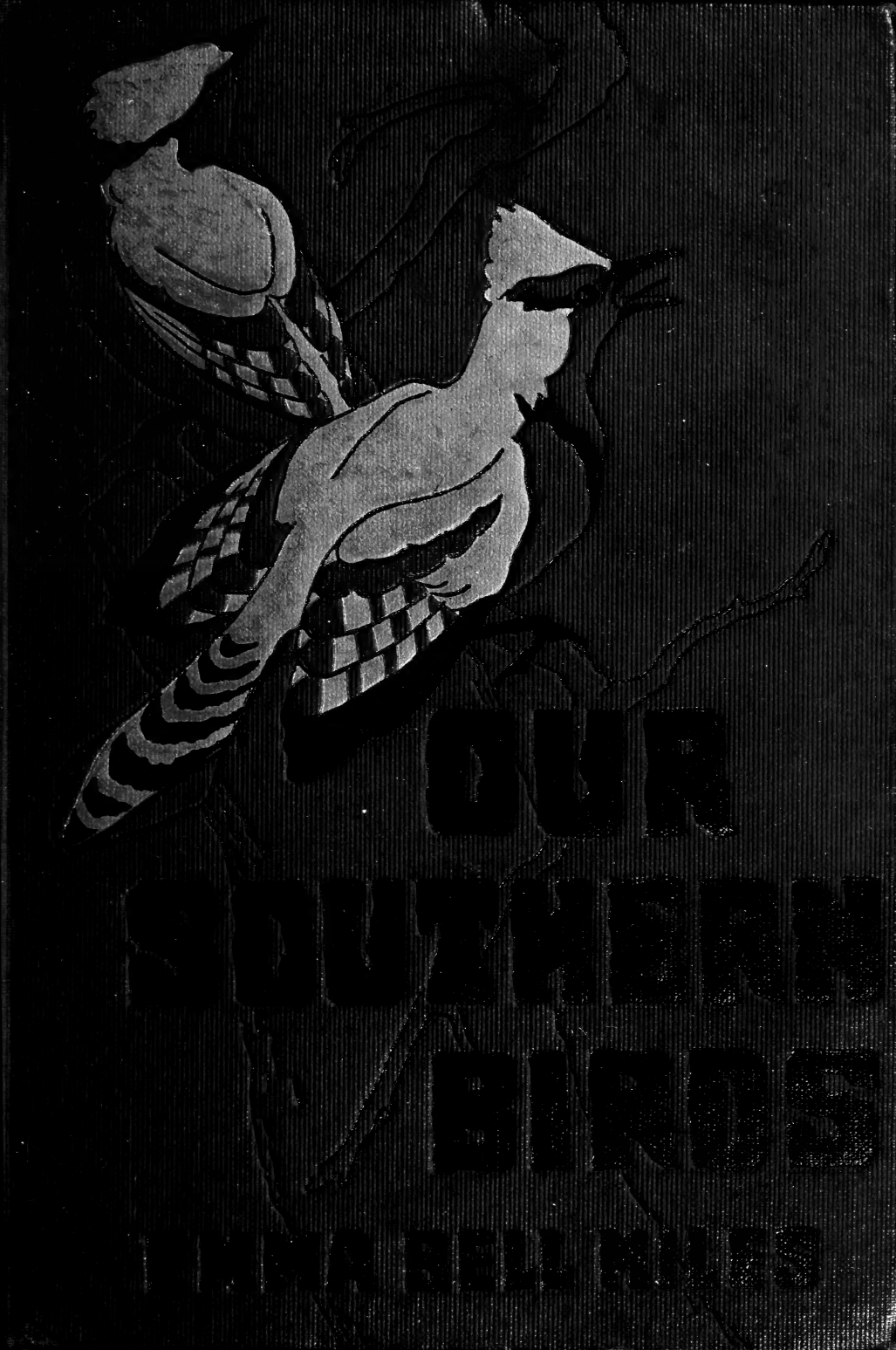
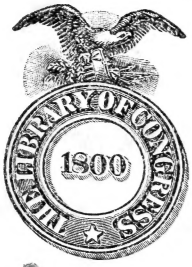

OUR
FEATHERED
BIRDS



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FOX SPARROW
Length 7¼ inches

OUR SOUTHERN BIRDS

EMMA BELL MILES

ILLUSTRATED BY THE AUTHOR

NATIONAL BOOK COMPANY

CHATTANOOGA, TENN. CHICAGO, ILL.

DALLAS, TEXAS

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no 1

BIRD STUDY

An Introduction

While the scientific study of birds is beyond most of us, yet an intimate understanding of them and their ways is within reach of everyone, and may enrich life with a new depth of interest. No line of study opens a more fascinating vista to the mind which wants to know, in the best and truest sense, in what kind of world we are living.

Most nature study books are written for the latitude of New England. While the sub-tropical natural life of Florida has received considerable attention, it is a strange fact that for all its valuable and richly various fauna and flora the Middle Southern States have had few naturalists. The non-scientific student, in search of a popular work that will help him to some knowledge of birds in this section, is at a loss what to read. It is to help meet this need that the present volume has been written.

Blank pages are provided for the recording of individual observations. With the exception of those few species which nest near our homes, comparatively little is known of the daily life and actions of birds.

Go out alone in early morning, keep the sun at your back, be careful to do nothing that will startle these timid creatures, and see what you will see. Remember that you are dealing with the most sensitively organized of animals. Stand or sit quietly watching them; do not touch nest or eggs, as many species have so keen a scent

that they will not return to a nest which has been in contact with a hand.

Naturalists like John Burroughs are often said to possess some mysterious secret of attracting birds, or at least of dealing with them at close range. The secret is simply the avoidance of sudden movements. By keeping quiet you may induce such friendly birds as Wrens, Chippies, and Titmice to perch on your arms and head and to eat from your hand.

Experience is the only real teacher in this study. Patience and practice render the identification of birds easy. There is as much character in the voice and actions of a bird as there is in those of most people; and we learn to recognize bird friends as readily as human ones, as they become familiar. Their rudimentary language, too, is easily learned; so that when one is accustomed to the vocal range of a pair it is easy to tell whether they are expressing alarm at the presence of an enemy, satisfaction over the fledglings in the nest, or triumph over the capture of food; whether they are quarreling, making love, or conducting an ordinary business conversation. It should be kept in mind, however, that very careful observation is necessary before deciding on the identity of any bird not well and familiarly known to you.

When you come upon a new bird, therefore, try to describe it about as follows:

About what size? Compare with some familiar type as Crow, Robin, or Sparrow, or state length in inches.

Describe bright colors or marks, if any.

Shape and color of bill — a bird's most characteristic feature.

Marks — wing bars, eye ring, line through or over eye, white feathers in tail, etc.

Notes and song — short or continuous; loud or low, etc.

Is it on the ground or in trees? in thicket, grass, or in the open?

Does it walk or hop?

What is it eating?

Is it alone, or in flocks, or with birds of other species? About how many in a flock or group?

Where is it — in swamp, pasture, or woods, in the air, or by running water?

All notes should be dated. Having identified the bird, the next thing is to study its habits and peculiarities. A note book and pencil should be carried in the pocket for the immediate fixing of one's impressions. Immediate, because our memories are treacherous, and fifteen minutes' delay may give rise to errors in notes or markings, or confusion of two or more species seen at the same time. Afterward these notes may be entered in the blank pages of this book.

A bare list of the birds found in your neighborhood, with dates, is well worth making. It is most interesting to make a special study of one bird at a time, filling the pages with little family histories. In March or April, watch the actions of some mated pair, and find out all you can about their home life. Some leading questions in this line of study might be:

Where was the nest built? When begun? When completed? Of what is it made?

Did the male bird or the female build it, or both?

When was the first egg laid? the last?

Do both birds or only one incubate the eggs?

How long before hatching?

What food is brought to the young?

How long do they remain in the nest? Do they return to it after once leaving?

How long are they fed before seeking their own living?

Do they remain with the parents until migration? The changes in plumage brought about by the juvenal and yearly molts are a puzzling factor in identification of birds, and one that makes the study of migration difficult for the beginner. But the date of arrival in spring, and whether the birds come in flocks, pairs, or singly, or whether the males and females arrive in separate bands, are interesting points and easily noted.

If the blank pages be filled out with these and similar data carefully made, the completed book will be valued for generations.

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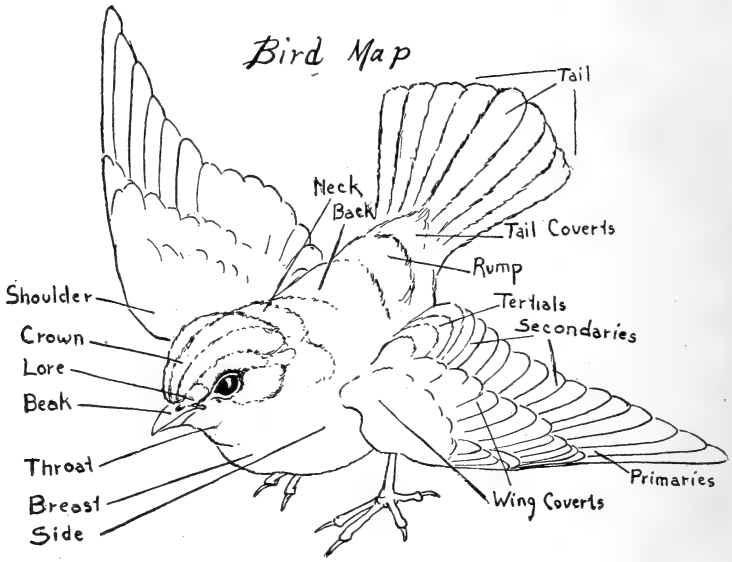
SHADOWS OF THE PAST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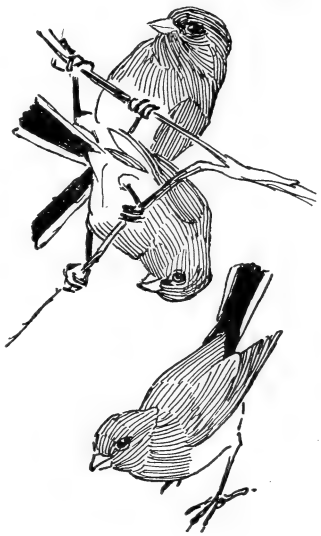
OUR SOUTHERN BIRDS

BIRDS OF THE YEAR ROUND

JUNCO

These are the "snowbirds" we all know so well, colored like "stormy sky above; snow-covered earth below," as has been prettily said of them. A flock, appearing suddenly in a field or dooryard, may cover the ground for a time with little moving gray forms, busily picking and pecking for grass and weed seeds, then suddenly be gone. They are very sociable, quick to benefit by a handful of finely crumbled cornbread thrown onto the bare ground or a doorstep swept clean of snow, and will sit in the shrubbery of the lawn looking so plump and contented that we are glad to have them as guests.



JUNCO
Length 6¼ inches

The Junco's beak is like that of the Field Sparrow, broad and pinkish. There are two white feathers in the tail which form a bright V as the bird flits before you into the underbrush.

Many other small winter birds consort with Juncos in the friendliest way; you may see them with Wrens, Song-sparrows, Titmice, Golden-crowned Kinglets, and Bluebirds, with perhaps a Nuthatch or a Downy Woodpecker, feeding all together in your dooryard, if you will take pains to spread a meal for them and keep cats at a distance. When you have finished with your walnuts, hickory nuts, or pecans, if you will throw the hulls out on the ground instead of burning them, you will find that all these birds and also the Cardinal will enjoy the waste bits of kernel which their sharp beaks can pick out.

All winter long the Juncos are among our most plentiful and familiar birds; but with the warmth of March's sprouting days they begin to drift northward, to nest in Canada and the extreme northern states, and we see no more of them until next October. But there is in the higher ranges of the southern Alleghenies a Carolina Junco, somewhat larger than the snow-bird and gray all over, who remains a resident through the year. If you go to the mountains for the summer, perhaps you will see him among the rhododendron.

"Little snowbird in the tree," we used to sing when I was in the First Grade; but the tree is not the place in which to look for Juncos. Not so energetic as the Titmouse nor so lively as the Wrens, not so prettily colored as the Kinglet, nor so acrobatic as the Chickadee, these plump, quiet little fellows are as welcome winter companions as any that habitually come around our homes. Their pleasant twitter and chirp is never an obtrusive sound, and their clear brown eyes have always an expression of innocent friendliness, nearly like that of Doves.

WHITE-BREASTED NUTHATCH

"Yank-yank! yank-yank!" Here he comes, head downward as usual, looking all over the bark with his sharp eyes, pecking into crevices with his sharp beak. Round and round the tree he goes, circling some of the larger limbs, easily taking all the attitudes of a fly on the ceiling. What a neatly tailored appearance he makes in his slate-gray close-fitting suit, with its pearly vest and black markings, cut so squarely short across the tail.

The name of Nuthatch means that he will wedge small nuts, such as beechnuts or chestnuts, or large seeds like those of the sunflower, into cracks in the bark, and hammer away at them till he splits them open — a clever trick which

few other birds seem to have learned. He is also called Devil Downhead and other odd names in reference to his upside-down way of searching for insect food.

WHITE-BREASTED NUTHATCH
Length 6 inches

He is not at all shy, and will come to the very doorstep to eat cornbread-crumbs and grain. In winter he may even venture into the residence districts of towns, where he runs over the trees in lawns and yards; but with the approach of warm weather he becomes less familiar, and is not often seen after the beginning of the nesting season. His home is hard to find; it is tucked away in a hollow limb, softened with dead leaves and lined with feathers.

The Red-breasted Nuthatch is one of our winter visitors, but goes north with the coming of warm days.

The little Brown-headed Nuthatch is a feature of the great Southern pinewoods. He gathers his food chiefly among the smaller branches, but carries it to the main trunk and wedges it firmly

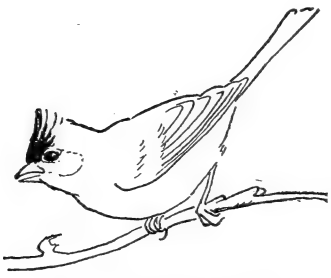
between the scales of pine bark, to be eaten at his leisure. The nest is made of grasses and lined softly with feathers, generally placed near the ground in a hole in a tree or stump. With the coming of spring, even so early as the first warm days of March, five or six pretty spotted eggs are laid.

BROWN-HEADED NUTHATCH
Length 4¼ inches

All these Nuthatches are surprising cortortionists. Owing to his fearlessness and to the conspicuous clearness of his markings, the White-breasted is easiest to observe. You may see him during the winter in the suburbs of southern towns, and no bird's movements are more interesting to watch than his reversals, flittings, and gyrations. His compact little body seems to be fitted with some kind of universal joint which enables him to take positions which would be impossible to any other bird. He is not sociably inclined; but if you will follow his softly nasal cry of "yank-yank, yank, yank," through the woods you will often find Chickadees or a Titmouse with him, apparently following him too.

TUFTED TITMOUSE

This vigorous little fellow makes up in conspicuous voice and action for the modest ashen smoothness of his coloring. His rousing "peeto, peeto, peeto" may be heard on any still winter morning. He is full of pranks and quite intrepid, so that curiosity often brings him into porches and out-buildings where, if not protected, he falls an easy victim to the cat.



TUFTED TITMOUSE
Length 6 inches

His nest is deep in some abandoned Woodpecker's hole or hollow limb, and soft with crushed dry oak-galls of last year, with sedge-grass down, and hair picked up around barns and stables, or even pulled out of the backs of cows in the pasture.

One spring day I was lying on a cot out of doors, when a Titmouse came into the porch where I was and began to explore nooks and crannies. I "froze," as it is well to do when a bird comes near, and lay watching him as he poked about the rungs of a chair and the cracks of the balusters; but what was my surprise when he hopped up on my pillow and began to examine my head! I dared not move; I heard his light

feet tapping all round my ears; he tweaked once or twice at my hair, chirped, and then actually jumped on my head and with claws and beak went to work in earnest!

This treatment was too vigorous for an ordinary human scalp to endure long at one time, but before I was obliged to drive him away he called to his mate with incisive chirruping to come and see what he had found. She soon answered, and came tripping sidewise along a drooping pine bough to within a few feet, but would not venture closer. From the tone of her replies I take it that she scarcely liked the looks of the strange object on which he was standing.

"Why didn't you catch it?" at this point inquires nearly every child to whom I tell this story. But why should I have wished to catch him? I could not have kept him; I couldn't possibly have made him happy, and he would have been too frightened and miserable to make me happy. Even if I had only held him a few seconds and then set him free, he would never have come back again.

As it was, he did come back in a day or two, to find me sitting in a chair. Without hesitation he climbed up my back and began on my head as before, standing braced by his tail feathers against my ear, and working away with loud chirps of excitement.

He seemed delighted with his discovery of this source of hair; although he never carried much away, he enjoyed playing with it. Since I occupied the porch most of the time and warned others not to frighten him, he returned again and again to peck at one scalp or another, to everybody's good pleasure. Thinking to oblige him I fastened wisps and combings in convenient crevices, but though he sometimes pulled at these in passing he never took them away. Apparently he preferred his goods in the original package. I noticed that while perched on some one's head he seemed at times to be overcome with surprise at realizing his unusual position, and would look around at us with a startled expression, erecting his crest, which nearly caused us all to burst out laughing. But I am glad to say his confidence was never betrayed; his visits continued until the building period was over, when doubtless family cares claimed all his time and attention.

CAROLINA CHICKADEE

Smaller and shyer than the Chickadee of New England states, our Carolina thumbkin nevertheless brightens the winter landscape with busy, capricious flutterings and constant chirping in much the same way. His wing feathers are not edged with white, and his "tsic-a-de-de-de-de"

is softer than that of the bird of Emerson's poem; but his courage in enduring cheerfully the hardships of winter deserves all the praise that has been pretty generally heaped on his northern cousin.

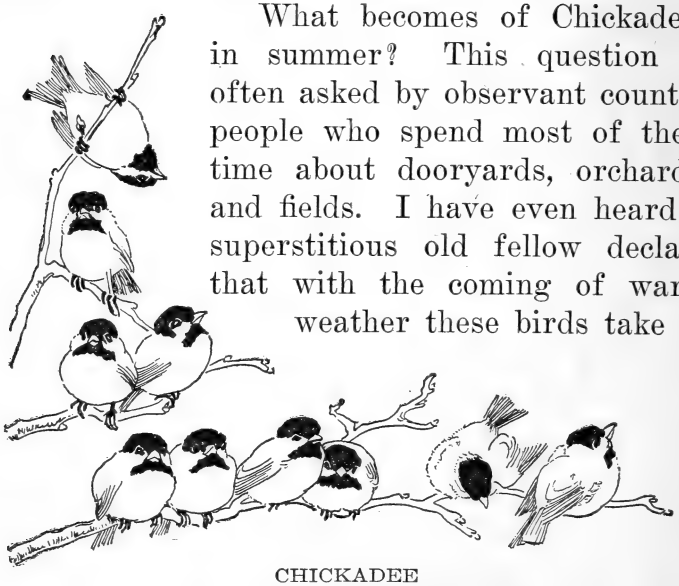
His coat is all gray, with a black cap and cravat. No bird is livelier or more agile than this wee fellow, as he flits among the branches, searching every twig for tiny insects and the eggs and larvae of insects which larger birds have overlooked, picking, pecking, boring, fluttering, standing upside down and peering into chinks, squeaking "suippit, suippit," and from time to time calling "tsic-a-de-de-de." Besides this he has a spring song of four smooth whistling notes of equal value, "I'm — here — to — stay," and other chuckling or scolding notes. It has been estimated that one of these tiny helpers of ours consumes from two hundred to five hundred small insects daily, or up to 4,000 eggs of insects, and even more when the young Chicks are to be fed.

The nest is a cosy affair, no bigger than the hollow of your hand, tucked into a stump or an empty woodpecker's hole. It cradles perhaps six white eggs specked a little with brown.

It used to puzzle me that such tiny bodies could contain enough warmth and vital energy to defy cheerfully the fiercest weather. I believe,

they are aided by their sociable way of cuddling together, a number of them finding shelter in a hollow limb. There they remain, fluffed out into little gray puff-balls with toes hidden in their feathers, no doubt holding each other's courage up as well as assisting each other to keep warm, through storms and freezing nights and the long imprisonment of sleet which is so trying to birds of all kinds; but with the first morning on which the wind does not blow too hard they are out long before sunrise, calling brightly to each other over the snow, busy and merry as only birds can be.

What becomes of Chickadees in summer? This question is often asked by observant country people who spend most of their time about dooryards, orchards, and fields. I have even heard a superstitious old fellow declare that with the coming of warm weather these birds take to



CHICKADEE
Length 4½ inches

the water and are changed into frogs! But the summer disappearance of the Chickadee is no mystery to be accounted for by fables; he has simply retired to the woods, together with the Nuthatch and Titmouse, where you may see them among the green treetops if you look closely, until the retirement of the migratory birds and the winter scarcity of food brings them round our homes again.

CAROLINA WREN

This is our most constant if not our most eloquent singer. In all months and all weathers we are awakened early by the bell-like jingle of "Percedar, percedar, percedar, perceet!" or "Jubilee, jubilee, jubilee!" which may be answered from a little distance by "Sweetheart, sweetheart, sweetheart!" The merriest, sauciest, busiest little creatures are all our Wrens, as friendly as they are excitable. They all carry a nervous, jerky tail straight up over the back, and all have a voice and a spirit that seem too large for such tiny bodies. They are perhaps the only species smaller than the English sparrows determined enough to hold their own among those noisy bullies so as to nest in the back yards and suburban spaces of town. For this reason if no other, we are bound to keep a particularly affectionate spot in our memories for the brown

bright Wrens, and to help them by guarding their nests and by throwing out cracked nuts for them to peck at in snowy weather.

