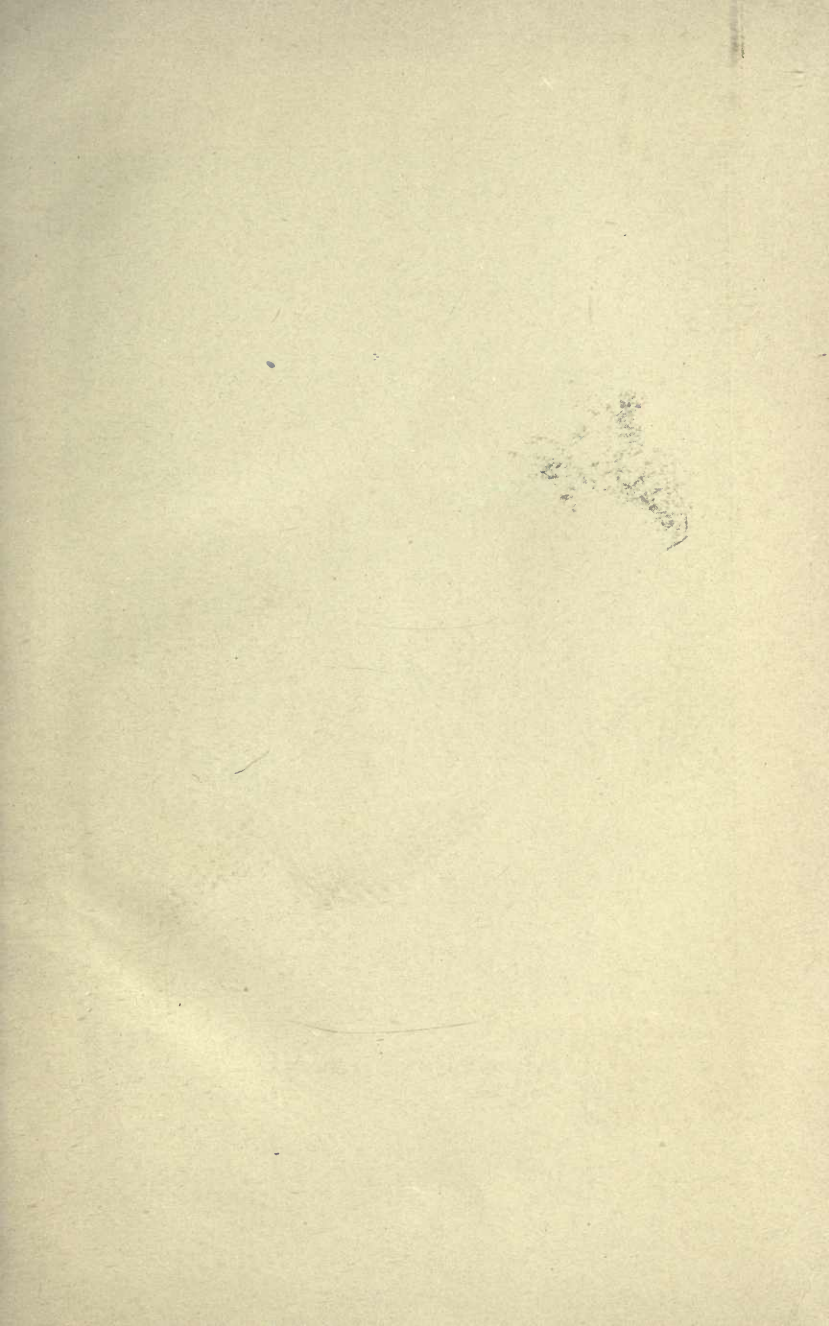
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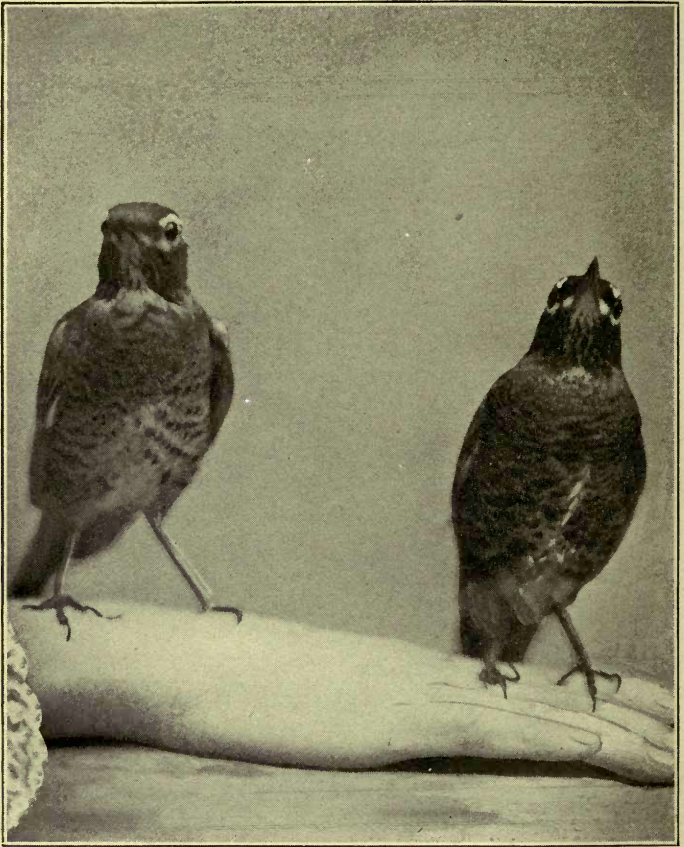




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MISS JENNY.

MR. CHUPES.

THE DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

Mr. Chupes and Miss Jenny

The Life Story
of Two Robins

By
Effie Bignell



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ACKNOWLEDGMENT

PORTIONS of the following account of my two robins, amounting, perhaps, to one-quarter of the text as here given, appeared originally in "Our Animal Friends"; and I take this occasion to thank its courteous editor for kind permission to use the matter in this enlarged form.

THE AUTHOR.

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MR. CHUPES AND MISS JENNY

I

THE HERO ENTERS SUDDENLY

My robins were known as Mr. Chupes and Miss Jenny, and their settled habitation was in a certain collegiate town of New Jersey; but like all unhampered individuals of their kind, they travelled extensively at fashionable seasons. At home and during their trips they collected large circles of friends from all kinds and conditions of men. Yet their popularity was not confined to their route of travel, for the little creatures are known by reputation in lands far over the sea; and, to this day, certain

MR. CHUPES AND MISS JENNY

wise men of the Orient are puzzling their brains over the problem of two such small heads having been able to carry all they knew.

Being such a quiet, unobtrusive little couple, their presence on boats and trains was generally unsuspected, but whenever public or private attention was attracted to them, they awakened an interest equal to that bestowed on royalty abroad or its corresponding great ones at home.

But, to begin at the very beginning, my acquaintance with the hero of this strictly authentic sketch dates from a certain balmy June afternoon when a friend and I were strolling through a beautiful shady grove in our neighborhood.

We had been revelling in the delightful sounds around us,—gently rustling leaves, songs of birds, the drowsy hum of insects and various other soothing and harmonious



THE RESCUE.

THE HERO ENTERS SUDDENLY

voices of the woods,—when, suddenly, shrill cries of distress and loud calls for help broke upon the harmony of the place. Following the sound-trail, we came to the poor victim, the unwilling cause of all the disturbance.

He had fallen from the top of a high tree, and was very much frightened and possibly hurt. His anxious parents and sympathetic neighbors from far and near had assembled at the scene of the accident, and an almost deafening consultation was going on. Every one was putting in a suggestion or a warning, but above all these sounds rose the wails of the unfortunate subject of the accident.

My friend and I approached the sufferer, but, whatever torture he might be enduring, it was evident that he had no wish to be rescued by us. After a short consultation we decided to ignore his objections, so

MR. CHUPES AND MISS JENNY

we picked him up; and, although we were severely denounced by the whole party, himself included, we bore him away from his friends, his relatives and his family tree, and brought him to our home.

Such a dear, downy, yellow-beaked, big-headed mite as this baby robin was! The pathetic little "chupe, chupe" that he uttered from time to time furnished the suggestion for the name of Mr. Chupes which he always thereafter bore, while a mark of identification had been provided for him through his hasty and unpremeditated descent from the tree; for, as he fell, he struck the ground with such force as to break the hind toe of his right claw; and the injured member, in healing, grew forward instead of back. But no doubt my clumsy surgery intensified the defect, for, forgetting how plastic the baby bones were, I bunched all the little toes of the right claw together

THE HERO ENTERS SUDDENLY

in my witchhazel-soaked bandages, and I only discovered my mistake when the injured toe was firmly set in its unnatural position. I have no doubt that to the influence of this same unskilful treatment may be ascribed the fact that, in Mr. Chupes' case, the sitting-on-the-elbows period was extended several days beyond orthodox limits.

The reminder of his accident (which, by the way, is plainly discernible in several of his photographs) he carried to the end of his days. It seemed to inconvenience him slightly when he attempted to grasp a small surface; but, as a rule, it did not interfere with his comfort.

When the little bird was once fairly installed in his new quarters, he manifested no further desire to rejoin his parents. At about four o'clock on the morning of the day after his rescue, he gave unmistakable

MR. CHUPES AND MISS JENNY

notes of response to some robins that flew, chattering, past my window; but it was not the piteous appeal of "Take me with you!" Rather the reassuring, "I have fallen among extremely decent humans. Don't distress yourselves on my account."

Shortly after we rescued him I went back to see if his parents were grieving. I found them very philosophically taking up the thread of their daily life, evidently determined not to let the loss of a nestling interfere with their housekeeping. The anxiety of the neighbors had also calmed down, and peace and order reigned where confusion and dismay had so recently held sway.

Now before going any further in my recital I want to confess to you that when I picked up that squawking little bundle of feathers, with body and head nearly equal in their dimensions, legs no support whatever and wings represented by two helpless

THE HERO ENTERS SUDDENLY

little quill-covered bones folded against its sides, I had no conception of the magnitude of the task I was imposing on myself in undertaking its rescue. I should probably have hesitated about accepting the charge, or perhaps have declined it altogether, had I realized all the care, the anxiety and the danger to my *protégé* involved in the responsibility.

When I took Chupes to my home and bestowed upon him the care and attention one would give a child, I deprived him in a great measure of his natural sense of self-protection. He simply cast the responsibility of his existence on me, as was proved by the fact that in danger he usually came flying to me with a cry that certainly was a call for help. I never disappointed him, but it was at a cost that few among you could realize, and none but an ardent bird-lover would be willing to meet. It is in case the

MR. CHUPES AND MISS JENNY

story of my interesting little pets should engage your attention to the extent of filling you with the desire to own a Chupes or a Jenny, that I emphasize these very important points.

The possession of pets under such circumstances as I describe means "eternal vigilance" as far as their natural enemies are concerned, and a constant watchfulness against the dangers induced by unnatural conditions. Take, for instance, the fact that the tops of open doors were favorite perching places of Chupes' and Jenny's. Think what might have resulted from a moment's carelessness in the matter of one left to swing! This is a single instance, chosen, at random, from hundreds, of the risks to which these helpless little creatures were subjected.

Now carry out the line of thought with regard to food preparation and administra-

THE HERO ENTERS SUDDENLY

tion, to cleanliness, to cheeriness (for, having made them dependent on me for everything, their happiness became my duty), and as many other demands as you can fancy, and you will have some idea, but not a perfect one, of what my possession of the robins involved.

“But,” you suggest, “what if in our rambles we are confronted by the problem of an injured or a helpless bird? Are we to leave the little creature to die?”

If you choose to pick the waif up with the thought of giving it a chance of recovery and its freedom at the earliest possible date, well and good; but remember that it would be far more merciful to leave the little creature to starve or to fall into the jaws of the cat than to teach it to look for and be dependent on your care, only to perish miserably through your neglect.

There is really no excuse for taking a

MR. CHUPES AND MISS JENNY

bird from its nest, although nestlings may learn to accommodate themselves to unnatural conditions, and even to be happy with human beings under the most favorable circumstances.

But a bird that has once tasted the sweets of liberty—unless some accident has maimed him and made him grateful for human aid—can never know anything but heartache in captivity.

I don't know that I ever realized this more fully than in the case of a beautiful cardinal-bird owned by a friend of mine.

It was evening when the cage was brought to her home, and its occupant was either too dazed or too exhausted to evince restlessness; indeed he had almost the appearance of having been drugged.

But the following morning when my friend went to look at her gift she found the unfortunate creature beating wildly against

THE HERO ENTERS SUDDENLY :

the restraining bars, while a pool of blood in the bottom of his cage testified to the length of time he had been making this desperate resistance.

I need hardly tell you that the sight decided her to liberate the wretched prisoner; but a terrible storm was raging. Could she make up her mind to turn him adrift in such a tempest?

She hesitated, but her indecision lasted only a moment. No storm could be fiercer than the one raging in his captive breast; no struggle more desperate than this wild battle for liberty. Better any fate than that of a prisoner!

She carried him to the balcony and opened the door of his cage. The bleeding creature looked up into the wild sky. He halted a moment, influenced perhaps by inability to grasp the thought that his bondage was over; then a gleam of hope came

MR. CHUPES AND MISS JENNY

into the beautiful red eyes; he spread his battered wings and, with a cry of joy, he went out into the tempest.

No doubt the work of healing began with the first beating of the storm against his mangled body, and no doubt, with each sweep of his bleeding wings, his exulting heart sang, *free, free!*

I have frequently been asked if, in all the five years during which I had my birds, I never found the charge irksome; if I never regretted having taken such a burden upon myself.

To this I answer unhesitatingly, *never!* Their loss was a heartfelt grief to me, and I daily miss their sweet companionship. The possession of anything truly worth while is attended by many trials and difficulties, and in serving even our dearest ones we may experience anxiety and fatigue.

But putting the very highest estimate on

THE HERO ENTERS SUDDENLY

all I ever did for my robins, they repaid me more than a hundredfold. They were my most devoted friends—Chupes might even have been styled my worshipper—and affection is such a precious thing! Their actions always had the charm of originality and purpose, and watching them was one of the pleasantest and most profitable of recreations. It was almost impossible not to be beguiled into interest and amusement while following their funny performances.

Then what a gain in my health and education resulted from the hours and hours that I spent in the woods for *their* happiness and benefit! Let me give an instance or two of how my lessons were taught me.

It was while I was quietly watching for bird enemies that I first saw a bit of bark become an animated creature and go swiftly and stealthily around a tree, while keeping up a squeaky little monologue.

MR. CHUPES AND MISS JENNY

Suddenly it halted, and, spreading out a camp-chair sort of an arrangement, it sat down; and then I knew that my piece of bark was the brown creeper, and the camp-chair its tail!

It was during a study of the ground in the interests of my birds that I discovered one of the sweetest secrets of the sod. My attention was first attracted by a little roughness in the sward—loosely strewn bits of grass with occasional suggestive tufts of short grayish-brown hair—and, lifting the covering, I found four tiny, smooth, furry balls: baby rabbits, hardly half the size of my hand, with soft brown eyes, quivering noses of conch-shell hue, prophecies of long ears, and suggestions of stumpy tails. Papa was probably away on an expedition to a neighboring burrow,—perhaps canvassing with his chums the most expeditious and unobtrusive methods

THE HERO ENTERS SUDDENLY

of extracting certain roots other than Greek or Latin,—while mamma was no doubt at a greengrocer's, making selections for lunch.

Allowing myself time for only a hurried survey of the babies, I tenderly tucked them up again in the soft, warm coverlet (lined with fur from the parents' old coats, by the way), and I left the nursery before the heads of the house had time to witness my intrusion.

They all learned to know me after a while; and as their fear decreased, they sought my neighborhood instead of avoiding it.

I never became thoroughly acquainted with that clever entomologist, the toad, until Chupes and Jenny introduced me to him. We were quietly stationed in his neighborhood one afternoon, not even suspecting his presence, when, all at once, a gentle

MR. CHUPES AND MISS JENNY

rustle among the leaves called our attention to him. We had entered his dressing-room evidently, for he soon proceeded to make his toilet. First he massaged himself thoroughly; then he began to tug and pull at his outer skin, which he finally drew over his head after the manner of an athlete taking off his sweater, and when he had rolled it up into a ball he calmly swallowed it!

I have since learned that this pill is the only medicine a toad ever takes. It is a little difficult to understand how his cast-off garments benefit him internally, but clever men, far too learned to err in such matters, assure us that they do; so we dare not discredit the statement. You may be interested in knowing that the new coat resembled the old in every respect, only that it was a trifle less dingy.

We three and the toad became excellent friends as the days went on. He used to

THE HERO ENTERS SUDDENLY

station himself regularly under the watering-pot when the flower-bed in which he lived, and to which he was of such benefit in destroying noxious insects, received its shower-bath. I suppose he found it refreshing to his dry back.

On two or three occasions Chupes looked as if he had surgical intentions on the entomologist's warts, but the opportunity for performing an operation never presented itself, as the coveted subject usually hopped off when the would-be surgeon came within four or five inches of him.

The manner in which this goggle-eyed creature used to catch his prey was a never-failing source of wonder to me. He would sit motionless for half an hour at a time, his bulgy, palpitating sides alone testifying to the fact that he was not merely a paper-weight or a bronze ornament. Suddenly you might fancy that you saw a convulsive

MR. CHUPES AND MISS JENNY

movement of the broad mouth, and at the same time you perhaps missed a fly or some other insect that had been venturing too near Mr. Wartyback; but of the transaction proper you had not an inkling. I used sometimes to imagine that the goggle eye nearest me winked, and that the wide mouth had the semblance of a grin after a successful haul, but I must have been mistaken; for surely no creature of such *sang froid* as a toad could have indulged in so frivolous an action.

Through my intimacy with this specimen I was enabled to alleviate the sufferings of several relatives of his—victims of lawnmower accidents. But as a rule, the kindest service one can render in such cases is to put the maimed creature out of the way as quickly as possible.

I will ask you to note that in each of the instances of discovery I have mentioned, we

THE HERO ENTERS SUDDENLY

were *quiet* when the revelation came. If you wish to see a bird go to its nest without misleading artifices, you must be willing to be quiet. If you would follow the little creature as it rears its young and launches them in the world, you must be quiet. Indeed, without quiet you will never view any but a disguised form of bird or beast or insect life.

The secret of forest calm was one of the earliest out-door mysteries into which Chupes and Jenny initiated me. One need not be a stock or a stone; one need not assume an attitude of painful, tiresome rigidity; but one must learn that bustling, noisy ways are all out of place in Nature's school. She cannot reveal herself to restless listeners. One must be willing to wait for her interpretations; to wait to catch the sound of the myriad voices, none of which is without signification; but such waiting is never

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lost time. Body and soul are both gainers by this beautiful, restful stillness, and forest calm, once truly gained, becomes a life habit.

I never learned so much of the beauty, the majesty and the significance of a storm, as when watching it from its earliest beginnings with a view to giving my robins as much of an outing as possible, while allowing myself ample time to place them under shelter before it should really break forth.