Last summer a pair of Bewick's Wrens built their big, loose nest in the underpinning of my tent floor. For weeks they came and went all day long; after the young were hatched they stopped on every trip to sing, with a happy little flutter of wings and tail, a triumphal carol over the mouthful brought. Such a celebration when the fledglings quit the nest — such urging, such coaxing and scolding of the reluctant youngsters, and what bursting every minute into loud, excited song!

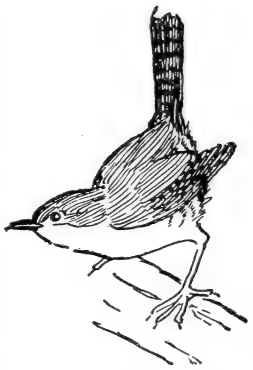
BEWICK'S WREN
Length 5 inches

A pair of House Wrens also perched on the canvas of mornings, and a short, perky, jerky Winter Wren, later in the year, was pleased to explore a broken stump near by. The Bewick's Wrens and the Carolina Wren several times ventured into the tent, probably by mistake, when I was studying quietly. It was interesting to note that while others might forget the way out and go into a panic, the Carolina Wren behaved like one sure of his welcome, now examining every

object on the table, and now hopping across the floor in pursuit of a spider.

The song of the House Wren sounds like "I see a *man* up a trrreee," in clear trilled notes like rippling water; the Bewick's is similar in quality, but differs in the arrangement of the notes.

All three of the commoner Wrens make themselves very much at home about dwellings and outbuildings; one even hears a Wren sing in an empty room, sometimes, with startling loudness and clearness. They all expend a great deal of fussy energy in the business of building; the nest is a large mass of grasses, dry oak tassels, trash of all kinds, feathers and hair and string. It may be placed in shelves, eaves, bird boxes, and even in tin cans. One I knew in a paper bag, forgotten on the shelf of an outhouse; one in an old garden sprinkler; and one which I keep in a box to itself was built in the rolled-up fold of a tent. It is quite arched over, with the entrance at one side. One dainty, freckled tail feather from a summer molt lies inside it,—a souvenir of the proprietor—which I would not think of removing.



HOUSE WREN
Length 4¾ inches

This habit of building in all sorts of odd places makes the Wren a veritable tricksy Puck to superstitious people who think it is "bad luck" if a bird builds in one's clothes. I have seen strong men turn pale and tremble on discovering a Wren's nest in some forgotten pocket or shoe!

Marsh Wrens, both the Long-billed and the Short-billed varieties, are found in brushy places near the water. Like other Wrens, they carry their tails erect and all their movements are rather jerky. But their nests are peculiar — globular affairs woven of grasses, entered from the side, and laced tight to the criss-crossed stems of reeds or other undergrowth. The eggs of the Long-billed are almost chocolate brown in color; but those of the Short-billed are pure white.

CARDINAL

In all the world there is nothing braver than the heart of a singing bird. Can you think what it means to be so small and so beautiful in a world full of guns and traps, of cats and hawks, of crafty snakes and crows and squirrels and bluejays all of whom rob the nest, — and yet to sing and sing again that all nature is good, is good!

Of all the birds who endure our winters with their inevitable hardships and perils of storm,

cold, and hunger, none is so beautiful as the Cardinal, and probably none is so much sought after by enemies of all kinds. His color is conspicuous as an electric spark, flashing alike in contrast to snow, to the green of summer, the gray of winter, or the gloom of the cedars in which he delights to dwell.

His song is no less attractive than his plumage, — that keen whip-like whistle of "Woit, woit, ten, ten, ten; woit ten; whittoo whittoo whittoo. Whip! woiche woiche woiche woiche." A friend of mine and his declares that he sits by the road on rainy mornings when the children are going by to school, and delivers a timely warning of "Wet shoes, wet, wet, wet, wet shoes!"

There is something gracious and lofty in the very bearing of the Cardinal, as if he could not stoop to do a mean or discourteous thing; and in this his disposition bears out his appearance. He is a kind and praiseworthy consort, very attentive to his olive-colored mate, who sings nearly as well as he. He guards and protects her and their brood, and does his full share of the labor of rearing the young.

Formerly many of these valuable birds were caged and sent out of the country every year, and many more were stuffed to meet some people's strange ideas of ornament; but the laws

CARDINAL
Length 9 inches

that exist for their protection in almost every Southern state are now being enforced more strictly. It is to be hoped the day is not far distant when the Cardinal shall build his one, two, or even three nests a season in our door-yard cedars undisturbed, and take shelter from blizzards in our barn lofts unmolested; when his long confidence and helpfulness shall at last be met by the response of human friendship and encouragement.

The beautiful and noble Rosebreasted Grosbeak, which the Middle West prizes as adjutant to the farmer because he eats potato bugs, is a near kinsman of our Cardinal. His range begins about where the Cardinal's comes to an end. But he does not try to bear the pinch of winter; and during his period of migration in early April he sometimes rests for a few days in the southern mountains, and tries over for us the rich, sweet, rolling warble that is his spring song.

CROW

Have you ever watched a flock of Crows feeding over a field? How glossy is their plumage, how lofty their port! They bear themselves like born aristocrats, lords of the soil; the flirt of a Crow's wings and tail is like the gesture with which a cavalier should toss back his velvet cape from the hilt of his sword. The Crow has dig-

nity without strutting, and shrewdness without sneaking. I have no hesitation in calling him the most intelligent bird I know. Few are the planters whose strategy he cannot outwit; few the hunters who can slip up on him. But though he has all the destructive and mischievous habits of the Bluejay, except that he does not attack smaller birds, and though he is in addition an accomplished corn-thief, we, all of us, retain a certain respect and something like admiration for Jim Crow.

CROW
Length 19 inches

Crows of one kind and another are well distributed over the world; they survive in great numbers the Russian winters and the famines of India. This proves them to be a type of special fitness, highly successful in nature's competitive economical scheme. Their success in thriving where others fail is due not only to individual intelligence, but to their close co-operation with each other. Every member of a flock is able to communicate with and to aid every other member. If you try to slip up on them unawares you will see how quickly the first that spies you gives the alarm; and if you do not believe that Crows

have a sort of language, notice what a different note is sounded to warn the flock of a man with a gun — different from, say, the note that tells of a child aimlessly crossing their feeding-ground.

Can crows be taught to talk, parrot fashion? As a child, I knew a pet crow whose ingenuity in mischief seemed an uncanny thing. He stole and hoarded numbers of small objects such as pencils and thimbles. I remember the dismay of an old lady whose gold spectacles he carried to the top of a tall tree, and the frantic efforts of the family to coax him down without damage to the lens. He also hid a tiny doll that was one of my own particular treasures, and remodelled it to his liking by biting off the hands and feet. After such a performance it seemed to me only natural that his cleverness should extend to the pronunciation of five or six words. But a wider acquaintance with Crows has since led me to question whether, among so great a variety of noises and squawks and caws, a few do not inevitably happen to sound like words. In any case the splitting of the tongue never helped a Crow or any other creature to "talk"; it is a wholly unnecessary piece of cruelty.

Whether Crows have the parrot faculty of imitating sounds of speech or not, it is certain that they have a greater range of signals and

communication-sounds of their own than other birds. Like Kipling's Marines, they think for themselves and they steal for themselves, and they never ask what's to do. Out of the stark, comfortless fields of winter or out of the snowy forest he wrings a living by dint of sheer cleverness and skill, with a facility that recalls another of Kipling's lines — "You can leave 'im at night on a bald man's 'ead, to paddle 'is own canoe!" Bare indeed is the glistening expanse of snow above which he cannot find a morsel — a chestnut forgotten in its burr, a chinquapin, a pod of field-peas missed by the last gleaner, or an unwary fieldmouse that has ventured too far from home.

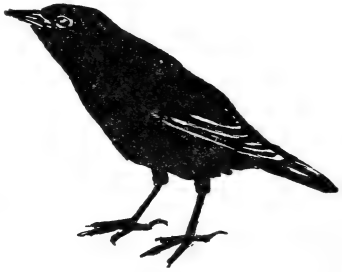
But whether employing his talents in mischief, in noisy treetop caucuses, or in the winter search for food in which success is life or death to him, the Crow comforts himself with a queer sardonic nonchalance worthy of an Indian's dignity. Buccaneer of the crop and pirate of the nest although he be, his numbers are no longer so formidable as they were a generation ago, and he remains a feature of our native landscape that could not well be spared.

No nestlings are noisier than young Crows; they do not seem to care who knows the location of their great brushy nest — and indeed it would be hard to conceal that bushel of crooked twigs, conspicuous in a treetop. Their feeding-time is

proclaimed to all the surrounding woods as clearly as if they rang a dinner bell.

RAVEN

Larger and shyer than the Crow, the Raven is never seen in flocks, nor about farms, but keeps to the heavily wooded mountains. He is glossy black from beak to tail, with steel-blue glints of light; the feathers of his neck are long and pointed, instead of being round like the Crow's. Whether perching or in flight his motions are all slow and stately. A handsome bird, with a peculiar grace of his own; but I do not know of a harsher, more disagreeable voice in the woods than the guttural "cr-r-r-cruck" or the hoarse, half-strangled scream he gives forth by way of welcoming the spring or making love to his lady; it seems that if he could only keep silent, he might make a better impression.



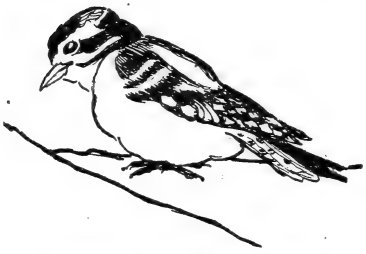
RAVEN
Length 25 inches

These birds not only mate for life, but return to the same nest in a tree or a ledge of some mountain cliff, year after year. It is a well-shaped nest, not loose like the Crow's, but compact of sticks and lined with grasses, sometimes

softened with wool picked up in tufts where a flock of sheep have rambled through the bushes. Every season before the two to seven greenish eggs are laid, this nest is made softer and deeper by the addition of new material.

DOWNY WOODPECKER

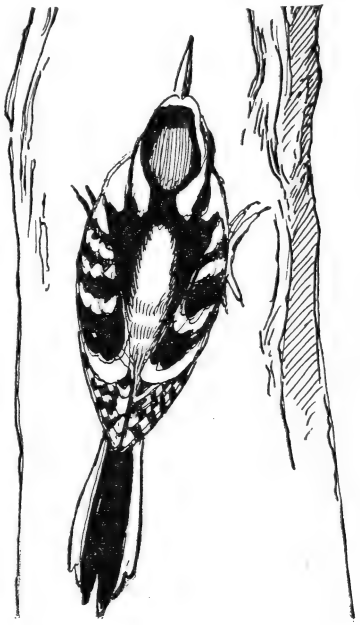
Smallest of all our feathered carpenters is Downy, and clothed in the true Woodpecker uniform of black and white, with a scarlet spot on the crown of the male. He is quite tame; one often finds him chiseling away with his little pickaxe on trees but a few feet from the door; and he is a frequent guest at the feeding trays which so many people are now keeping up for our winter birds.



DOWNY WOODPECKER
Length 6 inches

In summer the Downy Woodpecker is oftenest seen in the cornfield. I was visiting one summer at a farmhouse where the corn grew right up to the doors, when the owner interrupted our talk to get his gun, saying he must shoot that bird that was riddling his crop. Quickly I handed him my opera-glass instead, telling him to watch the bird a moment. As he did so his features changed with surprise. Lowering the

glass he cried: "Well, now, don't that beat you — I saw him catch a worm!" For some time he continued watching the woodpecker's progress from one ripening ear to another, studying the preliminary tap-tap which, like a doctor's stethoscope, locates a cavity, and the final accurate drive in upon the worm which eats the milky grains. By the time Downy flew out of the field with a joyous thanksong of "peenk-peenk-peenk," the gun was forgotten, the man convinced; and I think there is one farmer who will never again be so foolish as to make war on one of his ablest helpers.



HAIRY WOODPECKER
Length 9 inches

Like all Woodpeckers, Downy is fond of showing his mate what a fine drummer he is; and indeed the amount of resonance the little fellow can bring out of a dead tree is enough to make anybody wonder.

The Hairy Woodpecker (nine inches) is larger than Downy, and shyer, keeping to the

woods. Both are sometimes called "checker-back" by those who have not learned to distinguish the difference. Their pretty, glossy white eggs are laid in holes which they have been at pains to dig out with their energetic little chisels, holes carefully rounded and deeply hollowed, and softened with fine chippings. When one sees the frailty of other nests and their frequent exposure to severe weather, one wonders if young Vireos and Buntings do not envy the cosily housed young Woodpeckers and their well-protected mother.

YELLOW-BELLIED SAPSUCKER

It is said that this bright-colored Woodpecker injures fruit trees by boring through the bark to get at the sap. This is a much-discussed point in ornithological circles, which we shall be safe in setting down as not proven. I have never seen an orchard tree really damaged in this way; and by following the Sapsucker and watching him you may see for yourself that he chops out and eats borers, worms, and other troublesome insects as do other Woodpeckers — a habit which renders actual service to the tree. So suppose we do not condemn the Sapsucker too hastily.

He is certainly a great drinker of sap, especially from sweet-flavored trees like the birch. His habit is to drill holes in regular row on row,

and to return in a few days to find them flowing, or possibly inhabited by insects which he finds edible. Many creatures come to drink at the tiny sap-wells when he has thus drilled through the bark; not only insects, but certain smaller birds, and even squirrels. The latter are said sometimes to become oddly intoxicated on the sweet juices fermented by the sun.

YELLOW-BELLIED SAPSUCKER
Length 8½ inches

The Sapsucker's voice is not pleasant, being louder and harsher than that of the Downy and Hairy Woodpeckers'; his notes are somewhat like the scream of the Jay. The nest is usually high off the ground in a cavity in a tree about as large as that of the Hairy Woodpecker. Sapsuckers do not nest so early as the great handsome Pileated birds, but the eggs are nearly twice as many, laid in May, after the warm weather has really come.

RED-HEADED WOODPECKER

On the hill where I live are five different kinds of Woodpeckers: the Downy, the Hairy, the Redhead, the Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, and

even a splendid pair of Pileated which have so far escaped the persecution of hunters. They are all more or less red-headed, at least the males of each species having a scarlet patch on the crown. But the brightest colored and noisiest, as alas! the most mischievous of all, is Redhead himself.

REDHEADED WOODPECKER
Length 9¾ inches

His mischief is confined chiefly to the robbing of other birds' nests, but whether by this or by his scolding, quarrelsome ways, he has given all his kin a bad name.

Redhead is the most brilliantly colored creature in our winter landscape, and flies boldly about our lawns and fields without fearing to display his colors or to sound his loud cries, sometimes scolding pointedly at a dog or a person who seems to him to be trespassing on his domain. His home is worth climbing up to see; the safest, most comfortable nest, one would say, in the whole bird kingdom. Its entrance is perfectly circular as if marked out with a compass; in the bottom, on a bed of

sawdust and chips, are half a dozen or so of glossy white eggs. One large dead pine I know of has more than a dozen such round holes in its trunk; perhaps the same pair of Woodpeckers have built there season after season.

Redhead has the name of being destructive; and like Jays and Crows, he will rifle the nests of smaller birds. But his fare and habits change with the season. In winter beach nuts are greatly favored, and in summer he hunts fruit and insects.

The feet of all our Woodpeckers have two toes pointing forward and two back. Were our schoolboys equipped with such stout climbers, no pecan-tree in the land could withhold its nuts.

The Red-bellied Woodpecker is also common in the Southern states, and the Red-cockaded is found in the pine woods. But the largest and most beautiful Woodpecker of all, the Ivory-billed, is now extinct in the United States, except in a few counties in Florida.

PILEATED WOODPECKER

Next to the beautiful Ivory-billed, which is now all but extinct in the United States, the Pileated Woodpecker is largest of the Woodpecker family found in this country, being nearly if not quite as large as a Crow. Its usual cry is a "cuk-cuk-cuk-cuk" similar to the note of a

scared domestic pullet, which cry has given this bird in the mountains the name of Wood-hen. It is also known as Logcock and Cock-of-the-Woods.

PILEATED WOODPECKER
Length 17 inches

In some ways it resembles the common Flicker; it has a similar long, strong, barbed tongue, and when two individuals of the species meet they utter a Flicker-like conversational note of "wi-chew" or "wick-y-up."

The food of this handsome Woodpecker consists mainly of grubs, wood-boring beetles, and ants that make their homes in dead wood. To obtain a meal he chips away on log or tree with surprising skill and force, flinging good-sized chips and splinters in every direction. But he does not confine himself to dead or rotten trees for woodcutters' work; he is quite likely to excavate a hole for a sleeping-chamber in the hard wood of a living tree.

The Pileated Woodpecker mates very early in spring, and the pair spend about a month in digging out the nest cavity. Both birds work at this important task, and after the glossy white eggs are laid they share the duty of incubation. It is said, that when the bird on the nest wishes to go out for food and exercise it will call the mate, and wait until its coming before quitting the eggs. They like to return to the same spot year after year, never using the same nest a second time, but digging another as near as convenient, so that an old tree may show a number of Woodpecker-holes, each as circular as if it had been bored. The abandoned nests are greatly in demand among smaller birds who nest in hollow wood, and even as nests for squirrels.

This Woodpecker is not so common as in former years. It does not like cut-over woodlands, nor the open pine-barrens of the sandy country. One must go to the hammocks of Florida or to the primeval woods of the southern Alleghenies to find them still plentiful. Their black and white markings and the big flaming head-tuft, vivid in the green shadow, are too good a field-mark to be missed even by a careless eye.

FLICKER

To call over the many names by which this bird is known in different parts of the country is to suggest a number of his most striking characteristics — High-hole; Yellow-hammer; Ground Woodpecker; Yarrup; Golden-winged Woodpecker, etc. Of all these the last is perhaps most descriptive, for his wings are indeed lined with yellow satin, and the larger quills are bright as gold. All his markings are showy; the red crown-patch, the black cravat and moustache, the gay polka-dot vest and the barred brown coat.

FLICKER
Length 13 inches

His saucy calls and cries are as various as his names, and every country boy or girl knows them. But not every one knows of his curious tongue, twice as long as the bill and hard-pointed, which he uses in extracting grubs and other denizens of deep crevices and holes. He visits the ground much oftener than other Woodpeckers, and picks up great numbers of ants.

The nest, like that of other Woodpeckers, is

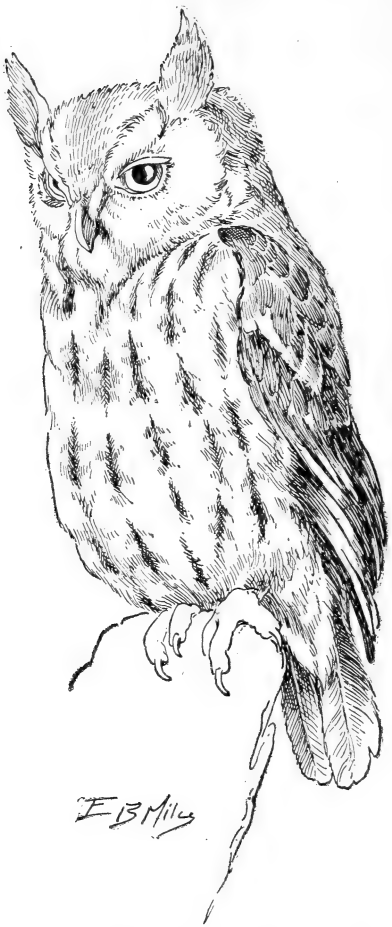
commonly a hole in a tree, but the Yellowhammer is not averse to occupying a ready-made dwelling and will even thank you for a bird-box of convenient size.

Although often seen on the ground its feet are like all Woodpeckers' feet, adapted for clinging erect against tree-trunks, with two toes before and two behind.

SCREECH OWL

Can you think why the eggs of birds who nest in the open are usually colored or speckled, while those laid in a deep or hidden and more or less dark place are commonly pure white? Can you find a reason for the difference in the shape of the eggs — those of sea-fowl who lay on flat ledges of rock being of a long, almost cone-like oval; those in cup-shaped nests being oval or elliptical; and those placed in deep hollows sometimes quite round? Try to roll some cone-shaped object, as a thimble or a tumbler, along the floor, and a reason may suggest itself to you.

Anyway, our little Owl is hatched from a pure white, globular egg, in a hollow tree nest so deep and dark that the twin treasures cannot roll out nor be seen by passing enemies. There are two white, downy young. Sometimes this inoffensive little home occupies an angle of the rafters in an unfrequented barn or cabin loft.



SCREECH OWL
Length 9 inches

Some haunt of night-like shadows it is sure to be, for the Owl's eyes are so made that while he can see well with almost no light and is free and happy under the moon, he is dazzled by sunshine and does not like to stir abroad by day.

Owls are the only birds who can look at an object with both eyes at once. The eyes are fixed in the sockets so that the head must be turned to face whatever the Owl wishes to look at.

Another peculiarity is the foot, of which two toes are normally placed in front and two behind. The outer toe is opposable, like a thumb, and can be brought round to the front.

They are also the only birds who have an external ear—not the upstanding feather tufts we call "horns," but real folds of flesh hidden under the feathers, and serving, like the ears of mammals, to catch the vibrations of sound and turn them inward. The hearing of all Owls is very acute. The softest slither of a bat's wing on the leaves, the slightest scratch of a field mouse's claws at the roots of a tree, and down comes little Screech Owl like the drop of a velvet cloth to seize his supper. He eats mice, some insects, small birds, frogs, and lizards. When not too large this prey is swallowed entire. Afterward the bones, hair, and other indigestible parts are ejected, rolled up in a ball that looks like some strange cocoon.

He has two color phases, a reddish brown and a gray, which he wears without respect to age, sex, or season. The best time to watch for him is at dusk, when he comes out to flit soundlessly from tree to tree: for he remains unseen and unseeing by day, and during the night it is our eyes which are blind and cannot see him.

The well-known cry of the Screech Owl is so mournful a sound that many people do not like to hear it. But we may at least be sure that this uncanny tremolo represents nothing like sadness in the mood of the producer; he is never so happy as when crooning to his mate or to the friendly moon. I am for letting him enjoy himself in his own peculiar way. At the worst, it resembles that of certain of our own poets and novelists who express themselves best in most doleful themes, yet on acquaintance are found to be the jolliest optimists alive.

Negroes often heat a poker in the fire, and people with recollections of the witchcraft delusion sometimes tie knots in a sheet, to conjure the little Owl and stop his quavering cry. But is it not much better to conjure away one's groundless dislike and terror of so harmless a creature by a closer acquaintance with its interesting ways?

Other Owls of the region are the large Barn Owl with its curious ape-like face, and the Great

Horned Owl who cries "Whoo, whoo, who — who — who — aw" across the frosty hush of winter nights, or as schoolboys translate it, "Who — cooks — for you — all, for you — all?"

It is not quite true that Owls cannot see in daytime. The Great Horned Owl and some other species, when they have young to feed, come out and hunt on dark, cloudy days. It is chiefly these birds whom we have to thank that the meadow-mice, which multiply very rapidly, do not become so numerous as to destroy all our grain in the stack, and our young fruit trees.

KINGFISHER

He sits on a dead branch above a pond, creek, or river, noticing neither bird nor insect, but watching, watching silently for a glint of silversides in the water below. Suddenly down he darts, like the head of a spear; there is a splash, and a second later up he comes with his dinner.

The ancients called him halcyon, and hung his dried body to the boat's mast when they cruised about the Mediterranean, because he was supposed to bring calm and pleasant weather. We still retain an echo of this lost belief in the phrase "halcyon days."

He is always a pleasant picture in his blue-gray speckled coat, with prominent crest and belt, sitting just above the green rushes, reeds,

KINGFISHER
Length 13 inches

and lilies of the shore. But his voice is enough to startle the nerves of the hardiest; his harsh rattling cry can be heard for half a mile up or down stream. Although only thirteen inches long he appears larger, because of his short tail and stout, top-heavy body.

A stout little fellow he has need to be, for his nest is at the end of a passage dug two or three feet back into a sand bank. Here is a chamber large enough for the mother bird — queenfisher, shall we say? — to turn around in, and a curious bed of — fishbones! A most uncomfortable pallet on the floor we should find it, and a malodorous bedroom; but we may be sure it exactly meets the liking of the young Kingfishers.

In order that the pair may not find all this excavation too onerous a task, the Kingfisher's two outer toes on each foot are joined together for most of their length, to form a sort of shovel. Like the Woodpeckers, these birds like to return to the same place year after year, but they always drill a new nest-cavity.

This fisherman does not seize his catch in claws or beak like a bird of prey, but impales it on his sharp beak by darting upon it with closed wings through the water, like the fishing-spear of an Indian. Having caught his dinner he carries it to his perch ashore, turns the head toward him, and swallows it whole. Fish of a surprising

size can go down in this manner, but frogs, crayfish, and some aquatic insects are also eaten. The scales, fins, bones, and other indigestible portions are afterward cast up in pellets, as is the custom with Owls.

Minnows and suckers, and other small fish of no special value, are those most frequently taken by the Kingfisher along the streams and rivers which are his usual home. But on the shores of trout streams or of artificial lakes which are stocked with valuable fish he is considered quite a nuisance, and for this reason is not protected by law.

In spite of this his brilliant color and unusual shape, his interesting ways and good disposition, make him one of our most attractive and best known birds. Kingfishers have always been favorites with all peoples the world over; and even hunters and fishermen are not eager to take a shot at them.

WILD TURKEY

Any one who has followed the trail of the turkey through its native woods, or who has made the acquaintance of some lustrous purple-legged baron hatched from a wild egg and raised in a poultry yard, will not grudge this species the phrase that has often been applied to it — "noblest of American birds." An appreciative

Southern writer, Mr. Lanier, once suggested that the Wild Turkey would be a better choice for adoption as our national emblem, instead of the rapacious and quarrelsome Eagle; but, however suitable to American ideals and character this change might be, it is not likely to take place, for the reason that this splendid game bird is being killed off at a rate that insures its disappearance from all but the wildest parts of its range. In short, the Wild Turkey will probably be nearly extinct before the general public becomes acquainted with him.

In past years one might come upon these birds feeding over burnt areas of woodland, picking up acorns and insects from the ground; or one might hear the early morning gobbling of the male at a favored roost, or the plaintive kyonck-kyonck of the female. I have surprised a whole family of the young poults walking together in a quiet thicket, slipping away like shadows as soon as my presence was known to them. The wild gobblers even used to visit the range of domestic poultry and consort with them. But only the wariest mountain hunters, or those in Arkansas, Missouri, Oklahoma, Texas, Florida, and the wildest parts of the Southern Alleghenies, can boast of seeing them in recent times.

In their habits, the turkeys of the deep forest are not very different from those of the barn-

yard. They live in bands of from twelve to twenty, feeding together by day upon nuts and acorns, and flying up into a chosen roost-tree at night. At the beginning of the breeding season, however, these flocks disband, and the males begin to gobble as they seek their mates. The sound of their gobbling is usually heard early in the morning; it is associated in my memory with perfumed banks of azalea bloom dripping with dew.

At this season the great gobblers rustle stiffly about, displaying their plumes, and often fight to see which shall be leader of a flock of admiring hens. As soon, however, as those same hens are safely retired to the secret places of the underbrush, each with her precious clutch of freckled eggs, the males forget their differences and go foraging amicably together, leaving the hens to bring up the new broods. But if young Wild Turkey poults are as difficult to rear safely as those of the domestic species, one wonders that among so many enemies, rainstorms, and other mischances, the most careful mothering ever enables a family to grow up.

RUFFED GROUSE

In former years on a tramp through the mountain woods one was quite likely to be startled by the sudden whirr of this bird's sud-

den rise. Or one might come upon a rounded hollow beside a log where the wild hen had been taking a dust bath; or would hear, from the dense laurel, the male's remarkable drumming, — thump, thump, thump, thump-thump-thump fllllump. This sound is produced by striking the air with the short, stiff, concave wings, much as a rooster flaps his wings before crowing. Although a stump or log is almost always chosen for a drumming-place, the wood is not struck during this performance, neither is the bird's own body. Like the hollow noise made by the Nighthawk in diving through the air, the boom or thump is produced by the wings alone.

But rare indeed is the luck of seeing or even hearing a Grouse at the present day. This superb game bird is the particular delight of hunters; and as it relies mostly on protective coloring for safety and cannot make long flights, but in the hunter's phraseology "lies well to a dog," most records of this Grouse over its entire range read "formerly very common," — a tragic phrase occurring all too often in the history of American bird life.

This bird is miscalled "pheasant" through much of its territory, and in New England is known as "partridge."

The nest, under a brushpile or at the base of a tree, is very much like a small domestic hen's,

and apt to be as full of eggs. The young are hatched thickly covered with down and striped on head and back like Brown Leghorn chicks. They are able to run about and scratch the day after they quit the shell. A pretty sight, but one rarely seen, for like young Bob-Whites they squat and hide at the first alarm, and do not come out until their mother warns them that all is safe again. Meantime she falls and flutters and pleads and pretends, using every device to draw attention from the precious brood.

They roost in evergreen thickets, and live in summer on insects and berries. In winter the little partridge-berry vine spreads them a meal along the banks of rocky streams, but when the snow covers these there are still catkins, and buds, and the bitter scarlet berries of the holly.

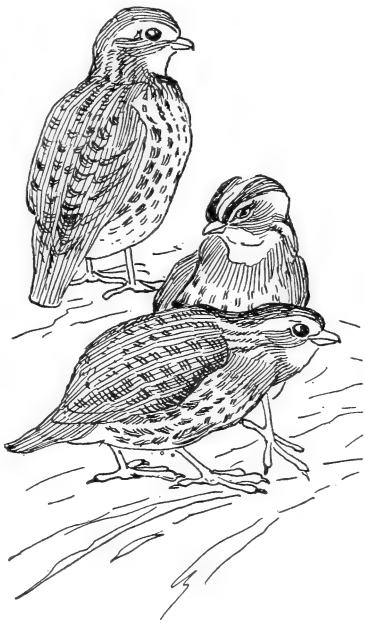
BOB-WHITE

Every girl has found the nest, or walked into the midst of a newly hatched brood that disappeared in a twinkling under the smallest sticks and leaves. Every boy has whistled to spring woods and fields to bring the ready answer, "Bob White! O Bob White!" and the inquiring "scatter-call" of "Whitie? Whitie?"

Not much of a song it seems, but we may all be glad that Bob White is now classed as a song-bird and placed under government protection.

He is more to be valued as an ally of the farmer than as a game bird, although, like chickens, he eats pretty much everything edible. He likes to run through wheat or cowpeas, gleaning; but his services in making away with the pestiferous cotton boll weevil and other harmful insects more than pay his keep.

In other ways, too, the Bob-Whites are rather like barn-yard chickens, being scratchers. They herd together when the pairing season ends, and they share each other's nests. Ten or fifteen eggs is quite enough for one pair of such short wings to cover, but where several of these little hens occupy one nest, the number may reach two or three dozen. The young also resemble Bantam chicks, downy, brown-striped; they are what is called praecocial, that is, precocious children, able to run about and scratch the day after they pip the shell. But the male Bob-White could teach



BOB WHITE
Length 10 inches

Chantecler a lesson; he makes himself useful as a husband and father, helping to incubate the eggs and care for the young.

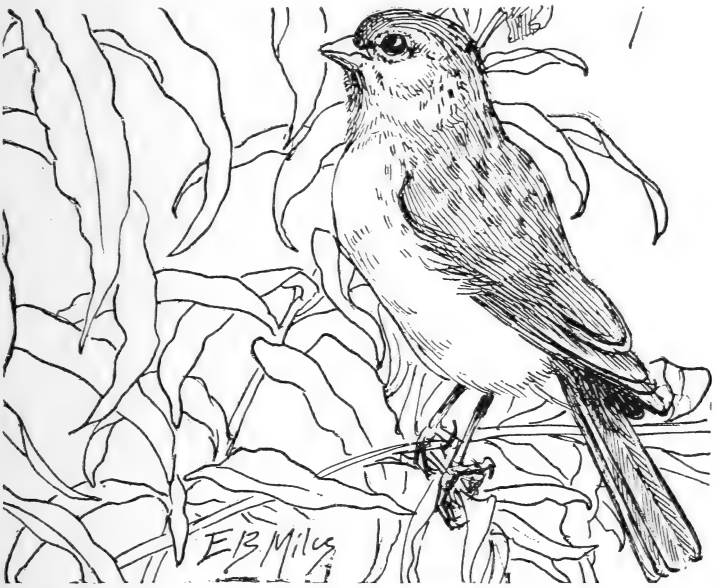
The experiment is often tried of hatching Bob-White eggs under a domestic hen, but I have never seen it succeed; the attentions of so heavy and clumsy a foster-mother is sure to trample the life out of the little ones. It is said, besides, that although young Bob-Whites are quick to scatter and hide at the warning sounded when a hawk or other danger is nigh, they will not rejoin a mother who cannot give the return call of "Whitie, Whitie," and so wander off and are lost.

In winter Bob-Whites are found in bevies, frequenting thickets and bottom lands. At this season they eat a great many of the pretty partridge-berries that grow in rocky woods on a little vine, with buds and berries of all sorts. They sleep on the ground, tail to tail in a close circle, with heads pointing outward, in small open places among bushes or tufts of grass.

FIELD SPARROW

With the exception of the noisy, bullying English Sparrow, all our Sparrows are innocent, friendly, useful little birds. None are of brilliant plumage, but some are very pleasing songsters. Of them all none is prettier in ways and coloring

than the Field Sparrow, whose bright pale brown flocks like brushy pastures best, but are common in fields and gardens in late summer. Their usefulness is evident in autumn and winter as



FIELD SPARROW
Length 5½ inches

they drift through wayside weed patches, pecking away at seeds that left to themselves would produce an abnormally troublesome crop next year. The young are reared chiefly on even more troublesome insect pests. Their nest is on the ground or in low bushes, a frail structure of fine grass.

Lucy Larcom, who wrote so tenderly of birds and flowers, has left us this pretty verse about the Field Sparrow:

"One syllable, clear and soft
As a raindrop's silvery patter,
Or a tinkling fairy-bell, heard aloft
In the midst of the merry chatter
Of robin and linnet and wren and jay,—
One syllable oft repeated:
He has but a word to say,
And of that he will not be cheated."

A pinkish bill and rather paler coloring distinguish this Sparrow from others resident in the Southern states, as the Henslow and Pinewoods Sparrows, which are not so common. Henslow may be known by an olive green head striped with black; he is seen most often in old sedge-grass fields. The Pinewoods Sparrow makes his home among pines and under scrub palmettos, and even in summer does not venture far north of Georgia. It is a famous songster, said by some authorities to equal even the Thrush in quality of tone.

All our native Sparrows inhabit fields, plains, and marshes, where their brownish streaks and markings render them inconspicuous among the usual growth. The various species are often difficult to distinguish at first; but so much indi-

viduality have they that once their acquaintance is made you can never mistake a Field Sparrow for a Chippy, or a Fox for a Whitethroat. Their attitudes, motions, and bearing are all different, in spite of the similarity of markings and color-

HENSLOW'S SPARROW
Length 5 inches

ing. The many varieties well repay our attention and study, for no large family of birds is more amiable or of more helpful service than that of our native Sparrows.

SEASIDE SPARROW

All along the Atlantic seaboard we may find this a common Sparrow, and though its flocks winter south of Virginia and return northward in spring, yet enough of their number remain

along the Southern coast during the nesting season so that we may fairly write the Seaside Sparrow as a permanent resident. Without definite coloring or markings, they live so well hidden that one seldom realizes how plentiful they are. It is only when disturbed that they take flight and are plainly visible. For the most part they run like mice among the grasses, faintly chirping, sharing their salt marsh or creek with Savannah and Swamp Sparrows, busily feeding on "sand fleas" under the drift cast up by the tide, and on the seeds of weeds, and marsh insects, and now and then mounting a tall reed or a bush to deliver the four or five notes that make up their only musical effort.

The nest is woven of seaweed and marsh grass, attached to the grass stalks a little above ground, and sometimes arched and roofed over with dry seaweed.

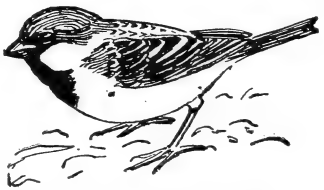
Rather more noticeably marked but identical in habits is the Sharp-tailed Sparrow, who frequents the same salt meadows and streams emptying into the ocean. His narrow tail quills are sharply pointed, hence the name.

The nest is very similar to that of the last, but for it a drier site is commonly chosen, in a tussock of grass, or in the drift and seaweed cast up by the tide along the shore. The greenish white eggs, specked with brown, look precisely

alike in the nests of both species, and the squeaky little voices of both birds are indistinguishable. We have to examine the tail feathers, and look for a small bright yellow spot before the eyes to be sure that it is a Sharp-tailed Sparrow.

ENGLISH SPARROW

It is easy to understand how the original mistake came to be made, in 1851 and 1852, of introducing this bird of the Old World among American species; but why, oh, why need the same error have been repeated recently in the case of the Starling? It is always a risk to disturb the natural balance of animal life by transferring a species from its native continent to another. To be sure, the introduction of reindeer into Newfoundland has by all accounts worked well; but the reindeer is a domestic animal directly under man's control; whereas for one such success there are several disastrous experiments on record, such as the importation of rabbits into Australia, and that of the mongoose into Jamaica.



ENGLISH SPARROW
Length 6¼ inches

Usually a species so introduced into a foreign country fails in some respect to wholly adapt itself to the new habitat, and soon dies out of

the locality, to be heard of there no more. But occasionally it happens that the alien species being superior in adaptability makes haste to adjust itself, and being hardy, thrifty, and of rapid breeding tendencies, manages to over-live the native species, and even to drive them out as the white man over-lived and drove out the Indian.

Many of our most troublesome weeds, coming originally from Europe, have out-done even the commonest American vegetation in this way. But the most notorious example of this sort of error is the English Sparrow.

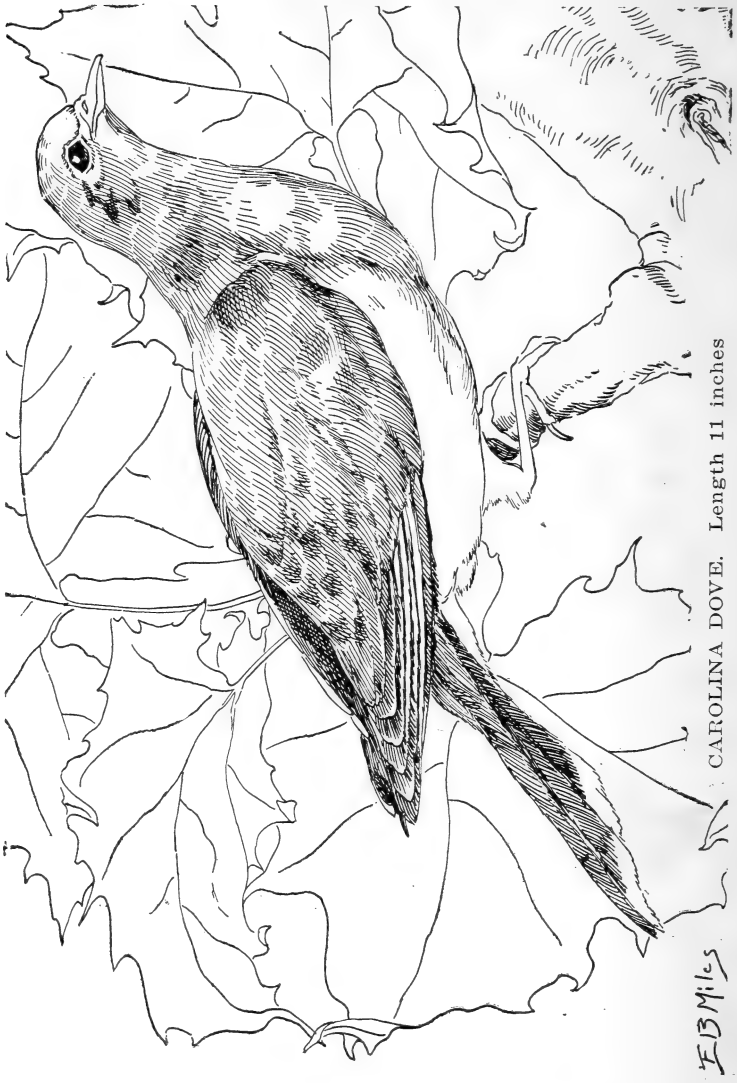
Few birds in the world are more unlovely or less generally useful than this dirty, noisy, quarrelsome little street gamin. By those who brought the first pairs across the Atlantic it was supposed that this Sparrow would be of service in clearing village streets of insect life; but his appetite proved to be appreciative of pretty much everything, including sprouting suburban gardens and stores of grain. So long as the nuisance was confined to towns and cities, where a certain amount of noise and dirt seems inevitable anyway, no alarm was felt. But they are no longer confined to towns or even to suburbs. The terrible fitness, the all-conquering adaptability of this Sparrow extends itself to all but the primeval forest.

English Sparrows can make a nest of any available material in any available place, and a living where other birds would starve. They do not, as is sometimes said, fight away other birds; they have no need to do so. It is only necessary for them to take possession of all nesting sites in advance of others. Rapid multiplication does the rest. Changes in environment do not disturb them; accidents to the nest are mere episodes of the season, since they rear several broods in succession, and if one mate is killed, its survivor immediately finds another; and they are undismayed by our most rigorous weather.

The most remote settlements and even country homes are no longer safe from invasion. Only the sparsely inhabited mountains and Tropical Florida are free from this pest, and it may be only a question of time and further settlement till they too shall be colonized. Sparrow traps do much to mitigate the annoyance, but we may never again hope to hear around our homes the true chorus of native songsters undisturbed by the loud, harsh Sparrow chirping.

CAROLINA DOVE — MOURNING DOVE

A boy once told me that "every dove has one drop of human blood in its body, and if you kill one it'll haunt you." Such a superstition must have come, I think, from the tender expression



CAROLINA DOVE. Length 11 inches

of the dove's eyes and the meekness of its bearing. And though all false beliefs are hurtful, I could almost wish that this one might be generally taught and encouraged, if it might be a means of ending the slaughter of this useful and lovely bird throughout the Southern states.

Doves are most frequently seen walking — walking, not hopping, with their round smooth heads bobbing prettily at every step — in open woods or fields and along country roads. Everywhere and always they are occupied in looking for weed seed. Each single dove will eat, in the course of the autumn and winter, a quantity of the seed of noxious weeds that saves man or boy days and days of back-breaking labor in the field and garden next year. The dove has been for centuries admired as the world's type of innocence and gentleness; but few even of those who love these birds best have realized how great a help their work is to that of cultivators.

Many Southern boys hail the slow, sweet cooing of the Dove in March as the signal for taking off shoes and stockings, just as European peasant children listen for the call of the old-world Cuckoo. But careful elders should warn them that March is unsafe for barefoot-time, although we are too far south to follow Poor Richard's New England rule, "Change not a clout till May be out." Perhaps it would be better to take the

arrival of the Chat or the Thrush as the signal for barefeet, instead of listening to one so reckless of untimely frosts as our friendly Dove.

The nest is loosely and carelessly woven of sticks laid in the fork of a tree, scarcely protecting the two white eggs, which sometimes fall out. The young, like those of all doves and pigeons, are fed by regurgitation, that is, with predigested food from the crops of both parents. Their tender, naked bodies cannot be very comfortable or even safe in such a rudely constructed lattice-work of twigs, but they have the gentlest care and brooding. Two or three broods are raised in a season.