How impressively the minor-voiced trees spoke as they wildly and warningly waved their branches against the ever-darkening sky. It was as if they said: "Go to your shelter, O human child. Nature has a great probing, testing work on hand to-day. She is sending out her emissaries to learn which of us have lived out the measure of our days: which will fall under the violence of the storm, or which will gain in strength

THE HERO ENTERS SUDDENLY

through resistance. She will test even the homes of the little creatures that live among our branches. Careless workmanship will not survive. The searching out will cost some little beings their lives. But this is not so cruel as it would appear. The weak and the ailing alone succumb. Nature allows these beings, to whom prolonged inactivity would be torture, no possibility of dragging out a lengthy, wretched existence. There is no lasting infirmity, no forlorn old age possible in this realm. It would have no meaning, no benefit, no place here.

“But do not needlessly subject yourself to the violence of any storm, O human child. Go to your shelter. Well for you if it has been constructed on right principles. Woe to you if careless workmanship has made it unsafe; for even one insufficient layer of mortar, one loosely placed brick, may cause

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a great calamity. Heed the lesson well, and though you may suffer through the wrongdoing of others, never let others suffer through your carelessness. Be faithful in least as well as in greatest things. Remember that there are no insignificant results of a careless act or a neglected duty."

Do you understand something of my indebtedness to my little charges, and something of the responsibility connected with their bringing-up? Then let us turn once more to the baby robin in order to learn how he fared in the home of his adoption.

His most conspicuous feature was his beak. When closed it presented the appearance of having been ironed, with edges and corners badly puckered by the laundress. But during the earliest stages of his infancy I was not often permitted a lengthy contemplation of this feature in repose.

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My approach was a signal for the head to fly back and the beak to open to such an extent that it seemed fairly in danger of swallowing its owner. If I was not at my attendant's post, I was certain to be summoned every ten or fifteen minutes during all the waking hours of the little creature I was mothering. While I fed him, the beak would remain open, the regulation squawking and chattering of approval going on, until no more food could be accommodated, when the satisfied little chap would drop off into a comfortable snooze.

As he grew older the intervals between meals were longer and the naps fewer. Had he remained in his parents' house, they would probably have begun their danger object-lessons at this more wakeful period of his existence.

I had no particular theory with regard to Mr. Chupes' diet when I began to feed him.

MR. CHUPES AND MISS JENNY

Bread, moistened with water, was the most available food, and on this he subsisted until one day when I found it more convenient to give him biscuit. Naturally, for this purpose, I selected the simplest of wafers. After having once tested the new food, he scornfully rejected bread, yet we had never fancied that any taste or discrimination could be connected with the gobbling performance we had dignified by the name of eating.

The wide-open beak soon learned to close on a spoon, and both drink and food disappeared down the yellow lane, accompanied by the chattering without which young birds seem unable to relish their meals.

Since the days of Chupes' babyhood I have watched, with interest, various methods pursued by friends of mine in their attempts to raise young robins. It was, at

THE HERO ENTERS SUDDENLY

first, a matter of surprise to me that in nearly every case where the diet of earth-worms was adopted, the little creatures developed asthma and died before reaching maturity. The more I consider the matter, the more natural it seems to me that outdoor air is the necessary digestive accompaniment of such a hearty diet as worms; and again, that the slapping and banging and generally masticating preparation which the parent bird gives the worm makes it easy for the little stomach to assimilate it.

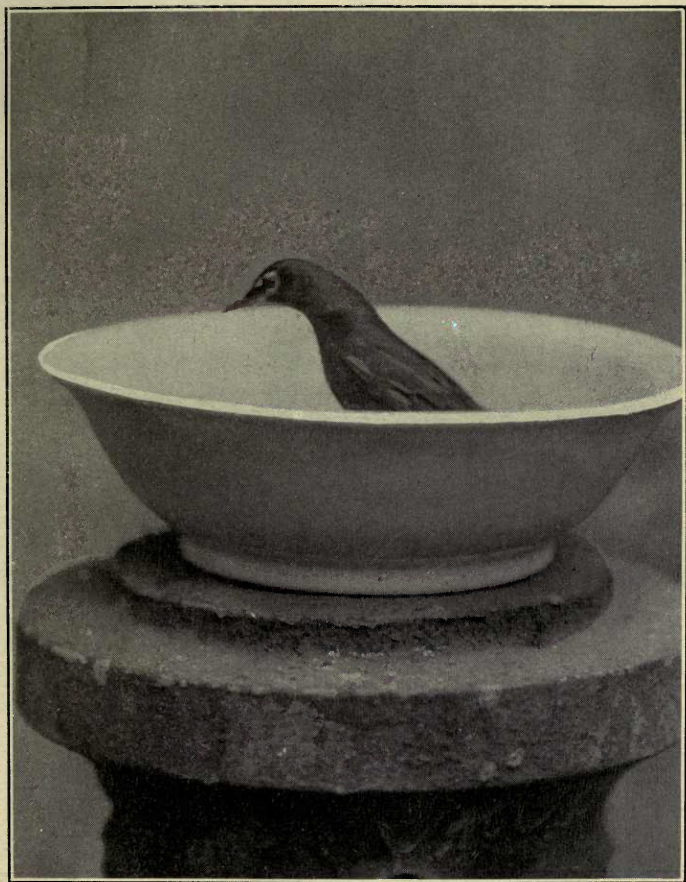
During the cradle period, Chupes delighted in being held in the hollow of one's hand, but as such treats could only be occasional, we made a nice nest for him of soft old handkerchiefs, and a more thoroughly contented or satisfied little bird one never saw. His sky was obscured only during the moments of his daily bath, which he

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was too small to take by himself, and to which, at this early period of his career, he objected strongly. But when he had once grasped the benefits and learned to appreciate the delights of bathing, how to restrain him became the problem.

No matter for whom the basin of water had been prepared, or how many dips the little chap had already taken during the day, at the sight of every available dish of water he would make a rush for "first innings." In his eagerness for a plunge he sometimes tolerated even soap-suds.

I well remember my earliest struggles to keep him from washing his face in my pitcher whenever the water stood at an available level. He even attempted a foot-bath at unusually high tides, but an alarming sense of insecurity, an inability to strike bottom, soon caused him to abandon this project.



MR. CHUPES ENJOYS BATHING.

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To discourage the face-washing propensity, I tried the plan of covering the top of my pitcher with a heavy wash-cloth about a foot square; but I had not taken into consideration the ingenuity of the wonderful little brain when I counted on such an easy victory.

Stationing himself, as usual, on the edge of the pitcher, Chupes began operations by tugging at the opposite side. Instead, however, of attempting to work *away* from his post, he drew the wash-cloth towards himself so that one corner of it soon fell into the water.

The tug of war was virtually over at this stage of the proceedings, for, having obtained a porcelain foothold for himself, he could easily pass over to it, and, from this vantage-point, drag the entire wash-cloth into the pitcher.

It would seem as if this clever manoeuvre

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ought to have earned for him the right to wash his face; yet I always made it a matter of principle to discourage the performance. But my tactics were a mere formality, for the persistent little worker never failed to dislodge the obstacle, even when it was wet and consequently really heavy; and it was only after I had discovered what terrors a piece of bark had for the birds, as I explain later on, that I secured immunity from this amusing persecution.

The days of Chupes' infancy passed happily on, bringing great changes in his appearance and abilities. After a time his poor claw healed, and he was able to play about my room and even to roam around out-of-doors a little. Naturally, on such occasions, he was always accompanied by one of his faithful friends.

Of course the baby down dropped off after a time, and good-sized feathers, as

THE HERO ENTERS SUDDENLY

well as a very respectable little tail, put in, or put out, an appearance. His breast was now all speckled, and I suppose his general costume corresponded to that of a little lad who has been promoted to knickerbockers.

His wings by this time had reached such proportions that he could fly to the top of a small tree. I would gladly have given him his liberty if he would have accepted it, but he always seemed disinclined to remain away from me, and would come hurrying back after a short investigation of the tree or any other object to which he had flown.

One afternoon, when he seemed particularly anxious to go on a voyage of discovery, he sighted in a neighbor's yard something which appeared to possess unusual interest. He flew away and, to my dismay, alighted beside a cat!

Whether the remarkable sight of a bird voluntarily putting himself in the way of

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furnishing her breakfast took away pussy's breath, or whether my violent gesticulations and "shoos" paralyzed her, I cannot say, but, at any rate, there she sat regarding him, and there he stood admiring her, until I went up to him and rescued him.

The cat question was one that I was compelled to confront, or at least to consider, every day of our outings. I always went on the supposition that there might be hungry felines lying in wait for my little charges; and only when they were either safe in a tree or fairly under my hand, did I feel secure from cat onslaughts.

Of one thing I became convinced as I watched these gaunt quadrupeds; their skins hanging loosely, their sides suggesting the possibility of clapping together from sheer emptiness, as they prowled around with quivering jaws and suppressed staccato meows in search of such creatures

THE HERO ENTERS SUDDENLY

as those I was guarding: *there are altogether too many cats in the world!*

Understand that I bear them no grudge whatever. Pussy, in a good home, where she does not endanger the life of any feathered inmates of the household, and where she is well cared for and sufficiently fed, is a very desirable member of society; and the question would never have to be viewed from any other standpoint than this, if superfluous cat babies received a birthday gift of a merciful dose of chloroform or a kind bath. The mother grieves when they are taken from her, but she soon consoles herself with the one kitten left her. But even were she deprived of them all, her distress could not equal the long-drawn-out and multiplied misery of the wretched, half-starved tramp cats who are allowed to grow up because no one had the kindness of heart to put them out of the way before they re-

MR. CHUPES AND MISS JENNY

alized that they were alive. Think of this when the settling of the question depends on you or your influence.

After Chupes' encounter with the cat, I felt that in justice to this very trusting little bird it would be necessary to limit his flight, so I reluctantly clipped the outer feathers of one of his wings. This answered the purpose better than cutting both, and was far less disfiguring.

Not at all inconvenienced or discouraged by this restriction, he went on his happy way, only complaining when deprived of the society of human beings, following us about whenever permitted, and always deeply interested in whatever we had on hand.

He had not the freedom of the house, but one large room was his and—mine! This partnership arrangement involved the greatest simplicity of furnishing, and at-

THE HERO ENTERS SUDDENLY

tractive perching places were imperative; a high pole with horizontal bars at branch-like distances being the favorite of these.

Whenever I left the room without the birds, I dropped and fastened to the floor the mosquito-netting *portières* which always hung at my doors as precautionary measures; and for longer absences I had also provided screens for open windows. Chupes and Jenny were at liberty to fly out when I could accompany them, but there was danger in any expedition not under my direct supervision. Boys with kidnapping designs, cats, dogs, hawks, and I can't tell you how many other enemies, awaited them. And *à propos* of dogs, why would it not be advisable to employ for decreasing their number and preventing much of their misery the same merciful methods that I have suggested for lessening the cat population? Although they are not such fierce

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bird-enemies as cats, nevertheless I was ever on the alert in their presence. Even in the case of fine hunting-dogs I kept faithful guard, although their owners assured me that a thoroughbred would scorn to avail himself of any opportunities other than those afforded by regular hunts. I always feared that the unusually tempting occasion might disclose a hitherto unsuspected bar sinister on the aristocratic canine shield.

I provided a cage for Chupes as soon as he learned to perch, and here he was incarcerated at night and, whenever liberty meant danger, during the day. He was so trusting that he would plant himself directly in our path; and even when the danger of being crushed seemed imminent, he would not swerve.

A stay in the cage had no terrors for him, however. He knew that it did not mean

THE HERO ENTERS SUDDENLY

permanent imprisonment; and from behind the bars he contentedly kept up his conversations with me and his interest in my movements.

The summer of Chupes' rescue we decided to remain at home,—not that there was any connection between the bird and the decision,—and every wind-and-weather-favored day we spent in the grove. These visits seemed to afford my *protégé* the greatest pleasure, yet, in revisiting these scenes of his babyhood, I do not suppose that there was ever the slightest stirring of fond recollection.

He used to make the journey from our house in the safe shelter of his cage, but once arrived at his destination he was set free. Strange to say, the chief attraction on these occasions was not the society of birds (in his own kind he had only a slight interest), nor even an occasional flight to a

MR. CHUPES AND MISS JENNY

tree, but the investigation of the earth with its pebbly treasures, and now and then the capture of a worm, for which, at this time, he seemed to have little use beyond the pleasure of slaughtering it.

Many a bird paid Chupes a wondering visit during these days in the grove, but all his callers would retire after a short investigation, evidently under the impression that no sane bird would be willing to exchange their society for that of human beings. Through my innocent little decoy I learned a world of bird secrets. Relieved from apprehension by his fondness for me and his familiarity with human beings, his feathered companions have gone on with their housekeeping even in my immediate neighborhood; occasionally, in an excess of curiosity, venturing near enough to study me narrowly.

Once, when Chupes was stationed on my

THE HERO ENTERS SUDDENLY

hand, a humming-bird came buzzing up to me. He was evidently about to alight beside Chupes, when a sudden movement on my part startled the tiny creature and caused him to draw back. But in spite of his alarm, he buzzed and hummed around me for some time, apparently uncertain what to make of me. I never realized my ambition of taming one of these gems of nature.

Chupes' first approach to an intimate acquaintance with a bird came about under peculiar circumstances. He was digging near me in the grove, when a father and mother robin, who were escorting their son on one of his earliest trips abroad, came flying by at a rapid rate. The parents were proficient surveyors and they cleared the wire fence, against which the baby hit with full force. In one moment he lay on the ground in an attitude painfully suggestive

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of quail on toast. But for an occasional convulsive movement I should have supposed him dead.

The parents looked on in helpless distress, and Chupes, with keen interest, while I called to a friend who was manipulating a hose among the shrubs near me: "Here is a bird in a faint! Do see if a shower-bath will restore him."

The nozzle was immediately turned towards the bird and a gentle spray soon did its reviving work; but the victim of the accident, instead of manifesting the slightest gratitude for services rendered, turned upon us the most indignant of glances as soon as he came to himself. No doubt he attributed his headache, as well as his interrupted journey, to our meddling interference. Perhaps that is what he was angrily chattering about as he flew away with his relieved parents.

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One day when I was visiting the orchard part of the grove I noticed that two cat-birds followed me as I passed from tree to tree. I naturally supposed that the falling together of our routes was accidental, but a repetition of the occurrence on the following day led me to conclude that they had a nest in the neighborhood, and that they resented my presence.

A search among the branches failed to reveal even the slightest semblance of a bird-home, however. So when, on the third day, reinforced by two wood-thrushes, they again made quite a trip in my company, and, in answer to my outstretched hand, came down to the very tips of the branches, almost within reach in fact, I concluded that the entire demonstration was a mark of approval; something of the nature of a certificate of good conduct; almost as if they had written:

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Know all birds by these presents that this particular member of the *genus homo* is worthy of complete trust, having learned, through her peculiar advantages in associating with our kind, to conduct herself in a quiet, reasonable, bird-like manner. We heartily recommend her to the feathered folk of the grove.

In testimony whereof, we, the undersigned, do hereby subscribe our names and affix our seal.

GALEOSOPTES CAROLINENSIS.

TURDUS MUSTELINUS.



A couple of beautiful little indigo-birds became quite at home with me, and although they never followed me in my strolls, they pursued their seed-hunting quite fearlessly in my neighborhood.

But one day a murderous missile came, flying over the fence, and in a moment a mangled, lifeless little body lay at the feet of one of the owners of the grove. We

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hoped that the poor little victim was immediately stunned and that he knew no pain in connection with the fatal blow; and we were glad that the beautiful feathers had not been secured by the destroyer for hat or bonnet ornamentation, but there was no channel through which we could convey a single consoling thought to the little brown mate with the broken heart.

More and more I am impressed by the thought of the blood-guiltiness of those who, directly or indirectly, encourage the terrible traffic that makes so many martyrs in the bird realm. Think of the songs silenced, of the woods stripped of these bright dashes of color, of the desolate homes, of the starving nestlings, of the wailing mates, of the maimed creatures who, eluding their would-be captors, escape merely to die slowly in pain and hunger and the terrible thirst of the wounded;

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think of all these things, to say nothing of the incalculable usefulness of the little feathered friends, when you make your next selection for a hat-trimming!

And do not be deluded by any specious reasoning concerning feathers picked up in poultry-yards and arranged by artificial means to simulate the genuine article. Not even if the demonstration be carried to the extent of exposing feathers glued on artificial backgrounds. It is said that all the poultry-yards in the country could not supply the demands for feathers for millinery purposes.

“A survey of women’s headgear, as the average woman appears in public,” says *The Auk* of January, 1900, “is a painful sight to the ornithologist, who at a glance can tell the source of these hat decorations, however mutilated and disguised, with reasonable certainty, and can realize to

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what an enormous extent our wild birds are still sacrificed for woman's defacement."

But if you still cling to the idea that your hat-trimming is made from feathers that have been shed in the **un**interrupted course of nature, and that no cruelty has been practised in obtaining them, do not fail to take into consideration all those to whom your decorations *will appear real*, all those who will gladly seize upon your example as a precedent, as a sanction to proceed to almost any length in this line. Do you not think it worth while to avoid the very appearance of evil and to select decorations that have no connection with birds?

One other wild-bird experience I must mention here. This time it was a golden-crowned kinglet, and my room, not the grove, was the scene of action.

The tiny creature entered our house during a driving autumn storm; and as he did

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not avail himself of an open window to make his escape, I decided to keep him under shelter while the storm lasted. At first he was much frightened, but after studying Chupes and myself attentively, he evidently became convinced that my intentions were friendly, for he suddenly flew to my hand and snatched from between my fingers a fly that I was holding out to Chupes.

The latter's expressions of countenance as he viewed this unceremonious appropriation of *his* dainty were varied and amusing. First unbounded surprise; then indignation, gradually working itself up to the pitch of resentment where nothing short of the administration of a flogging could appease him. As a chase around the room did not result in the capture of the intruder, Chupes stationed himself on a high perch as if to consider other tactics. All things come to him who knows how to wait, the

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French tell us, and in this instance, at least, the proverb was verified.

The kinglet, disarmed probably by the calm of his enemy, came sailing directly under the perch. What must have been his surprise to feel himself suddenly seized by his golden crown and suspended in the air! No writ of *habeas corpus* could possibly have been more literally carried out. He was not long held aloft, however, for I rushed to his rescue and released him as quickly as possible. From this time on he seemed to understand that the gentleman in feathers was his enemy, and the human being his defender, for several times he came to me for protection, perching on my hand and taking flies from my fingers whenever he could elude the vigilance of Chupes.

Lest you should ever be tempted to follow my example and to offer hospitality to

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a golden-crowned kinglet, I must give you the sad sequel of the incident. The most blustering of storms would have been far less disastrous to the hardy little creature than the shelter of my room, for, at the end of seven or eight hours, he died; not from Chupes' violent attentions, but from over-feeding and the warmth of the house. I suppose that at first he was too dazed to find his way out through the open window, and afterwards too comfortable to care to escape. He was bright and happy up to the very time when the fatal cramp attacked him. Fortunately he did not suffer long. I never see any of his kind without being reminded that my well-meant but mistaken interference caused the death of my charming little visitor.

I have said that this tragic incident occurred in the autumn, and I am ashamed to tell you that, although Chupes had by this

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time arrived at what would be considered a coming-of-age period in the robin world, he had been fed like a baby until within a fortnight or so of the poor little kinglet's visit.

I had not realized that there was anything exceptional in his training until one day when a friend remarked, on hearing him call loudly for his dinner: "Do you mean to say that that big bird is unable to feed himself?"

A little mortified by the backwardness of my *protégé*, I immediately set about making him more independent. He had manifested the greatest liking for flies, no doubt according to these dainties the favored place in his affections that children reserve for ice-cream and sweets. Here was my opportunity!

As it was the season when flies were becoming torpid, I had no difficulty in pro-

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curing a number. Armed with the alluring bait, I approached my ward, and, as usual at the sight of a fly between my fingers, he threw back his head and opened his beak, expecting to be fed. His amazement and disappointment when he found that his hungry attitude was unnoticed were almost ludicrous.

Looking around to see what had happened, he spied the tempting morsels on the table beside him. He again put back his head as if expecting the flies to walk into his beak, but as no such marvel occurred, he concluded, after a moment's waiting, to pick them up, and thus the victory was won. Thereafter he no longer opened his beak appealingly when he was hungry, but went to his dishes and supplied himself with food.

Let me return once more to an incident of Chupes' babyhood. One afternoon,

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when he had been with us about four weeks, and while he was nestling contentedly in a soap-dish, I heard a faint, tender little trill, which I fancied came from a bird in the grove. It had a far-off, silvery sound, unlike any bird-note I had ever heard before; so faint as to be barely distinguishable, yet so clear and distinct that not one note of the musical chain was missing. In a short time the sound ceased, but the following day I heard it again under the same circumstances. I think nearly a week elapsed before I traced it to our own little bird. He was testing his voice, and each day he strengthened it somewhat by use.

In the absence of the vocal drill which his parents would no doubt have given him, he was learning to improvise, and his own musical genius, together with some suggestions from a very pretty bird-whistle, soon gave him a *repertoire* of the sweetest

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and softest, the most weird and pathetic, and yet, at times, the most joyful and triumphant of songs. In his choicest selections the sweet little trill of his babyhood predominated.

At a later period of his life he was guilty of musical sins. I will confess them to you in due time.

Very early in his career this brave little songster learned the wonderful secret of evolving harmony from discord. The squeaking of casters, the rumbling of carts, the rattling of blinds and windows, the rustling of paper, as well as talking, laughing, singing, whistling,—any one of these sounds, or any combination of them, used to send him off into a little ecstasy of song which he would sometimes keep up for half an hour.

The regulation robin-song, *cheery, be cheery, cheer up, cheer up!* was not intuitive

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with Chupes. He adopted it after attending a vesper service in the grove.

Notes of fear and those of the love-song were the only ones that came to him through channels of heredity. Of these I would say, as Sydney Lanier said of the carols of his bird *Bob*, "he must have brought them in his mind from the egg, or from some further source whereof we know nothing."

Playfulness, I have learned, exists in birds in as great a degree as in lambs or kittens. Chupes' joyful demonstrations with a bit of paper—tossing it up in the air, running to catch it, frisking and skirmishing wildly about with it in his beak—gave me the idea of testing him with a string. I found him more than willing to chase it, and whenever I wished to make his happiness complete and his antics extra amusing, I had only to attach a rubber band to the

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end of the string, when the mirth became fast and furious. It was necessary to keep a strict watch over him while he played with the rubber band, however, for it was a toy that he would persist in swallowing at the end of the game if left to follow his inclinations. He also had a liking for bits of thread, and on one occasion when he swallowed a good portion of a piece and entangled the remainder around his tongue, it was with the greatest difficulty that we rescued him from his uncomfortable and dangerous predicament.

One day an ungainly-looking mud-turtle was brought into my room. The creature was about the size of a saucer,—allowing, of course, for oval instead of circular proportions. He was a runaway (or, rather, a slow creepaway), and for a day or so he remained with us, unclaimed. A perforation had been made in his shell, and from the

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orifice hung a soiled bit of tethering-string.

At first Chupes watched him with the deepest interest as he pursued his slow, monotonous journey around chairs and tables. But suddenly the thought of an opportunity for a game suggested itself to the fun-loving bird; and, swooping down upon the turtle, he grabbed the trailing string, at which he tugged with might and main. Sometimes he was fairly thrown backwards; sometimes, in spite of firmly planted claws, he was carried along as smoothly as on a toboggan-slide; but it was all pure enjoyment to him, while the melancholy reptile looked more discouraged and distressed than ever when the retarding influence at the end of the string made itself felt.

A regularly instituted performance of the bird's that caused us much amusement was, I suppose, a natural consequence of our having bestowed such a large measure of

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appreciation on his efforts to feed himself. When he picked up his first fly he received such applause and encouragement from the spectators that thereafter, whenever he succeeded in capturing any kind of game, instead of immediately swallowing his prize, he would bring it to us for inspection and approval, uttering all the time sounds indicative of the greatest satisfaction. He seemed as averse to putting an end to the pleasure of holding his prey as a gourmand to relinquishing a particularly toothsome morsel, even by swallowing it.

More comical still was another performance that always accompanied the capture of a fly or any like dainty. As a friend remarked, it strongly reminded one of a boy calling out to those for whose benefit he is showing off: "Just see how much I can do with one hand tied behind me!"

While Chupes still held his game in his

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beak, he would pick up other objects: a leaf, a bit of paper, a string; just as many things as he could possibly carry, all the time parading up and down before us, challenging our admiration, while he repeatedly threw down all but the fly or whatever his prize might be, only to recommence the jugglery of picking them up. So the play would go on until the little fellow became tired, when he would eat his dainty with great relish.

The shaking and rattling of belts or straps or any objects with jingling and clinking attachments, like buckles, always wrought Chupes up to the highest pitch of merriment. We arranged a game for him of the nature of "Button, button, who has the button?" in which, with hands behind us, we did our best to pass the rattling thing from one to another so rapidly as to keep him from locating it; but *the bird* al-

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ways won the game. He would fly from shoulder to shoulder, looking behind us for the hidden object and meeting each jingle and rattle with a peculiar return squeak which he used on no other occasion. It was probably intended for an imitation of the metallic and leathery sounds.

He was always so ready to show-off for visitors. I wish you could have seen how wonderingly old and young used to watch him as I presented him with a little parcel in which I told him he would find a fly. He never saw the preparation of the package, but he knew what it all meant, and he would pull and tug and unroll until he got at the heart of the bundle, when he would seize the prize and triumphantly hold it aloft! This very effective little performance was the result of my having carried him a fly in a handkerchief when he was learning to feed himself.

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From the earliest stages of my acquaintance with my little feathered friend, he gave evidences of the deepest affection for me. Even as a mere baby, when opportunity offered, he would nestle down on my shoulder, where he would keep up a tender little chattering and cooing; and another favorite perch of his, particularly while I wrote, was the back of my left hand. Here, also, he would cuddle down as in a nest, while his head would turn from side to side—the bright eyes watching, now my face and again the progress of my writing—and much of the time his rippling little song kept pace with the sound of my pen.

If he could have had his way he would always have been with human beings, and there was never the slightest indication that he longed for any birthright joys of which he had been deprived; nevertheless, when the cold autumn days came, the friend who

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had aided me in his rescue feared that he might miss his outings in the grove and the occasional sight of his own kind, so she set about finding a mate for him. The thought was a kind one and it resulted in the rescue of another bird; this time, one that had seen the harder side of life.

II

MISS JENNY'S FORLORN ADVENT

MISS JENNY, the second robin, was found in a baker's establishment. Now bakers, when they do not put hurtful ingredients in their bread, are public benefactors—objects of envy even; for to nearly every small boy or girl there comes a time when any one connected with a bakery or a confectioner's establishment is viewed with envious eyes, and perhaps way down in the child's heart is the hope that some day or other he may rise to the dignity of dealer-out of the dainties, with the right, of course, to regale himself at pleasure with the choicest articles in stock. But for a poor little wild

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bird penned in a cage, neither a bakery nor a confectioner's establishment has any such fascination. Jenny had no doubt often beaten herself against her prison bars in her efforts to escape. In some way or other the feathers had been worn from around her beak, leaving the flesh raw. Her back was humped from her inability to stand erect in her close quarters; her wing feathers were broken and draggled; her breast was so muddy and food-encrusted as to have almost lost its original color; and this poor, frightened, wretched, almost deformed bird was the mate selected for the refined Mr. Chupes!

I am glad to say that it had been no easy matter to obtain even Jenny, because it proved that few robins had been trapped during the season, or, at any rate, had survived their imprisonment. As I looked at this pitiful object, scuttling around my



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room like a rat instead of a bird, terrified at the liberty accorded her, and only feeling somewhat reassured when she found her way into the cage and was able to look out at us through her prison bars, it did not seem to me possible that any trapper of birds could realize the cruelty or the injustice of his action when he captures and imprisons the wild, free, happy creatures.

Jenny came to me one day at about four in the afternoon, wild as any bird you have ever seen. At eight in the evening of the same day she was perching on my hand and eating crumbs from my fingers. Chupes, in the mean time, looked on with benevolent interest, but he showed unmistakable signs of resenting the liberty when Jenny was placed near him. She in her turn refused to approach him or to allow him near her, and this state of antagonism was kept up for

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months. Indeed, to the end, Chupes maintained his touch-me-not attitude towards Jenny; but mingled with it there seemed to be a certain high-minded pity for her weaknesses, and an amiable toleration of her vagaries. At times, when she was not urging his participation in them, he even manifested an amused interest in some of her performances. But although he never departed one jot from his first attitude, you will see how completely Jenny's feelings changed towards him as time went on.

In making the selection of her name we were influenced by the Cock-Robin and Jenny-Wren line of thought, minus the tragic ending. There was the idea of loving companionship, the hope that in each other's society they might find compensation for the loss of many bird privileges, and various other natural and laudable ambitions for the little couple actuated us, but

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the scheme met the fate of many another well-laid plan.

Mr. Chupes' name was an unfortunate selection. I have already told how it originated; but I am certain that the one who named him after the first baby utterances had no idea that the deed would have such lasting consequences.

As time went on and his wonderful character developed, I resented more and more the unmusical appellation of *Chupes*. The *Mr.*, without which he was seldom addressed, was an almost involuntary tribute to his superior qualities, a proof of the high esteem in which he was held. Jenny was styled *Miss*, not on account of lady-like qualifications, but simply as a sort of offset to the *Mr.* of Chupes.

It always seemed to me as if some hyphenated sort of an arrangement, suggesting a combination of song and poetry,

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might have been settled upon appropriately for our artist-poet bird. Campanini-Coleridge, or Mendelssohn-Schiller, or Capoul de Hérédia, for instance. Love would soon have found a suitable diminutive. But it is not an easy matter to put aside even an undesirable given name, as many owners of misfit appellations can testify. So Mr. Chupes he was from the outset, and as Mr. Chupes he will always be remembered by his hosts of devoted friends.

When poor little Jenny first came to me she seemed unable to understand her happiness, but she soon learned to take all the good things that came in her way. The morning after her arrival I carried her where the sun's rays could fall on her and warm her thoroughly. This was evidently a new experience, and at the earlier stages of the proceeding she appeared completely dazed; but as the blessed warmth found its

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way through her wretched feathers, she threw back her head, opened her beak, spread her poor tattered wings, and, gazing directly at the beneficent orb, she gave thanks in a way that would no doubt put many of our thanksgiving exercises to shame.

Shortly after this Chupes took his refreshing morning bath,—Jenny meanwhile observing him attentively,—and, as soon as he had vacated the basin, she jumped in.

We judged it was the first bath of her life. Such a wild splashing, splurging and ducking, and, when it was all over, a basin of such brown water!

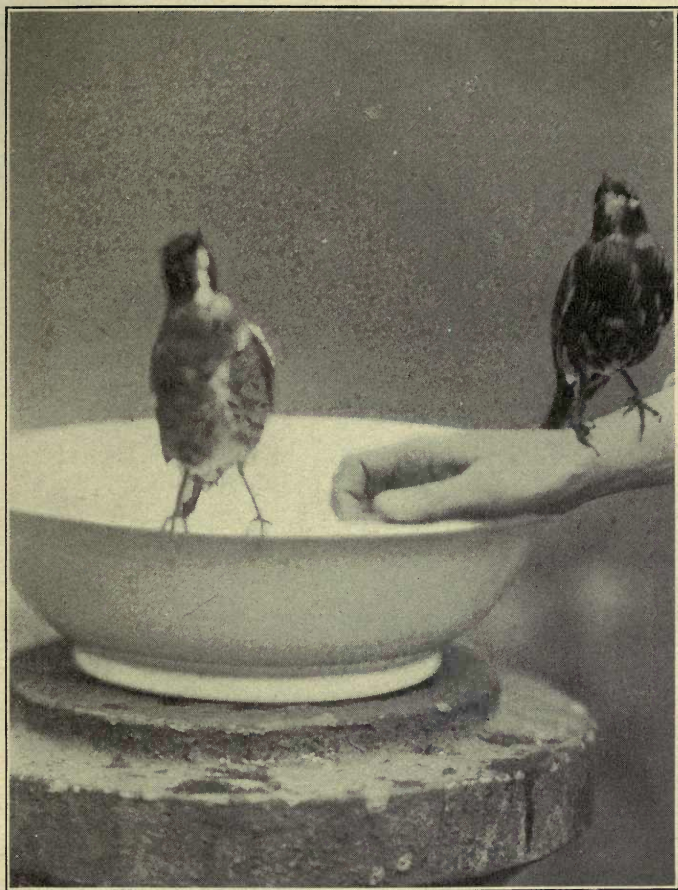
The performance was hardly ended, however, when she seemed to experience a revulsion of feeling. It was evident that she bitterly regretted the experiment. Her feathers, unaccustomed to the oiling that free birds know so well how to give them-

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selves, had absorbed much of the water, and she was literally drenched to the skin. Chupes had gone on with his preening and pluming and was soon as dry and glossy as could be; but poor Jenny shivered and shook, and only regained her spirits when the sun had thoroughly warmed her.

Not one thing did she do toward arranging or oiling her feathers. She seemed totally ignorant of the provision kind Nature has made for such emergencies, and the following day, when bath-time came, no example of Mr. Chupes', no coaxings or inducements on our part, could prevail on her to jump into the basin as she had so fearlessly done on the first occasion.

It seemed an unkind thing to do, but I knew that the little bird must be kept clean in order to be healthy, so I put her in the basin and washed her thoroughly. She appeared as doleful and injured as she did



MISS JENNY FOLLOWS A GOOD EXAMPLE.

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after the first bath, but this time she preened herself a little, and in a few days she was as anxious as Chupes for the morning plunge, and almost as particular as he about the arrangement of her feathers.

The oiling and smoothing soon made her look like another bird, and when we had cut off some of her most tattered feathers and a new lot had come in around her bill, we could hardly recognize her as the miserable little creature that had come to us that autumn afternoon. Owing to the cramping and stunting of her early days, her tail feathers were always crooked when they first appeared, but by dint of faithful smoothing she always corrected this blemish.

Of course with regard to Chupes' age we could only be a few days astray at the utmost; but there was much uncertainty about Jenny's. Had she been a horse or a

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tree, dental or arboreal indications would have aided us in making our calculations. As it was, we could figure only from the standpoint of a certain hardness of bone and setness of figure. "Middle-aged," was the fairly general verdict when these tests were applied to her. Perhaps the poor little creature had been a prisoner for years before coming to us; but the cruelty of that time is something on which I do not care to dwell except by way of discouragement to all kidnappers of birds.

In spite of her immense improvement in health and appearance, she never recovered from certain injuries received during her stay in prison. Her heart, for instance, was certainly affected, if not diseased, and during times of fright or great excitement it would beat so wildly that I could hear it, even at a distance of four or five feet. Take a pencil and tap gently but rapidly with it

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on some hard substance, and you will have the effect of the thumping of that poor little heart. I held her close to me while the fright lasted, whenever it was possible to do so. It often happened that both birds needed reassuring at the same time.

We could only account for Jenny's having existed under circumstances that would have killed the average bird, by the fact that she apparently lived to eat. The organ of appetite must have been abnormal in her to begin with, and in her prison there had been no scope for higher aspirations. Her table manners were shocking. She ate with the mad haste of a belated traveller at a railway restaurant, and—I blush to tell it, but candor compels me—both feet were often planted in her dish during the shovelling-in-of-food performance.

When she first came to us we made allowances for the ravenous manner in which

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she went at her food; attributing it to the fact that she had, undoubtedly, often gone hungry, and that, even in the midst of abundance, she perhaps feared her good things might be spirited away from her at any moment. But the five years of plenty only modified, never overcame, her greed, and her table manners never improved. It was a *nouveau-riche* streak, ever in evidence in the dear little plebeian.

From the time when Mr. Chupes learned to feed himself, his principal diet was grated carrot mixed with mocking-bird food, and although at the outset Jenny's taste ran exclusively to such things as boiled potatoes, bread, wafers, etc., she soon learned to like the carrot and mocking-bird food better than anything else.

But apart from this staple diet, the most desirable article of food seemed to be whatever *I* was eating. No matter how stealth-

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ily I manœuvred, I never succeeded in avoiding detection if I put even a crumb in my mouth in Chupes' or Jenny's presence. They always insisted on having a share of my bite.

Whenever my hand made a journey to my mouth, it was the signal for the birds to station themselves on my shoulders. One on each side, eagerly bending forward, they would inspect my face so critically as to make deception impossible. At the slightest movement of my lips, taps of various degrees of sharpness were administered to my cheeks. Jenny's discipline was eager and insistent; Chupes', gentle and pleading.

Their acuteness of perception and their determination that my property should belong to the commonwealth restricted me not a little in the choice of things to be eaten in my room. Apples and wafers gen-

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erally constituted my *pièces de résistance*. A mere seasoning of chocolate could now and then be indulged in with safety,—for other sweets they had no fancy,—but the highest measure of appreciation was bestowed on a concoction of malted milk, prescribed for me during days of invalidism. Can you not picture to yourself the astonishment of the physician when, on entering the room, he saw first one bird and then the other taking a sip from the spoon, while I came in for a modest third share?

A little raw beef, unsalted, appeared now and then in their menu, and occasional dainty bits of lettuce and celery were greatly appreciated by them. Jenny, with her cosmopolitan, democratic tastes, would sometimes gather and devour wild onions during her rambles in the fields. There never was any difficulty in convicting her of the deed, for the atmosphere of the most

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orthodox of French stews surrounded her for hours after the garlic indulgence.

A few days after Jenny's arrival she constituted herself guardian of the larder, so rapidly did she gain courage and independence. No matter how generous a supply of food she might have, she was in the habit of swelling out her feathers and going at Chupes like a little bulldog, when he attempted to help himself even to his own portion, if it happened to be in her neighborhood.

Of course her pugnacity made it necessary to have a legal division of goods and chattels: two cages for the night, and those occasional day incarceration periods of which I have already written, and two food-and water-dishes in the cages; also a private supply for Chupes in my neighborhood, where he used to station himself during nearly all his hours of liberty. If he

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entered his cage for food I could never be certain that Jenny would not pursue him. Now and then she even resented the supply in my neighborhood to the extent of bristling up to me and attacking the closed fist I shook at her in Chupes' defence.

And how differently the high-bred little gentleman behaved about his food! Putting aside the days of his gobbling infancy, he never failed to conduct himself at meals like a model of deportment. There was no mad haste as in Jenny's case. A pleasant little chatter often accompanied his repast, suggestive of patrician ease and leisure; and that he was no gourmand was proved conclusively by the fact that he was always willing to leave the most luscious meal to follow me when I left the room, if I gave him the opportunity to do so.