Doves, like others of the Pigeon family, are believed to mate for life. Their lover-like ways and refined manners are very pleasing to watch, as they walk about in pairs during the nesting season. Usually they go in pairs, or in small flocks, and never nest in colonies as did the Passenger Pigeon. For this reason it will probably never be exterminated like its ill-fated relative. While in some localities they have become rarer than we could wish, owing to excessive persecution by hunters, their name has now been removed from the game list and their numbers allowed a gradual increase.

On the wing, like most Doves and Pigeons, the Carolina Dove is a strong and swift flier, but

on the ground the short legs and pretty, rosy feet can take only mincing steps. Another peculiarity which it shares with this whole family of birds is the ability to drink without raising the head to swallow as other birds are obliged to do. The Dove's beak is immersed and the bird drinks as steadily and deeply as a horse. They sometimes nest miles from water, and early in the morning fly in pairs or in small companies to the nearest drinking-place, cleaving the air like bullets with whistling wings over your still sleepy head.

A pretty little Ground Dove, not much larger than a Sparrow, is not uncommon in the Gulf States and is sometimes found as far north as the Carolinas. It frequents old fields, swamps, and pine barrens, and builds a nest on the ground or in a bush, laying two pure white eggs. It is rather darker and browner in color than the larger Dove, and its red beak and pink breast feathers distinguish it clearly.

GOLDFINCH

Which is bird and which is blossom, as they flutter over the sunflower whose broad bosom is so generously filled with ripening seeds? Black and gold could not be more vivid: I have actually seen a big bumblebee deceived by it into flying at a Goldfinch, who drew daintily back and

GOLDFINCH
Length 5¼ inches

regarded the blundering intruder as if wishing to tell him he was "as crazy as he looked." But the bright canary-like yellow of the male Goldfinch's summer plumage is molted in autumn, and for the rest of the year he is dull-colored like the female.

Their food is chiefly of seeds, lettuce seeds being so favored that they are sometimes called Lettuce-birds, and for a similar reason Thistle-birds; but plant-lice and other small insects are also eaten.

The song is quite canary-like, but softer, with a variety of pretty chirps and trills. On the wing, their undulating course is punctuated by a twitter described by the mountain people as "Meat's cheaper—meat's cheaper"; and there is also a call-note, "te-zwee-ee? te-zwee?" with rising inflection.

The nest is very pretty, made of grass and plant fibres and lined with thistle down. It is often placed in alders or other thick waterside growth. There are from three to six pale blue eggs. The nesting time is delayed beyond that of most of our small birds, as late as June or even July.

During the winter, when most of our gay song birds have deserted us, we are often gladdened by a bright cluster of clear twittering notes, falling as it were out of the sky, where

these Goldfinches seem to be bounding along with the motion of sea waves. Many are the dainty pictures of Goldfinch life that come readily to mind — a Goldfinch and his mate on the tassels of a summer cornfield; a Goldfinch making his exquisite toilet on a bean vine just outside my window before sunrise, on several mornings in succession; Goldfinches on the thistles or the wild lettuce of an old field, pecking seeds; a male bright as a flower, hopping alone among the garden beds; Goldfinches swaying on the slender culms of nearly ripened oats, picking out the milky grains; a single beauty on the top twig of a peach tree, standing on his head to strip it of sap-sucking aphides, and righting himself to sing like a Canary between mouthfuls. Our whole year would lose a jewel if this bright company should leave us by any ill chance; they enrich and gladden the days of every season.

ROBIN

In Tennessee and southward we hardly know the Robin as a spring songster; he is more conspicuous as a winter visitor, appearing in flocks that come and go erratically over their feeding grounds. The Robin resident from Georgia to the Carolinas is less vividly colored than the normal type, and is usually written as a separate species — the Southern Robin.

Until recently many have been killed for food, although there can be scarcely three bites of meat on bones so delicate; but the Government has now taken the Robin under its protection, making the killing of one a misdemeanor. It is to be hoped that this course will result in the return of large numbers of these birds to their wonted habitat; for not only are the few cherries and strawberries which they eat paid for many times over by the amount of noxious insect life they remove, but the Robin's song and presence is a flash of joy we could ill spare.

ROBIN
Length 10 inches

What an active, gladsome, vigorous fellow he is, and how clearly and fully he expresses all his feelings in his various notes. No refinement of musical culture, such as graces his kinsmen the Thrushes, belongs to him, no elegance of gentle manners; we might say that the Wood Thrush is a violinist to whose recitals we listen in admiration, and Robin is a fiddler to whose jolly strains we may dance with glee. His notes ring with positive gladness; his every motion is decided and free, his bearing alert and open; his presence dominates the lawn or orchard.

His nest, like his erect carriage, shows that he is not the Redbreast of England, but a true Thrush. It looks like a big, careless, dirty Thrush's nest, being plastered with a cup-like shell of mud, and often saddled on a bough in the same way. But it is either less skillfully made, or else Robin has not so much discretion and judgment in placing it as have his woodland cousins; for a rainstorm is likely to crumble its wall and mash it out of its moorings — a disaster which I have never known to come upon a Thrush.

And Robin has a wider range of nesting sites to choose from, too; he may tuck his cradle into the angle of a barn's eaves, or any odd nook about the farm, for he is a friendly fellow, as we all know. And however his hearty, happy-go-lucky ways endear him to us, it seems a pity he cannot exercise some of the usual Thrush wisdom in his architectural affairs.

An old nest in my possession is made chiefly of quantities of crab-grass and small twigs in a bulky mass, woven outside with yards and yards of string, and scraps of rag and paper. There is the usual shell of hardened mud, lined with rootlets.

Four eggs of the famous blue are laid, and if the nest proves safe and satisfactory, a second brood may be reared in it.

The food of Robins includes a great variety of insects, and earthworms pulled from the sod; the berries of the China tree, holly, and mistletoe; wild cherries, as well as those of the orchard; service-berries, and dogwood, cedar and sumach berries.

BLUE JAY

Fine feathers, even in two shades of steel-bright blue with white borders, do not make a fine bird of this crafty robber of nests. His voice betrays him with its screeching "whongee, whongee, jay! jay! jay! hit 'm a lick, hit 'im a lick!" Undeniably he has his own place in creation, and fills his own sphere of usefulness; but it is not in the vicinity of our homes, where the gentler songbirds are more to be desired.

He is accused of murderous attacks on smaller birds, and certainly eats both eggs and young when he can find an unguarded nest; but he is rather cowardly. I have seen a pair of Red-eyed Vireos, defending their home, put a pair of these noisy bullies to flight.

Jays are almost as destructive as their cousins the Crows, and have the same love of teasing and scolding. A gang of them will sometimes discover the daytime retreat of an inoffensive Screech Owl and tease and chase him from one tree to another with malicious glee, as Crows

BLUE JAY
Length 11½ inches

enjoy driving and teasing a Hawk. They are like Crows, too, in the amount of noise they make about the business of nesting and feeding the young. Never again will a pair of Jays be allowed to nest near *one* dwelling!

Besides animal food Jays eat seeds, and are ever in search of small nuts and acorns, of which they hide away a surplus for future use.

The nest is bulky and brushy, usually placed in a stout crotch of a wide spreading tree rather high overhead. Four to six grayish eggs, spotted with brown, are laid. The young birds' first feathers come in brightly blue, like those of the parents.

Emerson, alone I believe among observers, declares that the Blue Jay does "more good than harm." But when I see a whole neighborhood of song-birds silenced and terrorized by the passing of a troop of these feathered Uhlans, I can only wonder what reason the philosopher had for his statement. Perhaps he thought of the flash of color which these bold azure wings add to our dun landscape after most bright-colored birds have followed the sun southward.

MEADOWLARK

Was it not a Meadowlark who, in the fable, postponed moving her nest fledglings while the farmer sent requests for friends and neighbors

to help him, but so soon as he took up the sickle himself fled at once, convinced that reaping would now actually begin? Not so wise as all

MEADOWLARK
Length 10¾ inches

this, but still very well acquainted with the ways of harvests and fields is our friend of the open as we know him,—flying up before our feet with a sputtering note of alarm, only to drop out of sight in the deep grass as a stone drops into a pool; or showing his bright yellow breast and black V-shaped collar from the top of a stump or fence-post; or fifing "spring o' the year—

spring o' the year'' from a tree. Like many other species, these birds are partially migratory in the latitude of severe winters, but resident here.

Meadowlarks build their nests on the ground, and really build it, too, usually arching it over. This structure shelters from three to five eggs, specked with brown.

Boys with guns used to consider the Meadowlark a game bird; but the Federal migratory birds laws have put an end to this over most of the country, and boys with kodaks and field-glasses are getting a more real and lasting enjoyment out of him today.

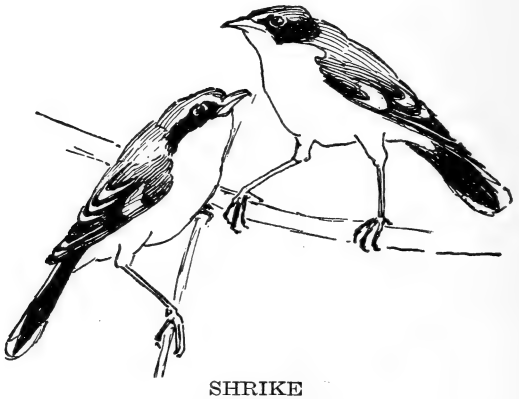
These ''fiel'-larks,'' as they are commonly called in the country, are not really larks at all, but are related to the Orioles and Blackbirds. In winter their flocks may be commonly found over river-bottoms and in marshy places, and when made bold by the hungry season, they venture sometimes to glean in the very barnyard with the chickens.

LOGGERHEAD SHRIKE

Why Loggerhead I have never learned, but he is well called the Butcher-bird; and handsome as he is not many of us really like him. He is so useful that the Federal migratory bird laws protect him, along with all other perching birds

whose food consists chiefly of insects. But when beetles, lizards, grasshoppers, and field-mice fail, the Shrike makes a prey of small birds; and it makes one shudder to see a bonny Warbler or Kinglet impaled on a thorn or on the barbs of a wire fence.

The habit of thus impaling its victims, as a butcher hangs quarters of beef on his hooks,



SHRIKE
Length 9 inches

seems at first a needless and wanton mutilation, but there is a reason for it. The feet of a Shrike are not formed with talons, like those of a bird of prey, but are the slim and clasping claws of a perching bird. Hence in order to hold his meat while tearing it to pieces, he pins it fast with a thorn.

He is no singer, but can only whistle and

squawk. The nest of the pair is usually well hidden in thickets or bushes, with from five to seven grayish, spotted eggs to guard.

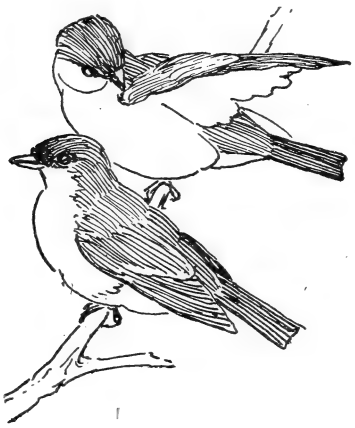
In October Shrikes get together as do the Mockingbirds, in small bands, though they are not wholly migratory. The sight of half a dozen or more of these handsome birds sitting on a tree in the morning autumn sunshine is worth getting out of doors early to see.

This Shrike furnishes an interesting example of nature's fine and accurate adjustment of the balance between different forms of life. He kills small birds in as spectacular and cruel a manner as do some so-called sportsmen, it is true; but in a quieter way he is efficient in keeping down two of the worst enemies the birds have,—snakes and field-mice. For some of the small snakes he picks up might certainly grow into large ones from which even a Woodpecker's hole affords no protection to young birds; and as to field-mice, they are so fond of the tidbit of a bird's egg that I often wonder how a pair of Meadowlarks or Ground Warblers ever guard their family to the time of hatching. Loggerhead is a terror to a flock of innocent Field Sparrows; they cry out and flutter away for their lives at his descent. But perhaps he is their benefactor in default of other protection—as the robber barons of the Middle Ages were

tolerated and supported, because they maintained the public roads.

BLUEBIRD

To the New England states, where the majority of American natural histories are written, the Bluebird is a summer visitor, hence it has become well known over the United States as the harbinger of spring; but throughout the southern winter home its soft contralto "dearie, dearie" may be heard in mild weather at any time of year. A wintry roadside may be suddenly illumined by the descent of a dozen Bluebirds on a sumach bush, or a pokeweed in late summer may be laid flat under the weight of a flock coming to eat the purple berries.



BLUEBIRD
Length 7 inches

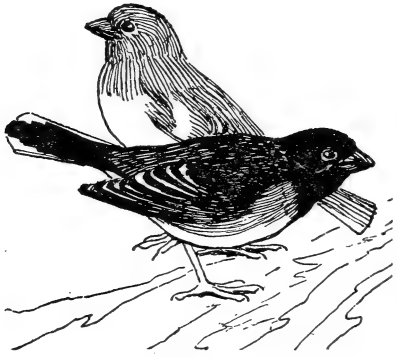
A gentler, more amiable deportment than that of the Bluebird can not be found. Their pretty sky-colored eggs are often laid in the hollows of old gate-posts or appletrees, for they keep up some sort of companionship with man and prefer to nest on farms or near dwellings.

During the bitter winter of 1895 most of them were killed through this part of the country and farther north; their frozen bodies were picked up where they had fallen from starvation, along roads and in fields, while many being too exhausted for flight fell easy victims to hawks, cats, and other natural enemies. Other species also suffered, but it was not until about 1900 that the Bluebirds reappeared in anything like their former numbers. They were so greatly missed that during this period many people resolved henceforth to keep feeding-stations replenished during snowy weather, that such a calamity might not occur again. For this bird's disposition is as celestial as its coloring, and he is as welcome to everyone as he is familiar to most.

Dusky blue and bronze in winter, the feathers become brighter in the spring molt; the breast is then colored like new plowed earth in the "old red hills of Georgia," and the back and wings of the male a rich blue, like a fallen fragment of the middle sky, whereas the color of the female is less vivid. The Bluebird is often confused with the Indigo Bunting, but may be distinguished by the rusty-red breast and by the beak, which is narrow and black, while the other is a true Finch, with beak conical and thick and colored like the feathers.

TOWHEE

Sometimes this bird is called Ground Robin; the spirited, erect carriage and handsome black-and-chestnut coloring remind us of the Robin's. In the southern mountains he is known as the "Joree bird," from one of his loud, ringing calls; farther north he is called "chewink," from another call.



TOWHEE
Length 8 inches

Towhees are frequenters of brush piles and brier patches, where they roost at night and scratch among the leaves like chickens in the daytime. The vivid black and white of the male, with chestnut sides, is easily seen, but the brown female is hardly to be distinguished from the ground. There are more of them with us in winter than in summer, because they are partially migratory, those that live in the Northern states coming south to spend the winter.

The nest is usually on the ground, but is sometimes set up in a low bush. It contains four or five white eggs dotted over with reddish

brown, and is so well hidden among dead leaves and colorless débris of last year's weeds that one must be careful not to set a heedless foot upon it.

The Towhee flies low, and keeps to the underbrush of swampy glades and bushy old fields. Among the dead leaves and grass he finds his food of earthworms and larvae, taking also some ripe berries in season.

PURPLE GRACKLE

This Blackbird is with the Southern states a permanent resident, though their immense flocks in the March and September migrations are the most impressive thing about Blackbirds elsewhere. Alas for the cornfield on which such a flock descends! This bird is also known as Cornthief, though in some sections of the country it lives mainly on grasshoppers. He is disliked also on account of his robberies of other birds' nests.

Never was made a more earnest effort to sing than a flock of Blackbirds settled on a field or hillside in spring, and never was a more ludicrous failure than the storm of twitterings, whistles, wheezes, and squeaks that arise from such a chorus.

Against the unattractiveness and the glaring faults of Blackbirds, Crows, and Ravens, it must be set down to their credit that they are all

devoted lovers and of a domestic faithfulness that is admirable. The nest of the Purple Grackle is built in the treetops, usually in a neighborhood of dozens of such nests. It is made of sticks, bark, and grasses, interwoven instead of being loosely laid like the Crow's, and lined with mud. The eggs vary greatly in color and markings.

TURKEY BUZZARD

Over all the country the Vultures are given credit for their good work as scavengers. Nobody is allowed by law to molest them, and nobody wishes to do so. Every one realizes that a Vulture is worth more living than dead. The birds seem to know of this widespread public sentiment in their favor, and in many Southern towns will come into the very streets to feed.

The soaring and circling of these birds is a conspicuous feature of the Southern landscape. A more lofty and perfect expression of the poetry of motion is hard to imagine, short of the wheeling of spheres in the planetary system. They seem to circle slowly round some invisible aerial center, without apparent motion of the large outspread wings, upheld by some mighty natural force and impelled and guided only by wish or will. Such effortless grace, such ample, free, deliberate progression is hardly found else-

TURKEY BUZZARD. Length 26 inches

where in the animal kingdom, — even the eagle does once in a while bethink himself of a necessity for haste.

Once on the ground, however, the Turkey Vulture becomes the ridiculous "Ol' Mis' Buzzard" of Uncle Remus, awkward and bald-headed, an offense to sight and to another sense.

Except during the nesting season, Vultures usually resort to a common roost at night. The cliffs along the brow of Southern mountains, and the brakes of creeks, harbor a great many. The large, brown-spotted eggs are laid on some safe ledge in these bluffs, or in a cave, or, in a region where great rocks are lacking, either in a hollow log or tree, or even on the ground under a log. The young are covered with grayish down and are helpless for a long time.

Another Vulture quite as common in the South is the Black Vulture or Carrion Crow, a smaller bird, with shorter wings that are not all black, but glisten silvery on the underside. The heads of both birds are naked, but the Buzzard's is red — "where Brer Rabbit shoveled hot coals upon it," according to Uncle Remus — while that of the Carrion Crow is black. Neither bird has a voice, except for the utterance of a low grunting or hissing sound when disturbed.

SPARROW HAWK

"Wild as a Hawk" is a common and highly expressive phrase. It is not to be wondered at that this group of swift, beautiful, and valuable birds should live in terror of the approach of man; for is not every man's hand against them? In spite of the fact that only two of our common Hawks habitually prey upon poultry, every hawk is in popular speech a "Chicken Hawk" and so to be killed on sight. It is strange that the scavenger value of the related family of Vultures should be so widely recognized and these birds generally protected, while the no less useful work of the Hawks in keeping down meadow mice, grasshoppers, and other mischievous pests is passed without appreciation.

Smallest of Falcons is the pretty Sparrow Hawk, scarcely larger than a robin. Its name belies its usual occupation to some extent, for while its appearance strikes terror to the hearts of small birds and sends them into hiding, an examination of the stomachs of many of these little Hawks gave a result of far more fur than feathers—indicating a decided preference for field-mice. A great many of the larger kinds of insects are also eaten.

The Sparrow Hawk nests on cliffs or in trees, but seldom builds for itself, preferring to lay

SPARROW HAWK
Length 10 inches

its brown-spotted eggs on the ground, in the top of a broken-off tree trunk or a cavity, or in a deserted crow's nest, freshly lined with finer twigs or bark.

This little fellow's eyesight, like that of other Hawks, is very keen, and its adjustment wonderful. For instance, he may be sailing high overhead, crying "killy—killy—killy," but the movement of a tiny mouse or lizard on the ground does not escape him. Then in the instant of his downward pounce, his eyes have changed their focus so that it requires a swift and clever mouse to get away. His usual manner of taking his prey is, however, to dart upon it from a hedge or bush.

All hawks feed upon meat, some catching insects, snails, frogs, snakes, lizards, and rabbits, small rodents in plenty, and even fish. The Rough-legged and the Broad-winged Hawks do not eat birds or poultry at all. It is a pity to make the whole tribe suffer for the sins of a few; and a great mistake is made by any community which puts a bounty on the heads of its birds of prey.

WINTER VISITORS

BROWN CREEPER

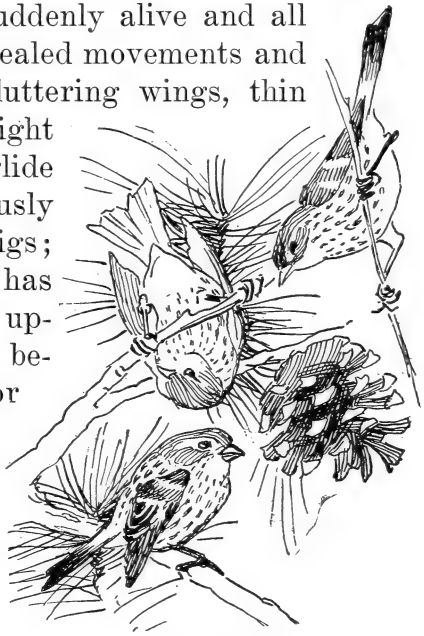
A regular winter visitor is this busy worker, moth-like in his quiet ways and in the velvet softness of his mottled markings who never in daylight ceases his searching scrutiny of the bark of trees. How many small insects he picks up, what quantities of tiny eggs and larvae, who can say! His bright eyes seem to see nothing farther away than the trunk to which he clings; his sharp beak, curved like a surgeon's needle, goes into the smallest cranny; his claws bear him steadily up the bole, helped by the brace of the stiff, pointed tail feathers. So closely is the body flattened that it seems like a bit of the bark itself that is moving,—moving upward, not down, for, unlike the Nuthatch, the Brown Creeper works from the roots up. Unlike the Nuthatch again, he seems to pay little attention to even the larger boughs, and never descends to the ground or mingles with other birds in feeding.

Just a solitary worker, colorless, and songless, but so busy as to be happy among us during all the frozen months; and no doubt the pretty nest which he hides behind a piece of loosened

bark or in a hollow of some Canadian timber is the crown of the year to him as much as to the most vociferous songster, and the full recompense of all his work.

PINE FINCH OR SISKIN

When a flock of Siskins settles on a pine on a winter day, it is as if the sombre, dusky tree burst into bloom, suddenly alive and all astir, with half concealed movements and chirpings. Little fluttering wings, thin as paper, and bright weightless bodies glide and dart capriciously over the bark and twigs; every brown cone has its bird, standing upside down to reach between the scales for the seed. They are not confined to pines, however, but visit other trees for the sake of buds, of which they eat a great many. They also flutter down to the roadside for the seeds of goldenrod and weeds.

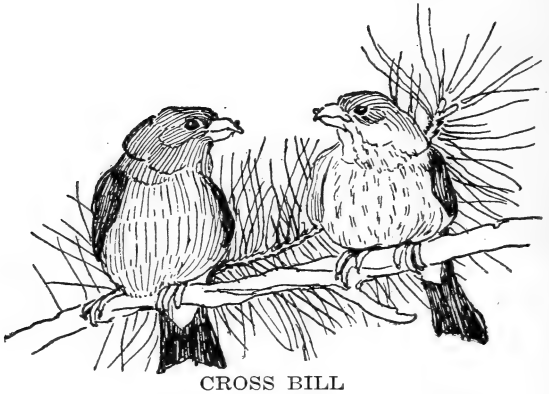


PINE SISKIN
Length 5 inches

Pine Siskins are often mistaken for Goldfinches in winter plumage, but are not quite so bright-colored and have not the clear voice of the Goldfinch, although their twittering song is very pretty. They come to us only in winter, nesting north of the United States.

CROSSBILL

These curious Finches rove the country erratically, in gypsy bands, so that while they appear on the outskirts of our cities every win-



CROSS BILL
Length 6 inches

ter, it is always a surprise to meet them. Their coloring, dull-red in the male and mottled olive and yellow in the female, with their interesting Parrot-like movements, makes them worth seeking among the pine trees; and they are tame

enough to allow close observation. They cling to the cones on which they feed, exchanging a short whistled call-note, and sending a shower of scales and broken cones down through the branches, for they can strip a cone with those crossed mandibles as quickly as you could do it with your fingers. Like Waxwings, they often take wing in a group without apparent reason, and circle gracefully round to return to the same tree, in their undulating flight uttering a flute-like whistle. There is also a pleasant little song.

The Crossbill flocks appear to nest wherever they find themselves in early spring, often when far south of their usual range, but always in coniferous trees.

Another bird of eccentric gypsy habits, whose roving bands may be encountered in winter, is the Purple Finch. He is not really purple, but a dull rosy red with Sparrow-like markings, as if a brown Sparrow had been dipped in grape juice. A fine singer in his own range, he is seldom or never heard here, leaving us before his spring song commences. Unfortunately these beautiful Finches are too fond of orchard buds to be welcomed as frequent visitors.

WHITETHROAT SPARROW

Among the many Sparrows who spend the winter south of the Ohio none is handsomer than

this one, who may be known by his broadly striped head and the white patch on the throat. He is larger by half an inch than the English

WHITETHROAT SPARROW
Length 6¾ inches

Sparrow of town streets. Besides the attraction of being so richly and harmoniously colored he offers a little song of his own that sounds like "I Peabody, peabody, peabody," or "pea-bod-y-bird," by which name he is frequently known in

his Northern summer home where he is more often heard than seen.

In our latitude, however, the winter sunshine rarely inspires him to more vocal effort than a few chirps and whistles. We see these Whitethroats on the ground in bushy, briery places, scratching like chickens, often in company with Fox Sparrows, and Towhees. They are ground birds, even building their nests on the ground after their return northward in spring.

An old mountain field I know of, where a clear "spring-branch" slides with tinkle and murmur under encroaching shadows of pine and dogwood, emerging into sunlight in a tangle of bare bushes and blackberry briers, is a good place in which to see all the winter sparrows. On a walk in that direction one is sure to encounter a group of Swamp Sparrows in the withered grass, or of the large Fox Sparrows, brown and glossy like the dry leaves they are so vigorously tossing about; or Grasshopper Sparrows, with a yellow spot on the bend of the wing and another between the eye and the beak, flitting over a broom-sedge knoll; or the two white tail feathers of the Vesper Sparrow flash before he disappears into the grizzly-gray weeds and underbrush.

These are but a few of the Sparrows who spend the winter in the Southern states. They

are difficult for the beginner to distinguish, being all of the same general Sparrow type, with broad, conical Finch-like beaks, soft round heads, and pleasant ways.

SONG SPARROW

One snowy day in March a stranger came to feed among the Juncos and Wrens on their dinner of crumbs, sunflower seeds, and cracked nuts, for which we had swept bare a rock in the back yard. We recognized the Song Sparrow "on whose throat Music hath set her triple-fingered mark," as Dr. Van Dyke says of him. Afterward we heard his thanksong from the top of a near-by pine, a delicious melody, varied and brilliant as that of a canary. A group of us stood listening for a time in the doorway, on tiptoe not to miss a note; then we hunted out the passage in Thoreau's wonderful Walden which begins, "The first sparrow of spring! The year beginning with younger hope than ever!" and read it aloud with an appreciation none of us had ever felt before. Thus richly does nature reward us for a little friendliness, "inasmuch as we have done it unto one of the least of these."

The Song Sparrow in all its variations is the most generally distributed and the best known of our native sparrows. It is a vivacious neighbor like the Chippy, at home in fields, hedges,

and gardens, sprinkling the roadside with music, and blessing every hour of the day with good cheer. It is common throughout the South in winter, and enough Song Sparrows remain with us throughout the year for most of us to know them nearly as well by sound as by sight—though the March incident just related was unusual. The song accompanies the romance of mating and nesting, as with most species.

SONG SPARROW
Length 6¼ inches

The nest is sometimes hidden in the grass and weeds, where it is at least safe from hawks, and again it may be set up in the crotch of a bush, as if the little builders had meadow mice and clumsy-hoofed cattle in mind. It is cup-shaped, made of grass and leaves and lined with hair and fine fibres. From three to five grayish white, speckled eggs are laid, and two and even three broods may be raised in a season.

SAVANNAH SPARROW

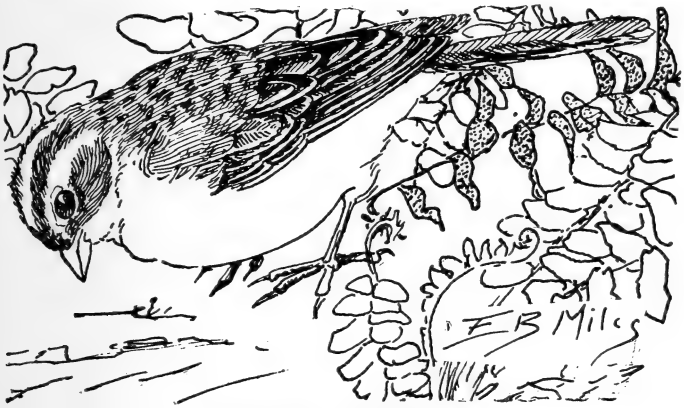
This shy ground bird steals through the weeds and grasses so quietly, and disappears into the fence or the underbrush so quickly when disturbed, that one may pass years among the birds without suspecting how many Savannah Sparrows inhabit our marshes and pastures during the winter. The habit of sitting alone out of doors while sketching has revealed to me many of the shyer and quieter species of birds, who, though easily startled by the slightest movement, will pass close by a motionless figure without fearing or perhaps even suspecting its presence. It was in this way that I gained my first sight of the Savannah Sparrow. They were a small flock feeding in the grass, pecking along from clump to clump, chirping mildly and sociably, and every now and then raising their pretty round heads to look watchfully about them. Their streaked breasts, and the buff markings round their soft bright eyes, were plain to view; but they never saw me! If they had, what a fluttering and scattering away through the old fields, cat brier and sumach tangles must have ensued!

This Sparrow is no singer, but before going north to the lowlands of Canada and Nova Scotia to build his nest sometimes offers us a weak

chirp and insect-like trill by way of springtime greeting.

SWAMP SPARROW

Like a lost riverlet is the sweet monotonous trill that, issuing from the grassy, brushy tangle

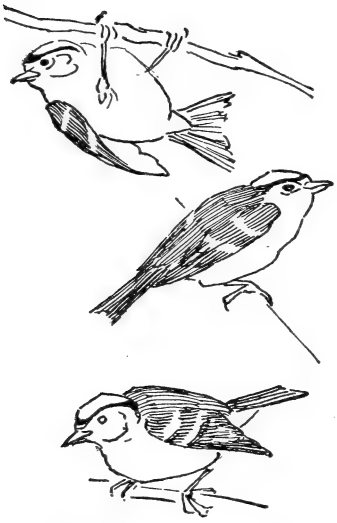


SWAMP SPARROW
Length 5¾ inches

of the marsh growth, lets you know the little dark-brown bird is near, usually before your eyes can find him. Look closely at his bright bay head, which in winter is striped with black, and you may be sure of him in whatever surroundings; for in the South he does not always choose so moist a habitat, but is content in low-lying brushy pastures and sedge-grass fields.

A stream that has lost its way in crossing a

woody flat, and grown up in lush waterweeds and alder and azalea, suits very well the Swamp Sparrow's idea of a winter residence. Here you may see him flying just above the low thicket, trilling happily as he goes; or walking securely over the soft mire which your clumsier feet cannot approach; or even tripping across the water on some light pontoon of chance-caught drift that looks as if it would scarcely bear up a fly.



GOLDEN-CROWNED KINGLET
Length 4 inches

In the spring these Sparrows, with the Grasshoppers and the Whitethroats, return to their northern homes.

GOLDEN-CROWNED KINGLET

Tiniest and brightest of the children of winter is this happy fairy—smaller and brighter even than the Pine Warbler. Though most frequently seen pecking for his scanty fare along pine branches and in evergreen bushes, he is not confined to such, and being in winter very sociable with other small birds, goes wherever they do. I have seen him in the door-

yard among Titmice and Juncos, and in a dogwood thicket with Chickadees, busily and amicably feeding all together.

He has not much of a song — a few weak chirps and trills; but his pleasant disposition is apparent without such evidence.

Another Kinglet, the Ruby-crowned, is scarcely larger but a louder singer, brightening our winter days and, like the last, going north to Canada to build his nest in spring.

WAXWING

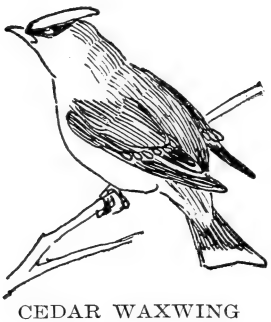
Like a Japanese watercolor in finish of detail and softness of coloring is a group of Waxwings sitting close together, as they love to be, on a treetop; like a festoon of flying cherubs in some old master's conception of celestial regions is the grace of their short flights, wheeling out and back again. Invariably they suggest a work of art, or some finished elegance of cultivation.

Their affectionate, dainty manners toward one another win our admiration. Surely the beauty of such a flock, though songless, well repays us for the cherries of which they take toll. But their capacity for destroying canker-worms is an indorsement quite as strong.

The name Waxwing is given them on account of the curiously tipped wing feathers. Across

each wing is what appears to be a row of drops of bright red sealing wax. The body color is a smooth and delicate fawn which sunshine tints softly golden; there is a tuft on the head, and a yellow band across the tail.

These birds come and go in flocks, delighting the very dooryard for a few days and then disappearing for months together. One never knows where to find them, but may walk up on a pretty group at any time. In our latitude they are winter visitors, building their nests from Virginia northward. At the time when a company of them descends upon the May cherries and provokes us to wrath by selecting the ripest and finest, most of our small birds are sitting, or have young in the nest, while some species are already considering a second venture in home-making. But it is not until June is well begun, and other birds are through with family cares for the season, that the beautiful Waxwings begin to build.



CEDAR WAXWING
Length 7 inches

They seem to have no molting period; their appearance is always neat and full-feathered. Where most birds are incessantly in motion, restlessly changing position and place, nervously

searching for and triumphantly seizing their food, and eating it with watchful glances in all directions between bites, the Waxwings are creatures of elegant leisure. They have all the time there is. Having fed to repletion on great quantities of juniper and sumach berries, farkleberries, wild cherries, worms, and various insects, they retire to the top of a chosen tree to sit nearly motionless for a long time digesting their meal and enjoying a low-toned lisping conversation. They are a gentle race, taking life easily, in a gracious and ample spirit that may well be the envy of those less nobly bred.

HERMIT THRUSH

This is one of the world's famous singers who comes to winter with us, unheralded and almost unsuspected. He is not on tour; scarcely a note of his wonderful summer performance does he vouchsafe to the most patient and eager listener, even in early spring. By the time his singing season opens he is gone to his New England or Canadian home.

During the cold months we may account him as the most elegant in appearance and refined in bearing of all our winter visitors. Smaller and less distinctly marked than the Wood Thrush, he slips like a lovely brown bit of shadow between lichened boulder and Christmas-fern, over mossy

log and into a tangle of brush, and melts into invisibility in the soft gray of the winter woods. If you can steal upon him while making his morning toilet, as I have, you are lucky; or if

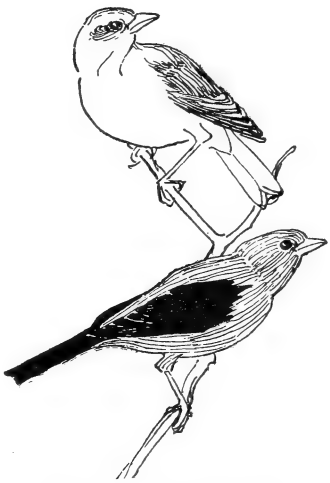
HERMIT THRUSH
Length 6¾ inches

you are perfectly quiet he may remain for some time sitting on a limb before you, regarding you with gentle confidence and curiosity, and slowly moving his rust-brown tail up and down.

SUMMER MIGRANTS

SCARLET TANAGER

In the Southern mountains this splendid summer resident is called the Timber Redbird, to distinguish it from the Cardinal or "Winter Redbird." Its wild beauty is invested also with a certain halo of romance, since in that region a pretty brunette, if she be saucy and spirited, is sometimes spoken of as a "timber redbird."



SCARLET TANAGER
Length 7½ inches

During the nesting season when the nuptial plumage is at its brightest, the red of the male Tanager's body color is richer even than the Cardinal's, forming a striking contrast to the black wings and tail. At the molt in late summer he takes on the olive green body plumage of his mate, only the wings and tail coming in black as before. Were the little mother as gorgeous as he, the nest, well hidden as it is in the fresh

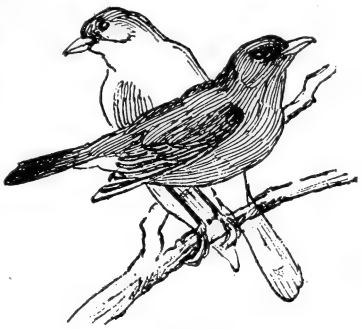
green undergrowth, would never be safe from the eyes of enemies while she sat on the eggs.

There are three or four of those eggs, cradled and hidden and guarded and defended like the treasures they are; bluish eggs, marked with brown. In the treetops the beautiful Tanager sings about them, a bright carol somewhat resembling the Robin's. Up in the world of green leaves, too, he hunts his food and calls down "chip-cherr" to his brooding mate, coming to the ground only to bathe or drink. On the ground his brilliant scarlet and black make him as conspicuous as a blaze or a jewel; and he has not the daring which enables the Cardinal so often to risk descent.

SUMMER TANAGER

Almost as gorgeous as his wilder cousin is this red bird of open woods, hedges, and orchards, and perhaps he is a better singer. His wings and tail are bronze-red, instead of black like the Scarlet Tanager's; and he is easily distinguished from the Cardinal by his smooth round head, not tufted; by the absence of any black marking round the beak; and by the difference in size. This Tanager's call-note, too, is distinctively his own, a sharp "chicker" and "chicky-tucky-tuck, chicky-tucky-tucky-tuck," being a well-known summer sound.

Like the female of the Cardinal and of the Scarlet Tanager, the mother bird of this species is clad in "protective coloring" that renders her hard to see among the leaves. Her nest is placed near the end of a limb, and made of fine twigs, strips of bark, weedstalks, and leaves, lined more softly with tendrils and blossom stems. It contains four bluish or greenish eggs, specked with cinnamon brown.



SUMMER TANAGER
Length 7½ inches

PHOEBE

Earliest of birds to return in spring, often wintering in the Gulf States, the Phoebe should occupy a very friendly place in our thoughts. Nearly every bridge in the country has its Phoebe's nest, the same pair returning to the spot year after year to build; though it is to be doubted whether the Phoebes seen in a neighborhood during the winter are the same individuals as those who in summer make their nests there. The pairs are supposed to mate, if not for life, at least for a term of years; but they separate during the migratory flight.

Phoebe is sometimes spoken of as the Bridge Pewee; but throughout the mountain region they are known chiefly as rock nesters, building in the safe overhang of cliffs and sheltered ledges near streams. They often choose the eaves of a spring house, or a beam or rafter of a porch, and will build in a barn or shed if water is not far away.

PHOEBE
Length 7 inches

I used to know a "rock-house" under a mountain bluff where the nest of a Phoebe was to be seen every spring, with portions of those of preceding seasons still clinging to the face of the rock, and mud rings — as many as five might be counted — marking sites of others long crumbled away. This historic record was probably not so extensive as I believed at the time, since Phoebe may build two or three homes and hatch a brood from each in a single season. But the nest itself justified my deep interest, being cup-like in form, cemented firmly to the sandstone, and woven of moss and grass and soft vegetable fibres plastered together with mud. Phoebe likes to line this structure with chicken feathers — a habit that frequently causes trouble, as mites are fatal to baby Phoebes.

This bird's fondness for watery places is explained by its manner of getting a living. Its food must be caught on the wing; and the multitude of sawyers, longlegs, gnats, Mayflies, and mosquitoes that dance above a stream are just to its liking.

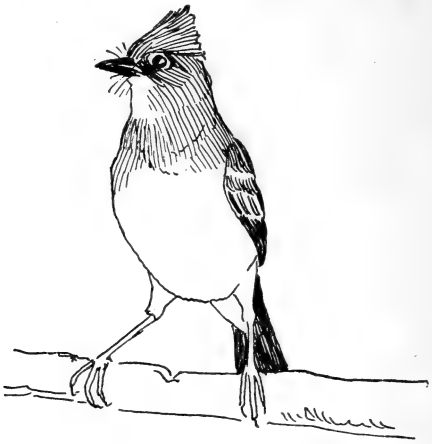
WOOD PEWEE
Length 6½ inches

Phoebe's color is dusky olive, with a pearl-white breast. He wears a dark crown cap, and the outer tail feathers have a rim of white. There is no song, but a monotonous note of "Phoebe, phoebe, pewit, phoebe." Although the spring arrival is so early, it is May before the four or five white eggs are laid.

The Wood Pewee's call is softer and more plaintive—a drawling "pe-wee, pee-ah-wee." Its nest, high among the trees, is of soft fibres covered outside with lichens; not so deep as the Gnatcatcher's but saddled on a limb in a similar way, so as to appear from below like a mossy knot.

Other Flycatchers who visit us are the Crested Flycatcher, who has the peculiar habit of weaving a cast snake-skin into the lining of his nest, and the smaller Acadian Flycatcher.

All this family may be known by their way of sitting very still on a dead twig or other open



GREATCRESTED FLYCATCHER
Length 9 inches

perch, and darting out after flying insects, to return to the same place and watchful attitude.

RED-EYED VIREO

"Are you weary? Why is it? We can *cheer* you; we know the secret; this is it: holy spirit; do you believe it? you *know* it; *you* see it; can you hear me?"

This is the Preacher delivering his matins from among the green boughs to all and sundry. He is actively in pursuit of a meal throughout the course of his rambling recitative.

Every fly or worm that he seizes from the

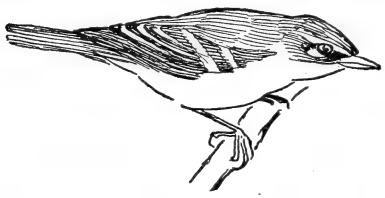
under side of a leaf has to be vigorously thumped against a twig and killed before it is swallowed, but none of this business interrupts the sermon

RED-EYED VIREO
Length 6 inches

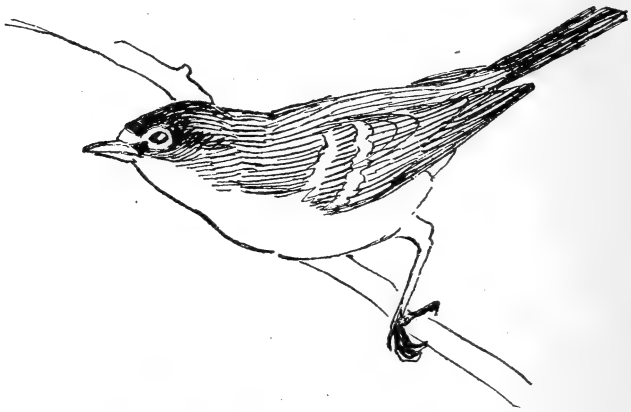
— or is he really pronouncing a cheerful grace upon his meat?

The Red-eyed Vireo is one of the last birds to be silenced by the advance of summer, and

one of the most common and widely distributed of our small insect hunters. He may be known by the olive general coloring that makes him difficult to distinguish among the leaves, by the gray cap, and the white line over the eye; the breast is pearly white. But I never could see that his eyes were redder than those of an ordinary brunette, although they may not be as black as those of a Wood Warbler or a flying squirrel.



YELLOW-THROATED VIREO
Length 5¾ inches



MOUNTAIN SOLITARY VIREO
Length 5¾ inches

The nest is a tantalizing object to cats and other groundling enemies, being unlike most bird-homes easier to see than to reach. It is a

pretty little gray basket, smoothly and firmly woven of strips of bark, and hung in the fork of a branch far out from the main body of the tree. It is lined with finer vegetable fibres and plant-down. Often the outside is fairly shingled over with fragments torn from old hornets' nests, and daubed with wads of spiders' silk. You cannot mistake it for any other nest in the woods. There are three or four white eggs, speckled round the larger end.