Strange to say, although Chupes was the dainty one, Jenny was the more fastidious

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and exacting. It was she who used to plow scornfully through her food, scattering it in all directions when there was rather a scant proportion of mocking-bird food to the grated carrot. "Put a beggar on horse-back," remarked a friend as she watched the tramp Jenny's disdainful reception of her breakfast when it was not quite up to the mark.

It was owing to Jenny's all-devouring greed that her career was in danger of being cut short just as her happiness had begun. She and Chupes were in the habit of going on foraging expeditions, and during one of these excursions she discovered a shoe-lace. Happily it had no metal tips, and happily, also, it was attached to a shoe. She began to swallow and succeeded in stowing away all that remained loose at one end. When she met the shoe, she naturally had to stop. She then drew herself back

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and, presto, the lace was restored. This amusement proved so fascinating that it became a part of her daily program, until one almost fatal hour, when she alighted upon a lace without a shoe.

Ah, here was a treat! Before I discovered what she was doing she had succeeded in swallowing an amazing amount of the string. It was then too late to undo all the mischief, but, seizing the part still in evidence, I compelled her to refund as much as she could without strangling. When it came to the almost suffocating point, I cut the lace close to her bill, expecting to see her expire before the close of the day. She went to bed in her usual good spirits, however, but the following morning I discovered her facing the wall, showing no desire to see what was going on around her, and, most alarming of all, no thought of eating!

She was a thoroughly depressed and dis-

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heartened little bird, and no wonder. From the length of the shoe-lace she did not succeed in stowing away, I knew that she had swallowed about eight inches of the poisonous stuff: enough to kill a strong child. There was nothing to be done for her, so we left her to die, as we supposed. But her strong constitution (for strong it was, in spite of everything) and her vim seemed to bring her around, and before the day was over she was frisking about as usual and eating as greedily as ever.

That was her last raid on a shoe-lace, but she made one other experiment in the string line before graduating from such exercises.

She was fond of perching on the upper window-sashes where the shade-strings hung within easy reach. Her playfulness had come gradually to her, but after a time she learned to frisk and romp like Chupes,

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and making playful lunges at these particular strings seemed to afford her much pleasure. Her favorite piece was thickly knotted for several inches from the end, and extremely hard. She danced gleefully around it day after day in her moments of recreation, and I had no thought of danger in connection with the game.

One morning I sat at my desk filing away papers, under Chupes' supervision, while Jenny played at one of the upper sashes. I had no anxiety about her, and indeed had forgotten her whereabouts, when I was roused by an exclamation of horror.

"Oh, oh! Hans Hucklebein! Look, look!" ejaculated a friend dramatically and rather enigmatically as she entered my room.

"Where?" I asked in alarm, too taken by surprise to interpret the allusion.

"There, there! On the window-sill.

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Your bird! Do you not see? He will hang himself!"

Following the direction of the indicating finger, I discovered Jenny dangling wildly at the end of the shade-string. She had swallowed the knotty part—how much more I could not then judge—and had evidently started to fly or to walk away after the repast; but no hook and line had ever done its work more thoroughly. As in the case of the shoe-lace, I made an ineffectual attempt to recover the property, and finally cut it off near her beak.

This was even more serious than the former swallowing episode. A decided Adam's apple travelling around in her craw enabled us to follow events very closely. Every now and then she would twist her neck and open her beak and choke and splutter and almost dislodge the unnatural food, but attempt after attempt failed.

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Three days she struggled and fought, but the obstinate ball still rolled around in her craw and seemed about to conquer, when, with one great gasp, one awful struggle, she managed to dislodge about seven inches of the coarse, knotted stuff! How triumphantly she shook her head over the ejected material, and how quickly she went to work to replace it by a good substantial meal! During the enemy's possession of the digestive stronghold, she had been able to swallow only enough to sustain life.

It was during one of her times of jollity that she discovered a register in the wall not far above the floor. It evidently afforded her great pleasure, and in this snug corner, with the gentle heat surrounding her, she was generally found cuddled down on very cold mornings.

During the first winter of Chupes' life and of Jenny's stay with us, I went away

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from home for a few days, leaving the birds in other hands, but in their usual quarters. The friend who replaced me was quite as faithful in her ministrations as I could possibly have been, but these little creatures had given me a place in their affections that could not be filled by any one else, and they moped pitifully for me.

From all accounts, Chupes gave himself up unreservedly to his sorrow. He ate only enough to keep the life in his little body, and not one bath did he take during my absence. He was frequently found in the depths of a dark closet. It was almost as if he were attempting to bury himself and his heartache. His custodian feared that he would die of grief before my return.

Jenny mourned heartily also, but in a lesser degree. She moped and seemed to have lost all her vim, but she ate and bathed.

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I shall never forget the welcome I received on my return. My substitute exclaimed: "I can't tell you how thankful I am to give you back your pets. It is too pitiful to see such distress. Never, never again will I undertake such a charge."

When I appeared in my room, Jenny flew and fluttered around me, fairly screaming for joy; but Chupes stationed himself on my shoulder and rubbed his soft head and little beak caressingly against my cheek while uttering low, tender little coos that said: "I'm so glad you've come back, for I can't live without you. Never, never leave me again!"

But suddenly he paused in his loving demonstrations. He had become conscious of the presence of the kind friend who had done her best to make him comfortable and happy during my absence. In an instant

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his mood changed from melting tenderness to vindictive hatred. He flew at her and pecked her hand so viciously that he actually drew blood. It was exactly as if he had said to her: "I believe *you* were the cause of it all. *You* took our dear one away and kept her from us. Take that, and that, and that, will you! And now go, and never come near us again or you'll hear from me!" His displeasure and distrust diminished gradually and finally disappeared altogether, but the length of time he remembered the supposed offence was really wonderful.

One beautiful spring morning when the maple buds were swelling out into leaves and the little feathered folk from the South were chattering merrily among the branches, I noticed Chupes and Jenny at the window perch, viewing with the deepest interest something going on in our nearest

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trees. Jenny, indeed, appeared absorbed in the study.

Suddenly two robins rushed angrily at my window, nearly into the room in fact, and almost simultaneously Jenny disappeared under the bed, while Chupes flew to me for protection. This performance was repeated several days in succession before I discovered the cause of it all. The wild robins were making housekeeping preparations in the nearest maple. Chupes' and Jenny's intense interest they interpreted as spying interference and they determined to rout the offenders. "Attend to your own affairs, you inquisitive, prying creatures and let your neighbors alone," they seemed to say.

I thought no more of the incident until a few days later, when I observed in Jenny unmistakable evidences of having obtained ideas from the study of the wild birds—as-

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pirations beyond eating and playing and mere animal content. She had determined to construct a nest, and from this time to the very day of her death, in all indoor places and at all seasons, she worked at the fulfilment of her project; yet she never succeeded in completing even one. Some of her structures have been known to extend over three feet of surface, while others were so small that they could hardly have accommodated a single egg, and all this earnest toil, this pathetic preparation, for the home to which no offspring ever came!

On one occasion, thinking to give her a few architectural points, I brought in a deserted nest, but it was only an object of terror to her.

I had noticed that her impatience with Chupes was even greater than usual after the period of her prying into the wild

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robins' domain, but, not knowing at the time that she was bent on nest-building, and that she greatly resented his utter indifference in the matter, I could not understand her unusual manifestations of displeasure.

The first intimation of her building propensities came to me in a startling manner. One afternoon I was awakened from my nap by a violent tugging and pulling at my hair. Chupes, according to his custom at this hour, had cuddled down on the lounge beside me, and a mirror opposite gave me a view of the energetic Jenny hard at work.

At a good deal of inconvenience, I might almost say at the risk of being scalped, I awaited developments. I could distinctly see Jenny's expression of dismay when her best efforts failed to dislodge the building material. Finally she paused as if to con-

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sider the situation, and at length, with fine strategic instinct, she concluded to make the nest at the literal headquarters of the coveted stuff. A violent scratching of the stubby little claws, accompanied by energetic shaping movements of the wings, followed this decision. Naturally such heroic treatment was not long endurable, and, to Jenny's great displeasure, I was compelled to defend myself. It was her habit to punish me whenever I transgressed, so on this occasion I received the customary sharp raps from her strong little beak. My point was gained, however, for she began to look elsewhere for a building site.

When I close my eyes I can see again the whole ridiculous scene as if it had all happened only yesterday. Chupes, nestling lovingly beside me, would look first with wonder and positive amusement at Jenny's

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wild performances, then questioningly up at my face as if to say: "What do you think of all this nonsense, dear?"

Jenny, meanwhile, as fussy and important as you can possibly picture her, flew from one corner of the room to another in her search for a suitable nesting-place. Finally she settled upon a sort of shelf over a window, and to this point she began to carry everything she could drag away.

My slippers were first attempted, but they, naturally, proved too heavy. After this failure came a brilliant success, for my lace pin-cushion cover was soon seen flying triumphantly through the air. Handkerchiefs, letters, soft bits of woollen materials and all other available articles in the room were transferred to the window-top, while a telegraphic communication was established between my work-basket and Jenny's nest by means of several yards of thread.

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The spool remained in the basket, but one end of the thread was unwound and carried to the general tangle. Such havoc could not continue. In self-defence I went to work to provide material, and from that time on, narrow strips of muslin, bits of straw and paper and other desirable articles were always on hand for the indefatigable little builder. Happily she did not resent the occasional pulling down of her structures. Indeed she seemed rather pleased than otherwise to have the opportunity of laying a new foundation now and then. Perhaps she always hoped that better results would follow a fresh start.

It is strange that the idea of building among the trees never occurred to her. She had ample opportunity, for we spent several hours of each pleasant summer day out-of-doors. But her peculiar training had no doubt given her all sorts of per-

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verted ideas, and while bird instincts were strong with her, the power, or sense, to carry them out was lacking.

III

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IT was not long after this first nesting demonstration that we began our preparations for the summer outing.

“But what shall we do with the birds?” we asked each other again and again. To this question, no matter how we viewed it, there was always but one answer. “We must take them with us.”

Balancing the fatigues and dangers of the journey against the cruelty of leaving them where they would no doubt pine to death for us, the scales always tipped in favor of their accompanying us; so at the end of May, we and they started on our northern journey.

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The greatest precautions were taken to envelop both cages in paper, in order that none of the strange sights should terrify the little travellers. Of course it was necessary to leave an opening for air, and imperative that the drinking-cup, with its supply of fresh water, should be easy of access. A small provision of food was placed in each cage.

At first both birds were terrified and gasped in an alarming manner, but when a very small proportion of our journey was over they quite adapted themselves to their new circumstances and began to take an interest in their surroundings. So little by little the covering of paper was put aside until one end of each cage was uncovered. When we saw that the little creatures seemed weary of long perching, we put a hand inside each cage, and there the grateful occupants were glad to settle down

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and rest. Mr. Chupes, who might be relied upon to do the right thing and not attempt to fly about, was allowed to come out of his cage on two or three occasions, and the applause that greeted his appearance was most enthusiastic.

On my travels with the birds I always selected the most inconspicuous corners, but in spite of all my precautions it was almost impossible to avoid observation. Notoriety even was my portion at times.

"There's a bird in this car, and he's not caged either," I heard one passenger remark to another on the occasion of Chupes' first appearance.

"Where is he?" in a tone of incredulity.

"On that lady's shoulder; and listen! I'm sure I heard him sing."

And so the news passed from one to another and, as a natural result, all travel-

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ling conventionalities were broken down, and the feathered tourists were generally introduced to their fellow passengers.

But to no one did Mr. Chupes appear more marvelous than to the kind-hearted porter of the sleeping-car. He remarked admiringly: "I would rather have that robin than ten dollars!"

Evidently he spoke of the bird wherever he went, for some time later when he appeared with the baggage inspector, he exclaimed on entering the door: "See, see! Over there on that lady's shoulder. There's the cute little chap I was telling you about!"

Had there been any dishonestly inclined persons quite an amount of smuggling might have been done on this occasion, for the baggage inspector also fell under the genial, friendly little bird's spell; and satchels and hand-baggage generally received

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the most superficial and hurried investigation.

Jenny came in for a share of notice also, but she was eclipsed by Chupes. Could they have seen her in her mason and builder capacity, they might have had eyes only for her.

When evening came, both birds were freed in my berth. They made no attempt to fly around, but nestled contentedly on my shoulders through the entire night.

For Custom-house reasons we were detained at the Bonaventure station in Montreal, and while we waited, there came one of those rare, restful, welcome lulls in the tide of travel. For a wonder, no one seemed to be going anywhere. The entire inner room was ours.

It was an excellent opportunity to let the birds come out of their cages, and I grasped it. They were soon installed on one of the

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wide window-sills, where, after gratefully stretching their wings, they set about arranging their feathers.

But we were not long to have things entirely our own way. Within ten or fifteen minutes two *habitant* women wearing the wide skirts, square waists, white neckerchiefs and broad-brimmed hats so delightfully suggestive of old-world peasantry, took their seats at a little distance from us.

A look in our direction did not reveal anything attractive enough to hold their attention, and they soon forgot us and proceeded as if we were not present.

First the quaint hats were removed and carefully deposited on the floor. Next the neckerchiefs were readjusted and a super-erogatory smoothing pat or two given to the well-oiled hair, while a brisk conversation was kept up concerning village inter-

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ests and the success that had met them at the market. Finally they leaned back in the swaying plush chairs and gave themselves up completely to the delights of the hour. It was evident that visits to this scene of luxury were rare treats.

“Qu'on est bi'n 'cite!” (*qu'on est bien ici*) they remarked again and again, as they gazed reverently on the surrounding plush and fresco splendors.

But suddenly, the rocking-chairs that were travelling at the rate of many a knot an hour came to an impressive halt. In the course of the general investigation their glances had again strayed our way; this time, however, they saw something worth looking at. One of them, pointing excitedly to the window-sill in my corner, exclaimed:

“Gar' donc, gar' donc! (*regarde donc.*)
Des oiseaux! Les vois-tu là-bas sur le

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châssis?" (Look, look! Birds! Do you see them over there on the window?)

Then followed a lively discussion as to whether the birds were alive or not.

"Well, me, I tell you they're alive. One moved just then. Didn't you see it?"

"No, I didn't and I don't believe they're alive. They're only ornaments."

"Ornaments! What would ornaments be doing on a window-sill of the Bonaventure station! And why should cages be carried around for *ornaments!* I tell you they're alive."

"I don't believe it. But let's ask the woman anyway."

"Very well, we'll ask the woman and you'll see that I'm right."

It was probably with some instinct of visiting etiquette that they donned their hats, although they were only going to cross the room; but the action, in whatever

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impulse it originated, procured for them the most conclusive of answers.

They had hardly time to ask me in the loudest and most emphatic of broken English if my birds were alive or stuffed, when the little creatures, seeing the stupendous hats bearing down upon them, flew in terror to the upper half of the high window.

The amazement of one peasant was only equalled by the exultation of the other.

“Ha, ha! What did I tell you? Now do you believe me?”

As soon as they understood that their hats caused the panic they removed them, and Chupes and Jenny were induced to return to the window-sill where they could more easily be inspected.

In answer to eager questionings I told of the finding of Chupes and the rescue of Jenny; in fact I gave a hasty *résumé* of their

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entire history up to the time of our arrival in Montreal.

I saw that the women were greatly interested, and I naturally supposed that their wonder was excited solely by the unusual experiences of the birds; but their own remarks, as they walked away impressively shaking their heads, left me no room for uncertainty.

“That woman, there, she has nothing to do, her, for sure, for sure!”

“No, indeed, she has nothing to do, for sure, for sure.”

They were soon reinstalled in the luxurious chairs; this time too engrossed in thought to care to rock. They gazed wonderingly at me until sleep overcame them, but even as they dropped off into the land of Nod, a drowsy murmur of “nothing . . . to . . . do . . . for . . . sure . . . for . . . sure” floated my way.

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One other incident of this waiting time shows how Chupes and Jenny attracted the attention of representatives of all classes.

The *habitant* women had "relaxed" completely and were snoring sturdily when a sweet little English lady, dressed in deep mourning, entered the waiting-room. It is hard to say whether she even glanced around the apartment; at any rate she was soon reading so intently as to lead one to suppose that she was entirely oblivious of such small interests as travelling companions and waiting-rooms. Now Chupes made a point of keeping up his musical exercises even during his journeys. I have known the dear little fellow to trill happily in his paper-enclosed cage during the entire Jersey City ferry crossing, and I remember that he warbled all along the Canadian route, but I cannot say positively whether it was a bit of song or a short flight

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that attracted the attention of the reserved little English lady. I only know that having once sighted my pets, her eyes kept wandering to them from her book; but I did not realize the extent of the interest awakened until I saw her crossing the room in my direction.

“Will you excuse me madame, but is it possible . . . are those really . . . ?”

Taking a bird on each hand I proved to her that there was no optical delusion in the case, and to give you an idea of the genuineness of the little lady's appreciation of the birds I need only say that we three were invited to make a stay at her home on our return trip.

Our final destination lay beyond the city of Quebec, about fourteen miles back from the St. Lawrence, in the very heart of the fragrant Canadian wilds. No railroad had ever desecrated the beautiful spot, so the

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journey out from Quebec had to be made by stage or carriage. As we penetrated farther and farther into the country I fancied that the birds were as keenly alive as ourselves to the wonderful influences by which we were surrounded. Surely the cool balmy air was as refreshing to the poor tired little travellers as to us. Surely the *bird* in them would rise to the appreciation of great free stretches of meadow and range upon range of blue mountains unfolding before us as we pursued our ever upward way. From the tops or the hearts of fragrant trees the voices of little creatures of their own kind greeted them. The whole scene must have seemed to Chupes like the embodiment of the best things he had ever put in song.

But at last the delightful journey was accomplished and we were at our objective point, the old home on the shore of the

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little mountain-surrounded lake. The delights of the situation were beyond words when travelling-wraps were put aside and country rigs donned, for it meant that we had really entered into the blessed free happy life of a camping-out summer. Not under tents, it is true, but with no more restrictions than a tent involves and greater security than one affords.

To no members of the party did the pleasures of our new surroundings appeal more forcibly than to Chupes and Jenny. It was easy to find dozens of safe quiet nooks, and it soon became the regular thing for me to take the birds, my books, and my writing materials down to the beautiful lake side, where we would remain for hours; the fragrant balsam firs sheltering us from sun and observation, yet opening their branches wide enough to enable us to see the sky, the mountains and the lake,

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with a boat now and then gliding over its smooth surface.

The carrying of books and writing materials was generally a mere matter of form with me—a sort of conscience sop—for I rarely made use of either of them. But there was no lazying, no loafing, for Chupes and Jenny. They devoted all their energies to work. Such a rooting up of moss and old leaves! Such discoveries of wriggling treasure! Now and then an extra prize in the shape of a fragrant wild strawberry, with raspberries, pigeon berries and blueberries in their season. Endless, endless treasures these Canadian woods held!

On one occasion I saw Chupes making a dive at the long grass growing in a little open space near our nook, and then withdrawing suddenly as if not quite certain about the advisability of carrying out some plan. This performance was repeated

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several times; then came a pitiful squeak from the victim, while Chupes held aloft and swung triumphantly by the extreme tip of its tail a poor, frightened baby field-mouse, whose escape I very soon contrived. Many a gentle little lizard has gone hurrying away from us on account of a sharp dig at his tail. I think that the valiant Chupes would have been willing to attack a small snake had the opportunity offered.

I have frequently been questioned with regard to the attitude of my birds towards earth-worms—the natural food of robins—and the more I consider the question the more convinced I become that their acquired tastes interfered seriously with the selections they would have made under natural circumstances. Whenever Chupes succeeded in unearthing a worm he always made a valorous show of killing his prey, but he seldom ate it. His indifference in

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this matter diminished slightly as years went on, however. At times Jenny seemed ravenous for earth-worms—I have seen her lift herself nearly off her feet in her eager haste to gulp one down—yet even she was fitful in her fancy for them. There was, however, a certain luscious specimen of worm, found on parsley, if I am not mistaken, over which the birds fairly smacked their beaks. They were also fond of meal-worms (always in stock at bird fanciers'), but these dainties are very rich and must be used sparingly. After too liberal a diet of them my birds had their second moulting period in one year. By the way, they seemed quite as eager to bathe during the moulting season as at any other time and, as I found it did not harm them in the least, I allowed them to proceed as usual.

Once when we were summering in the Catskills, a friend brought them, on a twig,

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a green caterpillar with a conspicuous growth of what looked like Lilliputian shrubbery on the upper part of its back near its head. The birds fell eagerly on the prize and proceeded to halve and quarter it, when suddenly they began to gasp as if in great pain, and in a short time their feet were so swollen that they could hardly stand. I recognized it as a case of poisoning and administered to each of the sufferers a generous dose of sweet-oil, after which I bathed the heated little claws and legs until the influence of the venom passed away.

Naturally I investigated the strange case, and I learned that this caterpillar is one of the most poisonous in existence; mere contact with it being enough to raise a swelling like that of the hives on human flesh. It belongs to the *Limacodidæ* or saddle-back family of caterpillars.

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But no such unfortunate experience occurred in our Canadian outings. Through all this happy first summer of our journeys, not a single digestion-disturbing object did the birds meet.

I generally established my headquarters near long-needled pines, cedars, tamaracks, hemlocks, balsam firs and other trees whose neighborhoods are apt to be dry; and in my selection of balsam-fir halting-places, I had a double object in view. While keeping a faithful watch on my birds I was able to gather large supplies of the tender, fragrant tips for cushions and pillows. (The newest growth, distinguishable always by its strongly contrasting light green, is the only one available for the purpose.) One can fancy how, afterwards, in shut-in days when a heavy mantle of snow lay over all the woodland paths and weighed down even the strongest of the great branches,

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my balsam pillow spoke to me of forest calm and harmony, of song and color and fragrance and of all the dear delights that had been mine in the gathering. But far better than this, these pillows of fragrant balsam often found their way to rooms where suffering reigned; rooms to whose inmates forest voices could come only through such channels as these. I remember particularly, in one instance where the windows were darkened and neither sun nor stars had appeared to the sufferer for many days, the touching gratitude of the recipient when I presented her with one of my balsam-fir pillows. Yet I had only given her of my abundance, my forest wealth! If you have never made the experiment of thus sharing your summer joys with one who, through illness or some other hindering agency, has been deprived

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of them, I can assure you that it is a thousand-fold paying investment.

Although the birds and I had our regular headquarters we did not confine ourselves to any one neighborhood. Occasionally the genuine gypsy spirit of strolling would take possession of us, and then, at times on my shoulders, again on my hands, now flying a little, a very little distance in advance of me, or perhaps lagging a few steps behind—the birds visited with me regions where the friendly white birch curled back its beautiful coat and generously gave us of its bark; where tremulous aspens and quivering silver poplars were ever striving to display to us the shimmering other side of their leafy shields; where thickly-set maples, elms and beeches stood guard over delicate ferns or where deeper, danker growths encouraged the sprouting of the tiny wax-like Indian pipe of peace.

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Here among the damp mosses and the leafy mold were the homes of hosts of harmless, slimy little creatures that glided or wriggled away at our approach, or hastily buried themselves in their moist beds. Perhaps a little farther away, in higher, dryer ground, crackling boughs told of the retreat of some other frightened little creatures of the wood. By the way, what a great sound usually results from the underbrush passing of a tiny creature!

On two or three occasions we even saw the tracks of bears, but the Bruin of this region is not the bloodthirsty creature that our imagination usually pictures. He prefers berries and forest productions generally to any city importations. Sometimes, when very hard pressed by hunger, he will attack the sheep-fold, but he always shows a wholesome fear of human beings.

In addition to the two roomy cages in

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which my birds spent the night, I had two small lightly constructed ones which I carried on our strolls. In this way I felt safe to wander freely, for at the first intimation of danger I could protect the birds by caging them.

But trouble generally comes from unexpected sources. It was not during a stroll, but while I was seated out under the trees near the house that real danger came to them. They had been playing near me in an open space, and were, as I supposed, in perfect security, when all at once I was startled by their pitiful cries. Chupes was rushing wildly about, but Jenny's fear was so abject as to make her almost rigid. I started hastily to go to their relief, and this sudden movement on my part averted their danger. A sparrow-hawk was just swooping down upon them, thinking doubtless that I was part of the tree against

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which I leaned. As soon as he saw that I was the birds' defender, he flew to a neighboring stump, from which he gazed ruefully on his coveted prey. Our poor little birds were too terrified to remain outdoors that day, so I carried them to the house, where they gradually quieted down. After this incident they were more than ever averse to remaining alone, running and flying after me when we were out, if I made any attempt to go to the house. I learned a lesson from this narrow escape, and never again left them in an open place without being on the alert for enemies.

Yet even with all my precautions, Chupes had the following nearly fatal encounter with a hawk during our summer in the Catskills:

Both my birds were playing very near me around the hill-top tree under which I sat, when all at once the great enemy came

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swooping down upon them. Jenny's attitude of rigidity saved her, but Chupes, in seeking a hiding-place, flew directly into danger. I thought I saw the cruel talons close on him, and as the hawk soared away, I was certain that my little friend was in his strong fierce grasp. But in spite of the apparent hopelessness of the case, I set out to make a thorough search for Chupes as soon as I had caged his companion. Half an hour passed without bringing any trace of the missing bird. "It's no use," I exclaimed dejectedly. "Long before this the tender little fellow will have been served out to the wife and babies of that terrible hunter."

"Don't give him up yet," said an optimistic friend, who, from the house, had observed my distress and hurried to my aid. "He is perhaps hiding. Let him have time to recover from his fright."

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How thankful I was that I had listened to this advice when, half an hour later, Chupes came warily out from an opening in a stone wall in which he had taken refuge. You can easily picture to yourself the ovation the dear little fellow received. On our return to the house the boarders crowded around him and offered him heartfelt congratulations on his escape. He always enjoyed being treated like a hero, and on this occasion he seemed to realize his importance to the utmost.

As there was much danger to the birds in this exposed region, I clipped their wing-feathers more closely than usual after this event in order to prevent a repetition of the harrowing case, for their peril lay in long flights. It always hurt me to restrict the birds to this extent, although they did not seem disturbed by the limitation, and with the late summer came the fine new plum-

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age that gave them complete liberty once more. This was safe for indoor seasons.

I have mentioned Chupes' juvenile fearlessness with regard to cats. Happily dread of them came with years and experience. Jenny, from the time of her coming to us, evinced wholesome terror at the approach of these dangerous enemies, but neither she nor Chupes possessed the quickness of wild birds in sighting their foes, hawks excepted. It was a wonderful instinct that taught Chupes, even as a baby, to detect danger in the object circling so far off in space as to be invisible to the keenest human eye. A plaintive, almost heart-rending cry was his means of announcing the terrifying discovery; and, generally, by the time the *loup garou* had materialized to the extent of enabling us to see a dark speck in the distant ether, Chupes was safe under the nearest fortification, represented

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to him by a bed, a sofa, a chair or any other equally substantial and shelter-affording object. Remember that this occurred before he had exchanged views with birds on any subject whatever; he was only at what corresponds to the *goo-goo* stage of articulation and understanding in human infants when he came to us—therefore this fear could not have been instilled into him by parental or neighborly precept.

At the sight of a hawk, Jenny always stiffened into terrified rigidity. Either she was too panic-stricken to move, or else she considered this attitude the most inoffensive and inconspicuous she could assume. These were doubtless the hours in which she “a monk would be,” but with the disappearance of the hawk she would resume her busy arbitrary ways and her severe disciplining of Chupes.

A bit of *detached* tree-bark always had

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a paralyzing effect on both birds, but there is a possible explanation of this which I must not fail to mention.

During this same summer at the Catskills we were visited by one of the most terrible storms I have ever known. A tree at a few feet from the house was cleft from top to bottom by lightning, and the bark, attached to the tree only by one end, was left hanging in slender strips several feet in length. The crash was terrible, and the birds, as well as the human beings, felt the shock keenly. With one accord the little creatures ran under the sofa, and from this vantage-point they occasionally peeped out as if to demand an explanation of the disturbance.

While the panic was still at its height, a venturesome member of the party rushed out and secured a sample strip of the bark, which he brought to the room where we

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were all assembled. It has several times occurred to me that the birds may have connected that period of terror with the bit of bark. At any rate, from that time on, I had only to place a piece where there was property to protect, and no sign of "no trespassing" was ever more religiously observed.

A still more remarkable case of their recognition of cause and effect,—and one in which there is no room for doubt,—came to my notice shortly after we began to use the electric light.

The birds always took a great interest in my movements, particularly Chupes, who never allowed me to open a bureau drawer or a box without insisting upon investigating its contents. The turning on and off of the electric light never failed to attract their attention. They seemed to know that light

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or darkness would result from a turn of the button.

One beautiful bright day when they were sunning themselves at the window a cloud suddenly came up, temporarily depriving them of their sun-bath. They turned around simultaneously, and in an injured sort of way they looked first at the electric button and then at me as if to say: "Why did you do that?"

In connection with things that were objects of terror to them, I must not forget to include all garments of light or bright hues. The exception to this rule I will mention later.

My sombre writing costume was the one in which they liked me best; a change to anything gayer,—particularly if the goods were figured,—met with evident disapproval. "That is certainly our dear one's

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face," they seemed to say, "but what has happened to her feathers?"

One of their callers, who appeared in a camel's-hair shawl, will well remember the terrible panic caused by the sight of her wrap. The birds evidently thought that their last hour had come, and dashed wildly against walls and windows in their endeavor to escape from the awful apparition. Even after they had, in a measure, quieted down, nothing could induce them to approach the friend, although she tried to allure them with their best-loved dainties.

With this deeply-rooted aversion to gay colors, Chupes entertained a strange inconsistency; the exception of which I spoke a moment ago. He manifested a decided predilection for a certain shade of yellow. I have often seen him alight in a perfect rapture on the hand of a person knitting in this color; his joyful gambols testifying to the

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fact that something about it delighted his heart.

Once he showed unmistakable approval when inspecting a bonnet that had been renovated by substituting a knot of bright red for blue. Only those who witnessed the critical survey can appreciate all it indicated in the line of observation and taste.

But we have wandered far away from the Canadian summer-home, and I still have something to tell you of our experiences in that ideal region.

In front of the house there is a delightful old-fashioned gallery, and here the birds received their regular callers. Two slate-colored juncos soon learned to come for crumbs, and although they never became tame enough to venture closer than within a foot or two of me, their trust was, nevertheless, quite remarkable. They sometimes contended violently with Chupes and Jenny

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for a share of their crumbs, and felt so at home on our gallery that they one day brought their whole brood to visit us. The young birds were even more fearless than their parents, crossing the threshold and entering the house in their search for dainties.

This pleasant friendship continued as long as we remained at the lake, and I fancy that our migration and theirs occurred at about the same date.

Chupes, you will remember, through his visits to the grove, had early become acquainted with creatures of his own kind, but it was only during the first mild days of the spring following her coming to us that Jenny learned the meaning of out-doors or gained any idea of wild-bird life. I shall never forget the awe with which the little creature contemplated the immensity of the scene, as she stood for the first time, mo-

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tionless, entranced, under the boundless dome. Then the voices of the trees seemed to reach her, the wind-stirred branches beckoned like friendly arms, and she flew to their shelter.

Perhaps it was because her wings, still influenced by the close confinement of her earlier days, refused to carry her far, or because the treatment she received from the wild birds was of an unchivalrous nature, that she did not remain away. Later, love for Chupes and affection for me, also the recognition of her dependence on me, restrained her; but at this earlier date, had circumstances been favorable, I think she would have been glad to cast her lot in with her little wild fellows.

She always appeared so flattered when they came in her direction, although I am certain that their notice of her was prompted by a very unflattering, in fact an

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extremely contemptuous, sort of curiosity.

It seemed to me that she gave extra touches to her feathers and assumed a would-be jaunty appearance at the approach of these genuine articles,—not make-believes, like the half-human Chupes,—yet a thrashing was the invariable outcome of the scrutiny. But poor, foolish little Jenny never seemed to recognize the ignominy of the case. She always came flying back to me with an air of triumph, as if she had achieved the most brilliant of social successes.

I fancy that if she could have known of the custom of hoarding such trophies as well-filled dancing-engagement cards, she would have arranged some corresponding record of her engagements. Perhaps something like the following:

Monday—Received a severe beating from a king-bird.

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Tuesday—Was well pecked by a grackle.

Wednesday—Nearly lost an eye through a dig from a cat-bird.

Thursday—Had a large tuft of feathers torn from my breast by a robin, etc., etc.

But democrat of democrats though she was, she drew the line at receiving attentions either hostile or friendly from English sparrows. I have seen her rout a whole band of the pert little fellows, when they were simply minding their own business and not thinking of interfering with her. It was surprising with what haste they would retreat before her. I had fancied that they would turn upon her and retaliate, but they always submitted meekly and fled.

The terrible sparrow aggressiveness of which we hear so much has never come in the line of my observations. I made a particular study of the cheery, noisy little creatures last winter with a view of learning

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something of their iniquities. Let me tell you what I saw. Remember that I am making no plea either for their extermination or preservation, merely stating what is to me an interesting fact.

Through the winter we strew our veranda-top with crumbs, knowing how welcome these little lunches are to the often sorely-tried feathered visitors of the season. For the benefit of a certain quadruped, of which I will tell you later, we always keep a supply of cracked walnuts in a sheltered corner of a window-sill on this same veranda. Day after day sparrows and juncos gorged themselves on these dainties, when the opportunity for doing so presented itself. But the juncos were served first, sparrows awaiting their turn until their superiors had feasted.

One day there appeared on the veranda-roof two little olive-coated "brindle birds,"

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and at the sight of these tiny visitors (much smaller than either sparrows or juncos), the others respectfully retired.

The new-comers were pine-siskins, and they seemed wonderfully at home with us from the outset. Without any fear of disturbing them, we could stand at the window and watch the sharp, black, well-pointed little beaks as they neatly picked the kernel from the shell, the delicate claw aiding by holding the nut in place during the excavation. When the crows could accommodate no more the little couple would fly to a tree at the side of the veranda, where they would clean their bills and smooth their feathers with an air of greatest satisfaction.

But it was not until the siskins had left that the juncos felt free to attend the repast; while the English sparrows, with their reputation for unbounded pugnacity, came

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in for what might correspond to steerage accommodations, or the holding of a third and rather undesirable mortgage on a property.

They no doubt have their share of faults and they are most unmusical, but I think that more odium than they deserve falls on them. Their persistent cheerfulness always appeals to me, yet I can assure you that many among them have good cause to grumble. A dragging broken leg, an injured wing, a little stump for a claw, these are some of the marks that distinguish regular pensioners of mine. The latter infirmity is attributable to Jack Frost, but persecuting boys are probably responsible for the former.

Cedar-birds, white-throated sparrows, woodthrushes, woodpeckers, vireos, kingfishers and juncos were our most intimate bird neighbors at the lake. It must have

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been mortifying to Jenny that they did not even consider her worth beating.

I must tell of some other neighbors of ours; not members of the bird family, but nevertheless of interest to Chupes and Jenny for domestic economy reasons. I allude to the wasps commonly known as yellow-jackets. They came to my notice in the following remarkable way:

The old Canadian home is constructed in a manner to let in as much of out-doors as possible. Hence long French windows, reaching almost from ceiling to floor, and guiltless of shades or curtains, as well as great doors, both front and back, stand open during all propitious weather, and the house is flooded with light and fragrance; while from each of the spacious openings the happy inmates have uninterrupted views of sky, lake, mountains, meadows

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and forests, with a glimpse or two of a distant home.

I sat one day at one of the wide windows trying to read; but the beautiful book of nature spread out before me interfered seriously with the carrying-out of my intention. Suddenly the wing of a fly dropped down upon the printed page, but this did not impress me as remarkable; and even when it was followed by a second wing, I attributed the circumstance to a zephyr prank merely. But when at length not only wings, but also several legs, lay on my book—the entire locomotive furnishings of some unfortunate fly, in fact—I felt that there could be no mistake in the matter; it was a premeditated dissection. So gathering up the constituent parts that composed my evidence, I went in search of the original trunk and the dissector.

I found neither, but I came upon one of

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the colleagues of the surgeon, a second yellow-jacket, who was busily dismembering another fly. When he had shorn the victim of legs and wings, he flew away with the body. This act seems to be performed merely with an idea of doing away with useless material and of making the prey more portable; not to prevent escape. The male yellow-jacket is the hunter,—the female remaining at home to take care of the young,—and he carries the booty away in order to fill the thousand hungry mouths awaiting it in the nest. Of course the male takes his occasional share of the game, but in all my watching I never saw one of them eating.

You will understand that Chupes and Jenny resented the presence of these hunters, as through them they were deprived of so much of the spoil that they looked upon as their lawful prey. And you will also un-

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derstand how welcome the yellow-jackets are in wild regions (and indeed civilized regions, also) where flies abound. The deer-fly, that scourge of surveyors and campers-out, is their first choice. Next comes the horse-fly, then the blue-bottle, after this the house-fly and so on in a decreasing scale until small insects are reached.

The value of the yellow-jacket is recognized in European countries and his presence generally welcomed by butchers. Chupes and Jenny never attacked a yellow-jacket. Even when I killed one and offered it to them, they cast it aside after merely sampling it. The taste no doubt corresponds to the rather bitter odor emitted by crushed bees and wasps. It is surprising how perfectly this odor may be represented by the crystalline substance known as salol.

If one desires to know in what particular form the inevitable serpent trail made itself

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felt in this earthly paradise, I shall have to put down my pen to consider, to search, in order to recall anything objectionable. In June we sometimes had a few mosquitoes, and an almost imperceptible sand-fly did have a fancy for burying its head in our flesh occasionally. Now and then, after certain rains, we were visited by small black flies—buffalo gnats—that gave a savage sting which left a track of blood on one's face or neck (hands last choice always), but, after all, these were rare occurrences, and I am certain that in this place we reached the minimum of summer discomfort, and derived the maximum of benefit and pleasure.

Jack Frost visits the Quebec region early, and before the middle of September the mountain sides are usually one crimson, golden mass, emphasized by the ever-deepening green of the winter foliage.

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People *have* spent the entire year in the old camping-house; double windows, huge stoves and enormous wood-piles enabling them to laugh at cold and storms; but we did not linger beyond the pleasant early autumn season. You may fancy that it was with reluctance that we left this beautiful resort and turned our faces to the south in orthodox bird-fashion.

On this occasion the robins seemed to understand the reasons for their experience when, packed in their cages, they started on their journey. It meant only a short period of confinement, after which they would have their usual liberty in new surroundings, or else the old surroundings so long left behind as to have the appearance of novelty. Therefore no terrible fright, no alarming gasping, accompanied the return journey, although Jenny managed to break two or three of her tail-feathers. I mention

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this as their absence is so noticeable in her photographs.