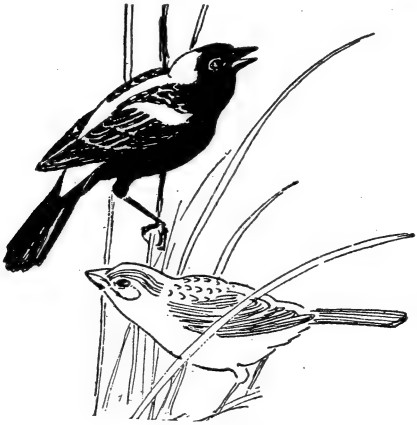
The Yellow-throated Vireo is a little larger, and keeps more to the woods, rarely coming into our dooryards as does the Preacher. He sings much the same tune, but sings in a contralto voice, and is less oratorical than Redeye's soprano delivery.

The Mountain Solitary Vireo builds in the Southern Alleghenies, and the White-eyed Vireo sometimes winters in the Gulf States.

BOBOLINK

This singer of the open field is but a transient visitor in the Middle South. His summer home is from New Jersey and Kansas northward; later in the season, when his gay nuptial plumage has been molted, he fattens on Louisiana rice; and drifts further south, even to Mexico and South America, for the winter. But almost any bird of Eastern North America may be a tran-

sient in the Middle South during April and May, since it is directly in the line with the great migratory routes, and so it comes that his allegretto voluntaries are often borne to our ears across some rich spring meadow —



BOBOLINK
Length 7¼ inches

Crying, "Phew, shew, Bobolincoln, see, see, Wadolincoln, Down among the thistle tops, hiding in the buttercups!—Bobolincoln, Wadolincoln, Winter seeble, follow, follow me!"

The rule of color among birds is that the upper parts shall be dark and the breast and underparts lighter in tone. But the male Bobolink gives the impression of having put on his clothes upside down; for, as we of the last generation used to declaim from the dear old McGuffy readers:

"Robert of Lincoln is gayly drest,
Wearing a bright black wedding coat;
White are his shoulders and white his crest.
Hear him call in his merry note,
"Bobolink, bobolink,
Spink, spank, spink,

Look, what a nice new coat is mine;
Sure, there was never a bird so fine!
Chee, chee, chee."

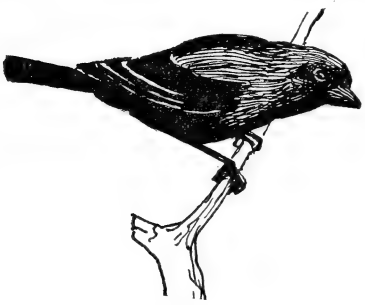
This harlequin garb accords well with the bubbling, jerky, almost comic, nature of his music. His liquid notes tumble over each other so rapidly and in such quaint variety as to astonish as well as delight the ear. Though he works considerable damage in rice-growing regions, the northern climate which claims him during the nesting and singing season, has no more popular minstrel than this rollicking composer of humoresques.

COWBIRD

Renegade and slacker we must call him, for what virtue of diligence in insect hunting can make up for the one great fault of the species? For this is the only bird we have in America who neither makes a nest nor cares for its own young. The female lays her white egg and then, watching her chance, slyly carries it to the nest of some smaller bird when the home-builders are absent, and leaves it to the care of more honest and responsible parties. Warblers, Sparrows, and Vireos are all victimized in this manner; and while some Warblers are bright enough to outwit the imposition by building a new nest on top of the first, they will not do so if their own eggs

are already placed, but take upon themselves the extra task of hatching and rearing the young Cowbird.

The interloper, being larger than the rightful nestlings, demands more food and more of the parent bird's attention, so that the others suffer and may even be starved by its greed.



COWBIRD
Length 7¾ inches

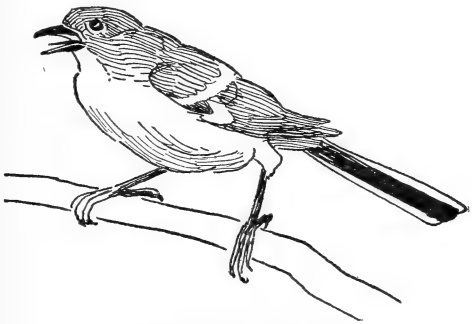
It is believed that no regular mating takes place among the Cowbirds; in short, they know no family tie. Appropriately, they are songless. They are oftenest seen walking about singly or in promiscuous groups among cows in the pasture, whence the name.

MOCKING BIRD

It seems that with all the interest that has been shown by American poets in this brother of the open, some one of them might have taken pains to find a name for him that should better express his personality. Mocking Bird is not pretty, and besides he is so much more than a mere mocker; the imitations he puts into his rich, sweet, wonderful medley are the least part of its variety and charm. And not all the indi-

viduals of the species are accomplished imitators; probably this faculty increases with practice as the bird grows older. Moreover, did he never sing a note he would still be a delightful and valuable neighbor, helpful in our war against cutworms and kindred pests, and fascinatingly original in his behavior.

The Latin name is scarcely more fortunate—Mimus Polyglottos, which means the Many-



MOCKING BIRD
Length 10½ inches

tongued Mimic. This troubadour of a thousand springs ought fitly to have a name from some musical and romantic language like the Spanish. But no matter! Once hearing him, and reading Sidney Lanier's tribute or Walt Whitman's "Out of the Cradle Endlessly Rocking," one inevitably inclines to ask what's in a name.

He is quite lordly in his bearing toward other singers, permitting none of them to be heard in

his territory. They may build nests and hunt for food as they please, but let a Tanager or a Catbird begin a song from a quiet treetop and his superior in music is down upon him at once. The Cardinal, however, is able to dispute his domain, so that both are frequently heard singing together on May mornings.

In color and size the Mocking Bird resembles the Catbird, but is quite distinctly marked with a white crescent on each wing and two white feathers in the tail, so that in flight there is a sort of broken halo round him. Perhaps his characteristic motions distinguish him even more readily. In mid-song he springs into the air from time to time as if unable to contain himself; he must even wake up in the night to sing again, trilling, warbling, whistling, and fluttering excitedly under the April moon. Another peculiarity is his way of lifting and half opening his wings occasionally while walking or picking up his dinner on the ground, spreading his white crescents as though to catch the sun.

It is not fully correct to speak of this group of related singers, the Mocking Bird, the Catbird, and the Thrasher, as migratory, since all three often winter in the Gulf States, and as far north as the Ohio valley are sometimes resident where found.

The nest of the Mocking Bird is built of sticks

and weeds, lined with fine rootlets, and usually set in a thicket or tangle of brush. The four or five eggs are bluish green, with markings of reddish brown.

Mr. George Cable, one of our most delightful Southern novelists, has thus humorously described the November behavior of the two favorite birds in Louisiana:

"Only an adventitious China-tree here and there had been stripped of its golden foliage, and kept but its ripened berries with the red birds darting and fluttering around them like so many hiccoughing Comanches about a dramseller's tent. And here, if one must tell a thing so painful, our old friend the mocking bird, neglecting his faithful wife and letting his home go to decay, kept dropping in, all hours of the day, tasting the berries' rank pulp, stimulating, stimulating, drowning care, you know,—'Lost so many children, and the rest gone off in ungrateful forgetfulness of their old hardworking father'; yes, and ready to sing or fight, just as any other creature happened not to wish; and going home in the evening scolding and swaggering, and getting to bed barely able to hang on to the roost. It would have been bad enough, even for a man; but for a bird — and a mocking bird!"

WOOD THRUSH

Listen to him reverently and with an open heart, for here is one of the world's perfect voices. The Thrush tone is the purest and sweetest to be found among American birds. Thoreau

WOOD THRUSH
Length 8 inches

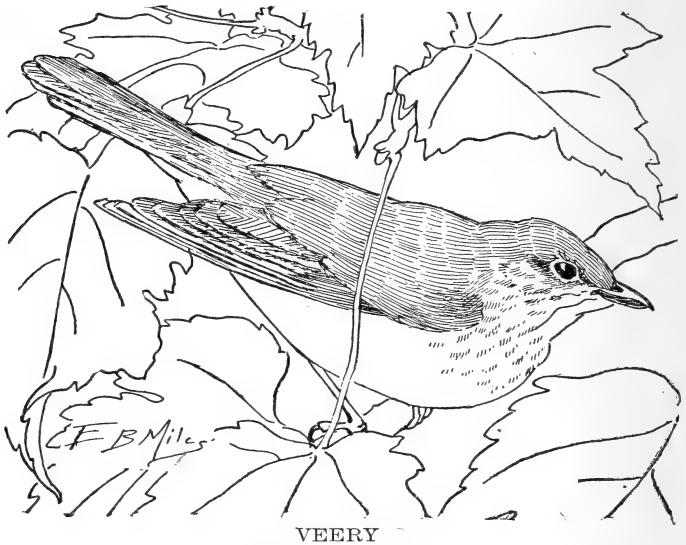
says it is "like things drawn up dripping from the bottom of deep springs."

Whether the Wood Thrush or his smaller, shyer northern relative, the Hermit Thrush, may be considered the supreme exemplar of this family gift is still in doubt: opinions differ. The latter bird is rarely heard in the Southern states, though he is well known as a winter visitor. Certain South American thrushes and solitaires

are said to possess a timbre and tone-quality finer still, but I find it hard to imagine.

This leaves the Wood Thrush to be safely named as the finest singer of our region. Fortunately he is common throughout the wooded portion of the South, and not too shy,—never so shy as he is reserved, with a delicate dignity of manner and a love for deep recesses of green leaves. His lines and finish are graceful as those of a vase or a violin; he carries himself with a sort of unhurried courtesy—just what one would expect in so great a musician. Here is a fit instrument, fine in every detail, through which the very soul of music speaks. The song invariably gives one the sense of a private hearing, as if too rare and lofty to be addressed to the multitude; it is attuned to vast silences of dawn or twilight, and to haunts of green shadow that might echo the pipes of Pan. Written for the piano, as it has been again and again, it is arranged as a bar or phrase of notes, followed by a full rest; then another matchless phrase ending in the softest evanishing trill, and another rest; then a third, and so on—forming a regular sequence of about five different phrases, with full rests between, repeated over and over in the same deliberate strain, as different as possible from the rapid operatic outgush of the Mocking Bird and his kin.

It is a little strange that of all the really fine poems in which "hush" has been rhymed with "thrush" since the time of Agassiz, the majority have celebrated him as an evening songster. To me the song is chiefly associated with the hour of dawn, for the thrush is earliest waking of all



VEERY
Length 4½ inches

our birds. Morning after morning it is his voice that awakes the sleeping forest, when the east is streaked with rose. Can it be that our American poets do not rise in time to hear him? Perish the thought; have they not one and all praised the morning hours? Thoreau, to whom dawn in the woods was as familiar as sunset on the pond,

recognizes the thrush as a true poet of inspiration from the length of his singing period, extending from shortly after his arrival about April 1st to 10th, to the first hot days of August. Says the philosopher, "Any man can write verses in the love season."

Another thrush with a miracle in its throat is the Veery, smaller and shyer than the Wood Thrush and less vividly colored. Shadowlike it slips through low, dense woodlands, and its song is a wild hymn of shadow, echoing the mystery and magic of the woods. The Olive-backed Thrush is also found here.

The Thrush's nest is much like the Robin's, having an inner wall of mud lined with black rootlets. It is set in a sapling crotch or saddled on a bough. The four or five eggs are blue.

BROWN THRASHER

Late in April or about the first of May, as you pass a brush-pile, a tangle of honeysuckles or roses, a brier patch, or even a clump of weeds and grass on the ground, look close for the staring yellow eye, like a chicken's, of a mother Thrasher on her big brushy nest of sticks. But do not disturb her; for this is one of our specially valued birds, and it would be a great pity if any one of those cinnamon-sprinkled grayish eggs were to miss its chance of hatching.

BROWN THRASHER
Length 11½ inches

In song and movements the Thrasher is very like the Mocking Bird and Catbird, to whom he is closely related; but he is more of a ground bird than they, darting in and out of brier patches and fence-rows, looking all over the yard and garden for cutworms and grubworms, mounting to a treetop only when ready to pour himself out in song. And what a song! In tone and delivery it resembles that of the Catbird, but is rounder and more uniformly sweet, containing no harsh notes and no imitations. Among writers on birds there seems a great difference of opinion about his quality as a musician, some pronouncing his performance second only to that of the Mocking Bird, and others declaring it to be a monotonous repetition of a single phrase. Well, if it be monotonous, then the Nightingale's is monotonous. All agree, I believe, in praising the sweetness of the Thrasher's tone.

Much confusion has arisen as to the identities of this bird and the Wood Thrush, although they are not so similar that they need be mistaken for each other when one has once had a good look at them both. The Wood Thrush is not brown at all except on the head, while this color extends all over the Thrasher; the breasts are speckled something alike, but the Thrasher may be certainly known by the two lighter bars on the wing. The songs, too, are utterly unlike.

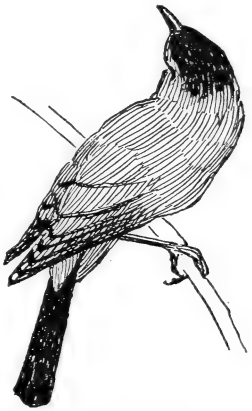
Perhaps the mistake arises from a supposition that the well-known poem of our school-days, "The Merry Brown Thrush," refers to one or the other. It is my belief that these pretty verses were written in celebration of some English species not found on this side of the Atlantic. For the song of the Wood Thrush is not merry, any more than the music of Bach or Beethoven is merry; while one line speaks of a nest "and five eggs hid by me in the juniper-tree," but I have never known either Thrush or Thrasher to build in evergreen trees, the Thrasher especially being likely to build near the ground.

CATBIRD

Of all the empty birds' nests in my possession the most interesting is perhaps that of a pair of Catbirds, who built it in a plum tree behind an old barn and in it hatched their young from four beautiful green-blue eggs. It is quite soberly lined with fine rootlets; the main structure is sensibly woven of crab-grass, weeds, and shreds of grapevine bark and corn husks; but down in the foundation, made of dry leaves, cornstalk splints and heavier weed stems, is a queer notionate collection, perhaps made with some idea of ornament. There are chicken quills, wrapping twine, a bit of crumpled newspaper, a

yard or two of floss partly crocheted by some little girl's hook, half a magazine page, a strip of rag, and a paper doll's dress!—just a little of everything, one would say, that could be found on the farm.

Something of the same capricious collecting habit enters into the Catbird's song; he gathers a bit of everything into it. He begins in a fine musical tone, like a silver violin, to sing of the freshness and fragrance of the spring morning, —"phut - phut - coquil - licot, calumet calumet kereen"; then thrusts a medley of imitations into his theme, Whippoorwill and Tanager notes, Cardinal and Jay—even trying to render the Wood Thrush strain, although to produce the Thrush tone is far beyond his powers. Again he catches the full sweetness of his violin, and does beautiful coloratura lacework for a while, only to break off, as if a string had snapped, into the harsh cat-call—miaow! miaow!—from which he derives his name. Some very expressive lines have been written by an unknown author concerning this quality of Catbird music. The first stanza runs:



CATBIRD
Length 9 inches

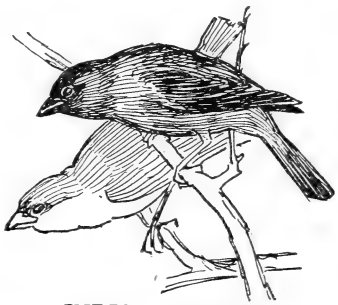
You who would with wanton art
Counterfeit another's part,
And with noisy utterance claim
Right to an ignoble name,—
Inharmonious!— why must you,
To a better self untrue,
Gifted with the charm of song,
Do the generous gift such wrong?

Mark Twain called him the Northern Mocking Bird. It is not strange that in regions where both are at home in summer, the two birds should be often confused, as they are rather similar in appearance, habit, and song. The Catbird's voice is less round and full in quality than that of his more famous kinsman, and the song has not so rich a variety. Although both birds are ashen gray, the Catbird is slightly darker and its markings are easily distinguished —a black cap, and a patch of chestnut under the tail; no white feathers anywhere.

He is of a prankish, playful disposition, and so tame as to enliven the very dooryard. As a devourer of cutworms and other insect pests he is unsurpassed. Before cherries and berries are ripe he has well earned his share of them; and who would be so niggardly as to grudge what he takes?

INDIGO BUNTING

This is the bluest of things blue, I do believe, in all the country, — like a drop precipitated by the delicate azure that is held in solution by the summer air. Blue we see in the velvety skies of the region; it hangs like a veil of flame — the thin violet flame of certain gases — over the sides of mountains and is reflected in the river; it is accented by bluebells, blue phlox, tradescantia, and bluets; in this bird it flashes fire! — a color deep as a turquoise, burnished like a sapphire, dusky on the wing feathers and darkening to indigo only on the head.



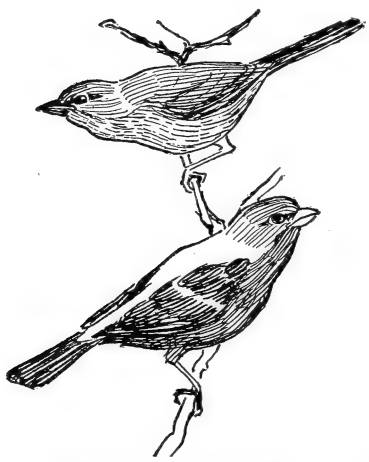
INDIGO BUNTING
Length 5½ inches

As is usual among species of splendid plumage, the female aspires to none of this physical glory, choosing rather the safety of the eggs and nestlings, which her Sparrow-like coloration helps to conceal. The pretty cup-shaped nest is generally set in the crotch of a bush, and is compactly made of grasses, dead leaves, and strips of bark, lined with hairs and softer vegetable fibres.

The Indigo Bird's song is a cheery warble

that seems to bubble up from the gladdest of hearts, expressing the very spirit of a summer morning. It is one of the last songs to be silenced by the oncoming heat and the molting season, being heard until well into August.

The Painted Bunting or Nonpareil is perhaps the most gorgeously colored bird found in the United States. So many colors, so brightly laid on, has he, that he seems exotic, as if only a visitor from the tropics where he makes his winter home. He is not so common anywhere as the Indigo Bunting, and his range is restricted, so that we may almost claim him as a native of the South Atlantic, and Middle Southern States alone. His song is not equal to that of the Indigo Bird, and he is of a more retiring disposition, so that in spite of his vivid colors he is a stranger to most people.



PAINTED BUNTING
Length 5½ inches

CHIMNEY SWIFT

Perhaps because of its fine long wings, this species is often spoken of as Chimney Swallow,

though it is more nearly related to the Whip-poorwills, Nighthawks, and Humming Birds than to the Swallows. Before the advent of the white man, these birds built their nests in hollow trees; but since the country was settled they have generally come to prefer and adopt unusued chimneys as a dwelling-place. An old factory chimney may shelter hundreds.

CHIMNEY SWIFT
Length 5½ inches

The Chimney Swift's feet, like those of the Whip-poorwill, are too small and weak to get about on, and only suffice for perching and clinging. In ascending the inside of a chimney they cling with sharp claws to the wall and hitch upward little by little, bracing themselves by the stiff spines with which the tail feathers are pointed. The wings, having been developed at the expense of the feet, are powerfully and beautifully made, and once the top of the chimney is reached the bird sets forth in air, with free and rapid motions, to catch insects on the wing.

The nest is semi-circular, made of twigs glued together and cemented to the wall by the bird's saliva. It is a cliff-dwelling bird of similar architectural ideas which furnishes the famous

bird-nest soup, agreeable to the palates of the Chinese.

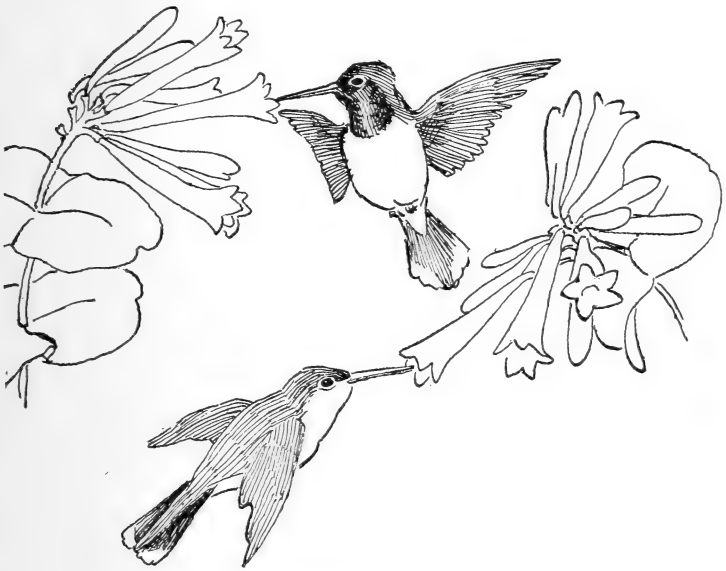
RUBYTHROAT HUMMING BIRD

Tiniest of all, a saucy Tom Thumb among the birds, is this flying jewel, whose size, chirp, and humming flight are more like those of an insect than of a bird. Vibrant with energy and strangely fearless, a pair of these wee creatures will dart out to attack any creature that approaches their nest, whatever the trespasser's size; in fact, the males enjoy fighting, and whirling in sudden squeaking quarrels round the honeyed trumpets of the woodbine. Red blossoms are their choice, though they will visit others. The popular idea of these fairylike bits of beauty is that they subsist daintily on the nectar of flowers alone; but this concentrated sweet is not sufficient to maintain such highly keyed vitality; they consume numbers of small spiders and other insects.

It is the male who displays the ruby throat; but the female is pretty enough, in metallic lustres of green with glints of gold.