After the first experience the birds seemed to have perfect confidence in me on all moving occasions except one, when I think their faith in my sound judgment must have been sorely tried.

What could it mean to them when their cages were hastily enveloped in shawls and they were hurried out of their comfortable quarters, one wild March night, to be deposited in darkness in some unknown place, and after an apparently senseless wait of three or four hours, to be brought back again to the very place from which they started? They could not understand the meaning of the awful street-cry that had roused us from the deepest and most dangerous of slumbers to the knowledge that the cruel flames had already enveloped a part of the house, and that great firebrands

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were being hurled by the mad March winds past the very windows of the room in which they slept. After the safety of the human beings was insured, the helpless little creatures in the cages were cared for. What was the saving of the most precious of inanimate household gods compared with the security of these loving, trusting, helpless *living* things!

It was during the birds' second winter with me that I had them photographed. The first attempt was in a green-house. This resulted in several failures and one success; but it was evident that experiments would have to be made with several cameras before the most satisfactory results could be obtained. And, as the artist could not bring his entire photographic paraphernalia to the green-house, we went to the studio.

The birds were at first rather alarmed at

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the sight of the formidable-looking cameras—the very largest available were called into requisition—but after a time they lost all fear, and felt quite at home in the studio. Where Chupes is bathing, and where they are emerging from the bath, all feeling of strangeness has been overcome.

You will have no difficulty in recognizing the saucy, alert Miss Jenny, or the dignified, patrician Mr. Chupes. I fancy that even in the photographs you will be able to trace the great difference that existed in the characters of these two specimens from the same family. Take the picture in which they stand together—frontispiece, for instance. Note Jenny's aggressive, square head and the sturdy pose of her stout little legs and feet, in contradistinction to the dainty and sensitive appearance of Chupes. In the very texture of their claws, skin and

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feathers, there was all the difference that exists between the most delicate silks and the stoutest and most durable of coarse woolen or cotton goods.

Soulful, poetic, musical, dainty; no lover of his kind but a worshipper of his human friends, was Chupes.

Alert, aggressive, practical, fiercely affectionate, and, above all, *maternal*, was Jenny. It is with such a sense of satisfaction that I dwell on the thought that this poor thwarted little bird finally met one of her own kind who returned her affection.

There is something misleading about the comparative size of the birds in the photographs. (Frontispiece cut.) Chupes was, in reality, larger than Jenny, yet I think the impression conveyed by the pictures is that he was the smaller bird.

It was a great disappointment to me that

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we were not able to secure a photograph of the birds taking a sun-bath. This was their hour of worship, and their ecstasy no doubt equalled that of the most ardent of Zoroastrian priests as they ministered at their fire-altars. So absorbed were my little sun-worshippers in their devotions that they appeared oblivious to everything going on around them. I have often experimented at such times, taking liberties of the nature of finding and examining the little openings at the sides of their heads that represented ears, putting my finger in their open beaks, parting their breast-feathers and smoothing their backs, but they were too rapt to notice me.

Under ordinary circumstances when, by a touch of my finger, I indicated to Chupes some part of his attire that required attention, he would always do a little smoothing with his bill, but at sun-bath time he was far

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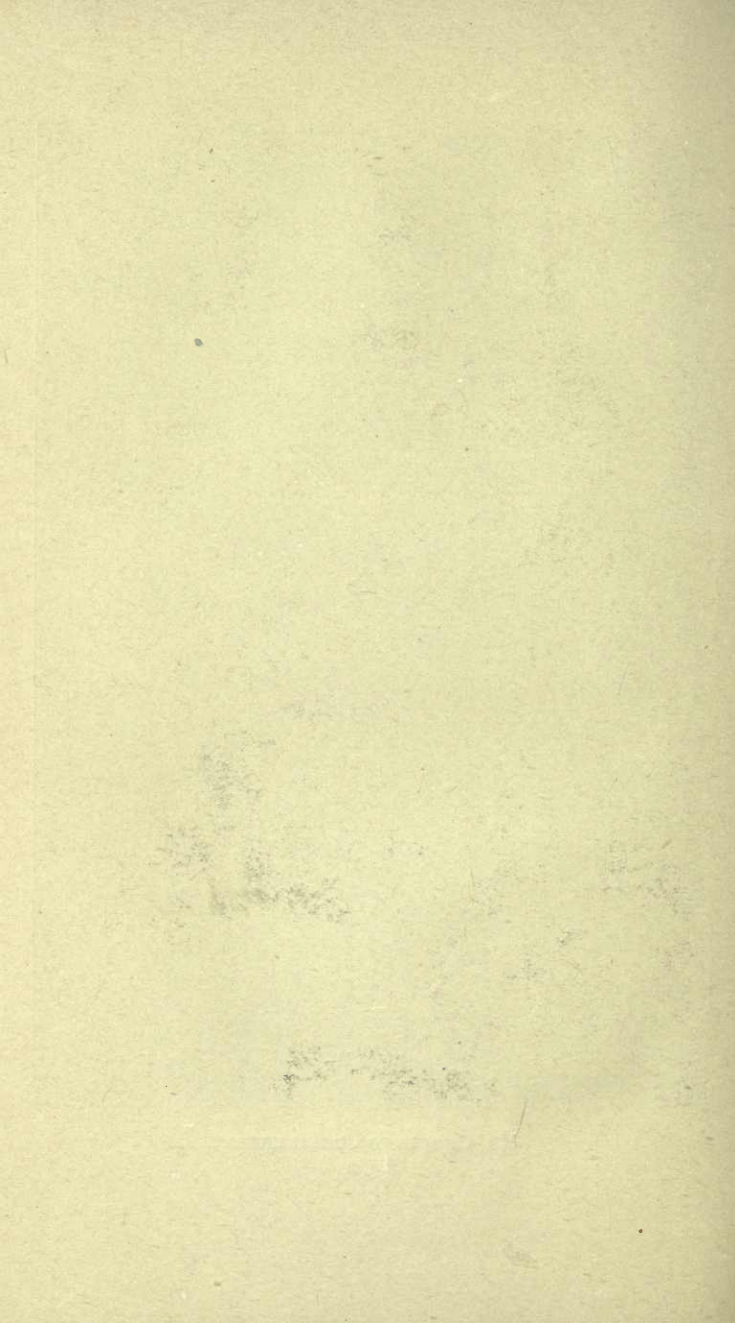
beyond such trivial considerations as misplaced feathers.

The birds never perched on these occasions; they reclined. Their eyes were always fixed unflinchingly on the great orb, their heads thrown back, their beaks open, their wings and tails spread and resting on the ground or wherever they chanced to be, and each individual feather stood out by itself until the birds possessed the appearance of ethereal, illuminated, fluffy beings, twice their natural size.

In the photograph of Chupes and his attendant (the presence of the latter in the picture is an accident, by the way; she supposed herself out of camera range), you have some idea of his loving, trustful attitude towards his human friends. No doubt the story of the little waifs enables you to understand much of their affection and intelligence, but in order to have really



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appreciated their wonderful capacities of heart and brain, you would have had to be personally and intimately acquainted with them.

One word about the conservatory of which you have a glimpse in the photograph.

It is the last of the three large green-houses of which the conservatory consists. The first (see photograph near grape-arbor) is a cold grapery, and is kept at a moderately low temperature in winter, while in summer its thermometer registers about the average heat in its out-door neighborhood.

A green-house of this kind is, to my way of thinking, one of the very best solutions of the wounded or stranded bird question. There is absolute safety from cats; the little invalid can receive the best attention without learning to lean entirely on the

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companionship and support of its human friends; excellent opportunities for digging and delving are afforded the little convalescent, and, with a frequently replenished bath, cleanliness is as possible as under the freest circumstances. With increasing wing strength, the little patient can take higher and higher flights, and when he is able so soar to the full extent of the greenhouse,—to take care of himself, that is,—he will find windows open in the roof, if the day is auspicious, and through them he may re-enter the world from which he involuntarily retired.

I have seen a beautiful flicker with a bleeding, helpless wing go through all the stages I have just described and finally fly away through the roof of this *Hotel des Invalides* with a perfectly clean bill of health.

If a bird is going to recover he will generally do so before the close of the season in

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which he received his injury; at any rate, precautions are taken through which a summer bird is never in danger of being launched in mid-winter, while a wounded winter visitor is made as comfortable as possible through trying summer seasons.

Nestlings requiring, as they do, frequent feeding from early in the morning until bed-time cannot be banished to the greenhouse. They must be under constant *surveillance*; but the grapery makes a fine playground for them when they have acquired a certain measure of independence, and is, as a rule, the establishment from which they graduate, unless, like Chupes and Jenny, they will not go free at all.

Our winters, although even in their tenor, were always full of interest; but of course all out-door incident was lacking, from the birds' standpoint that is, except such as we viewed through closed windows.

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There was to us *humans*, however, a suggestion of perpetual summer in the companionship of these dear redbreasts. Not a day passed without its interesting record of their performances. Not an hour could one spend in their company without deriving amusement and benefit from the contact.

I must tell you that, although Jenny became less and less playful and more and more absorbed in her nest-building, she nevertheless took time for the occasional and earnest contemplation of herself in the mirror. I have seen her throw down her building materials and rush to my bureau, where she would take up her stand on a little box that served as a pedestal, and there she would gaze and gaze and gaze at her reflection with the greatest complacency.

One day I placed a fine new supply of strings on the top of her cage and it seemed

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to give her the idea of starting housekeeping there. She worked with bill, claws and wings at the arrangement of things until lunch-time came; then she jumped down and rushed into her cage, always in a hurry as usual. It was while raising her head, after taking a sip of water, that her eye fell on the building material on top of her cage, visible through the wires.

She had hardly made the discovery before she was up on the highest perch, dragging strings and rags down through the bars. When she had gathered a load almost equal to her own bulk, she tugged it out through the door, and up on to the roof of her cage, where she again worked it into some sort of shape.

She evidently felt that she had struck a mine of supplies, and such a busy time followed. The performance I have described to you was repeated all through the day

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with great satisfaction, but when bed-time came the critical inspection Jenny gave her work seemed to reveal some defects. She retired in an unusually thoughtful mood, and even fell out of bed in her dreams. This occurrence I attributed to a possible nightmare in connection with the constantly-added-to and never-growing nest. At any rate, bright and early the next morning she removed all her furnishings to a nook where there was no delusive, misleading foundation.

I must relate a few incidents of a second Canadian summer, one spent in the picturesque valley of the St. Francis:

We were near the river brink, on the very outskirts of one of those typical straggling, one-streeted Canadian villages. Hills and dales, woods and clearings, genuine country surroundings were our portion. No mountains, and none of the primitive wildness of

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our first summer, but a quiet, peaceful, fragrant haunt, with few human habitations around us.

One of our favorite resorts was a gently rising pasture land. Here we spent two or three hours of each fine day under the shade of a noble elm. There was a superabundance of brilliant red spiders and light-green worms in this region, and many a carmine or pale-green streak on my books and papers still testifies to a deed of gore performed by the knightly Mr. Chupes. He seemed fascinated by the highly colored prey.

One day Jenny flew into a hedge, where she remained quiet for such a length of time that I, at last, feared harm had overtaken her. On going to investigate I found her with her wings tightly clasped against her body and her eyes fairly protruding with fright. On the other side of the hedge

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stood a cow with moist nose stretched out towards the rather dingy little redbreast, which she may have mistaken for an apple. At any rate, she was blowing great, long, inquiring, and anything but reassuring, snorts in Jenny's direction, and but for the protecting hedge she would probably have munched the terrorized bird.

There was a canary in the house where we were staying, and I obtained from Dickie's owner permission to let him out in the room with my birds occasionally. I afterwards felt that I had not done the kindest thing by the little fellow in giving him a taste of liberty and bird companionship of which he had to be deprived at our departure.

Chupes tolerated him, probably for the sake of his musical ability, and he even condescended to weave a few Dickie strains into some of his own compositions; but as

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far as sociability was concerned he insisted on the canary's strict observance of a sort of Mason and Dixon's line, the location of which was determined by my exclusive little autocrat.

Jenny was delighted to have something to mother, and she took the little creature under her wing almost literally; yet not quite, for when, at roosting times, he would try to creep under her feathers, she disciplined him mildly, and he soon learned that, although he was welcome to snuggle up to her side, he must not attempt greater liberties. Dickie was allowed to sit up late on two or three occasions, yet he was always caged for the night. It was an easy matter to secure him, especially when he was drowsy, by placing the top of his cage over him.

The house, or to give it its full dignity of title, the manse, stood on a hillside, and

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a few rods farther up was the little old church; the plain, unpretentious mother of several large, fine-looking, prosperous daughters in neighboring parishes. People generally came early to services in order to secure an opportunity for a visit to the quiet God's-acre at the back of the church; and both coming and going they learned to halt on the hillside to look up at the window for the two redbreasts and the little yellow-ball. They were seldom disappointed, for here, on Sunday mornings, the birds were usually seen, perched on the backs of chairs, inspecting the church-goers.

I always made everything secure before going to service, so I had no anxiety about the little friends and I frequently joined the hillside congregation and listened outside my window to a rousing Chupes and Dickie concert, Jenny (her little charge always at

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her side) coming in with an occasional thumping bass-drum or squeaking bag-pipe effect.

These were no doubt Dickie's halcyon days. He loved his little feathered friends and revelled in his occasional hours of liberty. He learned to know me also and even to eat from my hand, but he never became perfectly fearless.

IV

A DIGRESSION ON SQUIRRELS

The wildest spot in this entire neighborhood was a deep ravine, a little to the right of the church. On our occasional visits to the place I wondered at the scarcity of bird-homes,—there were only two or three robins' nests to be seen,—for the quiet and the heavy foliage seemed so inviting, but a little later I marvelled that any birds ever went near this den of thieves; for that is what I discovered it to be.

One morning my attention was attracted to the ravine by the pitiful cries of a robin. I hurried out to investigate the case, and

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there I beheld a sight that would have frozen the blood in the veins of the maternal-hearted Jenny, could she have understood the purport of the deed.

A mother robin was flying frantically around, calling out in an agony of distress while a cannibal of a red squirrel sat on a branch, calmly devouring one of her nestlings. There was no question of rescue, for the baby was dead, half-eaten in fact; but I took a savage satisfaction in spoiling the remainder of the meal of the bloodthirsty little kidnapper. He was only one of a band inhabiting the ravine. I will frankly acknowledge that then and there I experienced a revulsion of feeling towards his whole kind.

And now I should like to tell you how my gradually decreasing prejudices against squirrels in general were finally overcome (not that I ever entertain any but revenge-

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ful feelings towards the Canadian cannibal and all *his* family!), and how it happens that a little red squirrel and I are the closest of friends, and that he is certain to find a hearty welcome when he comes to my window for his daily meal. He is the "certain quadruped" of which I have already made rather mysterious mention, and his story will take you back to the New Jersey home in the neighborhood of the grove.

I was awakened very early one summer morning by a mysterious rattling of the slats of my most remote blinds, and, before I could investigate the matter, the strange performance began at a second set of blinds and then passed on to a third.

Burglars were out of the question. The world was too wideawake to encourage housebreakers. Purple grackles were croaking and seesawing in chorus, robins urging the world to universal cheerfulness,



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and all the chanticleers of the neighborhood were having their autocratic say.

But I was not long to remain in suspense. The strange sounds soon reached me from an adjoining room, the communicating door of which was open. A double window coming entirely within my range of vision was here the scene of the supernatural visitation. There were the moving slats, and there, at last, in plain sight, was the cause of all the disturbance—a little red squirrel!

No doubt he would have entered my room at the first stirring of the shutters had not a screen prevented him. Unfortunately for the depredator, these defences against flies and mosquitoes were at every window. He had allowed himself to be vanquished three times, but on this fourth occasion he had evidently determined to conquer, for he clattered up and down and all over the screen, looking for a vulnerable point.

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Now and then, as if to consider new tactics, he halted; and it was during one of these periods of meditation that I had my first good look at him. I had often seen coats of members of his family nailed on stable-doors, or other advantageous drying-places, and the little fellow's attitude, as he fastened himself out on the screen,—his paws spread, his tail limp and hanging,—suggested a nail at each of his four corners. But happily the points of attachment were merely his own little claws, not iron nails or tacks. Happily, also, he was safely lodged in his skin, where I hope he will remain until a gentle death, at the close of a long and pleasant life, opens to him the doors of the happy hunting ground.

Red squirrels are no rarity in the grove; and the little fellows are on such a friendly footing with the inmates of the house in the grove that they often enter the upper

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rooms and make their nests in these quarters, where they are so certain of immunity from all molestation.

But our home, although tree-surrounded and standing back a little, is not remote enough from the street to invite such confidence; at least, never before this remarkable morning had it been so honored, and I could not imagine what had drawn this little waif to us and make him so eager to enter.

However, here he was, and we were determined he should not have cause to brand us as inhospitable. To have enabled him to enter by doing away with the screens would have been carrying altruism too far; but we hit upon a compromise. A supply of nuts and bits of paper and other things suitable for bedding were placed in a convenient corner of an outer window-sill. The little visitor approved of our offerings, but his

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particular fancy was taken by strings that had been patiently wound round and round a rattling slat in the hope of silencing it. These were soon cut by his sharp teeth and added to the store we had presented for acceptance.

The squirrel's presence during the greater part of the day puzzled us not a little. I consulted with the inmates of the house in the grove as to the cause of his change of residence, but they were as much in the dark about the matter as I was. Moreover they had an extra puzzle or two of their own which they propounded to me for solution.

What had caused the recent disturbance in the bird settlements of our neighborhood? Why had companies of purple grackles, of robins, of thrushes, of orioles, of cat-birds, of indigo birds, of woodpeckers, and, indeed, representatives of all the

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feathered tribes in the grove, remained so persistently around the house of late, and called so unmistakably for help? And what was the meaning of the eight or ten squirrels' heads at the foot of one of the great pines? What enemy was terrorizing the usually peaceful community?

It was a mystery, yet one little ray of light shining out of the darkness made my part of the puzzle clearer. Whoever the common enemy might be, he it was who had sent Mr. Rufus to rattle my slats and to seek protection in my room. Now to find and exterminate the ogre was the next step. Exterminate him if he proved to be a bird or a beast in search of his daily food, that is. Past experience had taught us that if he was a boy, killing the poor little creatures for wanton sport, it would be difficult to obtain redress.

All day long a strict watch was kept in

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the grove, but no helpful information was gained till towards night, when cries of distress from half-awakened birds gave evidence that the marauder was a nocturnal one, but by force of circumstances only, on account of strict surveillance, as we learned when we identified him. At home he does his hunting by daylight.

There was no getting at him in the darkness, but with the first signs of dawn the faithful watchman caught sight of a large white body, before which the smaller creatures retreated in terror. True, nothing was gained beyond this one fleeting glimpse of him, yet it was a clue.

With strained necks and eyes directed towards the tree-tops, a whole reconnoitring party went through the grove during the day of the discovery, but the white spectre did not reveal itself. Further terror

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at night; more persistent search the next day, and, at last, success.

There, directly in front of the house, perched in the secluded top of a very high tree, was a magnificent snowy owl. Time was allowed for one admiring glance at him, then one *bang* and the reign of terror was over!

No one seemed to understand this fact more thoroughly than the poor, frightened little creatures whose danger had been so great. Bright, inquisitive eyes peered out from bushes and trees, while the sportsman took his beautiful prey and measured the wide wings—forty-four inches from tip to tip.

When we were once rid of the foe we could take time to consider the cause of his presence. What had brought the giant so far from his usual haunts? Small owls are frequently found in the grove, where,

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alas! they do no little mischief; but never had there been anything to approach the wholesale ravages of this formidable creature. Never before had one of his kind been seen in our neighborhood.

Of course we could only surmise, building our conjectures on the fact that a fearful storm had visited us just before these evidences of fright among the birds and squirrels had been observed. Had the tempest come from the region of eternal snows? Had it, on its way, met this beautiful being nurtured in an Arctic cradle, accustomed from his infancy to gaze on great, dazzling tracts of snow and ice, magnificent of plumage, strong of wing, keen of sight and glad and proud of heart? Had the noble bird, exulting in his strength, dared to court the tempest, gloried in battling with the storm? And at last, when too late, had he recognized his danger only to be

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driven on and on until he was brought to our quiet little settlement in a tame, temperate land?

Poor creature, he had done no wrong. In devouring the innocent little beings of the grove he had merely followed out the instinct of self-preservation; he only asked a livelihood. But he was as much out of place as a man born in advance of his century, as a human being with thoughts too great to be understood by his fellows. If only one could have sent him back again to his northern home!

I understand that these creatures are willing to make friends with men. He might perhaps have been caught and tamed, but his fate would then have been that of a captive, and, no matter how kindly treated, he would have felt the fetters. After all, the quick shot was merciful.

Now he is simply a specimen. His beau-

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tiful snowy coat, with its occasional contrasting black markings intensifying the whiteness, is filled with some foreign substance; great yellow eyes not his own look from his noble head; his black claws, over which the feathers fall like an avalanche, grasp an artificial bar, and he lives under a glass case!

But let us hope that the spirit that animated him, call it what you will, is soaring joyously through icy elysian fields, reveling in some Arctic paradise of birds!

And now let me tell you more of the little being whose coming to us was one of the results of the snowy owl's visit. He evidently did not care to lose our friendship, even when the presence of the enemy no longer drove him to us. True, he picked up his bed and bedding and started house-keeping in parts unknown as soon as the price was removed from his head; but from

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his first appearance, to the time of the present writing, he has not failed to make us a daily visit. Sometimes, indeed, the inquisitive little nose is seen flattened against the window-pane or screen several times in one day. His coming is announced by a sound so out of proportion to his little feet that the uninitiated look for an animal as large as a dog instead of a tiny squirrel. After the clatter on the tin roof of the veranda has subsided, the rat-like head appears above the window-sill on which the provisions await him. There he pauses a moment, one little paw resting for support on the wood work, the other tightly clasped against his fat, furry little breast. And how eagerly those great, soft brown eyes inspect our premises! What a wonderful amount of speculation with regard to us and our ways passes through the active little brain!

But suddenly, with the speed of light-

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ning, he grasps a piece of cracked nut, and almost simultaneously he is on his haunches with his tail whisked over his back. Then follows the rapid, nervous nibble, nibble, nibble, while the busy forepaws turn and twist the nut to the best advantage, and the roving eyes scan us. When the meat is eaten the shell is dropped like a flash, and the forepaws are placed tightly against the breast as in a muff. Then Rufus drops off into one of those remarkable fits of contemplation which are so incompatible with his usual indescribable briskness and alertness. At such times one could almost imagine him a stuffed specimen, so immovable is he, so apparently indifferent to everything that is going on around him. But you would reckon without your host if you were to settle down in the expectation of an opportunity for a lengthy and comfortable contemplation of the little fellow; for as sud-

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denly as he dropped into the contemplative mood, just so suddenly will he emerge from it. You see a red streak among the trees, and a wake of waving branches, and—Rufus is gone!

I don't know what kinds of husbands and fathers squirrels make, but I fancy that there are among them as many varieties as among humans. Sometimes a little lady squirrel accompanies Rufus, and on these occasions, I regret to say, he conducts himself in a most unchivalrous manner. There are such vigorous sparring matches that the atmosphere surrounding the combatants is almost tan color; tails whisk and claws scratch, while a vigorous spitting and hissing accompany the fight for food. Rufus, brave fellow, generally wins the day, and the lady retreats with very little or nothing gained. Perhaps the Restaurant of the Window-sill represents the sprightly gen-

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tleman's club, and he may think it incompatible with feminine dignity for Mrs. Rufus to attend. At any rate she is driven away almost as soon as she appears.

"There he is with his little mate," I remarked on one of these spicy occasions when they met at the *Hotel zür Fensterbrüstung*.

"That can't be his mate," said an unsophisticated observer. "They are fighting!"

"Did you never hear of disputes between married people?" I asked.

At first we put out for the Rufus supply only whole nuts, but one afternoon, when three pounds disappeared in about as many quarters of an hour, we concluded that our purses could not stand the strain. Entire nuts suggested secret stores to the active little brain. These he could carry off and bury, if such a term can be applied to plac-

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ing objects in the most conspicuous notches of trees and in other equally open places.

But cracked nuts he is more apt to devour on the spot, although even a portion of these he sometimes stores. Realizing, however, that it is not well for Rufus, any more than for the rest of us, to have things made too easy, and realizing also that there is safety and happiness in working for a living, we limit his supply of cracked nuts to half a dozen a day. This suffices to retain his cupboard friendship, and to secure his daily visits, and does not interfere with the sawing and filing of whole nuts, so beneficial to him from dental standpoints.

During the pine-siskin, junco and sparrow raids an extra supply of cracked nuts had to be put out on the window-sill and the veranda-roof. Even then Rufus had hard work to secure a share, and certainly no opportunity for over-eating. He sulked

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a little when he found his window-sill pre-empted, and several times he was obliged to retire and to wait the birds' pleasure before getting his little portion.

There are numbers of birds' nests in the trees around our home, and some are built in such advantageous positions that, from our dining-room, we are enabled to look in upon the nestlings while the parents deal out dainties to them.

One late autumn day I noticed Mr. Rufus skipping along among the bare branches of the tree nearest the dining-room. Finally he halted at one of the nests on a level with the window-tops. This little bird-home he eagerly investigated with the air of "family gone south for the winter! I wonder if they have left anything behind." I thought nothing more of the incident at the time, but to my surprise I saw him seated in the nest the next day. A portion

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of his back was visible; his head appeared over one edge and his long tail hung down over the opposite side. It was one of his pensive times and he was evidently oblivious to the intense interest two sparrows were taking in the performance. From time to time they literally put their wondering heads together as they chattered their surprise, and every now and then they shortened the distance between themselves and the unnatural combination of bird's nest and squirrel until at last they were at the very door of the nest.

When Mr. Rufus' meditation was over, he darted from his resting-place and sped merrily on his way towards the grove; and then the sparrows were able to gratify their hardly restrained curiosity. They peered wonderingly into the nest. What a Santa-Claus surprise awaited them!

In order to take a complete inventory of

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the find I was compelled to look down from a second-story window. There was a beautiful supply of nice cracked nuts and several quarters of juicy apples. How eagerly they fell upon the spoil—occasionally two of the plunderers in the nest at the same time—and how thoroughly they emptied the larder!

Strange as it may seem, Rufus continued purveyor to the sparrows throughout the entire winter. I often wonder how he accounted for the disappearance of his supplies. Perhaps he accuses himself of having absent-mindedly devoured them, or he may think that Mrs. Rufus profited by them. At any rate, the nest was well-provisioned several times a week and just as regularly emptied by the waiting sparrows.

I have spoken to several lovers of nature of the amusement we derive from watching the pranks of our funny little red-coat, and

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on more than one occasion I have had to listen to humiliating charges against him.

I will assemble them and place them before you with my defence for the criminal; and I shall attempt to be as honest (would that I could be as eloquent!) as Daniel Webster in his defence of the woodchuck.

The gravest of the charges are that squirrels steal birds' eggs and sometimes eat young birds, and that they kill pine- and cedar-trees by stripping them of their cones.

In considering these accusations calmly, I have come to the conclusion that a great law of nature is responsible for all the depredations Rufus commits, agreeing, for the sake of argument, that he does commit them.

Like every other living thing, he has to eat. If people strip the trees of nuts before he has an opportunity to fill his little larder,

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I suppose he, also, is compelled to turn robber, and to make a raid on the property of some other creature. Birds' eggs are not despised by him, but I am ready to testify that he is not a monopolist in this respect. Visits to cabinets of amateur collectors (we'll say nothing of museums) have convinced me of this fact.

As to his eating young birds, how can I deny this charge, haunted as I am by the remembrance of the tragedy in the ravine! Also, there comes to my mind the testimony of a travelling companion of mine who, on remonstrating with a keeper of a public park for his wholesale shooting of squirrels, was informed by him that the squirrels were killing all the birds and that he was only obeying official orders in destroying them!

Now, strange to say, all these delinquents were foreigners. The public park

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where the furry offenders were being punished for their fondness for game was the Berlin *Thiergarten*, while the carnivorous red squirrel that came under my observation was, as you know, a Canadian, a subject of His Gracious Majesty. I have been assured by those who have made a study of the case that he seldom crosses the border, and I think it would be difficult to prove such cannibalistic charges against any of the red-coats residing in our neighborhood.

The grove is a sufficient refutation of the statement that it is impossible to have both birds and squirrels. In season it is alive with songsters and gay with winter birds; yet throughout the entire year, with the exception of a few stormy or sleepy days, squirrels chatter saucily among the very trees in which the birds are hatched and brought up.

Among these same trees, by the way, are

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hundreds of pines and cedars, and they have prospered for many long years, although Rufus and his family do nibble the cones to get at the little kernel hidden away at the base of each scale.

After all, why should the little fellows' appropriation of the cones be more disastrous than mine? I gather them for my grate-fire and Rufus likes to see them on his bill of fare. Neither of us harms the trees.

Again, to make a concession for the sake of argument. Let us suppose that pine-trees are injured by raids on their cones. It brings me back to the original statement that the necessity for eating is at the root of the whole matter.

In order to remedy the evil try the methods so successfully employed by the owners of the grove. Give Rufus plenty of nuts and bedding, and give the birds supplies for

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their nests and helps over hard places, and you will have both birds and squirrels, and your cedar- and pine-trees will be safe. Let the suggestion have a fair trial and see if I am not right.

Squirrels manifested little or no curiosity concerning my pets, and they certainly never molested them. In fact they seemed more inclined to avoid than to seek the birds' society.

V

MR. CHUPES' MUSICAL ATTAINMENTS

In connection with the account of Mr. Chupes, I must not forget to make particular mention of his musical development. There were seasons when his heart was so joyous that he had to be restrained from singing at night as well as during the day. Sometimes the spirit of inspiration would come upon him during spring or summer nights; but his voice has also been heard in autumn moonlight sonatas, and even in mid-winter nocturnes. Owing, however, to the prejudices of prosaic people who wanted to sleep, these performances were generally nipped in the bud.

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Unlike Sydney Lanier's "Bob," Chupes did not sing in dreams. Perhaps it was because he practised so indefatigably during all waking hours that sleep claimed him completely when she at last secured him. Jenny was occasionally the victim of nightmares,—the result possibly of a dread of burglarious attacks on her nest, or of indigestions, arising from the non-assimilation of strings or other such unnatural *entrées*,—but if external evidence may be taken as testimony, Chupes was a dreamless sleeper.

He seemed to know that something in the nature of a ban had been laid on his nocturnal singing, yet he was ever testing us, evidently in the hope of our having come to a better state of mind with regard to evening performances. The most insinuating of notes would reach me from his cage as I tiptoed around my room in the de-

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sire to avoid disturbing those who had retired earlier. It was not enough that these tentative measures received no encouragement from me; my very silence was often construed into permission to continue, and the gentle notes that had served as entering wedges were, if unrepressed, merely the forerunners of wild outbursts of song.

There were certain tones of our voices that he recognized as indications of disapproval, and on all but the rare occasions when he had the delight of showing off for evening guests, I had to steel my heart to his blandishments and make use of these expostulations in order to bring him to a realization of the general fitness of quiet at night. He would listen with an air of benevolent and tolerant condescension,—almost as if he knew that I objected from the standpoint of others and not for my own sake,—and he generally yielded with the

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appearance of making a magnanimous concession.

But no victory crowned my morning efforts to subdue him. In vain I darkened my room and his cage; in vain I expostulated with him. Through all the gloom in which he was shrouded the little fellow's heart announced to him the approach of day; and even before the out-door birds had been heard from, he would pour out his most impassioned ode to dawn.

Beautiful and poetic as this was, it proved very trying to our city neighbors when, for a time, we left the vicinity of the grove and went nearer town; but as we migrated early and generally took up our quarters in haunts remote from men, we were not long in disfavor.

I have frequently been accused of partiality in keeping back the account of Chupes' transgressions; so I determine, on this oc-

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casion, to make a clean breast of the matter, and to tell you of the only instance in which the usually highly esteemed and dearly loved little gentleman was under a cloud; yet I think you will agree with me that my little musician was in no wise to blame. So far as he was concerned, it was simply a case of misdirected talent and endeavor. The odium should rest solely on the individual who conceived the idea of developing the patriotic side of the bird.

“Now, Mr. Chupes, you are to learn Yankee Doodle,” I heard this disturber of the peace say, in an evil hour, to my apt, attentive little bird. “Listen well while I whistle it for you.”

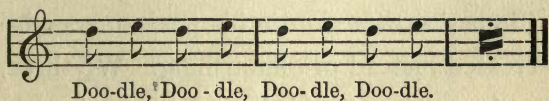
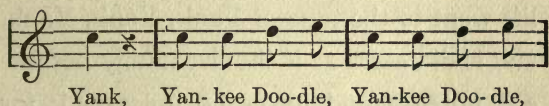
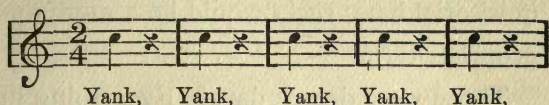
But instead of whistling the tune throughout, the musical director, thinking to arrive at the happiest and most speedy results through the reiteration of certain



ATTENTION, MR. CHUPES!

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notes, proceeded in the following unwise manner:



Unfortunately, the monotonous thing appealed to the usually correct fancy of the bird. He listened almost anxiously, with an expression of "Let me not lose one of these valuable suggestions," and at the end of the first lesson (which was also the last on this piece), he repeated all the *Yanks* and all the *Doodles* with fatal precision. Indeed, so charmed was he with his new acquisition that, for a time, he dropped his own

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compositions and gave up improvising in order to devote himself entirely to the inquisitorial bars; *racks* would be a more appropriate term.

Those were dreary days! Everything in life went to the tune of Yank, Yank, Yank, and it did seem as if the dreadfully persistent notes would never be unlearned; for Chupes' satisfaction in his performance increased instead of diminishing. We three,—the teacher, the bird and I,—were in general disgrace at this time; the charges against us respectively being instigation, response and ownership.

Before the summer set in one member of our family started for Europe, and our nearest neighbor left for the wilds. I don't mean to intimate that Chupes caused the stampede,—for summer plans had been made before the Yankee Doodle episode,—but I do assert that, owing to the painfully

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noisy circumstances, the pangs of separation were greatly mitigated.

This is the year in which Chupes seems to have sowed his musical wild oats. A little later in this same summer of our discontent he acquired the mournful cry of a turkey and the busy "cluck, cluck" of a hen; but both they and the Yankee Doodle notes disappeared at the close of the season, when he again took his stand among the sweetest of songsters.

He was very fond of certain tunes, and could give snatches of several. At the time of his death he had nearly mastered a portion of Sousa's *Directorate*. At least he had his own version of it. It went about as follows:

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Directorate



With what relish he whistled it, and how well he knew what his teacher meant when, standing before him with raised finger, she would say: “Now, Mr. Chupes, it’s time for your lesson. Attention! Begin!”

Then off they would start together, the bright bird-eyes eagerly fixed on the teacher’s face, the little head swaying from side to side as the finger marked the measure, the full throat rippling, and such evident

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satisfaction when, at the end of the lesson, he received the hearty congratulations of his admirers!

This piece and the unfortunate Yankee Doodle strains were the only things that Chupes was *taught*. We avoided all such training as the teaching of tricks, feeling that the best opportunity for a study of their originality would be destroyed by cultivating unbirdlike and artificial ways.

To refer again to the charming story of "Bob,"—the lover-like attentions with which the mocking-bird honored the lady to whom he was particularly devoted were not unlike those which Chupes bestowed upon his dearest human friend. On her return, even after a short absence, he would delightedly raise the feathers on the top of his head until he had the appearance of a bird with a very high crest.

Many and many a time he has strutted

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up and down before his favorite "with his hat on," as the expression went, his wings drooping, his tail spread and dragging like the train of a lady's gown, his beak open, and his yellow tongue, sometimes also part of his throat visible, while during the entire parade he uttered tender trilling little sounds that said as plainly as words could have done, *I love you!*

At all seasons, with the exception of the moulting period, he made use of these alluring little ways to tell of his affection. It was a genuine heart-song that he sang. I sometimes hear its counterpart among the robins at love-making seasons, but only when the world is very still; for the song is so delicate that even gently rustling leaves can drown it.

Whenever I catch a glimpse of a male robin with a high crest, a spread and drooping tail and gracefully lowered wings, I

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This expression of his genuine sentiments he reiterated to the close of his happy little life.

Jenny's usual notes were the busy, fussy, querulous, imperious ones, used by the orthodox female robin in addressing her mate. Occasionally she made a *leathery* (I find no other word to express the dull, creaking sound) departure from conversational tones, which I concluded was an attempt at improvisation—a failure from the standpoint of a musician, but evidently highly satisfactory to the performer. But in spite of the fact that her notes were, as a rule, harsh and unmusical to a degree, I have heard this dear little bird twitter and coo in the gentlest, sweetest manner as she prepared her impossible nest for the reception of the ardently longed-for nestlings.

VI

THE SONG DIES AWAY

And now I approach the end, for I come to the last year in the life of my dear little friends. I have told you of the summer of Chupes' babyhood; of the summer spent at the Canadian lake-side, of one passed in the St. Francis valley region, and I have made mention of another in the Catskills. I will merely touch upon the fifth—spent at home; a pleasant one, marked by no unusual incident and at the beginning and end of which the birds manifested no desire for migrating, although they were deprived of their customary trips.

I have also spoken of our winters; four of

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which were spent in the New Jersey home; but at the close of the fifth summer we reversed the usual order of procedure, and on a beautiful, clear, Thanksgiving-day eve, started for the North. It was evidently all one to the birds which direction we took, so long as we were together. Separation was the evil of evils to them.

You know the terrible rush and crush of festival occasions at such great centres as the Forty-second street station in New York, and you can easily picture to yourselves what an anxious time I had getting my charges through the crowd, but at last it was all over and we were safely installed in our sleeping-car and steaming away towards a third Canadian destination. Again the St. Francis valley region, but this time near a village at a distance of several miles from the ravine.

The journey was accomplished with little

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inconvenience and no alarm; but good, warm shawls were placed over the paper wrapping around the cages when we emerged from the cars on the occasion of this, my last trip with the dear little friends; for we had come upon keen, frosty air and snow, and any exposure would have been fatal to the tenderly reared little creatures.