The nest is about the size, shape, and consistency of a ball of crochet silk, being delicately woven of soft fibres, lined with plant down (a favorite material for this is the yellowish wool from stems of cinnamon fern), and covered with

gray flakes of lichen, the whole bound together with cobweb and other threads from insect spindles. So naturally does this fairy domicile sit saddled on its gray-barked support as to be all but unnoticeable, not to say invisible. Seen from



HUMMING BIRD
Length 3½ inches

below, it looks exactly like a small knot on the limb; and a lady who once looked over my collection of empty nests even remarked that it was strange the lichen should grow so much thicker on the nest than on the bark!

Two white eggs scarcely larger than peas

occupy this dainty cradle. Fourteen days' incubation is sufficient to hatch the tiny twins, who are fed by regurgitation — a murderous-looking process, since nearly the whole length of the parent bird's beak is thrust down the young one's throat, and given a violent pumping motion; but the youngsters enjoy it.

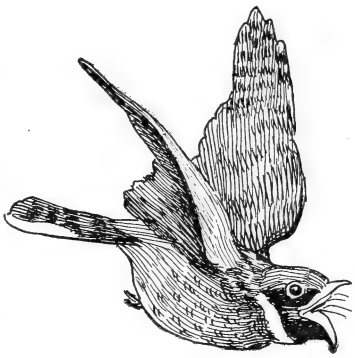
The Rubythroat has a peculiar way of frolicking or dancing in the air by flying rapidly to and fro in a 30-foot semicircle, as if swinging on the end of a thread. At each conclusion of this arc, before turning, he pauses for an excited twitter. This sort of "spree" is declared by some ornithologists to result from indulgence in the sweet sun-fermented juices that flow from Sapsucker borings in birch trees. I have never caught him drinking sap myself, but this pendulum-like swing has been performed before my eyes more than once, and always in the same wildly joyous fashion.

WHIPPOORWILL

Only after sunset does this bird open its large, dark, peculiarly lidded eyes and steal forth from the dense woods or thicket where it has slept all day. The dusk is full of insects, and flying low among them, it soon catches a supper on the wing. The wide mouth is adapted for this work, like the rim of a butterfly-net, and the

long sensitive hairs with which it is set appear to serve the same purpose as the whiskers of a cat.

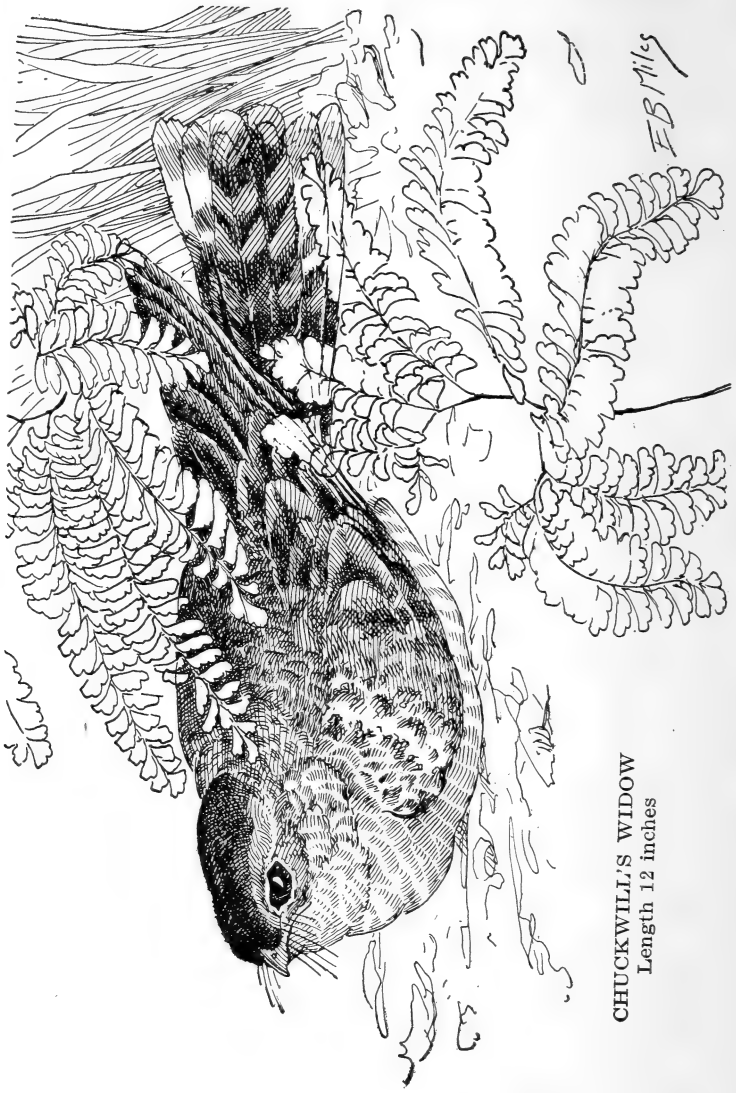
But stopping now and then to sit *lengthwise* of a limb, a fence-rail by a clearing, or even the ridgepole of some lonely cabin, it sends forth the quiver and lash, quiver and lash, quiver and lash of its thong-like note — a silvery-sweet if melancholy nocturne that accords well with the beauty and mystery of the summer night. Before dawn, when the leaves and flowers are still asleep in the dew, he sings again.



WHIPPOORWILL
Length 9¾ inches

The Whippoorwill makes no nest, but in May lays two eggs on the bare ground in woods or thickets. They are beautiful as jewels, pearly white with a few delicate markings of lilac and brown.

There is a larger bird called Chuckwill's Widow, whose cry, being slowly uttered at intervals of several seconds, has an even more lonely and weird effect than the more familiar hurrying Whippoorwill call. A little boy once gave me as the wording of this variation, "Chip out o'



CHUCKWILL'S WIDOW
Length 12 inches

whiteoak—chip out o' whiteoak," which I think more accurate than the commonly accepted Chuckwill's Widow. The mouth of this bird is enormous, gaping about two inches across from corner to corner, so that the largest night-moths and even small birds may be eaten. If one extends a hand gently to pick up this queer creature, it is apt to rely on its protective coloring for safety and, I verily believe, on a certain resemblance to a snake; for instead of making a wild struggle to escape it merely shuffles sidewise a little, and opens its mouth to emit a hissing noise and a disgusting odor.

Both birds are peculiar in the shape of the large dark eyes, in velvety, rotten-wood, mottled grayish brown colors, and in having wings developed at the expense of the feet. They can cling to a perch, but the walk is a clumsy shuffle.

NIGHTHAWK

"Bullbats" we commonly call them, as we look up at sunset to watch them flying over, not too high to be identified by the white spot on each of those long, swift, oar-like wings. "Peent, peent," they cry, then suddenly dive through the air and turn, making a hollow, booming sound by means of the large wing-feathers.

Above the river where insects abound, above the woods and fields, even above the city streets

they course to and fro, zigzagging as bats do in pursuit of food on the wing. From May 1st to late September they flit overhead at night, and sleep by day perched lengthwise on a limb, where their beautifully mottled velvety brown and gray

NIGHTHAWK
Length 10 inches

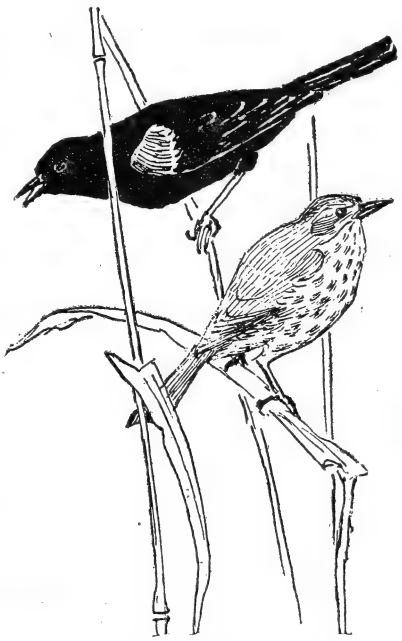
coloring renders them almost invisible. They spend the winter in South America.

Like the Whippoorwill, Nighthawks build no nest, but lay two white eggs on the bare ground.

REDWINGED BLACKBIRD

In marshy places around lakes and ponds, or where some meandering stream spreads out into

an alder thicket, the Redwings are found in numbers during the nesting season. It is only the black-coated male who wears bright scarlet epaulets; the young birds and the females, who during the winter and in migration flock by themselves, are brown with darker streaks, marked something like a Sparrow.



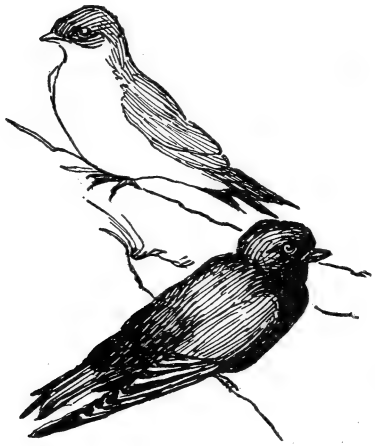
REDWINGED BLACKBIRD
Length 9½ inches

The rich call-note is described as "kong-que-ree" or "O ka lee." There is also a fifing chorus which the males sing all together, which, while not musical, makes as springlike a sound as the rippling of Pickering frogs.

The nest, if in alder thickets, is placed in a crotch of a bush; but if in reedy marshes it is supported by lacing several stems together. It is made of coarse grasses and weed stalks, lined with finer fibres. The eggs are pale blue, curiously black-streaked and spotted.

PURPLE MARTIN

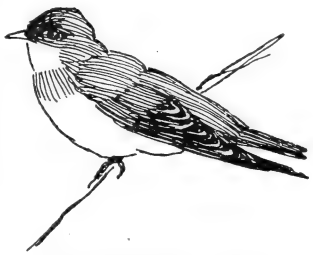
Have you ever seen martin-gourds swinging by twos and fours from the top of a pole, in some homelike nook where "bee-gums" stand in the corners of an old rail-fence among honeysuckles and yellow Scotch roses? Pleasant company they make for summer days, darting about overhead with a loud rolling twitter, not even taking shelter from a shower that drives all other birds inside, taking the rain on their long strong wings in the best of voice and spirits; pleasant company, worth all the gourds and box-houses we can put up for them. They live by preference in colonies, hence a real martin-box should be a double-tenement affair or a small hotel, having several compartments and entrances. It should be mounted on a bare pole in an open space, never in a tree; and should not be put up until the time of the Martin's arrival from South America in early April,—unless you wish the trouble of



PURPLE MARTIN
Length 7¾ inches

dispossessing whole families of English Sparrows to make room for the later comer.

Other Swallows who make their summer homes with us are the Barn Swallow, who plasters his mud nest under the eaves and lines it with chicken feathers; the Bank Swallow, whose home is in a hole in some sandy bank near running water; and the Rough-winged Swallow, who darts and wheels above the treetops in pursuit of insects. All are good architects, and all have the slim canoe-like build and arrowy wings of the Swallow type.

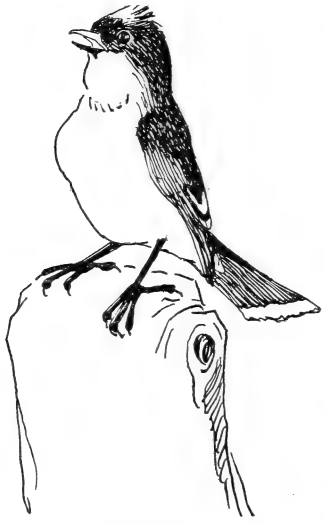


BANK SWALLOW
Length 5¼ inches

KINGBIRD

Perhaps you know him better by the name of Bee-Martin; and perhaps you have heard tales of his quarrelsome and overbearing disposition and his prowess in driving away other birds. While he seems to have a grudge against Crows, those well-known plunderers, and while he is not afraid to tackle even a large Hawk, it is now the opinion of good observers that popular accounts of the Kingbird's tyranny have been much exaggerated. Of course any bird, even the peaceful little Vireo, will defend its nest with spirit.

The male Kingbird is usually seen sitting or rather standing very erect on a dead twig or other perch having an unobstructed outlook, on the watch, Flycatcher fashion, for passing insects. While his mate is sitting on her eggs he takes a position not far away, and is very affectionate and attentive to her, guarding the nest while she goes out to seek food, and singing a few pleasing notes to her before daybreak. When the young make their way out of the brown-spotted eggs, he becomes a devoted father, untiring in the labor of catching insects for them.



KINGBIRD
Length 8½ inches

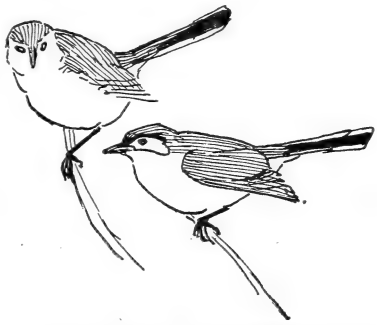
Does he, or does he not, earn his nickname of Bee-Martin by eating honeybees? Some bee-keepers have told me that he sits on a perch near the hive on purpose, and seizes the little workers as they fly out and in. But certain ornithologists who have taken pains to dissect the bodies of various species of birds and determine what was actually in the crops, declare that the Kingbird does not eat worker bees, who have stings, but

pick up only drones, who are stingless and at the approach of winter are destined to be killed anyway.

There are blank pages on which to record your own observations about this point.

BLUE-GRAY GNATCATCHER

This pretty little fellow seems to me like a miniature Catbird in appearance and motions. The song, too, is like tiny Catbird music, but faint and squeaky, interspersed with a call-note like the tank of a broken fiddle-string.

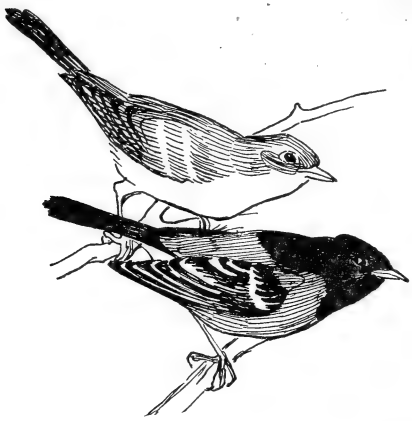


BLUE-GRAY GNATCATCHER
Length 4½ inches

It is a delight to watch the pair at work on their nest, with a great deal of flitting and fussing and frequent enthusiastic bursts of song. Fine strips of bark, tendrils, and grasses are woven into a deep symmetrical cup, which is covered outside with lichens that blend it exactly with the bark, and bound with spider web and other insect silk, making on the whole the very prettiest nest I know of in all the woods. Four or five speckled bluish eggs are laid.

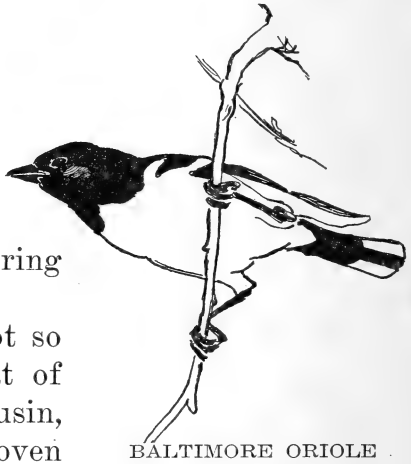
ORCHARD ORIOLE

Black and chestnut are his colors, but handsome as he is it is by his voice that we remember and recognize him on his return to the orchard or the shade trees of the lawn. In first one tree and then another it bubbles forth, a rich warbling carol easily distinguishable even among the full spring chorus.



ORCHARD ORIOLE
Length 7¼ inches

His nest, while not so deeply swung as that of his more famous cousin, is noticeably well woven of the choicest material, and firmly set in the crotch of a limb.



BALTIMORE ORIOLE
Length 7½ inches

The range of the beautiful Baltimore Oriole is more generally Northern, but nests are occa-

sionally found as far south as Georgia. Its color is splendid, as if brought from the tropical jungle, rich orange, with black wings and tail. The nest is one of the most remarkable in the bird world—a deep pouch-like hammock woven of vines, stems, strings, and grass, swung from a bough, the entrance being in the side. The song is even sweeter and richer than that of the Orchard Oriole.

YELLOW-BILLED CUCKOO

No drawing that I have seen gives a true idea of the grace and beauty of this well-known bird, which is, however, much more often heard than seen. Its long, slender "streamlines" are built for silent gliding through the treetops. The general color is a dusky olive brown, and the whole breast and underparts are of that color which in birds we call white, but which is really a lustrous pearly tint impossible to reproduce in paint. On each wing is a concealed beauty-patch of bronze or rufous, seen only as the larger feathers are spread to reveal its dull glow. The long tail feathers are tipped with white, showing from beneath like a series of thumb prints. The foot is peculiar in having two toes pointing forward and two back; a short, stout member, able to take a strong clutch on twigs and branches.

Raincrow we call him, when on summer days

we hear "c,c,c,c,cow! cow! cow!" from a lone tree or from the edge of the woods. From its rhythm the cry has been compared to the distant whetting of a scythe, though it is not in the least a metallic sound.

Solitary in habit and shy in disposition, the Cuckoos are known by voice, rather than by sight, over most of the Eastern United States. The Black-billed Cuckoo is common over the more northern part of its range; the Yellow-billed is the commoner Southern bird. Their habits are very similar.

Neither is a good nest-builder, though none of our American Cuckoos ever becomes so lazy as to leave its egg in the home of another bird to be hatched and reared, like the European species. The nest is little more than a shabby platform of loosely laid sticks in a low tree or bush, softened by grasses and dry oak tassels, but so thinly that the three to five pale greenish blue eggs may sometimes be seen through it from below. The eggs are not always laid at regular periods, one each day as is usual among birds. Intervals of some days sometimes elapse, thus frequently causing the nest to contain young birds and fresh eggs at the same time. The eggs of the Black-billed Cuckoo are rather smaller and darker than those of the other species.

This is one of our most useful birds in the

YELLOW-BILLED CUCKOO
Length 12¼ inches

checking of insect pests. The Cuckoo devours great numbers of tent-caterpillars, a creature few other birds will touch. If you will look close at the great gray webs these insects spin to wrap themselves, you will often find them punctured again and again by this bird's beak. It has been estimated that a single Cuckoo consumes from 50 to 400 caterpillars daily. Anyone who has seen the trees stripped by these insects will appreciate the protection that Cuckoos afford to green growth. They frequent open wood lands or the borders of woods and sometimes come into orchards and gardens, where they are more than welcome. But they are never conspicuous around our homes, because of their habits of concealing themselves among the foliage, and of keeping perfectly quiet when the least alarmed.

Young Cuckoos are the funniest, ugliest little creatures imaginable when first hatched. Their black skin is almost naked, and their mouths open bright red. The growing feathers remain in pencil-like sheaths until fully developed, so that their bodies appear to be encased in a curious mail of hedgehog-like quills. Young Kingfishers also present this singular appearance. The constant feeding on hundreds of insects daily has its effect; sooner or later the little black bodies fill out, the day comes when the feathers split their sheaths all at once, and

within a few hours the nest is filled with birds daintily clothed in dusky bronze and white, ready to make their first short flight into their treetop world. This striking transformation is one of the interesting features of Cuckoo life.

Another strange characteristic is their way of traveling at night during migration. They arrive in our latitude about the first of May, and leave at the end of September to spend the winter in South America.

CHIPPING SPARROW

The Doorstep Sparrow is John Burrough's name for this gentle, cheerful little chap, and a better could hardly be found. Of the many species of Sparrows round our homes in the country, this is the only one who is a summer migrant, and he so frequently winters with us as almost to be written as a permanent resident. He is smaller in size than the English Sparrow and has no mind for fighting, so that he is no longer to be found in suburbs and thickly settled places, where the larger, bullying Sparrow is in possession of all available nesting places before Chippy's return in the spring.

He may be readily known in summer by his rufous or rust-colored cap, and by the white line over the eye. In winter this bay cap is changed for a streaked one, and the Chippies flock to the

fields to live upon weed and grass seeds. The call-note is a soft chip, the song a rapid "chippy-chippy, chippy-chippy" long continued, like an insect's buzzing, not musical at all; but the

CHIPPING SPARROW
Length 5¼ inches

friendliness of Chippy's disposition atones for his lack as a songster; he needs no special talent to endear him to us all.

The nest is of grass and rootlets and other fibres, lined with horsehair. The four or five speckled eggs are laid about the first of May,

but a second or even a third brood are sometimes raised.

YELLOW-BREASTED CHAT

This is the largest and by far the noisiest of the Warblers. Except for his green and olive coloring he does not seem like a Warbler at all. His beak and legs are thick and stout, colored lead-gray; his voice is rather loud, and sounds as if he were scolding or harshly criticising somebody or something in the woods. "Woit? cheep —chuck; whee-whee-whee-whee—" and so on with any kind of whistle or squawk, never by any chance achieving a musical tone, but in such variety that he is sometimes given the name of Polyglot Chat and credited with imitation and ventriloquism. He must certainly enjoy these singular vocal efforts, since he often wakes up on April and May nights to repeat them.

His haunts are brushy hillsides and copses, or thickets in partial clearings; but he occasionally comes into an open space to perform a weird clown's dance in the air, twitching and jerking and somersaulting with dangling legs. But if he catches you watching him he disappears at once in the underbrush, and scolds nervously as long as you remain in sight.

YELLOW-BREASTED CHAT
Length 7½ inches

YELLOW WARBLER

The Wood Warblers are a large family, and exclusively American. They have been called the "most numerous, most beautiful and least

YELLOW WARBLER
Length 5 inches

known" birds of North America. Few of them really "warble"; their value is in their various and delicate beauty, and in the fact that they feed almost entirely upon small insects which larger birds overlook. The best time to observe

them is during the spring migration, when they travel through the Southeastern states in straggling flocks made up of several species, flitting through woods and orchards from tree to tree—such tiny wings to pass, even by stages, the thousands of miles that sometimes lie between their summer and winter homes. At this time they may be seen in the trees of lawns and dooryards, but later in the season they retire to the woods pretty generally.