As usual, they made themselves at home in their new surroundings and were thoroughly happy after a time, but I think they were at first depressed to find so much cut off from each end of their day. Of course the difference in latitude caused a very perceptible shortening of the daylight hours, displeasing to Jenny, as it interfered with her work, and not at all satisfactory to the sun- and light-loving Mr. Chupes. The disapprobation soon gave way to approval, however, when they learned that sunset and deepening twilight hours were to

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be spent in cosy snuggling on my shoulders.

My room commanded a view of the river, of wide meadow stretches and of a background of hills, behind one of which the mid-winter sun sets. It was ever a joy to me to watch the variations of the glowing colors that, for one brief interval, made of every bare, desolate tree on the hill-top a glorious burning bush: a bearer of an awe-inspiring message!

To the little nature-lovers on my shoulders the solemn influences of the hour must have appealed keenly. Their innocent hearts were ever in tune. The beings of what we are pleased to term "the lower creation," have ears to hear much from which our worldliness and dulness cut us off.

Yet many a weary wood-hauler found time to stop and gaze at the transfigured

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mount, and even light-hearted, thoughtless little urchins, tumbling each other along through the snow-drifts, would occasionally pay to the resplendent, dying orb the tribute of a *gar' donc*, and an indication with a mittened hand.

“ ‘ Not color but conflagration, ’ ” I was saying to myself on one of these glowing occasions; and almost at the same moment, along the clear, frosty air, came to me the exclamation of a little peasant lad who had been brought to a standstill by the wonderful sight: “ *On dirait que c'est du feu!* ” Another rendering of Ruskin's thought.

Often the birds watched with me as the moon rose over the great glistening expanses, the wonderful brilliant whiteness seeming almost like a return of day. Again we held starlight vigils, and never before had I seen night skies of so clear a blue or stars of such marvelous brightness. And

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the nights when the aurora borealis gave a red glow to the entire northern sky! How can I attempt to tell you of them?

Sometimes the unmistakable crunching and squeaking of runners as the jingling sleighs flew over the crisp, tightly-packed snow, testified to the intensity of the cold, and the occasional pistol-like reports that announced the springing of nails in the roof, corroborated the testimony of the runners and the snow. There were times when the maddest of winter sprites seemed let loose upon us. Blinding snows fell and wild winds howled as they piled the gigantic drifts around us; and down, down, down, went the mercury, till the thermometer sometimes registered thirty or thirty-five below zero. But above the wildest storms rose the sweet song of my little bird with perpetual summer in his heart; and neither cold, nor frost, nor tempests, interfered

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with Jenny's diligent housekeeping. What could these warm, comfortable, happy little creatures know of the fierce, bleak outer world?

I think they had almost forgotten the existence of other birds, when one day their attention was attracted by some feathered creatures, a little smaller than themselves, fluttering and chattering around a few desolate-looking stalks in the field opposite. They were snow-buntings; grayish-brown upper markings with occasional black streaks set off the plump, brown and white breasts; and a reddish-brown collar suggested sore-throat precautions. How these merry little creatures played and rollicked in the snow! It is said that they sometimes sleep under it. Think of using that cold, white mantle for a blanket! How they joyed in the wild storms and the biting cold, the first breath of which would have been

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death to Chupes and Jenny, yet which, to these visitors from Arctic regions, was probably like the balmy summer days of the grove to my pets. It was hard to realize that they were all of the same order of beings!

The snow-buntings came several times, attracted by the seeds in the field, and Chupes and Jenny never lost an opportunity of watching them; but after a while, when the supply of food gave out, they deserted our neighborhood. I tried to keep them by scattering seeds around the house, but the wind tossed my contributions far away and I soon gave up the attempt.

These were the only feathered creatures that my birds saw during the entire winter. There were hosts of sparrows in the neighborhood, but they preferred the comparatively thickly peopled village to the bleak, exposed, though beautiful, quarter where we lived.

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But my birds had human friends and admirers without number. I was generally known as the lady who owned the birds, and was worthy of consideration and esteem chiefly on account of my office as custodian of the little southerners. Jenny gained great favor through her housewifely ways and her willingness to perch on the hands of visitors, but Chupes was generally best loved; and his beautiful songs and funny pranks excited no end of admiration and wonder.

At last the long cold winter came to an end, and it was just as I had made up my mind that out-door pleasures and spring delights would soon be ours that the first little life closed.

Before entering upon any of the particulars, I want to tell you that I had dreaded for these tenderly watched, happy little creatures a forlorn old age, or some such

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tragic ending as would call for a heart-rending obituary like poor "Bob's"—"*Died of a cat;*" and I am anxious you should feel as I do that, sad as it was to lose these dear, true-hearted little friends, the end came in a merciful manner and at a merciful time. A five years' stretch of almost uninterrupted happiness constitutes a beautiful bird-life. And it was within a few weeks of five years after Mr. Chupes' coming to me that the loving little heart ceased to beat. We laid him away in the sod of this northern haunt where he had carried summer brightness, and about a month later we buried his faithful little lover, Jenny, beside him.

It is impossible for me to speak without emotion of the last days of these truest of little friends. Chupes' affection for me, great as it was at the outset, had gone on increasing with years. My absence even

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during half a day was enough to still the happy song and make the little fellow mope sadly. What a pitiful fate would have been his if circumstances had separated us permanently!

Jenny was very affectionate also, and she, too, felt my absence keenly; but the animal nature was stronger in her than in Chupes, and in every sorrow but one, food mitigated her grief. It was when Chupes died that she refused to eat or drink.

We had always known that she loved him, for she would fret and call unceasingly when he was out of sight; yet she scolded him constantly, and, as I have already told you, she fought him if he attempted to come near her food, and sometimes resented his helping himself to his own portion.

I have mentioned that the dear little fellow was only too ready to respond to a call

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for song, and that the great difficulty lay in restraining him. It seemed at times as if his throat would burst as it poured forth the rapturous notes. Indeed, from all I can learn, his constant singing was the cause of his death. I have consulted several bird-fanciers, and from them I learned that it is possible for birds to induce a paralysis of the throat by excessive singing. Two days before Chupes died the song suddenly stopped, and it soon became evident that his throat was affected.

He was hungry, poor little fellow, and he tried his best to eat, but he could not swallow. The delicate little instrument was worn out and refused to work. He was exactly like a sick child, and insisted on being held by the one to whom he had given all the love of his warm little heart. His sufferings were not severe, I am glad to say, and until the dim eyes closed his glance

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sought my face with a look of deepest love. It was almost as if he said: "Dearest one, you are a great comfort to me!"

He tried to sing and even to play, but all in vain. An hour or so before he died he gave a faint, pathetic little response to the jingling of a pair of buckles; but the resting-time had come, and, with my hands surrounding him,—the favorite attitude of his helpless babyhood,—he died.

Died of happiness, I suppose I may say, and I could not have asked a better fate for the sweet little pet who had brought sunshine and happiness into so many lives.

I see him now as he perched one winter day beside a worn-out artist who had come to us to rest. The bird was singing one of his sweetest, most plaintive, songs when one of us spoke.

"Oh, please don't," said the weary woman. "Let me listen to that wonderful

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song. It takes me into the heart of the cool green forest. I hear the rustling of leaves and the purling of brooks, and I feel the soft summer breezes. Let me close my eyes and listen only to him!"

When the news went out that the little voice was silenced there was such mourning! I am not ashamed to say that for weeks I could not speak of him without tears, but I was surprised and touched to find how many eyes besides my own grew moist at the news of the little friend's death.

Many letters were written to invalids about these wonderful birds, and the story passed from one "Shut-in" to another, carrying brightness as it went. The account of Jenny's funny fancies always caused amusement, but what remained longest in every one's memory was the echo of Chupes' sweet song.

VII

POOR MISS JENNY'S HEART

And Jenny, poor, despairing little Jenny! No one suspected the depth of feeling of which she was capable until Chupes died. She called unceasingly for him, and thinking it might convey some idea of the hopelessness of the cry if we let her see him, we placed the limp little body on the table beside her. She gazed at him fully two minutes without stirring, then she rushed wildly about the room, dashing herself against walls and windows as if attempting to beat her brains out. The neighbors, even at a distance, heard her pitiful wails, and it was a problem with us all what was

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to be done with the broken-hearted bird. How earnestly I wished she might die!

It made no difference to her when we took her dead playmate away. She knew that the quiet form was not really he. In vain were her favorite dishes placed before her; she would not eat. As for the nest, the building of which had been her chief aim in life, she no longer gave it a thought. I have never seen a wilder, more hopeless sorrow.

When night came she slept from sheer exhaustion, but with the first faint streaks of dawn (and during summer months day begins very early in that far northern latitude), the pitiful wailing and the wild flying started anew. It was more than I could endure. I dressed hastily and carried her out to a near hillside, hoping to change the current of her thoughts by out-door sights. At first she looked around in a dazed sort of

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manner, but suddenly she gave a wild scream—a scream of recognition it seemed to me—and then she flew away in answer to a male robin's call.

Something peculiar about the bird's note enabled me to identify him. He had haunted the house for two days. As I held my little invalid bird in the sunshine during his last hours, this stranger had appeared at the dining-room window, and Jenny, ever on the alert, had bristled up to him and frightened him away. But how she welcomed him now! What a transfigured bird she was! I am certain that for a moment she thought it was her beloved Chupes back again; but of course the delusion could not last. She soon recognized the fact that it was a stranger; but he was wooing her. He was not distant and absorbed in song. He would even be willing to take an interest in the nest and perhaps to help in its construc-

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tion. She was now as wildly happy as she had previously been miserable. I watched her flying from tree to tree with her little mate, and I made up my mind that she would never return to me. I hoped he would teach her all the secrets of self-preservation so well known to wild birds, and that when the summer was over, he would lead her to a southern home.

But even as I speculated, back came Jenny. She alighted on my shoulder and gave my lips the peremptory peck she was in the habit of administering whenever she suspected that I was eating. I gave her some of my early breakfast—a bit of cracker—and she flew away to her mate. It was evident, however, that she preferred walking to flying, as she soon alighted on the ground. He wisely accommodated himself to circumstances and walked along beside her. I followed at a respectful dis-

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tance, but as the wild bird's distrust of me decreased, I gradually shortened the space between us.

In this way I was enabled to make a discovery that accounted for his peculiar note, and perhaps also for his bachelorhood at a season when all robinkind had established itself in families. He would sing a few notes, and cough; no ordinary bird-sneeze, but a hard, rasping cough. I felt that I had the key to the situation. He was a consumptive. An undesirable suitor under ordinary circumstances, but here was a wife with a dowry, and it would not be necessary for him to work for her support.

It was all very satisfactory to the birds, no doubt, and certainly most romantic; but Jenny would starve without me, and I could not spend my life as her travelling maid; so, when she came to me again, I put her in her cage and carried her to the house; the wild

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bird accompanied her as far as the door. She seemed to understand that she was to see him again. At any rate she made no resistance, and, once in our room, she succumbed to the reaction from so much emotion and took a good nap.

A telephone-wire entered the house near one of my windows. Shortly after our return, a peculiar sound as of vibrating metal caused me to look out. There was Jenny's mate perched on the wire near the window; there was no mistaking the cough and the peculiar break in the song. He had located our room!

She awoke at the sound of his voice, and, as soon as she recognized him, she began scolding roundly. It was only coquetry, but he did not understand it, and he flew away in dismay. I placed a mosquito-netting at the window to keep her from following. She began to call pitifully for him.

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Jingle went the wire and back came the forgiving mate. I carefully drew aside the mosquito-netting and withdrew to a remote corner of the room. He came to the window-sill and looked in. In an instant Jenny flew eagerly to her work as if to show him what a domestic treasure he had found. Papers, rags, sticks, straws—the whole heterogeneous mass was stirred up, rearranged, and added to, while the wild bird looked on in amazement. Never before had he beheld such a nest. After a short time he flew away, soon to return with a fine fat grub for his industrious little wife. Jenny seized it eagerly and instantly carried it to the nest, where she scratched and clawed and mashed it into position among her building materials.

I made the experiment of putting some of her mocking-bird food on the window-sill for the little mate. He eyed it sus-

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piciously at first, but finally ate it with relish; and after this he always looked for a portion in exchange for the worm or grub presented to Jenny.

The manner in which we used to watch the weather with an eye to its effects on Jenny's mate was really laughable. "Bad for delicate throats," we would remark on cold, damp days, while warmth and sunshine were hailed with delight. But during the daylight hours of all weather the little fellow perched faithfully on his telephone-post when Jenny could not be out of doors.

At the end of a fortnight his cold had entirely disappeared, and I shall always attribute the cure to the good strengthening diet of mocking-bird food.

Only on one occasion did he really enter my room. Jenny was in her cage for safety, as the furniture was being moved. She

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called to him appealingly and he braved us all. With a force sufficient to bruise his tender little body he threw himself against the wires in a violent effort to liberate her. I opened the door of the cage and let them fly off together, but, as usual, I had to accompany them to the best of my walking abilities.

And so the days passed in strolls in the fields, flights among the trees, nest-building, exchange of food, and in general happiness for the strange little couple. I used to wonder anxiously how it would all end.

Jenny could not take care of herself; I had proved it again and again; but I had a new demonstration of the fact one day when we three went sauntering through the fields looking for such "delicatessen" as birds relish. Suddenly the wild mate gave a warning cry and flew away, evidently expecting Jenny to follow him. She,

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however, went unconcernedly on with her search for dainties, and had not a *meow* of delighted anticipation given me an intimation of danger, she would certainly have fallen into the jaws of a cat.

I allowed her to remain out as late as possible on fine days, yet I took great care to have her safely housed before the evening shadows fell. Once, however, I became so engrossed in watching the happy creatures, that, before I realized it, the dusk had nearly overtaken us. I called Jenny, but she refused to come. Her mate was coaxing her to go with him, and she went.

It was not too dark to distinguish the little figures, and I soon traced them to a large maple. While I stood anxiously looking up into the branches, a kind neighbor appeared on the scene.

“Can I do anything for you?” he asked.

“No, thank you,” I answered. “My lit-

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tle Jenny has made up her mind to remain out all night, and I may as well abandon all hope of catching her."

"I think I can get her," said the neighbor, swinging himself up in the tree; when, lo! just as he was ready to grasp her, the little rogue flew to another maple, leaving her would-be captor high up among the branches.

I followed her to another halting-place, and in a moment or so received an offer of assistance from a second neighbor. This I refused to accept, however, pointing to the friend in the tree as an illustration of the hopelessness of the attempt.

As I followed my little runaway, several barefooted urchins joined me, armed with poles and rakes; each one certain that he could catch Jenny, each in turn to be stranded in a tree while she flew triumphantly away. People in carts and in car-

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riages, on bicycles and on foot, swelled the upward-gazing throng, and, until it became so dark and chilly that we were driven away, the whole neighborhood watched for the fugitive.

What a cold night that was! The moisture condensing on the window-panes reminded us of late autumn, and we were certain that the little bird would take her death. There was nothing to do but wait for the daylight, however.

At about three in the morning I started out, but a dense fog drove me back. I could not even see my way across the street, and the mist had fallen so heavily that the grass looked as if the meadows had recently been the bed of a vast brook.

At five I made a second attempt to go out. The fog was lifting a little, and I was well protected by my winter coat. I made my way at once towards the robin settle-

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ment, for that was where I had last seen Mr. and Mrs. Jenny. As I proceeded, the atmosphere continued to clear, but long before I was near enough to distinguish the birds I heard a terrible commotion among them.

“The wild robins are probably killing Jenny,” I thought, and I hastened to her rescue.

What a sight met my gaze when I came to the scene of action!

Among the outer feathers of Jenny's tail was one completely white. Under stress of provocation she would spread her tail to its widest extent, and then of course the white feather was visible in all its length. This made it easy for me to identify her on the occasion in question, for there she was with outspread tail and flaunting white feather, visiting nest after nest, chattering angrily, fighting, and endeavoring to dislodge every

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mother bird in the community. I was surprised at the slight show of resistance on the part of her victims, but probably they were too dazed to retaliate. The mate, perched at a little distance from the battleground, looked on with evident dismay.

When the little termagant saw me, she made some parting remarks which sounded even more derisive than the previous ones and flew to my outstretched hand. I carried her home, the wild mate accompanying us to the door, and I fancied he looked relieved when I assumed the entire responsibility of his energetic charge. Jenny tumbled into her nest as soon as she had eaten a hearty breakfast, and then the day was given up to napping. The mate came occasionally, but she was too sleepy to receive him enthusiastically. After this occurrence I clipped the longest feathers of one of her wings to restrain her some-

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what. Neither her wings nor Chupes' had been interfered with since last moulting time.

It was between the second and third week of Jenny's acquaintance with the wild bird that the runaway took place. She was not hurt in the least by the exposure, and after she had rested well she picked up the thread of her daily life as if nothing unusual had happened. I suppose her existence was simply blissful during all this period, and the mate was certainly very happy also; but I was far from satisfied. In a few days I was to leave for a remote city, there to take up hotel life for a time, and what was to become of Jenny? A separation would, no doubt, pain the wild bird, but a few days would probably be the limit of his sorrow. As for little Jenny, I knew that to take her away from her mate would be to plunge her again in the deepest despair.

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I could not leave her, for no one else knew how to guard the helpless creature. Supposing even that I remained until the autumn; the wild bird would then take his departure and leave her to fret her life out. The plan of capturing and taming him was suggested to me, but I never entertained it for a moment. Only as a matter of rescue would I take a bird in, and never would I deprive one of its freedom.

It was a problem; but Nature solved it in its own kindly way. Just two nights before I left little Jenny died, evidently quite painlessly; for when I left my room she was sleeping quietly, and a few moments later we found her dead. The little creature had toiled her hardest at the nest all that day; chatting with the wild mate during his visits, but evidently preferring work to any outing; she actually wore her little feet sore with the scratching and shaping.

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The whole pathos of the situation came over me as I took down the strange accumulation that she would not need any more. Strings, papers, scraps of all kinds, even bits of food. I was so thankful that she had been so happy and had escaped a second agony, the brave little heart!

The clang of the telephone-wire early the next morning announced the advent of the mate. He had brought the usual delicacy for his little wife. He laid it on the window-sill and ate his portion of mocking-bird food, evidently not disturbed at first by her non-appearance. As the day wore on, however, he showed much uneasiness. The following morning he came once—the mocking-bird food alone did not allure him—and after that I heard his voice from the treetops only. The neighbors told me that he lingered around the house for a day or so after my departure, and he probably

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joined the robin throng when convinced that Jenny would not return.

Perhaps, at times, impelled by some vague remembrance of his strange little companion of a month, he visited the old haunts, and his voice may have blended with the sweet lullaby that the rustling leaves and murmuring waters sing all summer long at the grave of my dear, never-to-be-forgotten little friends—Mr. Chupes and Miss Jenny.

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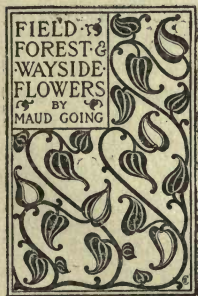
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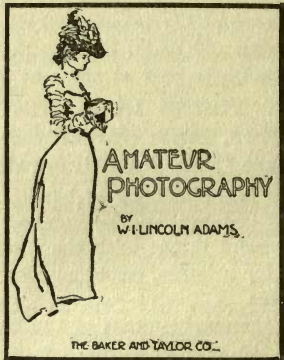
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