PALM WARBLER
Length 5¼ inches

The Yellow Warbler is an exception, preferring orchard trees, brushy brooks, and quiet gardens, where he is frequently mistaken for an escaped Canary, though his only song is a happy "wee-chee, chee, chee, che wee."

The nest of this live sunbeam is made of fine grass and fibres lined with thistledown; the eggs are thickly speckled.

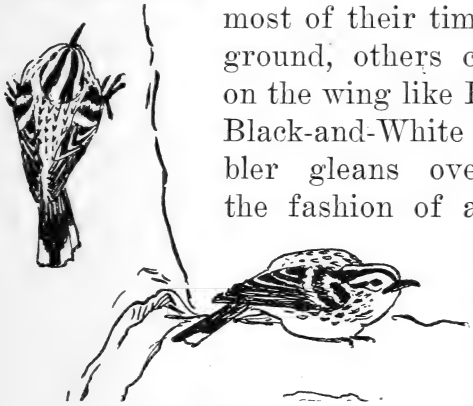
PRAIRIE WARBLER
Length 4¾ inches

This one, and the Palm and Prairie Warblers, are three "wood" warblers that are rarely found in the woods. The Prairie Warbler frequents bushy clearings, or old fields grown up in young

pines. It is one of the commonest of Southern Warblers.

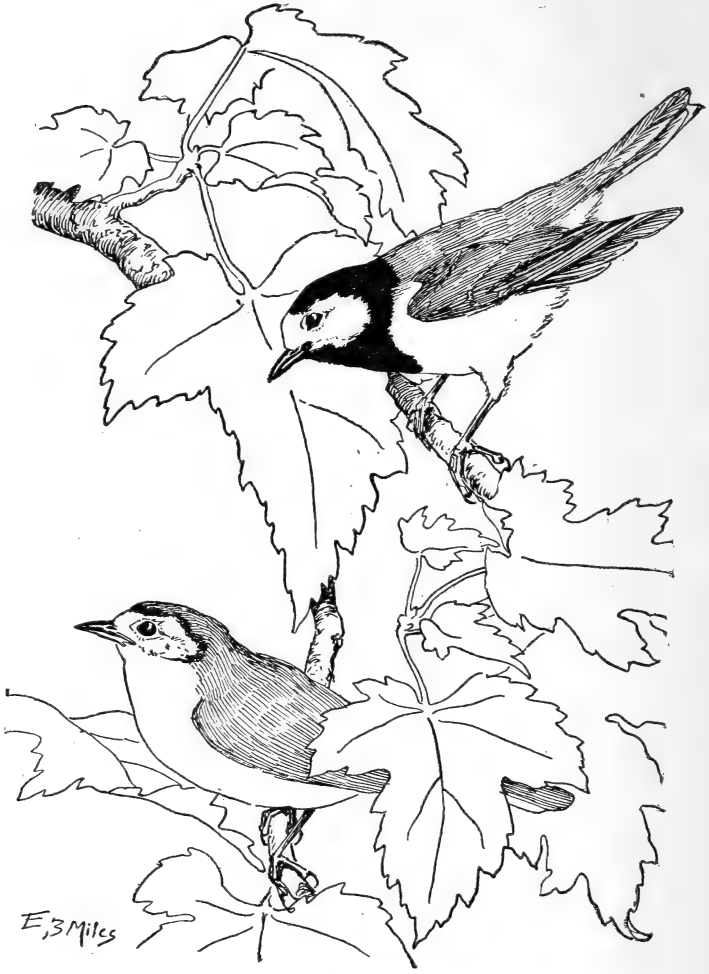
BLACK AND WHITE CREEPING WARBLER

Warblers seek their food in a variety of ways, some flitting through the green boughs and gleaning from twigs and leaves, some spending most of their time on or near the ground, others capturing insects on the wing like Flycatchers. The Black-and-White Creeping Warbler gleans over the bark in the fashion of a Nuthatch or a Creeper, but is more restless and active, exploring every crevice, slipping round and round the tree and over the larger boughs. It is one of the first Warblers to arrive in spring, and one of the commonest and best known representatives of the family, the black and white stripes being easy to remember.



BLACK AND WHITE CREEPING WARBLER
Length 5¼ inches

The song is something like the scraping of a corn stalk fiddle—feedle-deedle-deedle-dee. Although this Warbler seeks its living in trees, the



HOODED WARBLER
Length 5½ inches

nest is on the ground, beside a stump or log or under a rock.

HOODED WARBLER

His funny little song, usually described as "You must come' to the woods' or you won't *see* me," sounds to me more like "Che-wee, che-wee, che-wee, why it's you!" but every ear finds, no doubt, a different interpretation of such a hurried jingle.

I have watched him go over a whole budding maple, whose glutinous juices attracted a horde of small dancing insects, from time to time uttering this song between bites, and seizing whatever came in his way. Sometimes he darted out to catch a mouthful on the wing, and each time I heard the snap of his tiny beak, as of a bit of chalk broken. He is very oddly marked with what looks like a black skating helmet pulled over his bright yellow head.

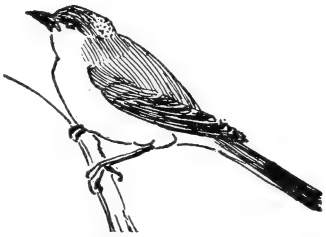
TENNESSEE WARBLER

This rather colorless Warbler is surely misnamed, since it is as common in several other States as in Tennessee, and is not more numerous there than, for instance, the Prairie Warbler. Its color is olive green on the back, with bluish gray head; the breast is white; there is a white line over the eye. The nest is made of fine vege-

table fibres and moss, lined with hair, in low bushes near the ground.

TENNESSEE WARBLER
Length 5 inches

The Nashville Warbler may be distinguished from the preceding by its brighter colors. The breast is bright yellow; there is no line over the eye, but a faint chestnut patch on the crown. It frequents open woods or tree-bordered fields and clearings. The nest is on the ground, usually hidden under a rock or a clump of leaves.



NASHVILLE WARBLER
Length 4¾ inches

A much rarer species which is found on or near the ground is the Worm-eating Warbler. It may be known by the buff-yellow, black-striped head.

MARYLAND YELLOWTHROAT
Length 5¼ inches

MARYLAND YELLOWTHROAT

Very similar in some ways and in coloring to the Kentucky Warbler is this black-masked beauty. Both birds make their homes in green thickets and tangles, but both are curious enough to drop from bough to bough and come quite

close to you if you will keep still, peering at you with bright eyes and chirping inquiringly.

PARULA WARBLER
Length 4½ inches

The Yellowthroat's "witchity witchity witchity" is quite a distinctive note, not easily confused with that of any other bird.

PARULA WARBLER

The Warbler colors are, generally speaking, bright yellow, slate gray, chestnut, black and white, and olive. Sometimes nearly all of these are laid on the feathers of a single bird, as in the tiny Parula. The southern species is at home in bayous and swamps where the long tillandsia moss, drooping in gray webs from the trees, forms the most convenient of hiding places for the almost weightless little nest.

BLACKBURNIAN WARBLER
Length 5¼ inches

The Northern variety is said to be brighter colored. Both occasionally winter on the Gulf Coast.

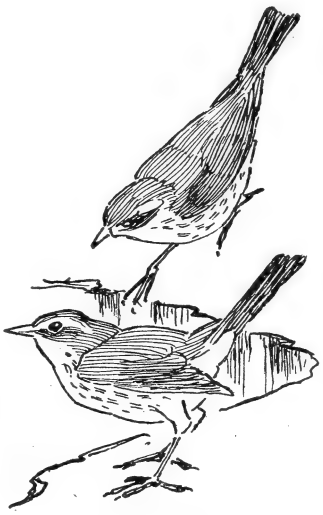
A still more brilliant example of Warbler beauty is the Blackburnian, which, while never a common bird in any region, may be found nesting in the Alleghenies as far south as Georgia. So also does the Black-throated Green Warbler. Both follow the coniferous forests north and south, preferring them for nesting and feeding grounds.

Other prettily colored Warblers are the Blue-winged and the Golden-winged, both of whom nest on the ground but are sometimes seen feeding in trees and bushes; and the black and yellow Bachman's Warbler, who is rare and local in distribution and seldom seen.

LOUISIANA WATER THRUSH

This shy, colorless Warbler of the wild sweet song chooses for its home the most romantic of sites. By a woodland brook that flashes white and gurgles over mossy boulders, or a mountain troutstream, or where some quieter creek steals between the roots of giant trees in the valley, the nest is hidden under a ledge, a bank, or the up-wrenched roots of a fallen tree. In such a green cavern, if you keep very still, you may catch a glimpse of the Water Thrush — a shadow among shadows, *walking,* springing from boulder to boulder across the stream, or darting through the laurel.

The instant he sees you he is gone, to watch you from a distant log or low bush until you leave. He is always in nervous motion, constantly tilting and weaving his body, so that he has been sometimes called the Water Wagtail.



LOUISIANA
WATER THRUSH
Length 6¼ inches

PROTHONOTARY WARBLER

Boys who paddle about in canoes or pirogues are likely to see this exquisite bird at home, its deep golden head and neck gleaming like a flower from the dense shadows of trees that overhang the water. Its nest is made by partly filling a hollow stub with moss, leaves, and grasses, and hollowing out the top of the moss to receive the five or six speckled eggs. A dead tree leaning over a stream or pond shore may contain several nests of this bird, with those of the Chickadee and the Downy Woodpecker at the same time, though the last two do not show the same preference for willow trees and water.

In the marshes of Georgia, and less commonly throughout the South in cane brakes and green

tangles by the water, is found a Warbler whose song outshines the plumage of gay-colored species — Swainson's, so little known that he is left out of many bird lists altogether. In contrast

PROTHONOTARY WARBLER
Length 5¼ inches

to the Black and White Warbler who lives in trees and nests on the ground, Swainson's Warbler lives on or near the ground and makes its nest in bushes, canes, or palmettos, several feet above the ground or the water.

Another pretty inhabitant of swamps, bayous, and wet thickets is the Yellowthroated Warbler, one of the smallest of all. It is vividly striped with black and white on the sides, and may be known by the bib-plastron of bright yellow on the throat and breast. The Sycamore Warbler is similarly marked, an inhabitant of heavily wooded bottom lands.

OVENBIRD

His speckled breast makes him look like a little Thrush, but when he begins to walk, lifting one white-stockinged leg after the other so daintily, none can mistake him. The spring note is also unmistakable. Mr. Burroughs has so aptly described it as "teacher-*teacher*-TEACHER-TEACHER-*TEACHER,*" that this wording is generally recognized by all bird students in connection with the voice.

OVENBIRD
Length 6 inches

Why Ovenbird? you may wonder until you see the nest, roofed and rounded over like an old-fashioned oven or kiln, with the entrance at the side. A big structure for so small an architect, but so nearly invisible that in order to find it you must pursue the tactics of children who

search for guinea's eggs, possessing your soul in patience—and in hiding—till you see the little hen slip into it.

The Ovenbird has another song, finer and sweeter than most Warbler strains, but seems rarely inspired to utter it, even in the nesting season.

CAIRN'S WARBLER
Length 5¼ inches

CAIRN'S WARBLER

This Warbler is nearly similar to the Black-throated Blue (which is not blue, but blue-gray or slate color) of more northern range, the prin-

cipal difference being that Cairn's has black spots on the back. The female is of very different feather, dull olive, and apt to puzzle the observer; but like the male she has a distinct white spot in the middle of the wing that serves as a mark of identification.

This is a true Wood Warbler, and hunts its food among the thickest of greenery, building its nest in a dense bush near the ground.

CHESTNUT-SIDED WARBLER

Like the Golden-winged and the Black-throated Green Warblers, this restless little Warbler dwells among us only by caprice, and then chiefly among the mountains or in wooded hills. He nests in the bushes and undergrowth, keeping himself and his family pretty well hidden after a short visit to our orchards and gardens, immediately after his arrival in the May migration. We may see him either on the ground picking up ants, or in the green thicket of leaves in pursuit of worms and small insects: a very bright and lively fellow, with nearly all the Warbler colors patched together in his coat, though it is the chestnut side streaks, sometimes spoken of as "bloody," that give him his name.

The song has been cleverly suggested by the syllables, "I wish I wish I wish to see Miss Beecher."

KENTUCKY WARBLER

Though not strictly a ground Warbler, preferring to glean along briery fence rows and in brushy thickets, this bright little fellow like

KENTUCKY WARBLER
Length 5½ inches

many ground Warblers *walks* instead of hopping. He is nearly as well known by his song as by his yellow breast; it is a loud clear whistle, reminding the listener of certain notes of the Carolina Wren, and persistently repeated.

The nest is rather bulky for so small a builder, hidden on the ground, made of leaves and strips of bark, and lined with fine fibres and horsehair; there are four or five pretty speckled eggs.

Mr. James Lane Allen, whose understanding of the wild creatures of his native State is equaled by his knowledge of beautiful English, has given the name of The Kentucky Warbler to one of his books. Of the bird itself he says:

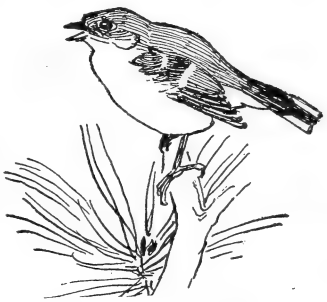
"For over a hundred years the Kentucky Warbler has worn the name of the State and has carried it all over the world — leading the students of bird life to form some image of a far country and to fix their thoughts at least for some brief moment on this beautiful spot of the earth's surface. As long as he remains in the forests of the earth, he will keep the name of Kentucky alive, though all else it once meant shall have perished and been forgotten. He is thus, as nearly as anything in nature can be, its winged world-wide emblem, ever young as each spring is young, as the green of the woods is young.

"Study the warbler while you may; how long he will inhabit the Kentucky forest no one can tell. As civilization advances upon the forest, the wild species retreat; when the forest falls, the wild species are gone — The distant time may

come, or a nearer, when the Kentucky warbler will have vanished like the wild pigeon; then any story of him will be as one of the ancient fables of bird life."

PINE WARBLER

This tiny olive-backed, yellow-breasted Warbler not only spends the winter in the middle Southern and Gulf states, but sings his soft, musical if rather monotonous trill on pleasant days throughout the year. As the name implies, he is found in pineries, and builds his nest in pine trees. His song is a trill suggesting that of the Chipping Sparrow, but sweeter in tone.

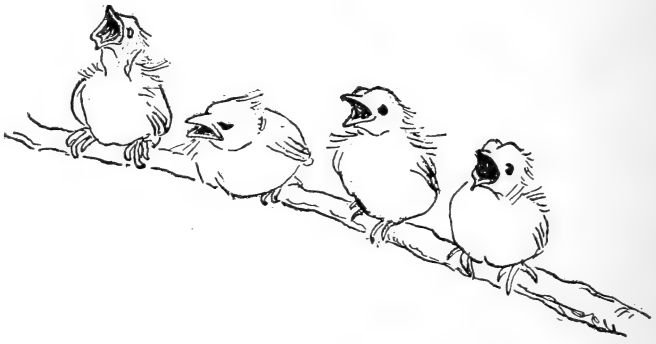


PINE WARBLER
Length 5½ inches

After the nesting season is over, Pine Warblers, being like most Warblers quite friendly with other species, are sometimes found in company with a few Yellow Palm and Myrtle Warblers. The last named is hardy enough to winter with us occasionally; but the Yellow Palm Warbler is a familiar sight in fields and roadsides, and even in the streets of Southern towns, during the months when most of these bright little fellows are away in the West Indies, Mexico, and

South America. He even comes into porches like the Chippy Sparrow. So fidgety and restless are his motions as to earn for him the name of Wagtail.

Those mentioned are only a part of the Warblers to be found in our woods, marshes, and fields; to enumerate them all would be confusing within the limits of a non-scientific book. There are some fifty-odd Warblers in the eastern portion of the United States, and nearly all of them are to be seen in the Southern States at one time or another, especially during migration. Concerning many of them little has been learned as yet. They are highly various and interesting, and well repay the closest and most earnest study.



SHADOWS FROM THE PAST

CAROLINA PAROQUET

How many children who enjoy feeding Polly on her perch and hearing her ludicrous imitations of the talk and other sounds around her, ever dream that there is a wild Parrot numbered among our native birds? Not so accomplished a linguist, but quite as brightly colored and curiously formed, is this pretty Poll of the woods whom so few of us have ever seen: its head and neck being yellow and orange, and the rest of its plumage green.

This Paroquet was once an abundant bird throughout the Southern States. How it would delight us today to see a pair of them, about as large as a Dove, clambering parrot-fashion among the branches of our trees; or to be allowed a peep at two white eggs in a Paroquet nest! But that is not to be. In order to find one of these birds today it would be necessary to search thoroughly the remotest and loneliest counties of Florida, where the rarer wild species are making their last stand in the struggle for existence, in dense "hammocks" of tropical growth surrounded and protected by the silence of the Everglades. Here also the Roseate Spoon-

bill, the Flamingo, the egrets, and the Ivorybilled Woodpecker spread their beautiful wings yet a little time unmolested.

Let the disappearance of these winged lives from their one-time haunts lead us to set a higher value on those that remain.

PASSENGER PIGEON

Have you not heard old people tell of the great flocks of Wild or Passenger Pigeons that used to bridge the sky like a summer cloud? This bird, once so abundant in this country that whole boatloads of the bodies were sold in New York markets at one cent apiece, is now but a memory, like the American Buffalo whose once innumerable herds have vanished from our plains.

No wings of the earth were swifter, stronger, and more graceful than those of this Pigeon in flight. It was larger by several inches than the Mourning Dove, and more erect and active. Its colors were brighter and its whole habit and bearing more energetic.

James Lane Allen, who has written so charmingly of the Cardinal and of other Southern birds, recalls to us as follows this well-nigh forgotten glory of our land:

"What Wilson records he saw of bird-life in Kentucky a hundred years ago reads to us now as fables of the marvelous, of the incredible

—— Let me tell you that I in my boyhood — half a century later than Wilson's visit to Kentucky — beheld things that you will hardly believe.

"The vast oak forest of Kentucky was what attracted the Passenger Pigeon. In the autumn when acorns were ripe, but not yet fallen, the pigeons filled the trees at times and places, eating them from the cups. Walking quietly some sunny afternoon through the bluegrass pastures, you might approach an oak and see nothing but the tree itself, thick bough with the afternoon sunlight sparkling on the leaves along one side. As you drew nearer, all at once, as if some violent explosion had taken place within the tree, a blue smoke-like cloud burst out all along the tree-top — the simultaneous flight of the startled pigeons. Or all night long there might be wind and rain and the swishing of boughs and the tapping of loosened leaves against the window panes; and when you stepped out of doors next morning, it had suddenly become clear and cold. Walking out into the open and looking up at the clear sky you might see this: an arch of pigeons, breast by breast, wing-tip to wing-tip, high up in the air as the wild geese fly, slowly moving southward. You could not see the end of the arch on one horizon or the other; the whole firmament was spanned by that mighty arch of pigeons flying south from the sudden cold. Not

all the forces of nature can restore to Kentucky that morning sunlit arch of pigeons flying south."

They are forever gone! The laws at that time gave them no protection, because it was considered that they were so numerous that the inroads of man could have no appreciable effect upon such countless numbers. Wilson, writing about 1808, estimated that the flock observed by him near Frankfort contained over two billion birds, and a nesting colony near Shelbyville in the same State extended through the woods for nearly forty miles, the trees being loaded with nests.

During the next ninety years, the slaughter of the birds went on unchecked. Pigeons were netted and shot by thousands and shipped by carloads and trainloads into the markets, or even fed to hogs. Hunters, taking their families along in wagons, camped near the nesting grounds, and with clubs and fires and sulphur pots killed parents and squabs on the nests. Boys and women without guns beat the birds down with brushy poles as they circled about bewildered by the smoke and shouting. At one nesting place in Michigan, 500 netters were at work, their catch averaging 200,000 birds apiece; at another it was estimated that fully a billion pigeons were taken.

Suddenly people noticed that Wild Pigeons were no longer plentiful. The buffalo went "all

at once." So "all at once" disappeared the well-known flocks from their native sky. They must, it was argued, have become tired of the yearly disturbance and gone farther into the unsettled forest to roost and to breed. They would come back some day. But that is not the way birds live. Remember that birds do not change their yearly nesting locations to any great extent. Their return to the same spot may be fatal, but return they must and will. A species persecuted to disappearance from a given locality has not moved elsewhere, but is killed out of that particular region; and if its flocks be undergoing everywhere a similar extermination, it means that this species is slowly but surely vanishing from the face of the earth.

The last recorded nesting of Passenger Pigeons occurred in Michigan in 1881. The last wild specimens of which we have any definite record were shot (of course!) in 1898. Eight birds were kept for some years in the Cincinnati Zoological Park; but they are too free and active by nature to thrive in captivity, and the last widowed survivor of the whole race died September 1, 1914.

Rewards of several thousands of dollars have since been offered without bringing to light a single living specimen of this superb member of the Dove family. We can never call back the

pigeon or the buffalo. But it is not too late to learn from the mistakes of our fathers, and though we have lost some valuable species, we may yet save others that are following these to extinction.

Note to Teacher

The student should have a careful training on on the points of observation according to the directions given in the Introduction, pages 5 and 6. If possible procure at least one good field glass for the use of the school. Careful observations should be made and notes written immediately. Even without the use of the field glass any sharp-eyed boy or girl can readily make most of these observations. After your notes are arranged in the best possible way, the most important of them should be written in ink as permanent records on the following blank pages. In addition, it is advisable that the pupil procure a suitable note-book for a permanent record of all birds observed. Furthermore it is important that there be discussions by the class of such questions as:

Why Birds Should Be Protected; How We May Protect the Birds; What We Can Do to Attract Birds about Our Homes.

A society for the study and protection of birds may be arranged.

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